

CITIES OF THE WORLD

SIXTH EDITION

**Volume 4:
Asia, the Pacific, and
the Asiatic Middle East**

**Cumulative Index
Volumes 1-4**



CITIES OF THE WORLD

SIXTH EDITION

CITIES OF THE WORLD

A Compilation of Current Information
on Cultural, Geographic, and
Political Conditions in the Countries
and Cities of Six Continents, Based on
the Department of State's
"Post Reports"

In Four Volumes

**Volume 4:
Asia, the Pacific, and
the Asiatic Middle East**

Cumulative Index Volumes 1-4





CITIES OF THE WORLD SIXTH EDITION

Karen Ellicott, Editor

Project Editor
Kathleen Droste
Permissions
Lori Hines

Imaging and Multimedia
Dean Dauphinais, Leitha Etheridge-Sims,
Dave Oblender, Robert Duncan, Lezlie Light
Manufacturing
Nekita McKee

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PREFACE

Cities of the World represents a compilation of government reports and original research on the social, cultural, political, and industrial aspects of the nations and cities of the world. Most of the country profiles included here are based on official personnel briefings issued as *Post Reports* by the U.S. Department of State. The *Post Reports* are designed to acquaint embassy personnel with life in the host country. Consequently, the reports concentrate on cities in which the U.S. government has embassies or consulates. To increase coverage of other important cities, the editors have added information on a large number of cities—31 of which are new to this edition—not reported on by the Department of State.

Since the fifth edition of *Cities of the World*, the Department of State has issued 62 new or revised *Post Reports*, all of which have been incorporated into this sixth edition. Selected data in *Post Reports* not revised by the Department of State since the last edition of *Cities of the World* have been updated by the editors with revised statistics acquired through independent research. In addition, articles have been written on thirty-three countries for which no *Post Report* exists.

Readers familiar with the fourth edition of this publication will notice that with the fifth edition the page size was enlarged to accommodate more information. This sixth edition includes new photographs selected by the Gale editors. The photographs depict scenes found in a city and countryside and, in many cases, reveal the cultural flavor of the area as well. As in the prior edition, many chapters feature a map of that country's capital or major city, with a superimposed locator map indicating the nation's geographic location in relation to its regional neighbors.

Volumes in This Series

This series includes four volumes:

- Volume 1: Africa;
- Volume 2: The Western Hemisphere (exclusive of the United States);
- Volume 3: Europe and the Mediterranean Middle East;
- Volume 4: Asia, the Pacific, and the Asiatic Middle East.

In all, this set provides coverage of over 2,000 cities in 193 countries.

Format and Arrangement of Entries

Cities of the World is arranged alphabetically by country name. Its chapters are divided into two basic sections, Major Cities and Country Profile, each of these with several subdivisions. A Major City listing might comprise information on Education, Recreation, and Entertainment. Other Cities, smaller cities and towns which are designated as other than major, are discussed in brief paragraphs at the end of the Major City section. Country Profile sections are subdivided into: Geography and Climate; Population; Government; Arts, Science, Education; Commerce and Industry; Transportation; Communications; Health; Clothing and Services; Local Holidays; Recommended Reading; and Notes for Travelers. Thus, *Cities of the World* presents not only basic information, but also comprehensive data on local customs, political conditions, community services, and educational and commercial facilities.

Contents and Index

The Contents and Index in each volume provide easy access to these reports. Listed under each country in the Contents are the cities that appear in its Major Cities section, as well as listings for the Other Cities and Country Profile sections. A Cumulative Index, combining the four individual volumes is found at the end of each volume. The Index is arranged alphabetically by city name, including listings for both major and minor cities that are mentioned in each volume; as well as by country name with names of cities indented below.

Acknowledgments

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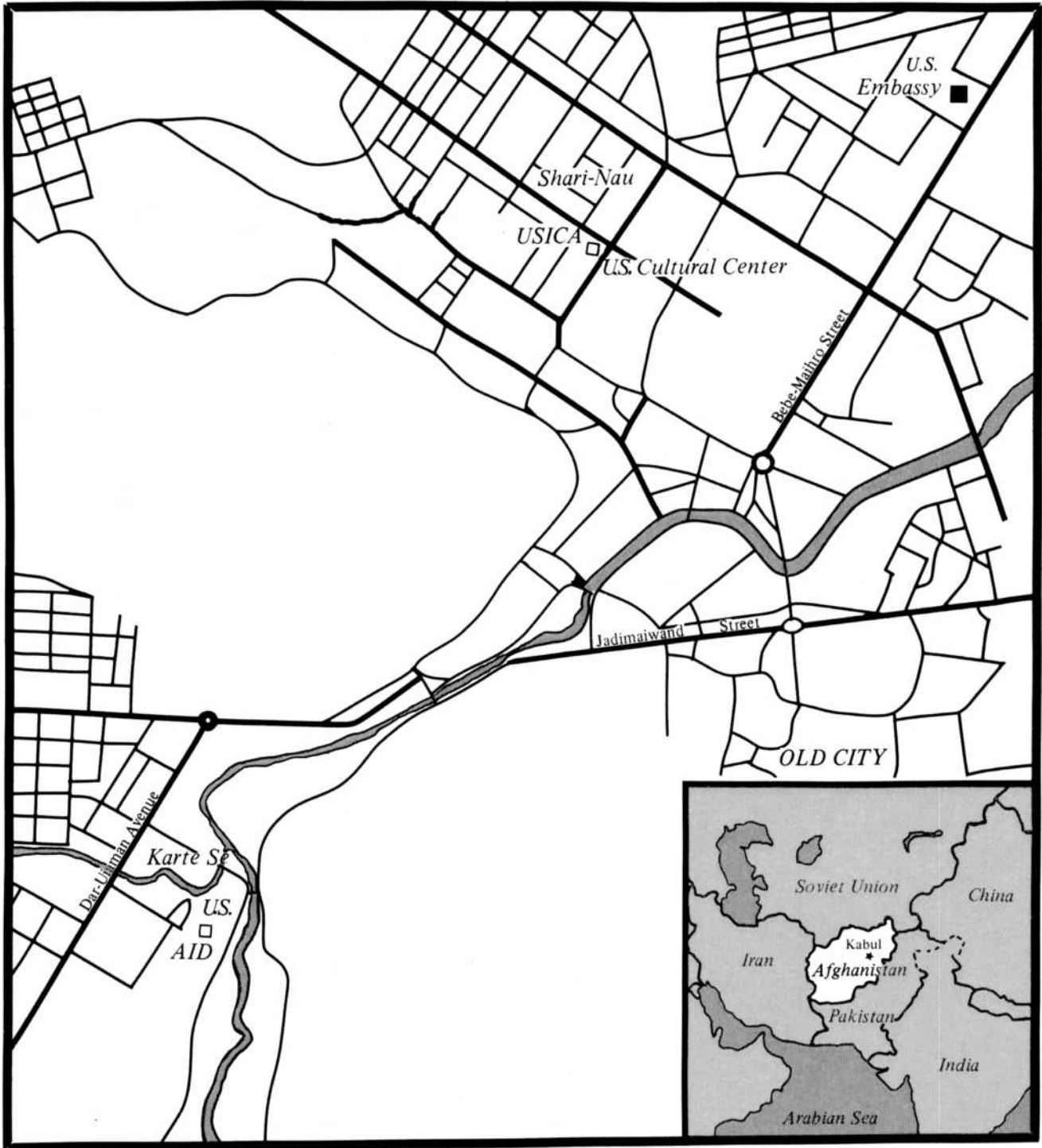
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The editors invite comments and suggestions concerning *Cities of the World*. Please write to: Editors, *Cities of the World*, The Gale Group, Inc., 27500 Drake Road, Farmington Hills, MI 48331-3535; fax (248) 699-8074; or call toll-free (800) 877-4253.

CITIES OF THE WORLD

Volume 4:

**Asia, the Pacific, and
the Asiatic Middle East**



Kabul, Afghanistan

AFGHANISTAN

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

Major City:

Kabul

Other Cities:

Bāghlān, Ghazni, Herāt, Jalālābād, Kandahār, Mazār-i-Sharīf

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report for Afghanistan. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

AFGHANISTAN, the landlocked country whose borders are touched by Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, China, Pakistan, and Iran, often has been called the crossroads of central Asia. It once formed part of the empires of Persia and of Alexander the Great. Throughout the centuries, it has been a base for forays into India, and has bowed to a succession of princes and petty chieftains struggling for control of its strategic trade and invasion routes.

Modern Afghanistan did not evolve until 1747, when principalities and fragmented provinces were consolidated into one kingdom by Ahmad Shah Durrani. All of the country's

successive rulers, until a Marxist coup in 1978, were from Durrani's tribe. Soviet military assistance to the new government eventually led to large-scale invasion of Afghanistan's capital city, but the regime failed to validate either Soviet conquest or authority in other parts of the nation. Soviet military occupation ended in February 1989 and Afghanistan endured a bloody civil war between the Afghan government and various factions of the fundamentalist Muslim guerrillas between 1992 and 1996. During the civil war, over 50,000 people lost their lives during the mujahidin infightings on Kabul's streets.

In 1995 and 1996, students from religious schools in the border regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan--the Taliban--spread throughout the country, proclaiming hostility to the West and establishing a reordering of society based upon a strict interpretation of Shari'a, or Islamic law.

After the September 11 attacks on the United States, carried out by members of Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda forces who were sheltered by the Taliban, the U.S.-U.K.-led coalition launched a military offensive on Kabul and major Afghan cities, toppling the Taliban regime. Afghan society and infrastructure,

already decimated after two decades of war, must be rebuilt.

MAJOR CITY

Kabul

Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, is situated on a high, barren plateau some 5,800 feet above sea level, and surrounded by rugged, treeless mountains. Commanding the main approach to the historic Khyber Pass between Afghanistan and what is now Pakistan, the city lies in the eastern section of the country, 140 miles from the Pakistan border. The Kabul River which winds through the city is, except for an interval in early spring, little more than a partially dry, but always polluted, stream.

The climate of the city is varied. During winter, temperatures sometimes fall below 0°F and, in January and February, snowfalls can be heavy. In summer, daytime temperatures often soar to 100°F, but fall rapidly after sunset.

Kabul is in a low-rainfall area, and almost all precipitation occurs between November and May. The remaining months are virtually dry. Strong afternoon winds, accompa-



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Aerial view of Kabul, Afghanistan

nied by dust storms, occur frequently in summer. Severe earthquakes are rare, but tremors are common. In March 2002, however, an earthquake in the northern Baghlan province (about 100 miles north of Kabul), killed thousands and was felt as far east as Pakistan.

Kabul's history can be traced to the seventh century, although its importance was long obscured by the ancient cities of Ghazni and Herāt. It came to prominence early in the 16th century as the capital of the Mogul kingdom. The tomb of Babur the Great, founder of the Mogul empire in India (1482–1530), is in Kabul, in a beautiful garden near Noon Gun Hill.

There are old city walls in Kabul, the mausoleum of Timor Shah, the son of Ahmad Shah Durrani who moved the capital of Afghanistan from Kandahar to Kabul, and the Arg or palace built to operate the Bala Hissar citadel, or seat of the rulers of Afghanistan.

Great Britain's desire to control the routes to India precipitated the first of the Anglo-Afghan Wars, and it was at Kabul that British forces were ambushed and nearly annihilated. The city was occupied again in 1879 during the Second Anglo-Afghan War, a struggle that

established Afghanistan's borders with British India and Russia. After 1940, Kabul grew as an industrial center.

Afghanistan's capital city is the site of Kabul University (founded in 1932), which was closed in 1992 due to war. The Taliban reopened it in 1995, but women were banned. The medical school was the only institution to make an exception to the ban on women: only female doctors could treat female patients. With the defeat of the Taliban, 4,000 students have taken entrance exams for a new semester, and 500 of them are women. There have been donations of books from abroad.

There are several other schools in the city, including Kabul Polytechnic Institute, which has been in operation since 1951. The Institute of Arabic and Religious Studies has headquarters here, and maintains satellite centers in other cities throughout the country. The Afghanistan Academy of Sciences (1979) also is located in Kabul, as are several research institutes and a museum. As of June 2002, it is unknown to what extent these institutions are operational.

As a result of war with the Soviet Union, civil war, the destruction wrought by the Taliban, and the

2001-2002 bombing campaign, the infrastructure of Kabul largely has been destroyed, including roads, the telephone system, electricity, and water sanitation. However, international relief organizations are engaged in reconstruction efforts.

The people of Kabul have begun to sift through the rubble of destroyed buildings, selecting usable bricks and building materials for the construction of new schools and other facilities. It is estimated that as many as 60 percent of Kabul's buildings are damaged or destroyed. Gravel from them is being used to patch roads.

Signs of a rejuvenated Kabul were beginning to emerge in 2002. Stylish haircuts are now available for around \$3.50, men are wearing hats instead of turbans, and men are shaving, forbidden under the Taliban. New restaurants have opened, and there are stalls selling such varied items as fruit, snacks, balloons, and laptop computers.

Rents are high, and items on the black market are very expensive--scotch whiskey sells for around \$100 a bottle, British soccer jerseys sell for \$50 each, and pornography is both available and expensive.

However, the increase in market activity has also brought theft, assaults, and murder, which are now more prevalent than under the Taliban.

Recreation and Entertainment

Buzkashi (like rugby on horseback), is the national sport. In *buzkashi*, riders struggle for possession of a goat, calf, or sheep carcass, and scores are counted when one of the teams is able to fling the animal's body into a designated circle on the field. At the end of March 2002, the first movie made in Afghanistan since the Taliban came to power was shown in Mazari-i-Sharif: *Chapan-daz* is an Afghan production, shot, edited, and released in the country, featuring the sport of *buzkashi*. Indian movies are also popular.

Other pastimes that have returned in 2002 are dog fighting, camel fighting, motorcycle stunts, and karaoke. Soccer began to be played in Kabul's sports stadium in December 2001, a venue that had previously been used for executions.

Such western novelties and food items as bubble-gum, soda, cookies, and juices have been arriving from Iran, Uzbekistan, China, Russia, Egypt, Turkey, and India.

OTHER CITIES

BĀGHLĀN is located in northern Afghanistan, about 125 miles north of the capital. The city, capital of Bāghlān Province, was a producer of cotton and beet sugar. The population for Bāghlān was estimated at 117,700 in 2002.

In December 2001, the Northern Alliance forced Sayed Jaffar, a local warlord, from power in Baghlan province.

In March 2002, an earthquake measuring 6.0 on the Richter scale struck Baghlan, killing at least 1,800 and injuring thousands. Baghlan's rich agricultural region was also the victim of a plague of locusts in the spring of 2002.

Located 92 miles southwest of Kabul, **GHAZNI** is the capital of the province with the same name. It was a center for trading wool, fruit, and corn, and was famous for its embroidered sheepskin coats. The city's most famous ruler was Mahmud of Ghazni who conquered regions in the area and made Ghazni the capital of a kingdom extending from the Tigris to the Ganges rivers. The kingdom was overthrown in 1173 by Mohammed of Ghor. Two impressive ancient minarets jut into the sky in Ghazni. The population was estimated at 39,000 in 2002.

In March 2002, Taliban and al-Qaeda rebels remained in Ghazni province. Dueling factions of Tajiks, Hazaras and Pashtuns are refusing to surrender their weapons.

In May 2002, a radio station went into operation in Ghazni, broadcasting from 6 to 8 pm at night. Two women have been hired to read the news and announcements, and listeners leave messages at the station requesting songs to be played. However, as of June 2002, there were no telephones and no electricity in the city.

A commercial center, best known for carpets, **HERĀT** is the capital of Herāt Province. The city is situated in the western part of Afghanistan, over 450 miles west of Kabul. It is known for magnificent huge earthworks and defense walls. There are also tombs, palaces, and mosques here. Herāt was once on the trade route from India to Persia, Mesopotamia, and Europe. It was severely damaged by the Mongols in 1221 and 1383; rebuilt, it prospered as an independent Afghan kingdom. Its population was estimated at 166,600 in 2002.

Thirty percent of the population left Herat during the 2001-2002 military campaign. Since it began to subside, one local warlord who seized a great deal of power in Herat is Ismail Khan, who courted hard-line conservatives in Iran. Iran is reconstructing the road from Herat to its border, while the United States is cleaning out the area's canals. Khan has appointed mullahs and archconservatives to high positions, and has opened an office for the promotion of virtue and the prevention of vice. His army numbers 50,000 to 60,000.

JALĀLĀBĀD (also spelled Jelalabad) is the capital of Nangarhār Province in eastern Afghanistan. It is situated 70 miles east of Kabul, on the route from Kabul via the Khyber Pass to Peshawar, Pakistan. The city, with a population that was estimated at 158,800 in 2002, was a trade center with sugar processing facilities and handicraft shops. There were large gardens and tree-lined avenues, as it served as a winter capital. Two festivals that were held were the Mushaira or Poet's festival devoted to Jalalabad's

orange blossoms, and Waisak, a religious festival.

Jalalabad has been in existence as a city since the second century BC, and Akbar, regarded as the greatest Mughal ruler of India, started the town in its modern form in the 1560s. It came under Afghan rule in 1834, and was later occupied by the British in the Anglo-Afghan wars.

Eleven km south of the city is Hada, a sacred spot of the Buddhist world, where pilgrims have come to worship at its many temples. These were maintained by monks and priests in large monasteries. It is said that the Buddha visited Hada.

Jalalabad is also a military center, with an airfield. The University of Nangarhar was opened here in 1963.

As of January 2002, the road from Kabul to Jalalabad was unsafe, as there have been robberies, car-jacking, thefts, and murders.

The capital of Kandahār province, **KANDAHĀR** is situated 300 miles southwest of Kabul, halfway between Kabul and Herat. It is the second largest city in the country with a population that was estimated at 339,200 in 2002. Kandahār was the site of the successful Afghan uprising against Persia between 1706 and 1708, and was the first capital of modern Afghanistan, founded by Ahmad Shah Durani in 1747. The most sacred shrine in Afghanistan is the Kaherqa Sharif shrine in Kandahar, which contains the cloak of the prophet Mohammad. Also, the Chel Zina monument is noted for its 40 stairs leading to a chamber carved into rock, which was built by Babur, the founder of the Moghul empire. Other shrines in the city include Haratji Baba, Baba Wali, and the bazar Charsuq, which is composed of four arcades.

Kandahar was the site of fierce fighting in 2001, and the Taliban only surrendered the city in December. It is estimated that 80 percent

of the population of southern Kandahar left in 2001.

Music, which had been banned under the rule of the Taliban, returned to Kandahar after the military campaign, as singers returned from exile in Pakistan. In the marketplace, cassette tapes are played at high volume, which are sold alongside radios, televisions, and video players. Pet birds, which were also banned under the Taliban, are now sold in the marketplace. During the rule of the Taliban, there were seven schools in Kandahar that enrolled 5,000 boys. As of March 2002, 137 co-ed schools have opened in the Kandahar district, and more than 30,000 children are enrolled, one-fourth of them girls.

Because Kandahar is almost entirely Pashtun, it does not suffer from the ethnic fighting in northern Afghanistan that has emerged in 2002.

Kandahar International Airport was established as the American base in the war. It is surrounded by mine fields and and barbed wire. Taliban and al-Qaeda suspects are kept there in a high-security area. There are 3,500 military personnel based at the airport.

Located in northern Afghanistan, **MAZĀR-I-SHARĪF** is the capital of Balth Province, 190 miles northwest of Kabul. The population here was estimated at 239,800 in 2002. The city was named for the shrine of the cousin and son-in-law of the prophet Mohammad, Hazarate Ali, who was assassinated in 661 and buried near Baghdad. Legend has it that his followers feared that his body would be desecrated, so they put his remains on the back of a white camel which wandered until it fell and died. The body was buried on this spot, and knowledge of its existence remained unknown until 1136, when Seljuk Sultan Sanjar ordered a shrine to be built upon the spot. Genghis Khan destroyed the building, and the grave remained unmarked until 1481. None of the 15th-century decoration remains, but efforts have been made to

restore the building's beauty. Mazar-i-Sharif means "The Noble Grave."

In March 2002, Mazar-i-Sharif was one of the sites of New Year celebrations at the beginning of spring (Nowroz), the most elaborately celebrated festival in Afghanistan. The city was a major trading center famous for Turkman carpets, high-quality cotton, and lambskins.

Since the Taliban fled the city, the airport has opened, and its runway has been repaired. Girls are attending classes. Medical equipment has been flown in for a new hospital run by Jordanian soldiers, which has been treating thousands of patients. A new police force of 600 members was drawn up.

However, a wave of revenge attacks by ethnic Hazara and Uzbek soldiers was taking place in early 2002, targeting Pashtuns. The attacks included robbery, rape, and murder. The Taliban, who were dominated by Pashtuns, persecuted Hazara civilians and their Shi'a religion. As of April 2002, there were 104 illegal checkpoints in Mazar-i-Sharif, manned by soldiers who were supposed to be replaced by civilian police. The two dominant warlords in Mazar-i-Sharif who are struggling for control of the city are General Abduraashid Dostum, an Uzbek commander, and Attah Mohammad, a Tajik veteran of the Northern Alliance.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Afghanistan, a landlocked country of about 260,000 square miles in area (about the size of Texas), is bounded on the north by Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan of the Commonwealth of Independent States (C.I.S.); on the east and south by Pakistan; on the west by Iran; and on the extreme northeast by

China. Its topography consists of irrigated land, small but fertile river valleys, deep gorges, deserts, high plateaus, and snow-covered mountains. The eastern portion of the country is divided by the towering mountain ranges of the Hindu Kush and Pamirs, with peaks rising above 24,000 feet.

The principal rivers drain to the southwest into the Helmand and Arghandab valleys and then into a desolate, marshy area, called Seistan, on the Afghan-Iranian border. Other rivers, including the Kabul, flow southeast into the Indus River. The Amu Darya (or Oxus of ancient times) forms a large part of the northern boundary with the C.I.S.

Afghanistan's climate comprises a cold, snowy winter and hot, dry summer. Extreme temperature changes occur from night to day, season to season, and place to place. During summer in Kabul (altitude 5,800 feet), the temperature may be 50°F at sunrise, but reach 100°F by noon. In the Jalālābād plains (90 miles from the capital and at an elevation of 1,800 feet) and in southwestern parts of the country, summer temperatures can reach 115°F.

The chief characteristic of Afghanistan's climate is a blue, cloudless sky, with over 300 days of sunshine yearly. Even during winter, skies usually remain clear between snowfalls. Since rainfall is scarce from May to November, this period can be extremely dry and dusty.

Population

The 2002 population was estimated at 24,405,000. Many Afghans have fled the country because of the continuing strife—Afghan refugee population in Pakistan is approximately 3.7 million and, in Iran and the west, an additional 1.6 million. There have been many spontaneous returnees, but the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees began assisting refugees to repatriate in February 2002. As of April, more than 350,000 had returned to

their homes. There are still approximately 400,000 internally displaced persons within the country. Also, many Afghans are still fleeing the country due to a lack of relief aid, banditry, and insecurity in remote areas.

Afghanistan's varied culture reflects its strategic location astride the historic trade and invasion routes that lead from the Middle East into central Asia and the Indian subcontinent. The largest ethnic group is the Pashtun (Pathan), comprising about half of the total population. Other sizable groups are the Tajik, Uzbek, Turkoman, and Hazara.

Dari (Afghan Persian) and Pushtu are the principal languages, but Turkic dialects are used extensively in the north. English is the most widely spoken foreign language; many educated Afghans speak Russian, German, or French as well.

Islam is the official religion and Muslims comprise 99 percent of the population of which 84 percent are Sunni Muslims and 15 percent are Shi'a Muslims. The Hazara, Kizilbash, and mountain Tajiks generally belong to the minority Shi'a sect. The Taliban attempted to destroy the presence of other religions in society; eight foreign aid workers were placed on trial for the crime of trying to convert Muslims to Christianity, a capital offense.

Since the fall of the Taliban, conditions for women have improved. Some have stopped wearing the head-to-toe cornflower-blue *burka*, however, many still shroud themselves in it, especially in rural areas. Some women are now wearing the *hejab*, or ankle-length black coat and chiffon veil, in deference to Islamic tradition and modesty. Under the Taliban, men and women were not permitted to mingle, and women could not venture outside of the home without being accompanied by a male relative. Women were prevented from obtaining education and from practicing most professions. In 2001-2002, that



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Mosque in Mazar-i-Sharif, Afghanistan

situation was in the process of being reversed.

Being devout Muslims, most Afghans do not drink alcoholic beverages or eat pork.

History

Afghanistan has had a turbulent, interesting history and has withstood countless invasions. In 328 B.C., Alexander the Great entered what is today Afghanistan—but was then a part of the Persian Empire—and captured several cities, including Herát, Kandahár, Kabul, and Balkh. The 300-year rule of his Greek successors was followed by that of Turkic Kushanis and various Buddhist groups. A lively Greco-Buddhist culture flourished around Bámián. In the year 652, Afghanistan fell to conquering Arabs, who brought with them Islam.

Arab hegemony gave way to renewed Persian predominance which continued until 998, when Mahmud of Ghazni, a Turkic ruler, assumed control. Ghazni became the capital. After Mahmud's death, Afghanistan was controlled by various princes until the invasion of the great Mongol leader, Genghis Khan, in the early 13th century. This

resulted in the destruction of Herát, Ghazni, Balkh, and other Afghan cities. Marco Polo passed through Afghanistan later in that century.

About 1400, the area came under the control of Tamerlane, the Mongol emperor. During the late 15th and early 16th centuries, Afghanistan was ruled by Babur the Great, founder of the Mogul dynasty in India; Babul's grave is in Kabul.

Afghanistan, as an independent kingdom, was founded by Ahmad Shah Durrani, a Pushtun prince, who was crowned in 1747. From that date until the coup in 1978, the country was governed by his direct or collateral descendants.

The history of Afghanistan was influenced by several European countries during the 19th century. To counter Russian dominance in both Persia and central Asia, Great Britain fought the First Anglo-Afghan War (1838–42), occupying much of Afghanistan in the process. In the face of Afghan resistance, the British were forced to withdraw in 1842, suffering a massacre. The Second Anglo-Afghan War (1878–80) brought Abdur Rahman Khan to the throne as emir. He created a central government in Afghanistan and introduced many modern elements



Street in Kandahar, Afghanistan

AP/Wide World Photos, Inc. Reproduced by permission.

into the country; the borders with Pakistan (then British India) and Russia were established during the emir's reign.

Several 20th-century Afghan leaders, such as King Amanullah (who ruled from 1919 to 1929), supported modernization programs. The Noor Mohammad Taraki and successive regimes announced numerous reforms which called for sweeping changes, but which were rejected by traditional Afghan society.

Government

On April 27, 1978, the government of former President Mohammad Daoud was overthrown in a quick, violent, and bloody coup. Daoud and many of his family members were killed in the fighting or murdered in its aftermath. A Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (D.R.A.) was proclaimed by the new leftist-oriented leadership under Noor Mohammad Taraki. He, in turn, was overthrown

and murdered by his rival within the fledgling Peoples' Democratic Party (PDPA), Hafizullah Amin. The Soviets installed a regime when it became clear that they could no longer control Amin, and when the countrywide opposition to the brutal Taraki/Amin regimes threatened to overwhelm the government in power. In December 1979, the U.S.S.R. introduced more than 80,000 troops, unseating Amin, who died in unclear circumstances. The Soviets found themselves in a long, ongoing civil war between the Afghan government and fundamentalist Muslim guerrillas or mujahidin. In 1988, a United Nations mediated agreement provided for the withdrawal of Soviet troops, the establishment of a neutral state, and the repatriation of refugees. The U.S. and the Soviets pledged to serve as guarantors of the agreement but the Afghan rebels rejected it. After the Soviets left the country, the rebels and the government began a civil war and the rebels elected a government in exile. In

1990, the U.N. announced the existence of "zones of tranquility" in order to begin the voluntary repatriation of refugees, however, the rebel government opposed this plan as giving tacit approval of the Kabul government.

President Mohammad Najibullah Ahmadzai, who took office in 1987, faced several attempted coups. The survival of what was a Soviet-supported government surprised many people. Relations with the West had improved and the population seemed weary of the more than a decade of civil war that left two million dead and much of the country in ruins.

In April 1992, the rebels captured Kabul and ousted Najibullah, along with his communist government. A coalition of Islamic rebels assumed power and installed guerrilla leader Sibghatullah Mojaddidi as president on an interim basis for two months. In June, Islamic religious and ethnic leaders chose Burhanud-

din Rabbani as interim president for several months. Rabbani was re-elected in December 1992 to an 18-month term. Rabbani's election was met with violence by rebel Islamic factions.

Once the rebels took charge and established the new Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the sale and consumption of alcohol was banned and women were ordered to wear head scarves. Most of the fundamentalist rebels also believed women should not hold government office.

In 1995-96, students from religious schools in the western region of Afghanistan, the Taliban, asserted their control over Afghan society, imposing adherence to a severe reading of Islamic law. They destroyed vestiges of other forms of worship, including two 1500-year-old Buddhist statues that were blown up in Bamiyan.

Until 2001, the Taliban sought diplomatic recognition and better relations with the West. To do so, they destroyed the country's opium crop, which cut the production of heroin worldwide in half. The United States demanded the surrender of Osama bin Laden, whom it wanted for the attacks on American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, if it was to grant diplomatic status to the Taliban. The Taliban refused. The United States was able to negotiate harsh U.N. sanctions against the Taliban in December 2000, and from that time on, the Taliban further isolated themselves from the rest of the world by being increasingly hostile to the West.

Resistance fighters in Afghanistan, otherwise known as the Northern Alliance, were forced into a north-east section of the country. Two weeks prior to the September 11 attacks on the United States, the Northern Alliance's military leader, Ahmad Shah Masoud, was assassinated.

After the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the U.S.-U.K.-led coalition waged a full-scale air war against the Taliban,

later followed up by the presence and fighting of special forces on the ground.

Mullah Muhammad Omar, the reclusive leader of the Taliban, and Osama bin Laden, have not been found as of June 2002.

In November 2001, delegates from four Afghan factions met in Bonn, Germany, to sign an agreement on a transitional government. A power-sharing interim cabinet led by Pashtun tribal commander Hamid Karzai was set up (which included two women), and Karzai took office on December 22.

King Muhammad Zahir Shah, who was king from 1933 until 1973, has claimed that he does not wish to restore the monarchy. However, he returned to Afghanistan from exile in Italy to preside over a *Loya Jirga*, or traditional gathering of tribal elders and other leaders, to be held in June 2002. Every village in Afghanistan will be consulted to put forth one or more representatives to go to regional gatherings, which will then select the 1,500 people to attend the *Loya Jirga*. The transitional government established by the *Loya Jirga* will be entrusted with the job of creating a constitution and setting the schedule for free and fair elections to be held within two years.

As the military campaign of 2001-2002 subsided, looting, rape, and ethnic killings have taken place, especially in Pashtun villages in northern Afghanistan, driving thousands of civilians from their homes.

Tribal warlords or *jihadi* have asserted their authority in the cities and villages of Afghanistan, establishing quasi-fiefdoms, killing many civilians and engaging in other crimes. Attempts to reassert regulation of virtues and vices have returned in some locales. One reason given for the few numbers of casualties resulting from the intense bombing of the Tora Bora mountains in December 2001, was that the U.S.-U.K.-led coalition's local "allies" at the time—the war-

lords—may have alerted al-Qaeda and former Taliban fighters in the region, giving them time to flee their caves. One warlord, taking pay from the coalition, called in U.S. fighter pilots to attack rival tribal leaders, under the guise of the convoy being that of al-Qaeda. There is widespread fear that regional fighting could become the mark of the post-Taliban era. The major cities of Jalalabad, Kandahar, Herat, and Mazar-i-Sharif are all bases for rival warlords and their militias.

Landmines and other unexploded ordnance (UXO), left over from the civil war of the 1990s, are more of a danger after the bombing campaign. There are approximately 50-100 victims of landmines and unexploded ordnance every week.

Arts, Science, Education

Many of Afghanistan's artistic activities are concentrated in handicrafts. The National Museum in Kabul is rich in Greek and Buddhist history. Archaeological research teams from France, Italy, Germany, the former Soviet Union, Japan, and the United States have made a number of new discoveries, but are no longer active.

In 1999, the estimated literacy rate was 31.5% of the total population--47.2% for males, and 15% for females.

Prior to the rule of the Taliban, officially compulsory education began at seven years of age, continued for eight years and was free at state-run schools. Secondary education was available at age 15 and lasted four years. Under the Taliban, girls over the age of 8 were forbidden from attending school. The type of schooling given to boys under the Taliban was based on a strict reading of Islam.

The country's main institutions of higher learning are Kabul University and the Polytechnic College, also located in the capital; the latter was built jointly with Afghan and

Soviet funds. There are universities in the provinces of Nangarhar, Balkh, and Herat.

Commerce and Industry

Afghanistan is primarily an agricultural country, with about 80 percent of the population engaged in this sector of the economy. Only about 15 to 20 percent of the total land is economically useful. Some of the country's principal cash crops were wheat, rice, barley, cotton, sugar beets, sugarcane, oil seeds, and a wide variety of vegetables. Raisins, nuts, and many kinds of fruits also were produced. During the 1990s, Afghanistan's poppy production accounted for the world's largest production of opium. A program to prevent the resurgence of opium production is being financed by the United States and other Western countries.

Mineral resources consist of natural gas, coal, copper, talc, barite, sulfur, lead, zinc, iron, and salt, as well as some precious and semi-precious stones, notably marble and lapis lazuli. None of these extensive resources has been fully developed except natural gas. Other leading export commodities have been dried fruits and nuts, cotton, carpets and rugs, fresh fruits, and *karakul* (Persian lamb) skins. Most of Afghanistan's exports were previously sent to C.I.S., India, Germany, United Kingdom, and Belgium/Luxembourg. Imported are food, petroleum, fertilizers, basic manufactured goods, and vehicles. C.I.S. and Eastern Europe provided most of the imports.

After the Soviet military invasion, all western countries cut off development aid. Almost all aid was then provided by the Soviets and the Moscow-based Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. Even after the withdrawal of Soviet troops in 1989, the West did not resume foreign aid. The United Nations-sponsored "Operation Salaam" was established to provide for relief,

rehabilitation, and resettlement of Afghan refugees.

Oxfam International, which was well-established in the country prior to the 2001-2002 military campaign, has been active since then in the economic rebuilding of Afghanistan. It has urged the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank to cancel their \$33 million debt to the country. Afghanistan also owes \$8.8 million to the International Monetary Fund. The United States and the world's other wealthiest nations are beginning a \$4.5 billion aid program to rebuild Afghanistan.

The International Committee for the Red Cross, the Afghan Red Crescent Society, and various U.N. agencies are actively involved in rebuilding Afghanistan, beginning with securing emergency relief, food, potable water and sanitation, health care, and education. In addition, funds have been appropriated for orthopedic centers in Afghanistan, as there are thousands of amputees and other disabled persons, many of whom have been the victims of landmines.

Transportation

Ariana Afghan Airlines is the national carrier. Commercial flights have not yet resumed to Afghanistan. Afghanistan has no railroads. The country also has no navigable rivers.

Ninety-five percent of Afghanistan's 30,000 miles of highways have either been destroyed or badly damaged by years of warfare and neglect. Land mines are buried on the sides of many roads. The roads are hard to police: in November, four journalists were shot and killed on the road from Sarobi to Kabul. Bandits have control over traffic on the roads. The largest piece of the \$4.5 billion in international aid that has been pledged to Afghanistan over the next two years, \$1.2 billion, has been dedicated to rebuilding highways.

One of the world's highest tunnels is found in Afghanistan, at Salang,

which links the north to the south of the country. It is a 11,000-foot-high and 1.6-mile pass through the Hindu Kush mountains, built by the Soviets in 1964. It was reopened in January 2002, after not having been open since 1997.

Communications

International communications are difficult. Local telephone networks are not operating reliably. International organizations and other entities rely on satellite telephone communications even to make local calls. There is no commercial satellite telephone service available locally. Those who wish to make domestic or international calls need to bring their own satellite telephone. Injured or distressed foreigners might face long delays before being able to communicate their needs to colleagues or family outside Afghanistan. Internet is not available through local service providers.

In January 2002, the first independent newspaper in post-Taliban Afghanistan issued its first edition. The Kabul Weekly featured articles in English, French, Dari, and Pashtun.

Health

Medical facilities are few and far between throughout Afghanistan. European and American medicines are generally unavailable, and there is a shortage of basic medical supplies. Basic medicines manufactured in Iran, Pakistan and India are available. Travelers will not be able to find Western-trained medical personnel in most parts of the country. An emergency hospital in Kabul with some Italian staff can provide limited services. There are also some international aid groups temporarily providing basic medical assistance in various cities and villages. For any medical treatment, payment is required in advance. No commercial medical evacuation capability from within Afghanistan exists.

Information on vaccinations and other health precautions may be obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's hotline for international travelers at 1-877-FYI-TRIP (1-877-394-8747); fax 1-888-CDC-FAXX (1-888-232-3299), or via CDC's Internet site at <http://www.cdc.gov>

Clothing and Services

An adequate wardrobe for hot, dry summers and cold, dry winters (as well as for brief spring and fall rainy seasons) should be brought to cover the duration of a stay here.

Winter-weight apparel is needed for December through February. Snowfalls are frequent; boots are a necessity for snow and mud conditions, and warm clothing is called for, especially wool sweaters. Excellent imported woolen materials are sold here, but the quality of tailoring varies widely.

For women, washable summer clothing is useful. Long cotton skirts, or those made from other washable fabrics, are popular in Kabul. Long wool skirts and sweaters are popular winter evening wear. Boots and warm outerwear are needed in the cold months. Coats of *karakul* and *poshteen* (suede lined in either sheared lamb or fur) can be purchased in Kabul. A good supply of shoes for all occasions should be brought into the country.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Special Note: The U.S. Department of State strongly warns against all travel to Afghanistan. The security threat to all American citizens in Afghanistan remains high.

A passport is required. The Interim Authority of Afghanistan requires American citizens to obtain a visa for entry into the country. The government has not been able to re-

open all of the country's former diplomatic missions. In the interim, the government is allowing the issuance of a single entry visa to persons entering on sanctioned international relief flights at Kabul International Airport. Commercial flights have not yet resumed to Afghanistan. Information on entry requirements can be obtained from the Embassy of Afghanistan located at 2000 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036, telephone 202-416-1620, fax 202-416-1630.

Afghan customs authorities may enforce strict regulations concerning temporary importation into or export from Afghanistan of items such as firearms, alcoholic beverages, religious materials, antiquities, medications, and printed materials. It is advisable to contact the Embassy of Afghanistan in Washington, D.C. or one of Afghanistan's other diplomatic missions for specific information regarding customs requirements.

U.S. citizens are encouraged to carry a copy of their U.S. passports with them at all times, so that, if questioned by local officials, proof of identity and U.S. citizenship are readily available. Consular assistance for American citizens in Afghanistan is extremely limited. U.S. Embassy officials in Kabul likely will not be able to obtain official information or assistance from Afghan authorities for Americans who face difficulties in Afghanistan nor will American officials be able to travel to provide personal assistance to Americans who face problems outside of the capital.

Although the Embassy is located at Bebe Mahro (Airport) Road, Kabul, it can provide no passport or visa services. Emergency consular services to U.S. citizens who travel or remain in Afghanistan are severely limited. The U.S. Embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan, will provide most consular services to American citizens. Americans who travel to or reside in Afghanistan are encouraged to register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan, or the U.S. Consulate in Peshawar, Pakistan,

and obtain updated information on travel and security within Afghanistan. These missions can be contacted as follows:

U.S. Embassy Islamabad, Diplomatic Enclave, Ramna 5, Islamabad, telephone (92-51) 2080-0000, Consular Section telephone (92-51) 2080-2700, fax (92-51) 282-2632;

U.S. Consulate Peshawar, 11 Hospital Road, Cantonment, Peshawar, telephone (92-91) 279-801 through 803, fax (92-91) 276-712.

Islam is the official religion of this country, and most Afghans are of the Sunni Muslim sect. Under the Taliban, Christian missionary work was considered a capital offense. As of December 2001, there were a total of two Jews in Afghanistan, Ishak Levin, and Zebulon Simentov, who have been in a feud with one another for years. They both share the only surviving synagogue in Kabul. In the late 19th century, as many as 40,000 Jews lived in Afghanistan, many of whom had fled from Persia, now Iran. By the middle of the 20th century, about 5,000 remained, but most emigrated after the creation of Israel in 1948. The Soviet invasion of 1979 drove out almost all the rest.

The time in Afghanistan is Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) plus four.

Afghanistan's monetary unit is the *afghani*, comprised of 100 *puls*. Because of the poor infrastructure in Afghanistan, access to banking facilities is extremely limited and unreliable. Afghanistan's economy operates on a "cash-only" basis for most transactions. Credit card transactions are not operable. International bank transfers are not available. No ATM machines exist.

The metric system is officially in force, but traditional methods of weights and measures also are used. The *pau* (15 ounces) is the unit of measure for most foods; a *seer* is 15.7 pounds, a *kharwar* 80 *seers*, or about 1,254 pounds; and a *jerib* is .482 acres.

The U.S. Embassy was closed in January 1989, and reopened in Jan-

uary 2002. The Embassy is located at Bebe Mahro (Airport) Road, Kabul.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

March 8	Women's Day
March 21	Nau-roz (New Year's)
April 27	Revolution Day
.	*Ramadan
May 1	Workers' Day
.	*Id ul Fitr (end of Ramadan)
August 19	Independence Day
.	*Id ul Adha (Feast of Sacrifice)
.	*Tenth of Moharram (Death of Prophet's Grandson)
.	*Birth of the Prophet
August 31	Pushtoonistan Day

*Variable

RECOMMENDED READING

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ARMENIA

Republic of Armenia

Major City:

Yerevan

Other Cities:

Arzni, Ashtarak, Echmiadzin, Kumayri

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report 1999 for Armenia. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

Armenia is one of the great cradles of human civilization. The archeologists tell us that wine was invented in its sheltered valleys, and, perhaps, even the wheel. According to Armenia's librarians, more than a decade before the Emperor Constantine turned Rome into a Christian Empire, Armenia's King Trdat declared his kingdom Christian, making Armenia into the world's very first Christian state.

Certainly, Armenia is home to one of the world's oldest and most durable continuous cultures. Its 3,000 years of history tell a powerful tale of conquest, foreign domination and resurgence. And throughout it all,

the country's remarkable people have sustained a clear sense of national, ethnic, and religious identity.

A member of the Soviet Union from 1921-1991, a newly independent Armenia is working hard to fulfill the promise of democracy and a market economy. The 1999 Parliamentary elections, for example, showed real improvement over the previous election. But, despite progress, the transition from the Soviet system has been painful. In addition to the natural hardships faced by all command economies undergoing reform, Armenia faces blockades and sanctions resulting from a complex conflict with Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh Region.

Following independence, Armenia was virtually without electric power for 2 years. Its well-developed economy-one of the richest in the Soviet Union-was simply crushed. Recovery has been slow.

Now, however, the worst is over. The dram, the national currency, is currently enjoying relative stability. Oil and gas supplies are flowing steadily. Moreover, with U.S. help, the power sector has been reorganized to dramatically improve efficiency. As a result, the lights

have been on in Yerevan for the past two years.

With traditional resilience, the country is slowly climbing out of the abyss, even though high tensions with Azerbaijan keep Armenia's borders with that country and with Turkey closed. Although the traditional economic base has been shattered, small businesses are opening all over the capital, and, to a lesser extent, in the provinces. Consumer goods are available in local markets, kiosks and stores. The metro is running; car traffic is rolling all day long. If normal life still lies in the future, some hope, at least, has returned to the present. Much, however, is contingent on creating a durable political resolution to the volatile Nagorno-Karabakh situation.

Given this dramatic backdrop, Yerevan remains an intensely busy post. The Armenians, among the best-educated people in the entire CIS, are competent and energetic. Personnel assigned to this post can expect many exciting responsibilities at work. Moreover, given the very real nature of the challenges here, there is a genuine sense of making a difference.

MAJOR CITY

Yerevan

Yerevan, the capital of Armenia, is in the west-central part of the country in the Ararat Valley, a plateau 1,000 meters (3,000 feet) above sea level. This fertile plain is ringed by an impressive range of mountains, which are capped with snow for most of the year. With the exception of the relatively flat center city, Yerevan is a town of steep hills and winding cobblestone byways. The tree-lined downtown streets retain some old-fashioned charm, as do sections of the surrounding hillsides. These are clustered with stone villas and small houses in various states of repair. There are many bars and restaurants in the safely walked center. And, in the summer especially, outdoor cafes and fountains abound. Much of the greater metropolis, however, is characterized by Soviet-style high-rise architecture, which lacks any aesthetic appeal. But Armenia's often spectacular countryside is never more than a 30-minute drive from any part of town. It should be noted that all official Embassy housing is currently in the relatively pleasant city center.

The ancient city is the cultural as well as the administrative center of the nation. There are universities, a fine, functional Opera House and many pleasant museums. With about a million people it is home to roughly a third of the country's entire population.

On clear days (and there are many) the mountains ringing Yerevan create a dramatic backdrop. Mount Ararat of Noah's Ark fame, a 16,000-foot peak crowned with eternal snow, commands the southwest horizon across the Turkish border. To the north looms Mount Aragats, Armenia's highest mountain, a rugged snow-capped peak of 13,000 feet.

Utilities

Electricity is 220v-50hz. There are frequent, sometimes extremely powerful, spikes. Bring surge protectors and uninterruptible power supplies (UPSs) for computers and any other expensive or delicate electrical equipment. European-style round-prong sockets are used in all housing. Bring adapter plugs for appliances with auto power-switching properties. Non-power-switching electrical appliances with 110v-60hz input require a transformer. Some appliances like electric clocks cannot be adapted in this way, others, like turntables may require special parts from the manufacturer for full adaptation.

Outlets are not usually grounded, so extra care should always be exercised around appliances. Hand-held equipment-hair dryers, shavers-requires extra caution.

Food

For most of the year there is a good supply of inexpensive raw fruits and vegetables at the open-air markets. In summer there is an abundance of delicious local apricots, cherries, and other fruits. The dead of winter sees a dramatic reduction of selection and an increase in price for fresh produce. Still, by Western standards, prices are not high. Winter crops like cabbages, beets, potatoes, onions, carrots are readily available all the time at cheap prices. And salad greens, fresh herbs and even tomatoes can almost always be had for a price. Oranges, bananas and apples can also be obtained year round. The best places for fruits and vegetables (price and selection) are the GUM fresh market on Tigran Mets Avenue and the Central Market on Mashtots Ave. Small markets and vendors abound in the city.

Fresh pork, lamb, beef, chicken and a limited variety of freshwater fish are available year round. Eggs are available, too. Low and reduced fat UHT shelf milk and full-fat powdered milk can be purchased as well, although supplies of low-fat are sporadic. Pasteurized fresh milk is available, but the quality is low.

Dried fruits like raisins, apricots, dates and figs, as well as many kinds of salami and cured meat, can be found in abundance. A few varieties of whole-bean coffee are available. The Cafe de Paris on Abovian Street (near Tumanian Street) has fresh-roasted beans. And there is plenty of instant coffee in shops and kiosks. Also available are pasta, flour, rice, beans, lentils, a limited variety of European and Australian cheeses, local sour cream, walnuts, hazelnuts, mushrooms, yogurt, and butter. A variety of Western soft drinks, candy, cigarettes, ice-cream bars and a few brands of imported and local beer are available.

There are a few supermarkets in Yerevan, but the inventory is sometimes disappointing and quirky and they are far from Western standard. A shopping trip might include a run through all of them to find something you need. Frozen food is available at these stores, but the selection is extremely limited and there are no frozen vegetables.

The following stores are popular these days: Partez, Europe, Cash and Carry, Yeritsian and Sons, Bravo, Urartu, and the Hayastan Super Market at the Druzbah Metro stop. For meat "The Rooster" butcher on Pushkin Street is popular. The state-run GUM market is a good place to shop, but is a little intimidating at first. One will find there most of the goods carried in the supermarkets, and at much better prices.

Other than some cereal products, baby foods are not generally available. Cake mixes are not available. Pop Tarts and other breakfast bars are not available. Pet food is available, but limited as to type and very expensive. Kitty litter is not available. Beer is available but limited in variety. Wine is available, but limited in variety. Nestle breakfast cereals are available, but are limited in choice and are now selling for \$6 a box. Low-fat versions of food are not available. Peanut butter, pancake syrup, and chocolate syrup are not available.



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View of Yerevan, Armenia

Clothing

The supply of ready made clothes available here is limited and often not to American taste. There are some ultra-expensive designer boutiques, however. And medium quality hand tailoring is available.

The sun can be quite strong, especially in the mountains, so hats, sun block, and good sunglasses are needed. Bring some effective winter gear. It does not stay cold, but temperatures can get very low. Long underwear will be needed some days. Keep in mind that many local buildings are poorly heated.

Washable fabrics should be chosen where possible. Although drycleaning services are available here, they are pricey and not as versatile as those in the U.S.

Sturdy walking shoes are a must; walking is a good way to get around in Yerevan.

Supplies and Services

It is strongly suggested that you bring a supply of laundry detergent and fabric softener with you. But what you bring by way of supplies is mainly a matter of preference, not absolute necessity. Most household goods are available here, from cleaning supplies to paper goods. But... they seldom bear a familiar brand name and often the quality is odd or very low. Russian-made toilet paper and Barf Detergent (an Iranian brand name) are good cases in point. Prices can also be quite high for some things, such as laundry detergent. Here you might see some familiar brands, such as Tide, but make sure it is for a machine. Hand detergent is common.

The following services are available and adequate: haircutting, shoe repair, taxi, tailoring, dressmaking, upholstery and draperies, auto repair, locksmith, picture framing, etc. In short, most average needs can be met.

Domestic Help

Domestic help is available and runs about \$100 per month for day help (\$1 per hour). Houses do not have special facilities for live-in maids.

Religious Activities

Most churches in Yerevan are Armenian Apostolic, but there are some services for other denominations. A partial list of contacts follows.

Anglican: (Episcopalian) Monthly service in English. Contact: Philip Storventer, St. Zhoravants Church. Tel: 40-79-85, Office: 52-71-27

Catholic: The Mekhitarist Center, daily services (mornings) with Sunday Mass at 10:00 am. (Catholic Armenian rite Mass is held primarily in Armenian with readings usually in English.) Address: 7 Alikhanian St. (opposite the Chinese Embassy) Contacts: Father Serafino (speaks English, French, Italian, Armenian), Father Elia (speaks Armenian, Italian) Tel: 56-

18-88, 58-98-37 E-mail: mca@acc.am

Church of the Latter-Day Saints: Services 10 am or 12 noon at 43 Pushkin St. Five different congregations and a youth group. Contact: Margie Anderson. Tel: 27-0349 or Elder Hadley Tel: 34-43-97 or Elder Reading Tel: 58-33-23.

Seventh Day Adventist: No English Service. There is an Armenian congregation of 300 and a young adult group. Contact: ADRA office. Tel: 39-27-09.

Interdenominational Bible Study and Fellowship: (In English) Sunday mornings from 9:30 to 10:30 am. at the Drummond home, Address: 39A Aigestan St. (Near Peace Corps Office) Contact: Peter or Jekke Drummond. Tel: 57-44-27.

Synagogue: Address: Nar-Dos St. 23, Yerevan. Contact: Rabbi Gersh-Meir Bourstem (Chief Rabbi of Armenia) Tel: 57-19-68 Fax: 374 3 90-69-14. e-mail: avnyer@mbox.amlink.net

Education

There is only one school in Armenia suited to the needs of the international community, and it is very well regarded. The QSI International School of Yerevan is an independent coeducational day school that offers an educational program from pre-school through grade eight for students of all nationalities. In addition, the school has the capability of coordinating correspondence education for the higher grades through a well-respected program operated out of the University of Nebraska. The school was founded in 1995 by Quality Schools International (QSI), which has 17 schools operating worldwide, many of them in the CIS. The school year comprises three trimesters. These extend from the first week in September to the second week in December; from the first week in January to the third week in March; and, lastly, from the first week in April to the second week in June.

The school is governed by the QSI Board of Directors. The board's composition is set forth in the bylaws of QSI. Additionally, an advisory board, composed of from six to ten members, assists the school in its operation. All members of the advisory board reside in Armenia. They are appointed by the president of QSI in concert with the director of the QSI International School of Yerevan.

The school offers an outcome-based educational program with a curriculum similar to that of U.S.-based public and private schools. Instruction, leading to individual mastery, takes advantage of small class sizes and the diverse educational backgrounds of the students. Instruction is in English.

The school also coordinates extra-curricular activities such as ballet, karate woodcarving, jewelry making, sculpting, puppet making, etc. Swimming instruction at a pool operated by the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRCC) is available.

There were four full-time faculty members in the 1997-98 school year, two of whom were U.S. citizens.

The school is located in the 650 square meter second floor of the CARITAS Switzerland building on Ashtarak Highway. The building will also house the school's administrative offices and the director's quarters. The facilities will be adequate for the projected enrollment for the next 3 years, and there is sufficient play and exercise space for the students, both indoors and out. The school has its own athletic field and weekly access to the IFRCC gym and pool. There are currently no facilities for handicapped or special needs students. Bus service will be provided.

In the 1998-99 school year, the school's income was derived from regular day school tuition. Annual tuition rates were as follows: Pre-school (3-4-year-olds) \$5,300; Kindergarten, \$8,300; grades one through eight, \$10,800. The school

also charges an annual capital fund fee of \$1,600 per year or a capital fund deposit of \$4,000 for all 5 year and older students. Accreditation: Full accreditation is expected by 1999. Currently, the school's financial system and curriculum have both received accreditation. The school has been accepted into candidacy for full accreditation by two bodies: The Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools and the Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation. The Self Study and School Improvement Plan have been completed and the Accreditation Team visited the school in February 1999. The school holds a Provisional Certificate from the Department of Defense.

Contact: QSI International School of Yerevan, c/o American Embassy, Yerevan, Department of State, Washington, D.C. 20521-7020

E-mail: gsiy@arminco.com World Wide Web URL: <http://www.arminco.com/gsiy> International telephone and fax: 371-407656

Local mobile phone: 8-21-407656

Sports

A few sport activities are also available in Yerevan. The Armenian soccer team plays at the Hrazdan stadium in season. There are tennis courts and amateur tournaments. For a fee, the gymnasium, sauna and indoor pool operated by the International Federation of the Red Cross are accessible year round. (The IFRCC facility is about 20 minutes from the Embassy.) And the Defense Attaches Office operates a small, but well-appointed gym and sauna in the Chancery. And there is a growing number of private health clubs in the city. Aerobic exercise classes are available.

Fishing is an attractive prospect in Armenia, a country with more than 100 mountain lakes, and countless clear fast rivers. Also, Lake Sevan is only about 50 miles from Yerevan. It is one of the world's largest mountain lakes, is a popular summer tourist spot, and the home of vast

numbers of fish-including brown trout. Fishing slower moving streams for carp is also popular.

The Tsakhadzor Ski Resort is a popular destination in both summer and winter. The chair lift operates year round and the overnight accommodation at the House of Writers is decent, albeit far from luxurious. There is skiing in the winter (cross country and downhill) and hiking and picnicking in the spring, summer and fall. The resort is about an hour's drive from Yerevan. Snowshoeing is also possible in many mountain areas for much of the year.

There are pristine camp recreation areas all over Armenia. Some notable ones are found on the slopes of Mt. Aragats, as well as in Hankavan, Dilijan and to the south near Yeghegnadzor.

And for those who like to jog around in strange places, that venerable running society the Hash House Harriers has an active chapter in Yerevan. The group, which is open to all, organizes camp outs from time to time.

Sightseeing

Yerevan is an excellent base for exploring Armenia's many ancient churches, monasteries, and natural wonders. Some of the oldest Christian monuments in the world can be found in Armenia. The architecture is fascinating and the settings dramatic; the mountainous Armenian landscape is unforgettable. Many people like to hike, climb and camp. The countryside is safe for overnight camping.

The Cathedral at Etchmiadzin, built in 301 A.D., is the spiritual center of the Armenian Apostolic Church. Located about 30 minutes from Yerevan by car, Etchmiadzin Cathedral can be visited for Sunday services. Tours on other days require special arrangement. The church, its grounds, and museum contain a fine collection of ancient religious artifacts.

There is much to see in Armenia. Take a trip to Mt. Aragats to see the soaring walls of the once impregnable fortress of Amberd. Or visit the Roman mosaics at the pagan temple of Garni. And do not miss the huge chambers hewn out of solid rock at the cave monastery of Gegard; or any of the scores of other churches, monasteries and ruins that hide in the country's rough, wild landscape.

Entertainment

The city of Yerevan itself has a surprising amount to offer. There is opera, ballet, and a world-class symphony. The symphony performs twice a week much of the year and tickets are very inexpensive.

The Armenian Song Theater is also splendid, as is the Chamber Ensemble. The National Art museum on Republic Square is a must see, as is the Matenadaran Manuscript Library, which houses illuminated tomes from ancient times in Armenian, Greek and Latin.

A visit to the open-air art market held near the opera house every weekend is a must, as are periodic trips to the Vermsage, the large crafts market located in the park near Republic Square.

Victory Park, overlooking the city, is a favorite place for runners and joggers, especially during the warm weather. And there is a small amusement midway in the park complete with a working Ferris wheel and other rides. There are also rowboats to rent on the park pond, which is ringed by several small cafes.

The American University of Armenia has several English-speaking clubs to which members of the American community are welcome. Several persons currently get personalized instruction from world-class musicians. The South Caucasus Study Group organizes many interesting talks and excursions. Topics range from history and archeology to natural history and biology.

Recently, a number of restaurants have opened in the city. Local interpretations of Russian, Chinese, Continental, Italian, Indian, Persian, Turkish and American (burgers and pizza) can be found. There are also, of course, many quality establishments serving Armenian cuisine. And there are scores of kabob houses, some of which have a good reputation for wholesomeness. In addition, outdoor cafe society is a vital part of the city life. During the long warm season (April to November) scores of pleasant establishments serving inexpensive coffee and pastries can be found tucked into the green patches around the city.

And, if such is your taste, small casinos abound in Yerevan. No one can vouch for their honesty or safety, however. Lastly, a few adequate bars and pubs popular with the expatriate crowd can be found. A high-tech disco has recently opened at the Armenia Hotel-now being managed by Marriott.

And there is an indoor-outdoor jazz bar and restaurant (Poplavok) by a lake in the center of the city. The music is excellent.

OTHER CITIES

ARZNI, 13 miles north of Yerevan, is noted for its mineral spring and baths, which are set in a park of pine and chestnut trees. The sanatorium was built in 1925. Regular bus service operates between Arzni and Yerevan.

ASHTARAK is on the southern slope of Mount Aragats, about 12 miles northwest of Yerevan. The surrounding area has been inhabited from prehistoric times and the villages of the area have many archaeological sites of interest.

ECHMIADZIN is a pleasant 12-mile drive from Yerevan. Mount Ararat, now in Turkey, can be seen on a clear day. It was on the peak of Mount Ararat that Noah is said to have landed after the Flood, and the

mountain remains an important part of Armenian legend.

KUMAYRI, formerly Leninakan, was completely destroyed in the 1988 Armenian earthquake. It was founded by Armenian refugee artisans from Turkey in 1837. The city of 123,000 was noted for its textile industry and theater life. Kumayri is currently being rebuilt, with completion expected soon.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Armenia is located in southwestern Asia, just east of Turkey. It covers a total land area of 29,800 square kilometers, which is slightly larger than the state of Maryland. Armenia is a landlocked country bordered by Azerbaijan, the Azerbaijan-Naxçıvan Enclave, Georgia, Iran and Turkey.

The climate is highland continental. It is dry, with an average of 550mm (21.6 inches) in annual rainfall. In the Ararat Valley, where Yerevan is located, there is far less rain, with an average range of from 200mm to 250mm (7.9 to 10 inches).

Seasonal extremes are pronounced in the Ararat Valley. Temperatures can approach the record summer high of 42°C (107.67) or plunge toward the record winter low of -30°C (-227). Mean temperatures are more temperate, however. July readings give an average high range of from 25°C (77°F) to 30°C (86°F). The January low range averages from -5°C (23°F) to -7°C (19°F). Autumns are long and golden; Armenia enjoys around 2700 hours of sunshine each year. Drought, however, is a perennial problem.

The country rests on a high mountainous plateau cut by fast flowing rivers. The over-grazed hills boast little true forest, but many of the steeper slopes are dressed with

scrub and second growth. Good soil is found in the Arax River Basin. And sheltered valleys across the country host fruit orchards and vineyards. The scenery along the highways is often dramatic, with high mountains shadowing green pastures ribboned with clear, cold streams.

Twenty percent of Armenia's land is given over to pasture and 17% to agriculture. Three thousand and fifty square kilometers is under irrigation.

At 4,095 meters, Mount Aragats is the highest point in the country.

The interesting geology consists mostly of young igneous and volcanic rocks including obsidian. Armenia is honeycombed with geologic faults and remains seismically active. The effects of a severe earthquake centered in Spitak in 1988 are still being felt socially and economically, particularly near the epicenter.

(See Health and Medicine for a discussion of the precautions recommended for the hot dry climate and the possibility of earthquake.)

Population

Armenia's population is officially 3.7 million, based on the 1989 census, but is probably substantially less, around 3 million, due to large scale emigration in the difficult years between 1988 and 1995. One-third of the population lives in Yerevan. Armenia retains significant Yezidi Kurdish and Russian minorities, and smaller numbers of Greeks, Ukrainians, and others. Some 300,000 ethnic Azeris fled Armenia in 1988-90, mostly from rural areas, and an approximately equal number of Armenians took refuge in Armenia from Baku and other Azeri cities.

Conditions in Armenia were so difficult from 1991 to 1993 that there was a vast emigration to the U.S., Europe, Russia and other Newly Independent States. True figures are not available, but the current

population probably stands between two-and-a-half and three million.

Armenians have their own highly distinctive alphabet and language. Ninety-six percent of the people in the country speak it, while a solid majority of the population know Russian as well. Armenia was totally literate; 99% of the population could read and write Armenian and or Russian in Soviet times. Current literacy figures are not available, but the economic crisis has dramatically affected education.

Most adults in Yerevan can communicate in Russian. Russian is still taught in school, although quality has declined sharply. English is increasing in popularity, but is spoken rarely outside of educated circles. Cyrillic script can still be seen on many older street and building signs. Ninety-four percent of the population claims membership in the Armenian Apostolic Church.

Caucasian hospitality is legendary and stems from an ancient tradition. Social gatherings center around sumptuous presentations of course after course of elaborately prepared, well-seasoned (but not spicy-hot) food. The host or hostess will often put morsels on a guest's plate whenever it is empty or fill his or her glass when it gets low. After a helping or two it is acceptable to refuse politely or, more simply, just leave a little uneaten food. A cleared plate or an empty glass will get filled.

On the whole, Armenia is a safe country, close-knit and with little violent crime.

Foreigners can travel freely throughout the country and be confident of a friendly welcome. Note that Armenians are intensely curious about foreigners, particularly in rural areas. This curiosity will generally manifest itself in open-handed hospitality and ready assistance to the traveler, but can sometimes become intrusive, requiring considerable diplomatic skill to extricate oneself. Stone-throwing by local urchins or vandalism of cars is

rare, but can be a problem, particularly when the foreigner is distinctively non-Armenian. Best defense is a friendly greeting in Armenian to the adults on entry to a new village.

Attitudes toward women are still shaped by Middle Eastern links and a pattern of male domination. Though violence against foreign women is rare, women traveling or dining without male escort should dress conservatively and avoid eye contact or other behavior that might attract unwanted attention.

Government

Armenia- "Hayastan" in Armenian- is a republic. On 5 July 1995, the current constitution was adopted through a national referendum.

With the adoption of the constitution ten provinces plus the capital were designated. They are as follows: Aragatsotn, Ararat, Armavir, Gegharkunik, Lori, Kotayk, Shirak, Syunik, Tavush, and Vayots Dzor, plus the capital city of Yerevan.

The head of state is the President, in whom much power is vested.

The head of government is the Prime Minister, who is appointed and dismissed by the President. The President also appoints and dismisses the members of the Government, but at the proposal of the Prime Minister.

The unicameral legislative branch is known as the National Assembly, which now has 131 members. Under an election law passed in 1999 two methods are used to choose what is now a professional full-time Assembly; first, a proportional party-based system, and, second, a simple head-to-head majority mandate. Currently, 56 deputies are elected under the proportional party-focused system and 75 are elected under the majoritarian candidate-focused system.

After the presidential election of 1998 a new set of political parties began to coalesce out of the ashes of

the previous administration. The largest plurality was for a time the "Yerkrapah" faction, a nationalistic association of Nagorno Karabakh veterans. But it has since been integrated into the Republican Party, which is headed by Defense Minister Vasgen Sarkissian. Moreover, just before the May 30, 1999, election the Republicans allied themselves with the People's Party. The People's Party is headed by Karen Demirchian, former First Secretary of the Armenian Communist Party. This powerful election alliance, the Unity Bloc-which includes Yerkrapah, the Republicans and the People's Party-won a decisive majority of National Assembly seats in the May 30, 1999, election.

The opposition is formed by several parties; notably, the Communists, the Dashnaks (a century-old nationalist party with strong ties to the Armenian Diaspora) and the National Democratic Union.

The country's legal apparatus is founded on a system of civil law. Currently, the National Assembly is very busy passing legislation in virtually every field. The system of new legislation being born is considered one generally favorable to free market business development and is in line with accepted democratic principles.

The judicial branch is headed by the Constitutional Court, which is composed of nine judges. These are appointed by the president. The term of office is for life, but a judge may be dismissed by the president. The president also appoints and dismisses the chief prosecutor.

Under international guidance the judiciary underwent a thorough legally mandated reform and retraining process. And it is now working with a completely rewritten set of legal codes that see it acting with increasing independence.

Moreover, in the past year, there have been important structural changes to the judiciary. What is more, constitutional amendments to even further increase judicial inde-

pendence are being given consideration. But new laws on the judicial system, the role of judges, advocate service and the enforcement of court judgements have already been passed. Judges have been appointed to the newly created trial courts (Courts of First Instance) and the Court of Appeals. However, it will take a lot of political will to continue to make further reforms encouraging judicial independence.

Many international organizations are represented in Armenia. The United Nations is very active, as is the EU and some national governments. In addition, there are scores of non-governmental organizations. These serve a variety of needs, ranging from humanitarian aid to democratic as well as economic development.

An important national issue is the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh, a predominantly Armenian region within Azerbaijan, which declared independence in 1988. After a war lasting six years, a fragile ceasefire has held since 1994. Achieving regional stability by finding a durable settlement is a high-priority mission goal. In addition, this unresolved confrontation is an exacerbating factor in the country's severe economic crisis due to the embargo imposed by Azerbaijan and Turkey. (See Commerce and Industry for more details.)

Lastly, no discussion of public institutions would be complete without mentioning the vast Armenian diaspora, both in the U.S. and Europe. It has become a bridge to the outside world for many Armenians, particularly with the advent of the Internet, and influences the direction of the country with resources and ideas. In addition, the Diaspora has been very active in humanitarian efforts in Armenia.

Arts, Science, and Education

Education

Yerevan is the country's intellectual as well as its administrative center.

Yerevan State University, the State Medical Institute and the State Engineering University are located in the capital. The latter maintains fairly strong programs in math, engineering and architecture.

The American University of Armenia has graduate programs in Business and Law, among others. The institution owes its existence to the combined efforts of the Government of Armenia, The Armenian General Benevolent Union, USAID, and the Boalt Hall School of Law at the University of California at Berkeley. Many of the country's most successful young entrepreneurs are graduates of this institution.

The extension programs and the library at AUA form a new focal point for English-language intellectual life in the city. English-language instruction plays a large part in the AUA curriculum and many members of the American community here, including spouses of U.S. Mission employees, teach English at the university.

Arts

As might be expected from so literate a society, Yerevan is a city of culture. The Matenadaran Library contains a priceless collection of ancient manuscripts, chiefly Armenian, but also Persian, Arab, Latin, and Greek.

The city's National Art Gallery has more than 16,000 works that date back to the middle ages. It houses paintings by many European masters. The Modern Art Museum, The Children's Picture Gallery, and the Saryan Museum are only a few of the other noteworthy collections of fine art on display in Yerevan. Moreover, many private galleries are now opening. They feature rotating exhibitions and sales.

Armenia was a crossroads of the ancient and medieval world. The country is home to hundreds if not thousands of fascinating archeological sites. Medieval, Iron Age, Bronze Age and even Stone Age sites are all within a few hours drive from the city. It can be compared to Greece or

Italy in terms of the numbers and quality of its historic sites. There is much to be learned and seen.

The world-class Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra performs at the city Opera House. In addition, there are several chamber ensembles and the Serenade Orchestra is also known for its high standards. In season, grand opera is performed. Fine music can also be heard at the State Music Conservatory and at the Chamber Music Orchestra Hall.

In addition, there are many drama theaters in Yerevan hosting plays in Russian as well as Armenian.

Yerevan's Vernisage (arts and crafts market)-held each weekend in the park just off Republic Square-is home to hundreds of vendors selling a variety of crafts, many of superb workmanship. From inlaid wooden backgammon sets, to the hand-knotted wool carpets that are signature to central Asia, the selection is astonishing. Obsidian, which is found locally, is crafted into an amazing assortment of jewelry and ornamental objects. And there is also an excellent selection of fine jewelry; Armenian gold smithy enjoys a long tradition. Soviet relics and souvenirs of recent Russian manufacture-nesting dolls, watches, enamel boxes, etc.-also may be found at the Vernisage. There is another popular weekend art market in the park across from the Opera House that focuses mainly on paintings.

Carpet emporiums abound in the city.

Science

In Soviet times Armenia boasted very high numbers of specialists and scientists in proportion to its population. There were many important academic institutes located here. Much of the basic research has stopped, however, due to the country's impoverished condition. For this reason many of the country's scientists have left or found more practical ways to make ends meet.

This breakdown has had an interesting consequence. Many of the English-speaking Foreign Service nationals employed at the U.S. Mission in Yerevan are drawn from this distinguished pool of intellectuals. They serve conscientiously in positions far beneath their level of training. These highly educated, self-starting Armenian partners add a great deal to the strength of the U.S. Embassy here. Yerevan has perhaps the best workforce in the entire NIS.

Commerce and Industry

Armenia's once thriving industrial economy largely collapsed with the demise of the Soviet Union. Only now is it slowly starting to recover. Once the small landlocked country was no longer an integral part of the economic structure of the Soviet central system, it lost its sources of supply as well as its markets. Historically, Armenia provided machine-building tools, textiles, and much of the Soviet military's high-tech equipment-lasers, navigation systems, etc. Energy and raw materials were supplied from other republics in a centralized system. Today, few industries from that time operate. And those that continue to run do so at greatly reduced capacity.

On top of this, the conflict with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh has resulted in a closed border with Turkey (a natural trading partner). And Azerbaijan, which was once a main supplier of energy, is now a bitter enemy. Moreover, the expense of the occupation in Azerbaijan drains the Armenian treasury.

Over the last 5 years (1995-99) things have improved relative to the darkest days of early independence. At that time, from 1992 to 1994, Yerevan was virtually without electric power. The people survived mainly through an intensive program of international aid. The critical situation with electricity has changed owing to many of the following factors: improvements in

power management, such as metering and transmission, have been made; gas supplies are coming in through Georgia; and the Metsamor Nuclear Power Plant is up and running. However, the above-mentioned chronic factors hindering Armenia's development—Nagorno-Karabakh, lack of markets and sources of supply—are still very much applicable.

Armenia's problems notwithstanding, many of its macro-economic indicators are strong. Inflation was brought down to comparatively tolerable levels during 1996 (5.9%). And it stood at 20% for 1997. In 1998 there was actually a negative inflation rate (-1.3%) (deflation). And, so far for 1999, the annualized rate of inflation stands at 11%.

The dram has enjoyed relative stability in this environment. Currently, it stands at 545 dram to the U.S. dollar. Moreover, the dram weathered the Russian financial crisis of 1998 quite well. One can expect it to remain basically stable with, perhaps, a weakening trend against the dollar. Official GDP grew at 7% in 1998.

These days, Armenia's biggest source of foreign exchange is from its trade in precious stones. There is a thriving jewelry industry, which includes the manufacture of finished jewels as well as the polishing of rough diamonds bought from South Africa. Some textiles are still produced as well, particularly leather goods. There is also a trade in high-value agricultural produce—apricots and grapes. And it must be mentioned that the country is justifiably famous for its brandy production. Some electronics manufacturing continues. And a few projects involving software development have been launched as well—one of Armenia's assets is its highly trained and educated labor pool.

Natural resources include deposits of gold, copper, molybdenum, zinc and alumina.

Also, Armenia's richness of history may be viewed as a sustainable

resource. Tourism has real potential, including archeological and ecological tourism. Armenia is traditionally considered to be the first Christian state; its conversion pre-dates that of the Roman Empire. As a result there are important monasteries and churches that date to the earliest centuries of the first millennium AD. But Armenia was also part of the cradle of civilization and important Bronze and Iron Age sites are also found here. These archeological sites, although undeveloped from a tourism perspective, are second to none in importance. Moreover, their mountain settings are often dramatic and beautiful.

Although agriculture plays an important role in the economy, Armenia still imports much of its food. Most of the raw material for its industry—hides, cotton, rough diamonds—is also imported. Consumer goods are brought in from the U.S., the United Arab Emirates, the other Newly Independent States, Russia, Eastern and Western Europe, Iran and—by way of Georgia and Iran—from Turkey.

Armenia still engages in some old, Soviet-style barter, but this is being slowly phased out.

To the extent that practical considerations allow, the government is planning and executing an aggressive restructuring of most major sectors of the economy. Transportation in the areas of roads, air and rail, is being moved forward. The energy sector has been given the highest priority. And the water system is being addressed as well.

With some exceptions, privatization is also well under way. Over 80% of small businesses are private, and over 60% of medium and large enterprises are private. The phone system has been privatized and the country's premier accommodation, the Armenia Hotel, has recently been privatized as well. It is being managed under contract by U.S.-based Marriott. In 1998 the government overcame strong opposition to privatize the world-famous brandy enterprise. And ninety percent of

the country's land, including virtually all of the farmland, is in private hands.

An expanding service sector is emerging in the capital, fueled in part by the substantial amount of aid pouring into the country. The many new shops and restaurants benefit everyone posted here.

In the main, the government appears to have a good understanding of what is needed for economic development. There is a liberal trade regime. Foreigners can own any kind of property or business except land. Investment is encouraged. World Bank and IMF advice is taken seriously.

Transportation

Automobiles

A car is very desirable, but is not an absolute necessity in Yerevan. Four-wheel drive is needed if you want complete year-round mobility, but a sturdy standard car will do for Yerevan and many other destinations.

Buying a new car locally is an option. You can buy a new Lada Niva (a tough little Russian-made 4x4) for from \$5,000 to \$6,000. Small sedans, like Lada Zhiguli's, run a little less; big sedans, like Volgas, run a little more. There are many places to buy new Russian-made cars. It is also possible to import a car from Dubai or Russia duty free. Also, Mitsubishi Motors has established a well-run dealership in Yerevan that features both sport utility vehicles and sedans.

Used car prices are extremely variable. Buyers will undoubtedly need the help of a local person to shop Yerevan's weekend auto market where new and used models are sold. The good news is that getting a local car repaired is easier and cheaper. The bad news is that with a Russian-made car the chances that repairs will be needed are greatly increased. It should also be noted that these cars are well below U.S. safety standards.

There are no restrictions on what kind of car you can bring in. There are legal pitfalls if you buy locally, but they are easily avoided. If you buy a car here make sure to check that the registration (the technical passport) matches the vehicle in both the engine number and the body number. Also, get a dated bill of sale that names the price and the parties concerned. This may be hand written. Once the title is transferred into your name by the local authorities—a complex process that involves paying a three percent transfer tax on the value of the vehicle.

Note: Car theft is not a great problem in Yerevan, but stereo theft is known. Removable faceplates and other stereo security systems are advised.

Although engine oil can be obtained here, it is of variable quality, and name brands are sometimes counterfeited and substandard product substituted.

There is no unleaded fuel at all in Armenia so POVs should be modified to accept leaded fuel. This mainly entails removing the catalytic converter if you want to prevent this expensive part from being poisoned by the lead. A permission letter from EPA is required if this is done in the U.S.

Gasoline is available throughout the country, mainly from tanker trucks parked along the road or gas kiosks. Yerevan and larger towns boast an ever-growing number of clean, modern and even luxurious gas stations. On the roadside the quality of fuel is variable and occasionally poor enough to cause problems. Gas stations, however, seem to deliver reasonable quality. Gasoline currently costs about \$1.50 per gallon. Gas prices are marked per 20 liters. Currently, gas sells for about 3500 dram (seven dollars) per 20 liters.

Roads

The streets of Yerevan are very beaten up in places, but are mostly in adequate repair. National high-

ways vary in quality. Main routes are usually passable for moderate cruising speeds with occasional bad spots, but secondary routes are sometimes quite degraded. Drivers must remain alert for potholes, however, on all roads. As in most of the developing world, the road culture is aggressive and undisciplined. In winter, snow is cleared on main routes, but secondary roads are ignored. Constant jay-walking and poor lighting at night adds to the danger in cities and villages. Yerevan's roads are a place for skilled, confident drivers.

Local

Public surface transportation in Yerevan is crowded and the equipment is old. There are trams, buses, trolley buses and even a funicular. Taxis are available and not overly expensive. Two dollars is the average fare for a ride within the central downtown area. The taxis are not metered and passengers must negotiate, so expect to pay a stiff premium if you can't negotiate in Armenian or Russian. Tips are appreciated, but are not expected.

There are *Marshrutnoi* (minibus) taxis as well. They run specified routes at varied rates ranging from 50 to 200 drams (10 to 40 cents). As mentioned earlier, there is a central metro line in Yerevan. The price of a token is 40 drams (8 cents). This is also the cost of a bus or tram ride.

There are inter-city buses and minivans and also very few trains. The trains are unreliable and are not used by U.S. Mission employees. Most of those posted here move about by private car, on foot, or, on occasion, by charter bus.

Regional

Most internal long-distance travel is accomplished by car, minivan, or bus. The trains are very bad both internally and to nearby neighbors. For example, the train to Tbilisi, Georgia takes 14-18 hours, runs an erratic schedule, is uncomfortable and is targeted by thieves. (The same ride by car takes from 5 to 6 hours.)

Bad relations with Turkey over Nagorno-Karabakh have closed that nearby land border. And, because of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, travel to Azerbaijan is impossible from Armenia. Moreover, official Americans cannot travel to Nagorno-Karabakh itself without special permission; the road to N-K, however, is open and considered good. The highway to Tbilisi is also open. The Armenian leg is good, but the Georgian side tends to be beaten up and slow going. It is a 6-hour drive maximum. Surface routes through to southern Armenia and Iran are open most of the year. However, official Americans cannot cross the border into Iran.

The regional roads are passable for most of the year, but in the dead of winter some routes close from time to time due to snows in high mountain passes.

Currently, there are no regular commercial in-country flights operating. However, for special purposes it is possible to charter a helicopter from Armenian Airlines.

Travel to nearby and neighboring countries is generally accomplished by air. The UN World Food Program operates an eight-seat commuter plane between Yerevan, Tbilisi, and Baku on which members of the official community can purchase seats when available. In addition, there are regularly scheduled flights on Armenian Air, the national carrier, to many regional cities, including Ashgabat, Dubai, Tbilisi, Istanbul, Sofia, Tehran, Beirut, Aleppo, and Tashkent. It also flies to several cities in Europe (Paris, London, Athens, Frankfurt, Zurich and Amsterdam) as well as to several in Russia (Moscow, Kiev and Samara). The schedule is variable; most flights are weekly, while others, such as those headed for Tbilisi, leave at least three days a week.

There are flights to Moscow every day on either Aeroflot or Armenian Air. This would be a convenient route both into and out of Yerevan, as Moscow is a good-sized hub, but the arbitrary actions of immigration

officials in Russia have caused problems for some travelers, even those in transit. Theoretically, holders of multiple-entry Armenian visas are allowed three days of transit time in Moscow without a Russian visa, but this appears to be poorly understood by officials there. Moreover, price gouging by Russian taxi drivers has made road travel between Moscow's airports exorbitant. Such cross-city travel is often a requirement in order to change planes. Very cheap, if very uncomfortable, transit travel by bus is an option, however. That notwithstanding, routing through Moscow is strongly discouraged.

Currently, five carriers operate out of Yerevan: Aeroflot, Armenian Air, British Air, Swiss Air and Vnukovo, a Russian carrier.

Communications

Telephone

The quality of the telephone lines is sometimes very bad. Service can be interrupted and it may take several tries to complete a call.

For modem users the data transmission speed on some of these city lines is sometimes very low. Improvements are underway, however, following the privatization of the phone company. Some city lines have been made digital allowing for decent voice and acceptable data communication. Cellular telephone service is also now available in Yerevan.

Internet

Armenia's information policy is open and Yerevan does have several Internet providers. Currently, America Online has a local dial-up number that functions fairly well, even on some city lines. AOL members who wish to keep their accounts should check for the latest Yerevan access number(s) before departing for post. Note that there is currently a \$6 /hour network access surcharge for Armenia's AOL users. There are also local ISPs with rates that are competitive to AOLs. One of the better known is Arminco. Also, the Yerevan Physics Institute

provides dial-up accounts. The service on the local ISP's is, like AOL, mostly adequate for home E-mail. World Wide Web surfing is also possible at the fairly low but manageable speed of about 1.0 (one) KPS- this includes AOL. Interestingly, some Internet cafes have appeared in the city lately.

Enhanced speed, giving faster access to the World Wide Web, is possible with leased lines or a radio modem. These services can run into hundreds of dollars a month. Also, there is fairly high-speed Internet access at the Hotel Armenia I Business Center. The rates are relatively steep, however. And the Armenia I charges roughly a dollar for every E-mail sent. Predictably, the Internet scene is changing all the time.

Radio and TV

There are several FM radio stations in Yerevan that play a variety of music-including Western-during the day. For English-language TV the best local option appears to be AA TV This is a line-of-site microwave "cable" system (not all residences have line of site). Installation is \$100 (this includes a \$50 refundable deposit on the antenna). The most popular option for expatriates is the \$20 per month 24-channel deal, which includes many English-language channels such as Discovery, The Movie Channel, TNT and Cartoon Network, MTV Europe, BBC, VH1, CNBC and National Geographic, and a few others. Note that not all 24 channels are in English.

There is local Russian and Armenian programming over VHF broadcast bands. In addition there are many broadcast satellites whose footprints cover Yerevan. Most of the programming is in languages other than English, but, with the proper dish and tuner, CNN International is available, as are NBC Europe, Euro News (with a digital tuner/decoder) BBC World Service and more.

Some Americans have paid to have satellite dishes and tuners installed in their residences. The cost is

\$300\$1,500. Employees often sell this equipment to incoming personnel. All the equipment required to receive satellite transmissions is available in Yerevan, and there is a reliable local contractor who can install it. Costs, however, must be born by the employee, both for hardware and installation.

Newspapers, Magazines, Books, and Technical Journals

There is only one local weekly paper publication that provides Armenian news in English: Noyan Tapan. However, there are more electronic options. The SNARK news service provides a daily paid E-mail subscription as do Armenpress and Azg.

The PAO Information Resource Center is a first class facility that maintains a healthy collection of current periodicals for on-site review (50 subscriptions). There are 1,000 books in the library as well as an up-to-date reference collection in hard copy and on CD. Many data bases are available. In the IRC a leased-line Internet connection may be used free of charge on a reservation basis for research and news gathering.

In addition, some Western periodicals in English may be reviewed at nearby English-language American University of Armenia Library.

Health

Hospitals

Malatia Medical Center, a general hospital with an intensive care unit and internal medicine department that meets minimum Western standards for cleanliness and, to some extent, technology. In sum, most average medical problems can be handled locally. If time allows, complex or unusual problems require medical evacuation to London for treatment.

Some dental clinics with acceptable standards have recently been identified. These clinics can provide routine cleaning, do simple procedures

as well as give emergency response. For complex dental work evacuation is still an option.

An English-speaking ophthalmologist has also been identified and is available for referrals. No suitable specialist in obstetrics has yet been identified.

Community Health

The city water supply is poorly treated, and tap water must be briskly boiled for 5 minutes before drinking.

A species of scorpion, which presents no serious health risk, is the source of much discussion. The truth is that for people without an allergic reaction the bite of this animal does not present a danger of death or serious injury. However, the bites of these creatures are often very painful and can cause prolonged swelling at the site of the bite as well as some systemic effects, such as nausea. These creatures have been found in some houses, particularly those in lower areas subject to moisture, but are really an outdoor pest. Store boots and shoes properly if you go camping and shake them out. Warn children not to turn over rocks. And, if you garden yourself, be careful.

A more serious outdoor danger arises from snakes. There are four species of poisonous snake in Armenia: the desert rattlesnake, the Asian rattlesnake, *vipera lebetina*, and *vipera dorevsky* (English common names unknown). Fifty-percent of all bites occur in children 12 years old or younger during the summer months of July and August. Camping is a popular recreation in the Foreign Service community here. Wear high boots and heavy long pants for treks and keep a sharp eye out. Children should be discouraged from playing in thick grass in high summer-even in some less developed parts of the city. Most large hospitals have antivenin.

Alcoholic beverages from state stores are considered safe, but throughout the CIS adulteration of bootleg alcohol (often sold in kiosks)

with poisonous wood alcohol is known. Armenia is famous for its brandies: buy them, and all alcohol, from reputable sources and check the state seal carefully.

Preventive Measures

There is a very serious microbial condition known as Brucellosis that can be contracted from some hoofed animals. One vector is unpasteurized milk from goats or cows. There have been outbreaks of this disease in Yerevan. Homemade Armenian cheese from village producers is the culprit. This rustic salty cheese should be purchased from quality stores and state-run markets, not from street vendors. It should be inspected for state seals. Cheese made in state factories is generally considered safe, as is imported cheese. Be cautious about unfamiliar cheeses at parties or eateries, particularly in the country. Yogurt and sour cream from state factories is considered safe. Again, be careful of village produce.

Giardia, a water-born intestinal bug, has from time to time been detected in city water. To be absolutely safe tap water should be boiled for 5 minutes before consumption. Local sparkling mineral waters like Bjni and Jermuk are considered safe, as are the bottled non-sparkling waters.

Malaria has been reported in some rural areas, especially along the Azerbaijan border. If traveling to the countryside check with the Health Unit for an update on the situation. Prevalence is low, but travelers to these areas should use insect repellent, cover up, and, if possible, avoid outside activity at dawn and dusk.

New arrivals should be aware that strenuous exercise at Yerevan's near mile-high elevation can take one by surprise, particularly if one leaves the relatively low-lying city center for the mountainous suburbs.

Armenia is notoriously dry. Humidifiers are supplied by GSO upon request. Order one for sleeping quarters. Also, stay well

hydrated in winter by drinking plenty of water or juice to help avoid upper respiratory complaints. These are common in Armenia.

Hats and sun block are a necessity for any prolonged activity outside in the summer.

Immunizations

Required immunizations for Yerevan include Typhoid, Diphtheria, Tetanus, Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B. People who expect to be out in the country, or whose activities could put them in the way of a dog bite, might want to consider a preventive rabies series, although the disease is not reported.

Medicines

Familiar brands of Western style over-the-counter and prescription pharmaceuticals are not generally available in Yerevan, although some European products are to be found here. Substitutions are possible, but you have to know what you are looking for. Aspirin, acetaminophen, and ibuprofen are available. Bring a full supply of prescription medicines, favorite over-the-counter medications, and health supplies such as corn plasters or Ace Bandages. Arrange with a U.S.-based pharmacy to mail in continuing prescriptions.

Other Measures

Armenia is in an earthquake zone. Without being overly dramatic and with the full understanding that the possibility of an earthquake at any given place and time is statistically remote-it would nonetheless be prudent to review some materials on how to prepare for and how to behave during a seismic event. The Federal Emergency Management Agency has prepared an excellent fact sheet on the subject. Find it at the following World Wide Web address: <http://www.fema.gov/library/quakef.htm>

Basic precautions are to check for hazards in the home, identify safe places in each room and have disaster supplies on hand.

NOTES FOR TRAVELLERS

Five carriers currently serve Yerevan: Armenian Air, Aeroflot, British Air, Swiss Air and Vnukovo. (Vnukovo is not used for official travel). Since Aeroflot and Vnukovo flights come through Moscow-and there have been problems there-Armenian Air, British Air and Swiss Air are the only carriers generally used to get from Europe. American carriers are used, however, to get to those European cities where the flights to Armenia originate.

There are flights to Yerevan from Amsterdam, Athens, Frankfurt, Istanbul, London, Paris and Zurich. These are not daily flights. On average, each city gets served two times per week. Armenian Air changes schedules with little notice. Currently, Northwest/KLM and Austrian Airlines are negotiating to provide service to Yerevan. The agreements are still pending, however. Scheduling flights to Yerevan via Moscow is discouraged due to a variety of transit problems.

Customs, Duties, and Passage

Passport and visa required. For further information on entry requirements contact the Armenian Embassy at 2225 R St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20008 tel. (202) 319-1976; the Armenian Consulate General in Los Angeles at 50 N. La Cienega Blvd., Suite 210, Beverly Hills, CA 90211, tel. (310) 657-6102 or visit the Armenian Embassy's website at <http://www.armeniaemb.org>.

Be aware that certain items are proscribed for export and should not be purchased and removed from Armenia without the permission of the

Ministry of Culture along with payment of a 100% duty. This includes old carpets, old manuscripts, and antiques. (Anything older than 50 years is subject to this levy and/or may be banned from export altogether.)

Pets

You may import pets to Armenia. No quarantine is imposed. Currently, a valid rabies certificate and a health certificate are required. Pets should be given a full range of inoculations before arrival. Be sure to check with all the airlines you use about requirements in transit. Be advised that pets must accompany passengers in the cabin on some Armenian Air flights. The cargo holds on the Russian jets it flies from some cities are not properly heated or pressurized for pets. Pets obtained here should be inoculated by one of the local veterinarians. Bring any specific medications for your pet.

Currency, Banking, Weights & Measures

The dram is the official currency. It is internally convertible. Currently, one U.S. dollar equals 545 dram. This rate is fairly stable, but the trend has been to weaken slowly against the dollar.

Armenia is a cash-based economy. Banks are not generally used. There is one international bank, HSBC, which operates a few VISA ATMs around town. (One is in the Armenia Hotel.) The HSBC Bank is located next to the Armenia Hotel on Buzand Street. If you are bringing U.S. cash to Armenia, make sure it is in good condition. Torn or marked bills might be refused, as might bills older than 1989.

American Express Travelers Checks are accepted at the largest of the hotels, but there are added fees.

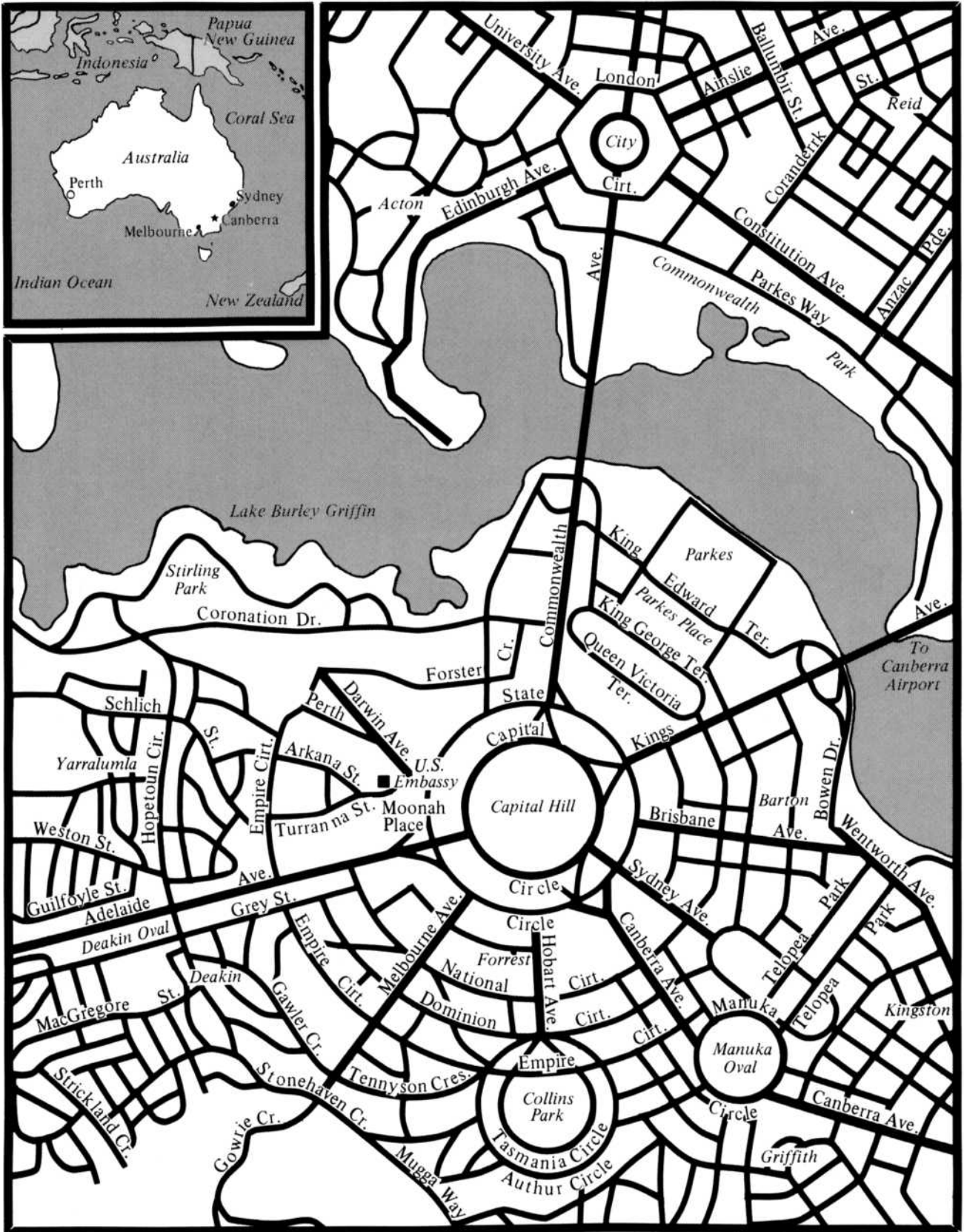
There are many money exchanges throughout Yerevan. They operate 7 days a week. By law all transactions must be in Armenian drams.

The metric system of weights and measures is used here. Fabric is bought by the meter, potatoes by the kilo, gasoline by the 20-liter container, and distances are measured in kilometers.

Americans who are living in or visiting Armenia are encouraged to register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Armenia and obtain updated information on travel and security within Armenia. The U.S. Embassy in Yerevan is located at 18 General Bagramian Street, telephone 011 (3741) 151-551 and fax 011 (3741) 151-550. The consular section is open from 9:00 AM until 5:30 PM, with time reserved for American citizen services from 2:00 PM until 5:30 PM Monday through Friday

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

- Jan. 1 & 2New Year's Day
 - Jan. 6Christmas
(Orthodox)
 - Apr. 7Day of Beauty & Mother's
 - Apr. 24Genocide Memorial Day
 - Apr/MayEaster*
 - May. 1Labor Day
 - May. 9Victory and Peace Day
 - May. 28First Republic Day
 - Jul.5Constitution Day
 - Sep. 23Independence Day
 - Dec. 31New Year's Eve
- *variable



Canberra, Australia

AUSTRALIA

Commonwealth of Australia

Major Cities:

Canberra, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth, Sydney, Adelaide, Hobart

Other Cities and Areas:

Alice Springs, Darwin, Fremantle, Geelong, Gold Coast, Newcastle, Tasmania, Wollongong

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated July 1996. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

AUSTRALIA, the land "Down Under," is an island continent about the size of the United States mainland. Geologically, it is one of the oldest continents; in civilization, the most recent. Its 19.2 million people (2000 est.) enjoy a high standard of living in a country which is still in the process of developing its great natural resources.

Australia holds considerable interest and appeal for Americans: its culture, similar to that of the United States; its unique geology, flora, and fauna; its distinctive literature and history; and the striking contrast between the highly civilized foreground of the coastal cities and the outback of the bush. Its climate var-

ies from tropical to temperate, and the contrasts in its landscape are from rolling plain to alpine height.

Australia and the U.S. share common goals and similar approaches to most major foreign policy questions. Their frequent exchanges of views on world affairs in general, and the Asian-Pacific area in particular, are characterized by a high degree of mutual confidence and understanding.

MAJOR CITIES

Canberra

The national capital, Canberra (an aboriginal word meaning "meeting place"), is in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) in the southern tablelands of New South Wales. It is 1,900 feet above sea level with much of the surrounding mountainous terrain above 3,000 feet. Built to be the seat of the Federal government, Canberra is one of the most carefully planned and rapidly growing cities in Australia. It is often called the "garden city" because of its millions of trees and shrubs. The city is striving to become the nation's political, administrative, commercial, educational, and scientific hub. It is also a growing tourist center. Its

lake, national buildings, parks, and wide avenues attract over 500,000 visitors a year. In the heart of the city is man-made Lake Burley Griffin. Always an integral part of the city's master plan, the lake (11 km long with a 41 km shore line) was completed in 1964. Planned community shopping centers are in each suburb. Modern new buildings attest to the fast growth of the capital.

Wheat and dairy products are produced in the ACT; the surrounding tree-studded upland country is used for the most part for sheep grazing. Development is strictly controlled, and Canberra is affectionately called the "bush capital." To the south are the Snowy Mountains hydroelectric development and Mount Kosciusko (about 7,810 feet), the highest point in Australia. The highlands are timbered mainly with native eucalyptus and radiata pine planted by the Forestry Commission. The Molonglo River flows through Canberra, but much of the city's water supply comes from the Cotter River dam about 12 miles away.

Canberra's climate is sunny year round with only short periods of rain or overcast skies. Summers are warm, with temperatures occasionally above 37°C (98°F), evenings are usually cool. Winters are cold, with

early mornings often below freezing but warming up during the day. It almost never snows. January is the hottest month; July the coldest.

Food

There is an excellent range of food products at local markets and stores. Beef, lamb, pork, veal, chicken, fish and shellfish are of good quality and available year round, as are a wide range of fresh fruits, vegetables and dairy products. All types of baby formulas and most canned goods, including baby foods, are available. Some Stateside favorites are unavailable.

There are American-style supermarkets in major shopping areas for one-stop shopping, and in addition smaller grocery/convenience stores are found in each suburb.

There are also butcher shops, news-agents, and markets for fresh fruit and vegetables in many suburbs. No post exchanges, commissaries, or group-purchasing arrangements exist in Australia.

Clothing

Most clothing needs can be met in Australia, but the range of sizes and choice of styles are not as great as in the USA. Good quality clothing is available but more expensive than in the United States. Department and discount stores stock reasonably priced clothing. Availability of sizes and reduced selection are more a consideration than is price. It is difficult to find shoes in narrow widths, or in extra wide or large sizes.

Men: Dress in Australia is similar to that in Washington, D.C. Many American men wear medium-weight suits of wool or woolen-synthetic mixtures year round. Heavier suits are worn in winter with comfort, particularly in Canberra. Sport coats are also worn. Lighter weight suits are comfortable in summer. Bring a light-to-medium-weight top-coat and/or raincoat.

Casual attire is very much the same as in the United States. Track suits are popular. A warm jacket is

needed for winter, but there is little need for a heavy parka except for skiing. Hats are needed for sun protection.

Women: Clothing styles are current, and influenced by U.S. and European designs, as well as some excellent Australian designers. Good quality women's clothing is available but more expensive than in the USA, and the selection and size range are more limited. Tall sizes in women's clothes are not widely available but some shops carry petite sizes. Clothing needs are very similar to the USA—casual for the most part, but more formal for office and official events.

Warm clothing is needed for colder months in Canberra. Clothes that can be layered are very useful. Most houses are chilly in winter so bring warm clothes for indoor wear. Many wear wool sweaters; some, thermal underwear. A light to medium-weight coat is sufficient. Australians wear hats of all kinds to protect against the sun in all seasons. A wide range of women's sunhats is available.

Dressmakers are difficult to find as well as expensive. Good quality lingerie is available. Hosiery is available but quality and sizes are different. A wide variety of fabrics are available but fabrics, sewing materials and patterns are also more expensive.

Children: Bring clothing for all seasons, although heavy winter clothing is not necessary unless skiing trips are planned. Snow is a rarity in Canberra, though winter nights are often below freezing.

Most public schools through grade 10 have a school uniform, which children are encouraged to wear. Therefore, a large wardrobe is often not necessary. Sneakers are popular in Australia and are often worn to school. For attendance at private schools, black or brown oxford-type lace-up shoes are required; they may be purchased locally. Almost all private schools require students to wear the school uniform, which for

older students often includes blazer (or suit) and tie in winter. After school clothing is much the same as is worn in the U.S. Jeans are popular but the name brands are expensive, so bring a supply.

Clothing for infants and preschool children is available, and at reasonable prices in the larger stores. Some U.S. brands are stocked but are expensive.

Supplies and Services

Some American-brand cosmetics, including Revlon, Elizabeth Arden, Lancome, Clinique, and Helena Rubenstein, are sold locally but are expensive. Paper products are available (albeit expensive), and the range is much greater than a few years ago. Table and bed linens are available in a limited range, sizes are slightly different, and high quality items are more expensive. Personal items for men, such as shaving supplies, etc., are sold locally; this includes several makes of electric razors. (If you bring an electric razor from the U.S., make sure it will run satisfactorily on the local current.)

Bring all needed baby furniture if practicable. Items such as bassinets, playpens, cribs, carriages, and high chairs are available but more expensive than in the U.S., as are large outdoor and indoor toys and play items.

Laundry and dry cleaning services are good. Dry cleaning services vary from 1 day to 1 week; 60-minute dry cleaners are also available. Coin-operated laundromats are available, and a few of these include coin-operated dry cleaning equipment.

Hair salon services are good, but hair dye colors are not the same even though they include name brands. Bring your own or have someone send from the U.S.

Religious Activities

Most faiths are represented in Canberra.

Education

Australian schools are a blend of British and American systems. The school year is the reverse of that in the U.S. It usually starts at the beginning of February and closes for a 6–8 week summer vacation in early to mid-December. There are short breaks of approximately 2 weeks at the end of each term in March/April, June/July and September/October.

Grade placement for children transferring from the Northern Hemisphere can sometimes be a problem. Each family and school assess each student individually, with placement related to the age of the student, and academic level. Some will advance half a grade, others will stay on in the same grade as in the USA. It is important to hand-carry up-to-date school records.

Australian schools through the secondary level fall into two broad categories: government-funded and operated public schools and private schools.

Public Schools: Schools are located in most suburbs of the city. In Canberra, children attend Preschool at age four, Primary School for Kindergarten through Year 6, and transfer to High School for Years 7 through 10. Students in Years 11 and 12 attend secondary colleges. Education is compulsory through age 15, but most students continue through Year 12. One secondary college in Canberra offers the international baccalaureate program for those students who are academically talented.

All five year olds and children turning five on or before April 30 in any year, enroll in Kindergarten at the beginning of that school year in early February. Public schools request a small parent contribution to cover the cost of special resources, sporting equipment and library books. Many primary schools in the ACT offer before and after school care.

Uniforms are not compulsory in public schools but most primary

schools have a uniform and actively encourage students to wear it. High schools have a dress color code. All public schools are coeducational and nonselective.

Private Schools: Most private schools are church-sponsored by either the Catholic or the Anglican Church of Australia, although membership in the sponsoring church is not a requirement for admission. It can be difficult to enroll children in private schools, as waiting lists may be long. Some private-school fees are expensive; however the educational allowance is adequate to cover most costs. Some of the private schools provide educational facilities from kindergarten through grade 12, others follow a structure similar to that of the public schools.

Testing: In some states, teachers rely heavily on examinations to grade students. In the ACT, Year 10 and Year 12 Certificates depend on a system of continuing assessment of student progress, including performance, tests, and written work. In addition, Year 12 students who study a certain quota of accredited courses and pass the Australian Scaling Test (AST) receive a Tertiary Entrance Statement which is recognized for entrance to tertiary institutions.

The U.S. College Board achievement tests can be taken in Australia. In Canberra, the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and Achievement Tests are usually given twice a year.

Preschool: Preschool facilities, both privately run and government-sponsored, are available in most areas for four-year olds. The public preschools are generally located near the primary schools but operate separately with some parental help. There are Montessori, Steiner, French-Australian and Chinese-Australian preschools. In some areas there is a waiting list for preschool admission, especially in private schools. Play-groups are plentiful for children under 4 years.

Special Education: Canberra has several schools for children with

special educational needs from preschool through high school. Alternatively, students may be enrolled in small units attached to regular schools, or they may be mainstreamed. All public schools have some provision for needs of children with special skills and abilities as well as for children with learning or behavioral difficulties.

Higher education opportunities. There are two universities in Canberra—the Australian National University (ANU), an internationally recognized institution with a strong research orientation and large graduate program, and the University of Canberra (UC), with a full range of professional degree programs, including teacher and nursing degrees. Entry to both is competitive, but overseas students are accepted subject to satisfactory academic qualifications and availability of places. At present, both universities require U.S. educated students to have a U.S. High School diploma and a minimum of 1050 to 1100 in SAT scores, with much higher scores for entry to some degree courses. No “subsidized” fees exist for overseas students as for Australian students. Books, room and board are extra. Books, including school textbooks, are expensive.

Further educational opportunities are available through the Canberra Institute of Technology, which is a large multi-campus provider of a wide range of tertiary education and training courses. The CIT is part of the Australian TAFE (Tertiary and Further Education) system which is government-funded and provides vocational education and training programs to persons in the workforce, those who left school and members of the community. CIT offers more than 300 courses from certificate to diploma, through nine teaching schools. Fees vary by course. CIT opened a new hotel-management school in 1995, run in conjunction with Cornell University of New York. Planned to be a world-class provider, fees are substantially higher than regular CIT course programs.



Skyline of Brisbane, Australia

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Non-degree or diploma-level instruction is available in many subjects—through the Technical and Further Education Program at CIT, the Centre for Continuing Education at the ANU and many local secondary colleges. Costs are reasonable. Sports, computer training, arts, crafts, business courses, languages and homemaking skills are among the many subjects covered. Both evening and day instruction is available.

Recreation and Social Life

Once considered the “bush capital,” Canberra is now a thriving, cosmopolitan city without the traffic, pollution and major crime problems of many larger cities. It has been well planned, has excellent recreational amenities, and is becoming a significant stop for international tourists. There are frequent festivals, fairs, and exhibitions, the Royal Canberra show, a thriving symphony orchestra and philharmonic society, and frequent touring companies. The

Floriade festival in September/October is becoming recognized internationally.

Sports

Canberra is a very sports-minded city. Cricket, football, tennis, golf, swimming, and bowls are all popular. Also available are ice and field hockey, basketball, ballooning, rifle shooting, softball, horse riding, volleyball, cycling, fishing, ice skating, skiing, croquet, polo, squash, baseball, bushwalking (hiking), rowing, sailing, and soccer. Five versions of football are played—rugby league, Australian rules, rugby union, soccer and gridiron (American) football. The Canberra Raiders Rugby League team has a place in local culture similar to the Washington Redskins, and won the National Competition in 1994.

Dress for the various sports is similar to that in the U.S. and quality sports equipment is available but at higher-than-U.S. prices. Children’s

bicycles and sports items are available.

There are several public golf courses available as well as clubs that offer membership privileges.

Tennis, mostly hard court, is popular. Limited numbers of public courts are available but small clubs are inexpensive to join. Squash courts are also available.

The Australian Institute of Sport (A.I.S.) in Bruce is a world-class training facility with residential programs for athletes of many sports. Indoor and outdoor stadiums are located there and their swimming and other facilities are available for some public use.

Lake Burley Griffin in the center of the city is the focus of many water activities. There are several sailing clubs with races held each Saturday and Sunday during summer. The rowing clubs participate in regular rowing regattas, and dragon boat races have become a popular annual event for amateur teams. A tourist boat regularly provides cruises around the lake—some with meals. Powerboats are not permitted on the lake.

Some streams are stocked with rainbow and brown trout. Lake Burley Griffin is stocked annually with both species, which may be taken only with a line and rod. Good ocean fishing is available on the south coast of New South Wales, about 100 miles from Canberra. A fishing license is not necessary in the Territory or in New South Wales but both size restrictions and bag limits apply.

Swimmers have a choice of a number of pools in the city (indoor and outdoor) and a number of natural pools on rivers outside the city. Most offer swim lessons for children. Canberra is a 2-hour drive from the ocean and good, if chilly, surf beaches.

Most school children join one or more of the many sports clubs operating for children, which practice

once or twice weekly, and compete on weekends. In addition the YMCA and YWCA cater to children 8 years of age and older. Activities include basketball, volleyball, squash, judo, trampoline, gymnastics, yoga, etc. Also active are various church groups, scouts, girl guides, and the Canberra Police and Citizen's Youth Clubs.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

The Canberra area has a wide range of options for every member of the family. In the city, the major sites include the new and old Parliament Houses, the High Court, Questacon (the Science and Technology Centre), the National Gallery of Australia, the War Memorial and Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the Royal Australian Mint, the Australian National Library, and Regatta Point—a display center to explain Canberra's planned development. Also close by are a Dinosaur Museum, the National Aquarium and Australian Wildlife Sanctuary, the National Museum, Cockington Green (a miniature English village) and a number of other tourist attractions.

For those who like the outdoor life, there is Namadgi National Park plus many nature reserves and recreation areas for bush-walking, bird-watching, camping and barbecues. The Tidbinbilla game reserve, the NASA tracking station and a dry alpine slide are each about 45-minutes drive from Canberra. Many picnic spots with facilities at lake-side areas are available, as well as picnic grounds in the city, often equipped with free electric grills or firewood. There are also about 10 wineries to visit near the city. The only real problem with outdoor activities is the large number of flies in summer months, which can be bothersome.

There are many seaside resorts on the coast, 100-200 miles from Canberra, which are accessible by paved road. The beaches are beautiful and the drive, scenic. Accommodations are heavily booked during summer holidays.

Good skiing at about five resorts, as well as on cross-country trails, is available about 100-130 miles from Canberra in the Snowy Mountains. The ski season tends to be short. Equipment can be hired in Canberra, Cooma or at the ski resorts. The Snowy Mountains, location of the large Snowy Mountain hydroelectric development, is also an attractive area for summer recreation with camping, picnic and fishing areas, water sports, a llama farm, riding (both day or longer trail-rides) and other activities.

Entertainment

Except for opera, for which it is necessary to go to Sydney or Melbourne, it is possible to enjoy a wide range of cultural activities in Canberra very easily and relatively inexpensively. The Canberra Theatre Center, which has a theater seating 1,200 and a smaller playhouse, sponsors a full range of live theater with both local and touring companies and performers. The Canberra Repertory Group is one of several groups producing high-quality plays. The Canberra Symphony Orchestra and Musica Viva arrange a number of subscription concerts annually. Active music clubs and a number of other societies offer a wide variety of cultural and intellectual programs. The Canberra School of Music presents a number of concerts and recitals of near-professional caliber in Llewellyn Hall. Movie theaters show American, British, Australian, and continental films. Movie theater tickets are more expensive than the U.S.

Canberra has a casino, and a few nightclubs together with several discos and restaurants with live entertainment/dancing. There are more than 300 restaurants providing a wide range of ethnic cuisines. In addition, most Canberrans belong to social or sporting clubs which provide inexpensive restaurants for members as well as recreational facilities and slot/poker machine gambling.

Social Activities

Most social and official occasions enable Americans to mix freely with

Australians. Americans residing in Canberra include US Government employees and their families, research fellows at ANU, American spouses of Australian officials, and business representatives. Spouses of the Embassy's American personnel meet regularly and the Australian American Association has a range of events. Canberra's social life varies with the wishes of the individual. Active, outgoing individuals find little effort is required to be accepted by Australians or American coworkers. Living in Canberra is similar to living and working in any modern, Western city.

Brisbane

Brisbane, with a population of about 1.6 million (1999 est.), is the capital of Queensland. It is 13 miles from the coast and 80 miles north of the New South Wales border. Situated on the Brisbane River, it is virtually at sea level and the city area covers 471 square miles.

Brisbane is surrounded by hills and nestled near beautiful Moreton Bay. The landscape rises from the river banks through hilly suburbs and on to the 3,000 foot peaks of mountain ranges less than 30 miles away. Ten miles of meandering river, parks and gardens and a unique blend of historical buildings and sophisticated architecture combine to create the charm that is Brisbane.

Brisbane was first settled in 1823 and has been the capital of Queensland since the foundation of the State in 1859. In the last ten years the city has developed rapidly and is now an attractive, modern urban center of over one million people. The city's population remains predominantly of British origin. However, the non-Anglo Saxon group has grown considerably since World War II as a result of the Australian immigration program. It includes Dutch, Italians, Greeks, Germans, East Europeans, Chinese and Vietnamese. Approximately 9,000 Americans also live in Queensland, most of those in the south east corner of the State in and around Brisbane. A large number of these are



Aerial view of Melbourne, Australia

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ex-servicemen who married Australians during World War II.

During the last decade, the face of Brisbane has changed markedly. There is the new Queen Street Shopping Mall, the new Queensland Cultural Centre Complex, State Library and Museum and a host of new international hotels.

Brisbane's other main advantage is as a gateway to Australia's popular tourist playgrounds in the sun, on the beach (not more than 2 hours drive to the north or south), in the tropical rainforest hinterland and agricultural farms. Brisbane is 483km (300 miles) south of the Tropic of Capricorn and 22 km (13 miles) up the Brisbane River from the Pacific Coast at Moreton Bay.

A number of U.S. business firms are locating in Queensland bringing engineers, technicians and supervisory personnel. The number of

American tourists coming to the State continues to increase with the introduction of discount airfares on the Pacific routes and the attraction of the Great Barrier Reef, the beaches and the Australian outback. Queensland has three international airports at Brisbane, Townsville and Cairns.

Queensland boasts a subtropical climate and is one of Australia's sunniest capitals enjoying an average of 7.5 hours of sunshine a day.

Summer: September-May—Average temperature ranges from 66°F to 86°F.

Winter: June-August—Average temperature ranges from 42°F to 66°F.

Queensland has summer rainfall and dry winters. Many of the older homes are well designed to be cool in summer and do not need air-con-

ditioning. As there is also usually no central heating, these houses can be quite chilly during the short winter.

Clothing

As Queensland winters are short and fairly mild, dress appropriate for a Washington, D.C., spring/summer/fall will be appropriate year round for Queensland.

Supplies and Services

City Shopping: The main shopping streets in the city are the grid formed by Elizabeth, Queen and Ann Streets crossed by Edward, Albert and George Streets. The Queen Street Mall is located between Edward and George Streets and is the city heart for commerce, busy shoppers and workers. It features an information booth, outdoor restaurants, shaded seating and plenty of places to rest. Several large department stores in the city area offer most goods found in US department stores.

Suburban Shopping: Spacious drive-in suburban shopping complexes offer convenient air-conditioned shopping, including large supermarkets, clothing, electrical, and hardware stores, coffeeshops and delicatessens.

General Shopping Hours: In the city—8.15 am to 5 pm except on Fridays 8.15 am to 9 pm; Saturdays 8.15 am to 4 pm; on Sundays many (but not all) shops in the downtown area are open 9 am to 4 pm. In the suburbs—8.15 am to 5 pm except on Thursdays 8.15 am to 9 pm and Saturdays 8.15 am to 4 pm. Most larger stores are now open until 9 pm on weekdays.

Some small suburban "corner" stores have flexible hours and open from 7 am to 7 pm and often later. There are day and night chemists (drugstores) in the city and in most suburban districts.

Transport

The transport system in Brisbane is reasonably efficient with regular bus, train and ferry services. Taxis are also readily available for hire.

Education

State schools are considered very good at the elementary levels; some state high schools are also considered good. Students who have come from US schools with high academic standards may be advised to move ahead one grade in Queensland schools.

Churches play an important part in education in Brisbane and run most of the private schools.

School uniforms are generally worn at all junior schools, however they are not compulsory. The high schools normally require students to wear a uniform.

School holidays are of approximately 2 weeks duration with 6 weeks in December to January. Because of the school calendar, many families arriving from the northern hemisphere find a December/January transfer convenient.

Entertainment

Brisbane's Queensland Cultural Centre is situated on the south bank of the Brisbane River and was completed in 1988. The complex houses the Queensland Art Gallery, the Queensland Museum, the State Library of Queensland and the Performing Arts Complex. The latter has a Concert Hall and Lyric Theatre each with seating for 2,000 people. The Brisbane Entertainment Centre, which opened in 1986, has seating for 13,000.

Because of the presence of both the Queensland Cultural Centre and the Brisbane Entertainment Centre, touring groups of international repute increasingly include Brisbane on their Australian schedules, including ballet, opera, chamber groups, larger ensembles and popular music groups. The Queensland Symphony Orchestra gives regular concerts and has internationally known guest stars. Live theatre is very popular in Brisbane and the Queensland Theatre Company performs first class productions regularly.

Many larger concerts and shows are held at the Brisbane Entertainment Centre at Boondall, some 30 minutes drive from the center of the city, which can seat approximately 13,000 people.

Restaurants: Brisbane restaurants are many and varied, ranging from large international class to small ethnic cuisine restaurants. Queensland's seafood and tropical fruits are a major feature in many restaurants.

Tipping: Tipping is not compulsory in Queensland, nor is it a widespread practice. It is usual, however, to tip hotel porters, restaurant service and taxi drivers if they have helped with luggage.

Radio/Television: For home entertainment, national and commercial radio networks offer a variety of programs. Five all-color TV stations, including one noncommercial channel, broadcast a mixture of US, BBC and Australian programs. The fifth channel offers a wide range of multi-cultural programs. The TV system is PAL and is not compatible with the U.S. system.

Library: The State Library of Queensland consists of a reasonably well-stocked central library housed in the Queensland Cultural Centre, with several suburban branches. The Brisbane City Council also offers a well-stocked library to Brisbane residents, with branches in many suburbs.

Sports

Brisbane's mild climate is extremely favorable for all forms of sporting pastimes and special events.

Australia's favorite sports—cricket, Rugby Union, Rugby League and Australian Rules football—are all readily available in Brisbane.

In the city, tennis, golf, squash, cricket, badminton, bowling, lawn bowls, rugby, soccer, baseball, swimming, and flying are available. Deep sea and surf fishing are popular throughout the State, and the Great

Barrier Reef provides spectacular snorkeling and scuba diving. Water skiing and small boating are popular on the Brisbane River and inland lakes. Sailing and rowing competitions and regattas are held on the river and big boat enthusiasts may cruise the beaches of nearby Moreton Bay or the Pacific Ocean.

Camping or hiking (bushwalking) can be enjoyed in the rainforests or on the Darling Downs about 2 hours from Brisbane. There are camping sites with full facilities in all the National Parks in Queensland.

Waterfowl shooting in the Brisbane Valley is popular with hunters. Brisbane has an artificial ice skating rink, but skiing and other winter sports are not available.

Surfers Paradise on the Gold Coast is only one and a half hours drive south from the city and offers miles of golden beaches, good surfing, water slides, fun attractions, shopping and restaurants.

One hour to the north, the Sunshine Coast offers quieter relaxation on equally beautiful beaches.

Horse racing is well catered for in Brisbane and there are regular trotting and greyhound racing meetings.

Most sporting equipment is available in Brisbane. Depending upon quality preferred, it may be expensive. Bring an initial supply with you. No particular taboos or special requirements exist for sports attire except that whites are required for lawn bowls and cricket.

As Brisbane was host to the Commonwealth Games in 1982, special sporting facilities were built such as the covered Chandler Swimming & Sports Centre and the QE II Sports Stadium.

Social Activities

Business and sporting clubs and organizations such as the American Chamber of Commerce, State Chamber of Commerce and Indus-

try, Rotary, Lions and the Australian-American Association offer excellent points of contact.

Melbourne

Melbourne is the capital city of the State of Victoria at the southeastern corner of the Australian continent and has a population of approximately 3.4 million (1999 est). The city sprawls on gently rolling terrain on the shores of Port Phillip Bay about 50 miles from the ocean. It is bisected by the Yarra River.

Melbourne's latitude of about 38 degrees south corresponds to that of Washington, D.C., and San Francisco; but the climate is more changeable, with warm days and cool nights. Although temperatures rarely drop below freezing, cold evenings and morning frosts do occur in the winter months. The usual summer pattern is a week of gradually rising temperatures culminating in a few hot days suddenly broken by the "cool change", which drops the temperature sharply and starts the cycle all over again. At any time of year the climate is highly changeable with rain, sunshine, heat, and cold sometimes all occurring in the same day. Because of the mild but variable climate, Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania are well suited for a wide range of flowers and trees that bloom all year round. South Australia and Victoria are noted for their good wines. All three states are rich farming and livestock-producing areas. Victoria, and especially Melbourne and its nearby districts, is a major industrial area. There are several other important industrial areas in South Australia.

Melbourne is a major port city and rail hub, as well as a major center of industry, business, and finance. Its parks are magnificent, its streets are ample, and it is an easy city to get acquainted with and in which to move around. Because of its size and given the high number of cars per capita in Australia, traffic is a growing problem.

The center of the city, however, has numerous car parks and the local

transportation system of trains, trams, and buses is extensive. Taxicabs are clean, reliable, and easy to obtain.

The city has an impressive skyline. A recent construction boom resulted in a large increase in modern office and apartment buildings in the 15 to 50-floor category.

Australia's post World War II program of immigration has brought to Melbourne many "new Australians" from western and southern European countries. These have injected a continental influence that is noticeable in many ways in delicatessens, restaurants, shops, sports, music and cultural programs, as well as in the frequency with which foreign languages are heard.

Since the late 1960's there also has been a substantial influx of Chinese, Vietnamese, Cambodians, Lao and Indonesians which has broadened the city's ethnic and cultural base even further.

Nearly 75 percent of the approximately 20,000 Americans in the consular district are located in the Melbourne metropolitan area, with the rest scattered throughout the district.

Food

In Melbourne there are many supermarkets comparable to U.S. stores, such as Safeway. Imported items from the U.S. and Europe are available, but at higher prices than in the U.S. In addition, because of the large foreign population in Melbourne, there is an immense variety of delicatessens, butchers, and green-grocers specializing in Italian, Greek, Eastern European and Asian produce. Also some neighborhoods have country-style markets which are open several days a week. The largest, the Victoria market, sells everything from fresh fruits and vegetables to live chickens and sides of beef and lamb. Local seafood is excellent and varied, including good fish, oysters and crustaceans. The large saltwater crayfish, known as "rock-lobster" in

the U.S. is very expensive but worth it.

Many supermarkets such as Safeway are open until midnight, but there are several Coles supermarkets operating 24 hours a day. Smaller supermarkets may close around 7 pm. Almost all stores close at 5 pm on Saturdays. City Center shops are open Sunday 10 am-5 pm. "Milkbars" usually exist in the small neighborhood areas. Not only milk, but also other dairy products and "emergency" food items are available at these small stores all weekend. Some grocery stores and butchers will take telephone orders and deliver either free or for a very small charge. For large shopping orders, there is a "half case" outlet next to the parking lot at Prahran Market just off Chapel Street and Malvern Road (see Melway). Similar stores exist in various suburbs; these are listed in the Melbourne telephone directory.

Education

The school year in the state of Victoria runs from late January or early February through early December. The year is divided into four terms with two to three week intervals between terms. The first term ends about Easter, and the other breaks are usually in late June and early October.

In Melbourne most American children attend private nondenominational or church-related schools which are generally considered to be academically superior to the public schools (known in Australia as "state schools"). There is a great variety of these schools, but most American students have attended only a few of these. Sometimes pre-admission examinations are required, but most schools reserve a number of places for the children of temporary consular or business residents, who are admitted without any special formalities. Admission, which depends on the child's scholastic record and existing vacancies in various grades, is most easily obtainable at the beginning of the school year in late January or February.

Students at most private schools wear school uniforms. A substantial initial outlay of approximately 300 U.S. dollars is usually needed to equip a child with the school basics, including regulation shoes, blazers, ties, socks, and gym equipment.

Differences between the American and Australian educational systems are most pronounced at the secondary level, particularly in the last two years of high school. Subjects are roughly comparable up until year ten, although there is probably a smaller choice of subjects in Australian schools.

At least two high schools and a small number of private schools in Melbourne have introduced the international baccalaureate, an internationally recognized high school diploma equivalent to most European secondary school leaving certificates. The international baccalaureate usually requires students to pursue a rigorous course of study in a number of academic areas. Many American universities grant advanced standing to students who obtain the international baccalaureate.

Recently the state of Victoria introduced a new high school diploma which requires students to follow a special course of study in both years 11 and 12. It is known as the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) and is being introduced over a period of years beginning in 1990. A controversial issue with many secondary and university educators in Australia, the VCE was introduced to allow more flexibility in subject matter for students in the last two years of high school. In addition to the regular course of study, it requires students to undertake a number of independent study projects, which are graded within the high school; but there is also a major external examination which students take upon completion of year 12 to obtain the VCE.

It should be emphasized that the VCE is intended to comprise a two-year study unit in years 11 and 12. Therefore, students planning to

attend high school in Melbourne in either of these two years would be well advised to obtain specific information from the schools of their choice regarding their special circumstances.

A good grade in the VCE and good high school grades would normally enable a student to gain admission to most American universities.

Clothing

Clothing prices in Australia are high by U.S. standards.

No matter when one arrives in Melbourne there is always the question of what weight clothes to put on—and by the time a decision is reached, the weather has changed completely! Generally speaking, the sweater, light coat or jacket which can be removed is a successful formula, whether it is winter, spring or autumn. Even in the summer either a long-sleeved cotton or a sleeveless dress with light sweater or short-sleeved jacket will be useful.

In the winter months (June-August), skiing is possible about 160 miles from Melbourne, so some “winter” clothing would be appropriate to wear for weekends on the slopes or just looking.

Melbourne has been known to experience all four seasons in one day. There is quite a lot of wind most of the year. In summer, Melbourne has a typical Mediterranean climate, except that the summer is as changeable as the rest of the year, so that hot weather alternates after four or five days with a cool change, and then back again. The following is a rough estimate of temperatures (in degrees Fahrenheit):

- Winter—June 21st through September 21. Daytime averages 57 degrees, nights in low 40's, rarely down to 32 degrees (if so, only for an hour or so); considerable rain and wind, no snow.

- Spring—September 22nd through December 21. Weather very changeable with some beautiful days about 75 to 80 degrees then

a spell of colder weather again; daytime average 67 degrees; can be windy.

- Summer—December 22 through March 21. A few hot days around 100 degrees with sudden changes to moderate weather. Nights generally cooler. Daytime average 77 degrees; breezes.

- Autumn—March 22 to June 21. Best weather; not much wind; average daytime 65 to 70 degrees. Nights around 60 degrees.

(These dates are obviously the reverse of seasons in the Northern Hemisphere which seems to be more easily understandable and logical to North Americans; the Australians tend to use the beginnings of the respective months, rather than the 21st in referring to their seasons.)

Sports

Australians are outdoor sports enthusiasts and Australia is noted for fielding “world class” sports teams. In Melbourne, golf and tennis are the most popular participant sports and are played year round. Sailing, swimming, fishing, surfing, and skin-diving are also popular. Good ski slopes abound in the mountains about 160 miles east of Melbourne. Australian-rules football is a spectacle which attracts huge crowds in the winter season, as does cricket in the summer. Soccer is increasing in popularity with the influx of “new Australians” from European countries. There is a growing national professional basketball association (similar to the American NBA) and amateur basketball and baseball are played at schools or various club organizations. Melbourne has both private and public golf courses and the best of these, such as the Royal Melbourne Golf Club, are among the world's finest.

Sports equipment of all kinds is available locally, including many well-known brands from England, Germany, Japan, and the U.S. The broad range of different types of equipment makes it difficult to com-

pare local and U.S. prices, but most sporting goods, including golf carts and tennis gear, are much cheaper in the U.S.

Tennis clubs are numerous and excellent; both grass and composition courts are available. Some tennis clubs admit children. There are several yacht clubs on Port Phillip Bay.

Deep sea, lake and river fishing are possible in this vast consular district. Small boats may be chartered in Melbourne or the suburbs for any type of fishing. Trout fishing is especially good in Tasmania. Hunting (or "shooting" as it is called in Australia) of ducks, birds, and some animals is possible in many areas. Target shooting can be arranged through one of the various rifle clubs.

Australian regulations no longer allow the importation of firearms of any sort.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

There are many one or two-day trips to be made near Melbourne. Plans, maps and general tourist information for short or long tours may be obtained from the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria (RACV), which provides road and other services for its members similar to those provided by the American Automobile Association, and from Victour.

We also recommend Blair's Guide to Victoria.

Roads outside the major cities are generally two-lane and are well maintained and provided with services such as wayside stops and gas stations.

Among the outstanding attractions in Melbourne are the attractively landscaped Royal Botanical Gardens. Because of the climate here, all tropical, sub-tropical and temperate zone trees, plants and flowers can be grown. Most are informatively labelled. The National Gallery, part of Melbourne's new Arts Center, has a

choice Far Eastern collection, as well as splendid representation from other parts of the world. There is an excellent group of Australian Impressionist paintings. The several National Trust Houses in and around Melbourne are well worth a visit. The National Museum has an excellent scientific collection.

In addition to a well-stocked zoo in Melbourne where one can find a good section of Australian fauna, as well as new and imaginative areas being built for animals from all over the world, there is an excellent wildlife sanctuary at Healesville about 40 miles northeast of Melbourne in the foothills of the Great Dividing Range. There one can see the shy lyre bird, emus, wombats, and opossums, walk among tame kangaroos and wallabies, see koala at close range, and watch the duck-billed platypus in a specially-constructed tank.

Taking the back road to Healesville one can get a splendid overall panorama of Melbourne from Kangaroo Ground War Memorial Tower, just 10 miles north of the City. (For kangaroo viewing go on to Sir Colin Mackenzie Sanctuary at Healesville referred to above.)

Phillip Island, about 85 miles southeast of Melbourne, is a popular summer resort where seals, fairy penguins, koalas and other wildlife can be seen in their natural habitat. Many people make at least one overnight trip to watch the fairy penguins march in from the sea at dusk.

The Dandenong Ranges, about 20 miles east of Melbourne are attractive to explore on short day trips. Gippsland, an area of wooded hills and rolling dairy country beginning just southeast of Melbourne, is relatively little-known as a tourist attraction, but drives through this nearby area provide many opportunities to see flora and fauna of Victoria in its natural state.

Further to the southeast, about 150 miles, is Wilson's Promontory, the southern extremity of the Australia

mainland. It comprises 116,000 acres of National Park which makes an ideal spot for walkers and swimmers. Flats and lodges of varying bed capacities are also available for hire at Tidal River within the Promontory. Arrangements for the rental of these accommodations are made through Tourism Victoria. There are also several small towns nearby where one can find adequate motel accommodations.

Facilities for campers with tent or trailer are good in all populated areas of Australia. Most campsites have toilet and shower blocks with hot water and laundry facilities. Trailers can be rented on the spot as well. Skin divers will find ample opportunity to pursue their hobby. To recapture the flavor of the gold rush era, day trips are possible to Ballarat and Bendigo, two old Victorian mining towns an hour's drive west and northwest of Melbourne, respectively.

The beaches inside Port Phillip Bay run over 50 miles from Melbourne down the Mornington Peninsula; the nearest ocean surf beaches are just outside the Bay about 1 1/2 hours' drive. The drive along the Peninsula, inside or out, is quite lovely with varied views. Sharks do appear along some of these beaches, but are less of a problem here than elsewhere in Australia. Many of the more popular public beaches have "shark watch" personnel as well as lifeguards on duty.

An interesting day or weekend trip by car by to Lake Eildon, about 90 miles northeast of Melbourne. This is Victoria's biggest man-made lake which was built to irrigate a vast area of northern Victoria, reaching as far as the Murray River. Set in the Upper Goulburn River Valley, Lake Eildon has an area of 50 square miles and picturesque 320-mile shoreline. It is ideal for water sports. Houseboats can be rented for a weekend or longer for great family vacations. In this area there is also a chance to see native wildlife.

Auto trips to the Australian Alps to see the Snowy Mountain hydroelec-

tric power project take about six hours and good overnight accommodation is available.

The Great Ocean Road along the southern coast of Victoria to the west is a delightful way to get to South Australia. Special scenic attractions are the "Twelve Apostles" and Loch Ard Gorge, stark rock formations set in the midst of surging tides. Inland from the cliffs and beaches are the rain forests of the Otway Range with their tall, stringy-bark eucalyptus trees and tree ferns. Over the South Australian state border are volcanic lakes, limestone caves with recent exciting finds of extinct marsupial lions and giant kangaroos. The inland marshes are full of black swans, egrets and ducks. Further to the north, Adelaide, the capital of South Australia, is a beautiful city set in an amphitheater of wooded hills. The new music and art center is the focus for the Adelaide Festival which attracts talent from all over the world.

Returning from Adelaide, or a special trip on its own, a stop in the Grampians, low ranges of rocky mountains in Western Victoria, is especially worthwhile during springtime when there is a vast array of wildflowers carpeting the area.

Entertainment

Melbourne has many theaters whose productions include many musicals and plays from Broadway and London, sometimes with imported casts or stars, but more often with excellent local talent. There are also several repertory companies which present regular seasons runs up to five or six weeks for each play. The Victorian Arts Centre has lavish facilities for concerts, theater, opera and dance on a par with the Kennedy and Lincoln Centers.

Melbourne has an excellent symphony orchestra with a regular season. There are also several music societies which regularly present good opera, ballet and symphony concerts. The Melbourne Arts Festi-

val, modeled after Italy's Spoleto Festival, takes place in September. In addition, many times during the year there are visiting orchestras, chamber music groups and soloists. A series of outdoor "Music for the People" concerts is given by the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra in the summer months at the Sidney Myer Music Bowl. Top jazz, rock and roll, and country and western bands from the U.S. and Europe perform regularly.

Several film societies present old and new films on a monthly basis. Some have special film festivals of a week or so duration. Also, special programs featuring returns of old favorites are very popular. This is, of course, in addition to the usual run of contemporary films presented on a public basis throughout all of Greater Melbourne. There is a Melbourne Film Festival in May with films from all over the world.

In Melbourne there are five TV stations; many AM and several FM radio stations. Classical music and news programs are available throughout the day and evening as well as the usual "top ten" tunes.

The Melbourne Cup horse race in November is considered to be Australia's outstanding race meeting of the year and is a major holiday and social event. The Davis Cup playoffs or finals often are held in Melbourne in December. The Australian Tennis Open is held in January. The Royal Agricultural Show is held in September. The annual Moomba carnival, celebrated each year in March, is sponsored by the City of Melbourne, with many varied exhibitions during a week-long program. Memorial events include observance of the battle of the Coral Sea in May and ANZAC Day in April.

Social Activities

Social activities vary according to responsibilities, desires and opportunities within a personal or family pattern.

The Australian-American Association (AAA)—Its aim is to promote close ties between Australians and

Americans. Coral Sea Week (now known as Australia-America Week) has been celebrated together for many years, either at balls, dinners, luncheons or all-day picnics. Other occasions follow a similar pattern.

The American Club of Victoria—Its principal purpose is to mark the main American holidays. It organizes for its members a Memorial Day Service at a church followed by a reception at the Consul General's residence. For Americans and their Australian guests, the Club arranges a Thanksgiving Dinner at a local hotel.

The American Women's Auxiliary to the Royal Children's Hospital—Its main objective is the raising of funds to support a ward, and to help pay for materials and equipment, in the Hospital. Members may also do volunteer work in the hospital canteen or with the children themselves. The Club also serves as a welcoming group for Americans coming into the community, particularly American businessmen's wives.

The Auxiliary is open primarily to women of the Consulate General. The main social activities of this group are monthly luncheons with speakers, a rummage sale once a year and a Fourth of July Ball (usually held on the 5th).

There are men's clubs in and around Melbourne; some offer honorary memberships. There are the usual service clubs for men as well.

Some Americans have joined the American Branch of the Australian Red Cross and some participate in the activities of the English Speaking Union. Melbourne also has Rotary, Lions, Toastmaster, Kiwanis, and Apex Clubs.

Perth

Perth, with a population of about 1,364,000 (1999 est.), is the capital of Western Australia, the largest of the Australian States.



View of Perth from King's Park.

Susan Rock. Reproduced by permission.

Perth entered into a stage of modern development during the economic expansion of the 1960s and early 1970s. Prior to then, Perth was one of the most isolated cities in the world, separated even from Australia's Federal capital by more than 2,100 miles. Road, rail, ship, and air services now provide a constant and quick interstate and international link. Modern communications and technology provide the instantaneous information demanded by a modern community.

Foreign capital, much of it from Japan, China, South East Asia, and the U.S., is spurring this economic growth and Perth has become a commercial and industrial complex in its own right. Perth's function as an administrative center for the vast hinterland remains all-important.

Perth is an attractive, modern city in the midst of residential expan-

sion. Large areas of natural bush have been bulldozed to meet the demands of growth, and freeways connect the towering office blocks of the central business district and the suburbs. Flanked by thousands of new homes, roads and highways radiate out from the city center. Attractive residential areas front the Swan River and the Indian Ocean.

White, sandy beaches are accessible from most parts of Perth.

All the consumer goods and the modern comforts of life are available in Perth, but they are expensive. Many goods are manufactured in the eastern States and reflect the high cross-country transport costs.

U.S. firms are well represented through branch offices, subsidiary companies and agencies. Their interest is primarily in the oil and

gas, and alumina mining areas. Approximately 7,000 Americans live in Western Australia.

Perth has one of the best climates in Australia. It is the sunniest of the State capitals, receiving an average of 8 hours sunshine a day. It has the wettest winters and the driest summers, with an average rainfall of 33 inches. Temperatures average about 73°F in summer and about 55°F in winter. In summer a number of days of above 100°F temperatures are to be expected, but low humidity and evening sea breezes make most summer nights comfortable. With winter rainfall and a lack of central heating, winter can feel chilly.

Food

Perth supermarkets are similar to their U.S. counterparts and are stocked with most varieties of food-stuffs required by the American consumer. Meats, fresh fruits, and

vegetables are plentiful and reasonably priced. Paper products and cleaning supplies are expensive.

Clothing

Perth is a relaxed city and clothing is similar to that of southern California. Sundresses, slacks, jeans, T-shirts, and shorts are all in evidence as are smart luncheon dresses, tailored suits, and, sometimes, hats. For work most men still wear coat and tie, even in hot weather. Evening attire is similarly varied, ranging from long gowns to short cocktail dresses.

Perth has a budding fashion industry. Clothing of all types, including many international brands, are available in Perth stores; however, the cost is greater and the selection smaller than in the U.S. The same is true for underwear and children's clothing.

Supplies and Services

Several large department stores in the downtown business district offer most goods found in U.S. department stores. Also, spacious suburban centers offer convenient shopping in air-conditioned malls. These shopping centers and downtown stores close at 5 pm on weeknights and Saturday, except Thursdays, on which there is "late-night shopping" until 9 pm. The downtown mall and larger suburban centers are open on Sundays. Convenience stores stay open longer but charge higher prices.

Stores are well stocked. With the growth of the State's population, more goods are being produced in western Australia instead of being shipped from eastern Australia or overseas. Consumer prices in Perth are higher than for the eastern U.S. and higher than the U.S. average.

Religious Activities

Religion in Perth is predominantly Christian. Of the population, 26 percent are Anglican, 25 percent Roman Catholic, and 5 percent Uniting. All churches hold regular services and Sunday school and offer religious instruction to their members. Judaism is the chief non-

Christian religion; the Jewish community is active. Recent immigration from Indochina, the Middle East, and the U.S. has broadened religious philosophies, there are now several Moslem mosques as well as churches of Seventh-day Adventists and the Latter-Day Saints.

Education

Educational opportunities, both formal and informal, are available to suit practically all interests. Four major universities provide tertiary and post graduate degrees. Technical, vocational and recreational learning centers abound as Perth services both the burgeoning population of Western Australia as well as several countries of Southeast Asia.

Perth churches play an important part in education and operate the major private schools.

Sports

Sporting facilities are excellent for tennis, golf, sailing, and all water sports. Horse racing, trotting, and dog racing are popular year round. Car racing, Australian rules football, and cricket are also popular spectator sports. Many sporting associations and public facilities are available for golf, tennis, lawn bowling, surfing, boating, and sailing. Membership is obtainable and inexpensive. Fishing, water skiing, biking, hiking, ten pin bowling, and rollerblading are also popular. Indoor rinks also make it possible to pursue ice skating and ice hockey. Baseball, softball, basketball, and soccer are also very popular.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Good highways can speed the motorist to most areas of the State. The West Australian outback has some magnificent and rugged scenery. With the onset of spring, the wildflowers bloom in abundance, blanketing the State in blossoms.

Entertainment

Entertainment facilities in Perth are much like those one would

encounter in a U.S. city of similar size. The library system consists of a well-stocked central library with numerous suburban branches. The State library also provides an information service.

Perth's principal museum, the Western Australian Museum, is devoted mainly to natural history, but it also has an interesting collection from pioneering days. It runs a children's center during the school holiday. The Western Australian Art Gallery has an interesting collection by many Australian artists. The city also has several private galleries. The port city of Fremantle has an excellent maritime museum.

Perth's concert hall and entertainment center attract artists of international renown. Excellent theaters on the University grounds as well as the refurbished His Majesty's Theater offer all forms of entertainment from classical to popular.

The city has five color TV stations, nine AM radio stations, and five FM stations. Numerous movie theaters show movies throughout the city and suburbs.

The Festival of Perth, held annually in February, attracts artists, plays, and exhibits from all over the world.

Social Activities

Western Australians are known for their friendliness. Sporting clubs and organizations such as Rotary and Lions offer excellent points of contact. The Australian-American Association and the American Women's Club provide opportunities for social involvement. Large organized social affairs are more formal than in the U.S. and long dresses or formal cocktail attire is worn.

The backyard barbecue is an institution in Perth because of the great weather and many invitations can be expected.

Sydney

In many ways Sydney is like San Francisco, with old homes perched

alongside modern apartment buildings on hills overlooking picturesque bays and coves. It has an international seaport with a scenic harbor, dominated by a famous bridge, and the world-famous opera house. In other ways, the city resembles Los Angeles, with its pleasant climate and informal outdoor life. The mean temperature in Sydney ranges from 56°F in winter to 74°F in summer.

Sydney is the capital of the State of New South Wales. It is also Australia's largest city (about 4 million people, 1999 est.), and is situated on the magnificent harbor of Port Jackson. It was the first European settlement in Australia, settled in 1788 as a penal colony. Sydney was named for Thomas Townsend, the first Viscount Sydney, Secretary of the Home Department, responsible for colonial affairs when New South Wales was founded.

The city grew rapidly with the arrival of free settlers; establishment of wool and wheat industries in New South Wales; gold rushes; building of road and rail networks focusing on Sydney Harbor; and the development of commerce, industry, and banking. The growth was largely unplanned, and the winding narrow streets and jumbled buildings add to Sydney's charm while aggravating traffic problems.

The city is built on an undulating low land south and west of Port Jackson and some steeply scarped sandstone plateaus north of the harbor and along the coast. The higher areas are 487–682 feet above sea level. The harbor has many bays, inlets, and coves with about 180 miles of shoreline. Most of the shoreline has been developed, but some areas have been set aside for parks, recreation areas, and reserves. Harbor Bridge, a single span steel arch known as the "coat hanger," and an underwater tunnel connect the north and south shores.

Food

As in Canberra, most foods are readily available. Supermarkets, as well as specialty shops, are found in

the city and suburbs. Some "American" food staples, such as Crisco, Bisquick, corn meal, and Mexican specialties, can occasionally be found in more expensive "international food" sections of stores.

Clothing

Sydney has a milder climate than its sister cities to the south. However, personnel often travel to the other areas of Australia. We suggest bringing some clothing suitable for tropical climates to the north and for the southern winters. For Sydney, clothing suitable for San Francisco is appropriate most of the year, though summers tend to be hotter and muggier.

Education

All public or government schools in Sydney are controlled by the New South Wales Department of Education. Non-government schools are usually church-sponsored, but they must follow courses and conform to the examinations of the State government system. Uniforms are usually required.

The school year begins in February and is divided into four terms; a break of approximately 2 weeks occurs between each term (April, July, September), with the long vacation (summer holidays) occurring in December/January. Both public and private schools follow this yearly pattern with only minor variations.

Grade placement is usually determined by the student's age, previous experience, and overall academic ability.

Free passes for use on public transport on buses and trains are provided for all children traveling more than 1 mile if they are attending the nearest appropriate school. This service is also provided to children attending private schools with no restriction on distance but with restrictions as to the outer limits on the transport system.

Sports

Sydney's outdoor sports facilities are equalled by few cities of its size

in the world. Beaches on the ocean north and south of the harbor entrance offer swimming, surfing, and beach sports from October through March. The harbors and rivers in the area are favorites for sailing and water skiing. The shark menace has been widely publicized, but no one has been attacked in the harbor for over 10 years, and beaches and offshore waters are patrolled.

Sydney is a sailor's paradise. The harbor is filled with small boats every weekend. Sailboats and power boats can be purchased locally, but prices are higher than in the U.S. prices.

Skiing is growing in popularity, though the season is limited to June-August and sometimes September. Ski resorts are 6 hours or more from Sydney by car. You can rent equipment.

The city is full of magnificent golf courses, both public and private, and tennis courts are numerous. Squash is a popular local pastime and squash courts are available at many clubs and at several large commercial facilities. The leading spectator sports are cricket and rugby football. Baseball also has been popular for many years, particularly in the western suburbs of the city, and a regular amateur league has teams throughout Australia. Basketball is growing rapidly in popularity. Indoor rinks also make it possible to pursue ice skating and ice hockey.

Hiking (bush walking) is popular, as is amateur prospecting in some of the old gold or opal fields in the interior of the State.

Saltwater fishing is good, and several streams and lakes offer freshwater fishing. Hunting most animals and birds is controlled, and hunters are often confronted by animal rights activists.

Touring and Outdoor Activities:

A number of pleasant picnic spots exist both within and near the city.

One of the favorites is the Royal National Park, about 30 miles south. Sydney has an excellent park system. Most suburbs have park and playground areas for children that are owned and controlled by local councils. You can reach the Sydney Zoological Gardens at the Taronga Park by car, bus, or ferry. The zoo, in a beautiful setting overlooking the harbor, is world famous for its collection of Australian fauna. A world-class aquarium is located at Darling Harbor, and another one in the North Shore suburb of Manly.

The Royal Botanic Gardens, Art Gallery of New South Wales, and the Australian Museum offer interesting and educational exhibits and are close to the city center. The magnificent Blue Mountains are less than a 2-hour drive to the west, and beaches on the south coast are popular vacation or weekend trips.

Entertainment

Sydney has many movie theaters, including large downtown and neighborhood first-run cinemas. Most films are English or American, but foreign-language films are also shown. Most films are seen here soon after release.

The legitimate theater retains its hold on the affection of Sydney-siders, and at least five or six stage productions are usually going on simultaneously. Productions include reviews and musicals, as well as drama and experimental plays. Some small, independent theaters in the suburbs have had successful productions and have become locally well known.

Australian ballet and opera companies have regular seasons in Sydney. Sydney's world-famous Opera House at Bennelong Point was opened by Queen Elizabeth on October 20, 1973. It contains concert halls, restaurants, and theaters, as well as the opera theater, and is the focal point for cultural entertainment in Sydney. Both the ballet and opera maintain international standards and have successfully tour abroad. Public support is wide-

spread and bookings should be made in advance. The Sydney Symphony Orchestra has a 6-month season and often has foreign guest soloists or conductors. World-class touring orchestras, chamber music groups, and soloists appear frequently.

Outdoor fairs include the Royal Easter Show and the Autumn Sheep Show. Other important events are the City of Sydney Festival in January, ANZAC Day Parade and commemoration ceremony in April, and the Australian-American Friendship Week in May. No unusual guidelines, etiquette requirements, or photographic restrictions apply to these activities.

Social Activities

Social contacts of Americans range from informal home visits to more formal meetings and an occasional full-dress ball. Except for small gatherings, however, few functions consist exclusively of Americans. Several Australian-American organizations are active in Sydney. The most prominent organization for promoting bilateral relations is the Australian-American Association (AAA), which sponsors an annual Friendship Week Ball, 4th of July activities and other social functions during the year.

The American Society and its affiliate, the American Women's Club, also have large and active memberships and welcome new arrivals to their ranks. The Society holds an Independence Day Celebration, an annual picnic, and other social events keyed to traditional American holidays, or to benefit worthy causes.

An American Legion chapter is active in Sydney. Another successful local organization is the American Club, a downtown eating club, a majority of whose members are now Australians.

The social club is a prominent feature of Sydney life. Clubs cover every form of activity from golf and tennis to lawn bowls, ethnic societies, and rugby league clubs. Since

slot machines are legal on club premises in New South Wales, many of the larger clubs have used this income to subsidize club activities and have low membership fees and lavish facilities—including indoor swimming pools, nightclubs, moderately priced meals, and such auxiliary activities as sports tournaments and charter group travel arrangements. Until recently, club life was predominantly a male phenomenon. But now women are admitted to full or associate membership in most institutions.

Sydney is a cosmopolitan city, and contacts with third-country nationals are frequent in the course of normal official or social activities.

Adelaide

Adelaide, founded in 1837, is the capital and principal city of South Australia. It was named for the consort of Britain's King William IV, and was the first city in Australia to be incorporated (1840). Now a thriving municipality of over 1 million inhabitants, it is a business and commercial center which supports a large export trade (Port Adelaide is only seven miles from the city), and which boasts a relatively new complex for the performing arts, the Adelaide Festival Centre. The Centre hosts Australia's premier performing arts festival. Adelaide is also the site of the annual Australian Formula One Grand Prix.

The city lies on the River Torrens, in an amphitheater of wooded hills. Its numerous parks and gardens provide the setting for an interesting mixture of colonial architecture and large, modern buildings. The University of Adelaide, more than a century old, is located here, as is Flinders University of South Australia, which was founded in 1966. Adelaide is noted for its many churches, including St. Peter's Anglican Cathedral. The South Australian Museum contains the world's largest collection of aboriginal artifacts.

One of the major tourist attractions in Adelaide is the huge Central



Sydney Opera House.

Susan Rock. Reproduced by permission.

Market, the largest produce market in the Southern Hemisphere. Shopping centers, where aboriginal arts and crafts may be purchased, and good hotels and restaurants have helped to increase business and tourism in the city. The South Australia Government Tourist Bureau conducts tours of the city and its environs and also of the Barossa Valley wine-producing district, where a vintage festival is held in odd-numbered years.

Warm-weather sports are particularly popular in Adelaide's climate. There are many cricket fields and tennis courts (Davis Cup matches are held here). Among the other popular sports are lawn bowls, golf, racing, water sports and, in the winter, football.

From Melbourne, the Great Ocean Road along the southern coast of Victoria to the west is a delightful way to get to South Australia, and on to Adelaide. Inland from the

cliffs and beaches are the rain forests of the Otway Range with their tall, stringy-bark eucalyptus trees and tree ferns. Over the South Australian border are volcanic lakes and limestone caves, with recent finds of extinct marsupial lions and giant kangaroos. The inland marshes are full of black swans, egrets, and ducks. The trip is fascinating, and lures many tourists to this part of the Australian continent.

Hobart (Tasmania)

Hobart is the capital of historic Tasmania, Australia's southernmost state. Named for Lord Hobart, a British colonial secretary, the city was known as Hobart Town for nearly 40 years after its incorporation in 1842. For a brief period, it also was called Hobarton. What is now the capital city originated as a penal colony on the site of one of the present suburbs, Risdon, but the settlement soon was moved across

the Derwent River. In 1812, it became the seat of state government.

The island state of Tasmania located about 150 miles to the south of Melbourne across the Bass Strait, is an outdoor adventurers dreamland. There are over 2000 km of walking tracks on the island and 18 national parks, with mountains, rivers and lakes that are never too far from the fabulous beaches on the coastline. The patient, observant hiker may get to see some of the abundant wildlife on Tasmania including wombats and wallabies, pademelons and platypus, kangaroos and quoll, and of course, the Tasmanian Devil. Fishing is plentiful and ocean life includes a large number of seals, dolphins and whales.

Dozens of guided and self-guided walking tours lead through Victorian-era streets and seaside towns to tell the stories and legends of the

earliest European settlers, most of whom were British convicts and the families of British security officials. Several prison buildings are now museums with artifacts, exhibits and presentations to share the history and experience of these people. Before the arrival of the British, however, Tasmanian Aborigines lived in isolation on the island for nearly 10,000 years. Their unique experience is shared at the Tiagarra Centre on Devonport's Bluff.

For a more refined experience, Tasmania has dozens of shopping markets that offer a variety of goods from antiques to arts and crafts. Excellent wines, cheeses, and chocolates, as well as local specialties such as leatherwood honey, are tempting treats. And in the evening, you can take in a concert at the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra's Federation Concert Hall.

The population of Tasmania is about 470,000 (2000 est.) Tasmania can be reached by plane or ferry from Melbourne.

Hobart is the home of the University of Tasmania and of the State Library, which houses an excellent museum and fine art galleries. There are many designated historic sites in the city, as well as botanical gardens of note.

Fishing, swimming, golf, lawn bowls, and squash are among the numerous sports available in this temperate climate. Spectator sports feature especially the annual Sydney-Hobart Yacht Race, originating in Sydney the day after Christmas. There is ample opportunity for entertainment in Hobart, which has a legal gambling casino, plus concerts, movies, legitimate theater, and a wealth of hotels and restaurants.

The metropolitan population of Hobart is over 194,000 (1999 est.).

OTHER CITIES

From its rough and tumble beginnings as a small desert town, **ALICE SPRINGS** has grown just enough to include all the modern facilities a traveler could want while keeping true to the rustic Outback heritage of the town. Alice Springs is located right in the center of Australia on the banks of the Todd River, which is usually dry. The second largest town in the Northern Territory, it is called the capital of the Outback with a population of over 27,000. It became most popular as a tourist site after the release of the 1956 film romance, *A Town Like Alice*.

Originally named Stuart, the town was founded in 1871 as construction began there for the overland telegraph station built to relay messages between Darwin and Adelaide. The waterhole located just east of the telegraph station buildings was named Alice Springs in honor of the wife of Sir Charles Todd, the Postmaster General of South Australia. The locals began to use the name for their town and officially renamed the place Alice Springs in 1933. The Alice Springs Telegraph Station and the waterhole are still popular sites to visit.

For those looking for a moderate outback adventure, Alice Springs offers a variety of opportunities to explore. Hikers will enjoy the Ayers Rock, a two-mile red monolith, and the nearby Olgas, a huge group of domes of lavender conglomerate rock. Overnight or weekly dude ranch trips out of Alice Springs are similar to those in the Western U.S. Camels are widely available for excursions or you may choose to tour the area from a hot air balloon. Visitors can stay at one of two major Caravan Parks, which offer accommodations that range from simple camp sites to deluxe villas with fully modern facilities.

The Alice Springs Desert Park is a combination national park, zoo, research center and aboriginal cultural center. The park offers 1.6 km

of trails through three typical desert habitats as well as a wide range of interactive exhibits and presentations designed to share an appreciation for the land and people of the Australian outback. The National Pioneer Women's Hall of Fame, featuring the accomplishments of women who made pioneering discoveries in all fields, is also located in Alice Springs.

If you're in Alice Springs in September, you won't want to miss the world famous Henley-on-Todd Regatta. The event attracts many local and international participants who have found ingenious ways to race their homemade boats on a river without any water.

Trips to Alice Springs should be in the winter months, since the dry center of Australia can be very hot in the summer.

Situated on the north coast near the Timor Sea, **DARWIN** is the capital of the Northern Territories. With roughly 88,000 residents (1999 est.), it has one of Australia's finest harbors and is one of the country's most modern cities. Darwin is the service center for the sparsely inhabited hinterland; the economy also relies on government business. This is a vital transportation and communications hub, served by an international airport. The area was founded in 1839 by a surveyor on the HMS Beagle, scientist Charles Darwin's (1809–1882) research ship. The expanding air service industry accounted for much of the area's growth in the 1930s. The Allied armies in Northern Australia were headquartered here during World War II, when Darwin was heavily damaged in bombing raids. A 1974 cyclone decimated the city, but it was rebuilt with government aid.

FREMANTLE, a suburb of Perth, is located on the Indian Ocean at the mouth of the Swan River in southwestern Australia. Founded in 1829, Fremantle is the terminus of the Trans-Australian railroad as well as the seaport for Perth. The city is a fishing and passenger port

and the chief commercial port in the area. Fruit, flower, wheat, and wool are exported, and steel, oil, and phosphates are imported. East Fremantle and North Fremantle are suburbs of the city which has a current population of more than 25,000. Fremantle gained worldwide recognition as the site of the 1987 America's Cup yachting race.

GEELONG, Victoria's second largest city, has an estimated population of over 156,000 (1999 est.). It is an important port, located on Corio Bay, 50 miles southwest of Melbourne. A large percentage of the nation's wool crop is marketed here; shipping and manufacturing are also major employers. Many schools and laboratories, as well as a large library, have made Geelong a center of education. The city set aside 40 percent of its area for parks, and lies in the middle of a coastal resort area. Geelong's name is taken from the Aboriginal *jillong*, meaning "the place of the native companion," a reference to a long-legged bird.

GOLD COAST, 50 miles south of Brisbane, is a resort complex that straddles the Queensland/New South Wales border. Building restrictions here were lifted in 1952, causing a massive construction boom. Beach resorts abound in Gold Coast, where the population of approximately 391,000 (1999 est.) expands dramatically at holidays. Tourist attractions include a fauna reserve and a bird sanctuary.

NEWCASTLE (formerly called King's Town) lies on the Tasman Sea, 100 miles northeast of Sydney. Iron and steel industries, mining, and textile manufactures are the main economic activities here. Newcastle was founded in the early 19th century as a penal settlement and became a city in 1885. The city has port facilities and a channel. The War Memorial Cultural Centre was established in the 1950s. Newcastle's current population is nearly 479,000 (1999 est.) and is Australia's sixth largest city.

The seaport of **WOLLONGONG** is 40 miles south of Sydney. With over

263,000 residents (1999 est.), this is the nucleus of the Illawarra dairy region. Bulli coal deposits have lured many heavy industries to the city, and the artificial harbor of Port Kembla is the home of a fishing fleet. Wollongong has road and rail connections to Sydney. The University of Wollongong and a technical college are located here.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Australia is a large, comparatively dry, and sparsely inhabited continent, almost as large as the 48 contiguous U.S. states. Australia, the only continent that consists of a single nation, is also the only inhabited continent which is isolated from all others (total coastline exceeds 22,000 miles). Average elevation is about 985 feet, which makes it the flattest continent on earth. This is among the prime reasons for sparse annual rainfall—16.5 inches, which is less than two-thirds the world average (26 inches). Further, the rain falls mainly on coastal regions: Forty percent of the surface gets less than 10 inches per year, and annual evaporation exceeds annual rainfall on about three-quarters of the land. Overall runoff is less than half that of the Mississippi basin; Australia has no navigable rivers of any commercial significance.

In general, the country is warmer than the U.S. (the northern one-third is in the tropics, the rest in the temperate zone). Temperature extremes are much less pronounced. Sydney's average daytime temperature is 59 degrees Fahrenheit in the coldest month (July), and 81 degrees in the warmest month (January).

Population

Most of Australia's 19.2 million people live in the south and southeast coastal areas (temperate zone). The

states of New South Wales and Victoria contain about 60 percent of the population. Australians are mainly city dwellers: about 63% percent reside in the eight capital cities, with about 38% in Sydney or Melbourne.

About 80% of Australians are of British or Irish descent. After World War II, Australia began to encourage immigration from other European countries also, and these immigrants and their descendants make up most of the balance. Approximately 23 percent of Australians were born overseas (9 percent in the UK, Ireland, or New Zealand), and about 20 percent to homes where English is not the dominant language. Immigration from Asia has increased in the last twenty years, especially from Vietnam, Cambodia, and China. Fifty percent of current immigrants come from Asia, and Asian-Australians are projected to account for 10 percent of the total population within a generation. In 1992, the population's annual rate of growth was estimated to be 1.37 percent; a little less than half of that stemmed from immigration. The government promotes pluralism, ethnic tolerance, and social diversity, describing this policy as multiculturalism.

Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders total about 260,000 (approximately 1.5 percent of the population). Most of them live in northern coastal regions and the interior, but there are also significant aboriginal communities in metropolitan Brisbane, Sydney, and other Australian cities.

Government

Australia is divided into six states and two territories: Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia, Western Australia, the Northern Territory, and the Australian Capital Territory (Canberra). All eight regional jurisdictions are represented in both houses of Parliament. Australia also governs external territories such as Norfolk Island in the Pacific (about 1000 miles northeast of Sydney), as

well as the Cocos (Keeling) and Christmas Islands in the Indian Ocean (about 1600 miles northwest of Perth).

In fiscal terms, Australian state and territorial governments mainly depend on grants from the federal government, for they do not tax personal incomes or corporate profits. Nevertheless, the states and territories have broader administrative authority than states of the U.S., for they manage various functions that Americans usually associate with local government (e.g., police, schools, and hospitals). In Australia, local governments provide relatively minor services (e.g., water supply, recreation facilities).

Canberra, the capital, is about 180 miles southwest of Sydney. During nation-building ferment of the 1890s, it became clear that partisans of Sydney and Melbourne could not reach agreement on either city as the permanent capital. The site of Canberra, the compromise, was selected after the six states federated in 1901. Chicago architect Walter Burley Griffin designed the basic plans, and construction started in 1913.

The Commonwealth (federal) government and the six state governments operate under written constitutions which mainly draw on the British (Westminster) tradition of a Cabinet government that is responsible to a majority in Parliament's lower chamber, the House of Representatives. The federal constitution, however, also contains some elements that resemble American practice (e.g., a Senate in which each state has equal representation).

The head of state is Queen Elizabeth II, the reigning British monarch, but she exercises her functions through personal representatives living in Australia (i.e., the Governor-General of Australia and the Governors of the six states). All seven are Australian citizens and are appointed at the recommendation of the respective head of government (i.e., the Prime Minister or

the Premier of a state). Most of their duties are ceremonial, and they mainly act on the advice of Cabinet ministers. Democratically elected representatives thus exercise effective rule, and in recent years there has been considerable debate about proposals to abolish the monarchy and establish a republic.

Voting is compulsory, and seats in the 147-member federal House of Representatives are allotted to the states and territories according to population. Members of the House are elected to three-year terms from specific "divisions" (districts) by means of a preferential voting system, but the Prime Minister may recommend new national elections before the three years have elapsed. (The Governor-General traditionally follows such advice.)

The Prime Minister and other Cabinet ministers are all serving members of Parliament. By tradition, most are members of the House of Representatives, which is the focus of intense debates and a highly structured competition that pits the government against the opposition. Party discipline is strict; almost all controversial proposals are debated and enacted along party lines. It is rare for a member to cross the floor (i.e., vote against party views), and anyone who does so risks expulsion from the party or rejection for "preselection" in the next electoral cycle. (Australia does not have primary elections. A candidate for the House of Representatives is nominated during a meeting of the party's local members.)

Each of the six states elects 12 federal Senators who serve for six years, but their terms overlap—so that half these seats are at issue every three years. In addition, each of the two territories elects two Senators who serve three-year terms. The upper house thus has 76 members in all.

Drafters of the constitution intended that the Senate mainly serve to represent the states and protect their rights. But because of strict party discipline and complex

electoral methods—at-large voting involving proportional "quotas" and sequential tallies that take account of second and subsequent preferences marked on the ballot—Senators mainly represent the interests and policies of political parties, with relatively minor variations that attest to regional concerns. Senators may serve as ministers, and in recent years about one-third of the overall number have come from the upper house.

The Senate cannot originate or amend tax or expenditure bills, but has the constitutional authority to reject them or propose changes. In all other respects, the two houses have equal standing. Under complex conditions specified in the federal constitution—in essence, extended deadlock between the House and Senate—both houses may be dissolved simultaneously, so that ensuing national elections would involve all seats in Parliament. This is unusual and has occurred only six times.

All major parties support the U.S.-Australia alliance and stress the importance of close relations between Australia and the United States. This long-standing and stable pattern is essentially unaffected by the outcome of national elections.

The governing Australian Labor Party (ALP), which maintains close ties to the trade union movement, has held office since 1983. During that period, the government has carried out major restructuring of the economy (e.g., floating the Australian dollar, cutting tariffs by substantial amounts, reducing and simplifying regulations that affect business). Liberalizing trade and enhancing economic integration with Asia-Pacific countries are major tenets of the ALP.

The opposition Liberal-National Coalition agrees with the ALP on the need to liberalize trade and enhance economic ties, and it likewise favors a free-market approach to economic growth. The Coalition, however, stresses individual rights, personal autonomy, and managerial

initiative, while favoring a more rapid shift toward enterprise contracts that would replace detailed federal and state regulations on pay levels and fringe benefits. Its junior partner, the National Party (formerly called the Country Party), is closely associated with conservative social values and the interests of farmers.

Two minor parties—the Australian Democrats and the Western Australia “Greens”—are represented only in the Senate but have political and media effects which are disproportionate to their numbers. The Democrats tend to be somewhat to the left of Labor, stressing good government, public-sector services, and social equality. The Western Australia “Greens” take a special interest in environmental matters and often express concern about the effect of large social institutions (e.g., government bodies, corporations, and trade unions) on individuals and local communities.

The High Court of Australia equates to the U.S. Supreme Court. It has the power of constitutional review, as well as general appellate jurisdiction over other federal courts and the courts of the various states. The federal court system is less extensive than in the U.S., for Parliament has invested state courts with substantial authority to enforce federal statutes.

Arts, Science, and Education

Education is compulsory through age 15. Reflecting the government’s drive to expand educational access, the number of Australians finishing high school has risen from 34 percent in 1983 to over 70 percent today. Approximately 66 percent of students attend government schools; the rest attend private schools. The number of students completing the Australian equivalent of a college education (i.e., at a university, teachers’ college, college of advanced education or technical school) is, growing annually. The Australian government supports

two significant organizations that encourage Australian and American scholarship and academic exchanges: the Australian Fulbright Commission and the Australian Centre for American Studies.

In science, Australia holds a significant place in radio astronomy, geology and marine sciences. Its observatories constitute the principal center of radio astronomy research in the Southern Hemisphere. It is also an important base for monitoring U.S. space flights and satellites with two critical NASA Space Tracking Stations. With the Great Barrier Reef on the country’s northeast coast, Kakadu National Park in the far north, and the unusual array of flora and fauna, Australia is considered by many naturalists and environmentalists to be a giant ecological laboratory. Australia’s proximity to Antarctica has also fostered considerable scientific research in the area of the South Pole.

Private and community events organizers, as well as the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), annually bring to Australia internationally-acclaimed performing artists who tour Australia’s principal cities. The major cities have symphony orchestras and lively professional theaters with productions ranging from the classics to the avant garde. National and foreign opera, ballet and theater companies perform in sites outside their headquarter cities on a regular touring basis. Some Australian companies such as the Australian National Ballet have received international acclaim.

Australia’s art scene is dynamic. Government-supported galleries in Canberra and the state capitals have important collections of Australian and overseas artists. Commercial galleries in the larger cities display top-quality work as well. Traditional and contemporary aboriginal art is popular with local and foreign collectors. Adelaide, Perth, Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra host annual or biennial arts festivals. They include all of the arts

and attract world-famous writers, musicians, singers, actors and dancers. Activities in the arts and politics are well-covered by newspapers and magazines. Australia’s publishing scene is lively. Novels, travel books and more “academic” publications by local authors are plentiful. Bookshops are usually well stocked, yet books, even paperbacks, are substantially more expensive than in the U.S. because of Australian arrangements with British publishers.

Commerce and Industry

Australia’s free enterprise economy combines a strong private sector with a relatively larger sector of state-owned or licensed businesses than is the case in the U.S. Railroads, utilities and many services are owned by state and federal governments. The push towards micro-economic reform and increased competition, however, has seen a gradual shift towards privatization of many of these services. For example, while the major telecommunications operator, Telecom, is government owned, recent deregulation of the market has seen two other operators take a significant market share. Deregulation of the airlines in 1990 has resulted in a major industry reshuffle. Ansett and Qantas (which took over former domestic-only carrier Australian Airlines in 1993) now compete directly both domestically and internationally, resulting in less expensive fares and greater services than previously. Nevertheless, airline prices still remain considerably higher than in the U.S. The privatization of QANTAS is now being completed through share offering. Other utilities and services (such as the natural gas infrastructure and the major airports) are subjects of the government’s extensive privatization plans.

Base wages are determined by a federal Industrial Relations Commission and, increasingly, by enterprise (collective) bargaining at the workplace level. After peaking at 12 per-

cent during 1990-91 recession unemployment is currently declining (6.4% percent in 2000).

A decreasing number of agricultural products are subject to marketing controls or stabilization arrangements. Australian agriculture is highly mechanized and efficient. It is based mainly on winter grains and extensive livestock ranching, with a limited acreage of row crops. The main agricultural products are wool, wheat, and meat, although sugar, dairy products, cotton and fruit, are also important. Livestock, which includes roughly 117 million sheep, holds greater relative importance in Australia than in the U.S.

In 2000, cattle prices increased by about 22% and were projected to continue to increase by about 6% for 2001 and 2002. In the same year, wool prices increased by about 21% high. Export income from wool accounts for about 6% of total export earnings (1994 data; in 1953 the figure was 50 percent). About one-third of world supply of wool is produced in Australia.

Distance, sparse population, and lack of navigable rivers make overland and air transportation vital. Australia has an extensive road and rail infrastructure network, relative to the population, with major arterial routes between each state capital (regional roads are of variable quality). Air transport, including air freight, has expanded into a leading industry: Australia leads the world in freight-ton miles per capita and is second only to the U.S. in passenger miles per capita.

Australia depends largely on ocean transport for bulk export, with an array of modern, deep water ports to handle its important minerals export trade. Significant reforms of labor practices over the past years have resulted in quicker ship turnaround times and more efficient stevedoring methods, but most industry groups argue that further reforms are necessary. International shipping is provided largely by foreign-owned lines, which contributes to Australia's high balance



Hobart Harbor and wharf.

Susan Rock. Reproduced by permission.

of payments net services deficit. Sea ports are well integrated with land transportation infrastructure.

Australia ranks among the world's leading trading nations, even though it has a relatively small population of only 19.2 million people. Primary products comprise about 60 percent of total merchandise exports. Of that, minerals and fuels account for 28 percent, and agricultural goods (both processed and unprocessed), around 30 percent. But the real growth sector is in elaborately transformed manufactures, which formerly made up an almost negligible percentage of Australia's merchandise exports.

While Australia is still considered a large importer of transformed goods and an exporter of primary commodities, its contribution to the global manufactures market is becoming significant.

Expansion of the minerals industry has been rapid over the past decade, despite uncertain minerals prices. Australia is the world's largest exporter of coal and continues to be a major player in the liquefied natural gas and iron ore markets—Japan is Australia's largest coal and iron ore market, for use in Japanese steel mills. Production of most other

metals, including gold, the titanium minerals and alumina, is major—in some cases world-leading.

Shifts in Australia's overseas trade pattern have occurred since World War II. The U.K. now is much less important to Australia as a trading partner than formerly. Asian countries are now the prominent markets for Australian products and accept 60 percent of merchandise exports. Japan is Australia's number one export market, taking 25 percent of merchandise exports in 1994 (mainly coal, iron ore, meat and gold). The U.S. is Australia's primary import source, with merchandise imports totalling almost \$11 billion in 1994 (22 percent of total import value—this compares to 12 percent in 1955). Australian exports to the U.S. were worth \$3.4 billion in 1994. The U.S. is the only major trading nation to consistently hold a bilateral trade surplus with Australia.

Australia exports a wide range of goods to the U.S. Major categories include beef, aircraft and associated equipment, computers and parts, and crude petroleum and oils. Major imports from the U.S. are computers, aircraft and equipment, measuring and checking equipment and telecommunications equipment.

The latter category represents a growing business opportunity for U.S. exporters, as Australia is currently experiencing a boom in mobile telecommunications, along with the start-up of pay-TV services.

Historically, Australia relied on high tariffs to protect domestic industry. In addition, special restrictions have applied to dairy and some other agricultural products, as well as to textiles, clothing, footwear and automobiles. The current Labor government has set about reducing tariffs and non-tariff barriers to increase Australia's integration into the global trading arena. Australia has petitioned the U.S. to liberalize its restrictions on the entry of Australian meat, steel and sugar. The Australian government and rural organizations continue to voice their displeasure over the U.S. Export Enhancement Program (EEP) and the Dairy Export Incentive Program (DEIP).

The Australian government has established foreign investment guidelines that encourage inward investment. Restrictions on foreign investment remain in mining, urban real estate, the media and civil aviation. In the natural resource sector, the government requires foreign investors to give Australian companies the opportunity to participate in major projects, normally requiring that at least 50 percent Australian equity and 50 percent of board-voting strength be held by Australian interests. In other areas, nonresidents, foreign-controlled businesses, and Australian companies in which foreign interests have a substantial shareholding, must notify the government before acquiring a substantial interest in an Australian company.

Around 30 percent of direct foreign investment stock in Australia comes from the U.S. U.S. investment is particularly prominent in autos, petroleum and minerals development, agricultural machines, construction and earthmoving equipment, chemicals, food processing, and oil refining. Australia is the

fourth most important country for direct investment from the U.S., after Canada, the U.K., and Germany.

Australia's economy definitely looks promising. Throughout the decade of the 1990s, the country boasted an annual economic growth rate of about 4% per year, the second-fastest rate in the developed world (behind Ireland). Which has placed the economy at the best it's been in over thirty years.

The July 2000 introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) seemed to cause a decrease in the construction industry, but over the course of a year, the service sectors reported strong growth (e.g. communications, 8 percent; property/business services 9 percent, finance services 5 percent) as did mining (10 percent), metal products (7 percent) and non-metallic mineral products (24 percent). The 10% GST is levied on most goods and services (with the exception of basic foods, education, health, and some other sectors). Several other sales taxes were abolished with the acceptance of the GST. The overall effect of these changes seems to have been to raise the inflation rate from its average 2.5% to 6% at the end of 2000. However, the rate is expected to return to normal by the end of 2001.

Transportation

Local

Bus service in Canberra is good, though limited in evenings and on weekends and holidays. Other major cities have a good system of commuter trains, buses, streetcars, and harbor ferries. Public transportation is efficient though crowded during rush hours.

Taxi

Taxi service in all major cities is good. Tipping is not expected unless the driver helps with baggage. Rent-a-car services are available in all cities. Rates are higher than those in the US. Railway porters have a set charge for each piece of luggage

handled, varying slightly from city to city.

Regional

Australia's size makes air travel the most convenient method of in-country travel. Several international airlines operate regularly in and out of Australia. There is an extensive but expensive domestic air network with an impressive safety record.

Numerous foreign shippers call at various ports. All State capitals are on the coast and most overseas liners can berth within 1 mile of the business district.

Rail service is good between major cities but other rail routes are erratic. Bus service is available between most cities and is less expensive than either air or rail.

Road conditions in Australia vary greatly. Few four-lane highways exist, and these are mainly for short stretches on the approaches to the larger cities. Most highways typically are two-lane asphalt or crushed stone; some have a third lane for passing on hills and other dangerous points. Country and secondary roads often are unsurfaced and become impassable after heavy rains.

Communications

Telephone

Telephone service within Australia and worldwide is excellent. An Australia-to-U.S. call is easy to place. Direct dialing and itemized billing are available but must be requested when ordering telephone service as they are not automatically installed. Fax facilities are excellent.

It is not advisable to have cordless/cellular phones in personal effects as they may be confiscated by Australian Customs. Phones coming into Australia must be registered with Telecom before entering Australia. Permits are very expensive.

Radio and TV

AM and FM radio stations reach the entire country. Shortwave broadcasts, including VOA, can be picked up but reception is unreliable. TV programs are similar to those in the U.S. with many American programs and films shown. All TV channels broadcast in color using the PAL system which means that U.S. made TVs cannot be used without modification. TV modification from NTSC (U.S.) to PAL is expensive, not always satisfactory, and will render the set unusable in the U.S. until it is converted back to NTSC.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

Australia's metropolitan press consist of two daily papers in Sydney and two in Melbourne; one each in Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra, Hobart and Perth; and two national daily newspapers. Each state capital has at least one Sunday paper. Many daily papers are published in provincial areas. Triweeklies, biweeklies and weeklies are published in other cities and towns throughout the country. Australia has a flourishing periodical press. U.S. newspapers are not available locally; however, *USA Today*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *International Herald Tribune* are available at a limited number of news agents.

Newsstands carry *Time Australia*, the Asia-Pacific edition of *Time*, as well as *Who* magazine (People). *Newsweek* and *Fortune* have been incorporated as part of the *Bulletin* magazine. Numerous bookstores in each capital city carry such American magazines as *Fortune*, *Saturday Review*, *Scientific American*, *Harper's Bazaar*, the *New Yorker*, the *New Leader* and European magazines such as *Paris Match*, *Realities*, *Punch*, the *Observer*, the *New Statesman* and *Encounter*. Airmail delivery or locally printed editions of the more popular magazines listed above means that issues are up to date. Subscriptions normally would be necessary for only the specialized publications.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

Also readily available are well-qualified doctors, surgeons, and specialists as well as good hospitals and laboratory facilities. It is not necessary to go outside Australia for medical care except in rare instances which require a trip to a specialist in the US.

Canberra has one general hospital, one Catholic hospital, and one private hospital which cater to all sections of the community. They are well equipped and provide the usual pathology and X-ray services and outpatient care. The city has many general practitioners and a variety of specialists. Good dentists, several opticians and ophthalmologists are available. Dental fees vary with the type of work required. Laboratory fees are expensive.

State capitals generally have several large and well-equipped hospitals. Many excellent doctors, surgeons, and specialists of all kinds practice in these cities. Competent oculists and opticians are readily available although eyeglasses, lenses and contact lenses are more expensive than in the U.S. All residential areas have a large number of general practitioners competent to handle all general ills not requiring a specialist. Gynecologists and pediatricians are excellent. Hospital accommodations are sometimes limited and, except for emergency care, should be reserved as far in advance as possible. Dentists use modern methods and equipment. Good orthodontic, periodontic and endodontic care are available. Pharmaceutical services are provided by chemist shops (drugstores) in all suburban and city shopping areas. Chemist shops are well stocked with prescription and patent medicines, and some provide 24 hour service and free delivery.

Community Health

No unusual health problems or hazards exist. Sewage and garbage disposal services are similar to those in

the U.S.; incinerators are used in most large apartment buildings. Water supply is ample for household use and normally enough for watering lawns. Water is soft and safe (drawn from a mountain reservoir in the mountains near Canberra) and is chlorinated and fluoridated. Safe pasteurized and homogenized milk is available.

Flies are pests throughout Australia in warm weather. In midsummer, the native bush fly is a constant annoyance outdoors, but it disappears in cold weather. People with gardens find snails and slugs a great nuisance. Zipper type garment bags are useful to protect fine and seldom-worn clothing from moths and silverfish.

Preventive Measures

No serious endemic diseases exist and no special health precautions are necessary. Sabin polio vaccine is available; take the series either before or after arrival, especially children under 2 years, as well as a measles, mumps, and rubella shots. The usual children's diseases (measles, mumps, chickenpox) occasionally reach epidemic proportions. Mild outbreaks of influenza, gastroenteritis, and other seasonal diseases are common. Sinusitis, colds, and other minor respiratory illnesses, as well as asthma and allergies, are common. Children should be immunized against diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, polio, measles, mumps, rubella and Haemophilus influenza B. Adults should keep tetanus and booster shots current. Yellow fever immunizations are currently required for personnel who have previously resided in tropical Africa or Brazil. No unusual health hazards exist. No known cases of rabies have occurred in Australia in recent years.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Australia is served by a number of airlines including United which

flies daily nonstop from the U.S. West Coast. Travelers must use the airline that holds the appropriate city-pair contract fare. Flying time for the roughly 7,000-mile nonstop trip from the west coast is about 14 hours.

U.S. citizens may travel to Australia on a valid U.S. passport with an Australian visa or, if eligible, on a valid U.S. passport and an Electronic Travel Authority (ETA), which replaces a visa and allows a stay of up to three months. The ETA is free of charge and is available from airlines and many travel agents. American citizens who overstay their ETA or visa, even for short periods, may be subject to detention and removal. More information about the ETA and entry requirements may be obtained from the Embassy of Australia at 1601 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036, telephone (202) 797-3000, via the Australian Embassy home page on the Internet at <http://www.austemb.org/>, or from the Australian Consulate General in Los Angeles, tel (310) 229-4840.

Information on vaccinations and other health precautions may be obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's hotline for international travelers at 1-877-FYI-TRIP (1-877-394-8747); fax 1-888-CDC-FAXX (1-888-232-3299), or via CDC's Internet site at <http://www.cdc.gov>.

Australian customs authorities enforce very strict regulations concerning the temporary importation from all countries of items such as agricultural and wood products, as well as very strict quarantine standards for other products, animals and pets. It is advisable to contact the Embassy of Australia in Washington or one of Australia's consulates in the United States for specific information regarding customs requirements, or see <http://www.aqis.gov.au>.

Americans living in or visiting Australia are encouraged to register at the nearest U.S. consulate and obtain updated information on

travel and security within Australia.

The U.S. Embassy in Canberra is located at Moonah Place, Yarralumla, A.C.T. 2600, telephone (61)(2) 6214-5600, fax (61)(2) 6273-3191, home page <http://usembassy-australia.state.gov>.

NOTE: Registration, passports, and other routine citizen services for Canberra and the rest of the Australian Capital Territory (A.C.T.) are provided by the U.S. Consulate in Sydney (please see contact information below). The Embassy may be contacted for emergency services (i.e. the arrest, death or serious injury of American citizens) within the ACT or Queanbeyan.

The U.S. Consulate General in Sydney serves New South Wales, Queensland, and the Australian Capital Territory and is located on Level 59, MLC Centre, 19-29 Martin Place, Sydney NSW 2000, telephone (61)(2) 9373-9200, fax (61)(2) 9373-9184, home page <http://usembassy-australia.state.gov/sydney/>.

The U.S. Consulate General in Melbourne serves Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia, and the Northern Territory and is located at 553 St. Kilda Road, P.O. Box 6722, Melbourne Vic 3004, telephone (61)(3) 9526-5900, fax (61)(3) 9525-0769, home page <http://usembassy-australia.state.gov/melbourne/>.

The U.S. Consulate General in Perth serves Western Australia and is located on Level 13, 16 St. Georges Terrace, Perth WA 6000, telephone (61)(8) 9202-1224, fax (61)(8) 9231-9444, home page <http://usembassy-australia.state.gov/perth/>.

You can import dogs and cats to Australia from the U.K. (including the Channel Island, Northern Ireland, and the Isle of Man), the Irish Republic, Hawaii, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Norfolk Island, and New Zealand without major difficulty. In all cases, animals must have been solely in the country of export for 6 months before export (or since

birth) and during that period must not have been in an port quarantine kennel. They must be accompanied by prescribed documents, including health certificates.

Animals from other areas can also be imported; however, the owner must comply with a lengthy and costly quarantine period.

Charges are made for inspection of animals on arrival in Australia and for accommodation in kennels at quarantine stations. These charges are reviewed periodically. All quarantine regulations are rigidly enforced.

Exporting of Wild Birds: Persons wishing to import their pet birds to the U.S. should be aware of the Wild Bird Conservations Act which limits imports of exotic bird species to ensure their populations are not harmed by trade, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture quarantine requirements.

Individuals who reside outside the U.S. continuously for at least one year may import a maximum of two pet birds (not on endangered species list), per year.

Arrangements for 30 day quarantine of pet birds into the U.S. may be made through the Agriculture Section.

Australian and American dollars may be freely exchanged. However, under the Australian banking (foreign exchange) regulations, a person departing from Australia is allowed to take only A\$250 in notes, A\$5 in coins and the equivalent of A\$250 in foreign currency notes. Any excess can be arranged through banking facilities by letters of credit, travelers checks, or drafts. The rate of exchange fluctuates slightly from day to day.

These accounts are freely convertible into U.S. dollar drafts or travelers checks. Bank credit cards are available and useful, particularly when traveling within the country. Employees who obtain bank savings accounts or other investments may

be subject to Australian income taxes on the income earned from such deposits. Contact the Financial Management Office or Administrative Office for more information.

No restrictions exist on bringing dollar currency or travelers checks into Australia. U.S. currency and checks drawn on American banks are freely negotiable.

Australia uses the metric system.

Disaster Preparedness

Australia is located in an area of low seismic activity. Although the probability of a major earthquake occurring during an individual trip is remote, earthquakes can and do occur. General information about natural disaster preparedness is available via the Internet at <http://travel.state.gov/crisismg.html>, and from the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) at <http://www.fema.gov>

	Celebrated (except Perth)*
Aug. 31	White Rose Day (memorial for Princess Diana)
Sept. 1	Wattle Day
Sept. 3	Flag Day
Oct. (1st Mon)	Queen's Birthday Celebrated (Perth)*
Oct. (1st Mon)	Labor Day (Canberra and Sydney)*
Nov. (1st Tues)	Melbourne Cup Day (Melbourne)*
Nov. 11	Remembrance Day
Dec. 25	Christmas Day
Dec. 26	Boxing Day
Dec. 31	New Year's Eve
	*variable

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LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan. 1	New Year's Day
Jan. 26	Australia Day
Mar. (1st Mon)	Labor Day (Perth)*
Mar. (2nd Mon)	Labor Day (Melbourne)*
Mar. (3rd Mon)	Canberra Day (Canberra)*
Mar/Apr.	Good Friday*
Mar/Apr.	Easter Saturday*
Mar/Apr.	Easter Monday*
Apr. 25	ANZAC Day
May 1	May Day
May/June	Corpus Christi*
June (1st Mon)	Foundation Day*
June (2nd Mon)	Queen's Birthday

RECOMMENDED READING

These titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country. The Department of State does not endorse unofficial publications.

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AZERBAIJAN

Republic of Azerbaijan

Major City:

Baku

Other Cities:

Gyandzha, Mingechaur, Nakhichevan, Shemakha, Sumgait

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated August 1994. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

The Republic of **AZERBAIJAN** declared its independence from the former Soviet Union on August 30, 1991. Formerly known as the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic, its independence was recognized by the United States on December 25, 1991. The country administers the Nakhichetan Autonomous Republic, which has an Azerbaijan ethnic majority but is separated from the rest of Azerbaijan by Armenia. It also administers the Nagorno-Karabakh region, which is predominately Christian Armenian but is within Azerbaijan's borders. Ongoing civil strife between Armenia and Azer-

baijan over control of Nagorno-Karabakh has, at times, turned violent.

MAJOR CITY

Baku

Baku (also spelled Baky), with over 1.7 million residents (1997 est.), is the capital of Azerbaijan. Located on the western shore of the Caspian Sea, Baku is the country's largest city, chief port, and main industrial center. Oil, first discovered in the eighth century, is the basis of Baku's economy. The oil field here was the world's largest in the early 1900s and, until the 1940s, was the Soviet Union's largest. Although Baku's oil field has been all but exhausted, drilling continues in the surrounding areas, as well as offshore. Pipelines connect these areas with Baku's oil refinery and processing plants. Other industries include shipbuilding, the manufacture of oil industry equipment, and electrical machinery.

Baku traces its history back to at least 885 A.D., but it is probable, based on archaeological evidence, that the area was inhabited several

hundred years before Christ. Peter the Great conquered it in 1723, but 12 years later it was returned to Persia. In 1806, Russia managed to gain control and, in 1920, Baku became the capital of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic.

Recreation and Entertainment

The Caucasus region, with its mountainous terrain, offers many winter sports. Fishing and swimming are popular, although some areas along the Caspian Sea have suffered considerable environmental damage from the exploration of offshore oil and gas reserves. Sihov Beach is popular with Baku residents. A trip to scenic Lake Gyogyol, in the mountains of southwest Azerbaijan, is well worth the time. This resort area is located at 4,500 feet above sea level.

Visits to the nearby wine growing regions and to Lenkoran, a subtropical city with experimental gardens, are possible from Baku. About 44 miles from Baku is the Kobustan Museum-Reserve where caves used by man 10,000 years ago can be visited. Cave drawings can be seen.

Baku, built on a hillside overlooking the Bay of Baku, has an attractive waterfront park. Restaurants, tea

houses, sports facilities, and an open-air theater are found there. A ride on the funicular (cable railway) to the highest location in the city, Kirov Monument, gives the visitor a view of the entire city and bay.

The picturesque old town, or castle district, forms the core of Baku. The district features the fortress of Icheri-Shekher with its narrow streets and old buildings. Icheri-Shekher's walls still survive, as does the 12th century tower of Kyz-Kalasy (Maiden's Tower). Also in this area is the museum Shirván-Sháh's, a former palace, part of which was built in the 11th century. The oldest religious site, the Synyk-Kala Minaret and Mosque, also dates from the 11th century.

Baku is Azerbaijan's major cultural and educational center. The city has several museums; the Azerbaijan State Art Museum, with 7,000 exhibits; the Academy of Sciences' Museum of the History of Azerbaijan, which contains 120,000 displays on the history of the Azerbaijani people; and the State Museum of Azerbaijan, which specializes in Azerbaijani literature. The Museum of Azerbaijani Carpets and Applied Folk Art has exhibits featuring carpets, embroidery, ceramics, jewelry, and other related art.

Music has played an important role in Azerbaijani life. Opera and ballet performances are popular and are staged throughout the year by the Mizra Akhundov Opera and Ballet Theatre, the Muslim Magomayev Philharmonic, the Samed Vurgun Russian Drama Theatre, and the State Puppet Theatre.

Transportation

Roads are extremely poor in Baku. Driving hazards such as open manholes, debris, and potholes are common. Drivers pay little heed to traffic regulations, signals, lanes, or other drivers. Drivers often travel at extremely high rates of speed and accidents are frequent. Driving within Baku should be considered

extremely hazardous. Outside of the city, where roads are present, conditions are similar. They are often in poor repair, unlit, and lack lane-marking, traffic signs, and warnings. Many rural roads are unpaved and rarely traveled.

OTHER CITIES

GYANDZHA, formerly known as Kirovabad and Yelizavetpol, is located along the Gyandzha River in western Azerbaijan. The city has a population of 294,000 (1997 est.) and is the country's second largest city. Gyandzha was established in the fifth or sixth century, but was destroyed by an earthquake in 1139 and rebuilt four miles east of the original settlement. Surrounded by a fertile farming area, the city has several industries that are agriculture-related. Other industries include the manufacture of machinery and instruments. Agricultural and teacher-training institutes are located here.

MINGECHAUR, located in the central part of the country, has 97,000 residents (1997 est.). The Mingechaur Reservoir, built in 1953 on the Kura River, provides hydroelectric power and water for irrigation. The city's major industry is a large cotton textile mill.

NAKHICHEVAN, with a population of 60,000, is the capital of the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic. According to Armenian lore, the city was founded by Noah. Various archaeologists have dated the city back to 1500 B.C. Nakhichevan was once a noted trade and handicrafts center, but now is known for its wine, dairy products, furniture, and leather.

The town of **SHEMAKHA** is about 80 miles west of Baku in the foothills of the Caucasus. It served as a major trading center and the capital of the Shivran shahs before they moved to Baku. Earthquakes have destroyed many historic sites in

Shemakha, but visitors can still see the Seven Domes Royal Mausoleum (Yeddi Gumbez), which served as a burial place for royalty, and the Djuma Mosque, which was built some time in the 10th century. The ruins of the Guistan fortress, from about the 11th or 12th century can be seen as well. Shemakha was once a major stop on the Silk Road and is still well-known for its carpet industry. Demonstrations of traditional weaving techniques are now presented to visitors at the modern carpet-weaving factory.

SUMGAI is 22 miles northwest of Baku. An industrial center specializing in chemicals and metals, the city has numerous factories. Its industries produce aluminum, synthetic rubber, fertilizers, detergents, petrochemicals, and steel-related products. Sumgait's population is 273,000 (1997 est.).

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Located in eastern Transcaucasia, the Republic of Azerbaijan is slightly larger than Maine and contains 33,744 square miles. Its borders include Russia and Georgia on the north, Iran on the south, Armenia on the west, and the Caspian Sea on the east.

The Caucasus Mountains form a natural northern border. Almost half of the country consists of lowlands, some of which are below sea level. The two main rivers are the Kura, which flows from the northwest to the Caspian Sea, and its tributary, Araks, which flows along Azerbaijan's border with Iran. Much of the farmland (70 percent) is irrigated.

Central and eastern Azerbaijan has a dry, subtropical climate with mild winters and long, hot summers. The

average summer temperature in Baku is 81°F; January temperatures average 34°F. The southeastern section of the country has a humid subtropical climate. Cold winters and hot, dry summers are characteristic of the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic. Heavy snowfalls, making travel impossible for three or four months of the year, are common in the more mountainous areas during winter.

Population

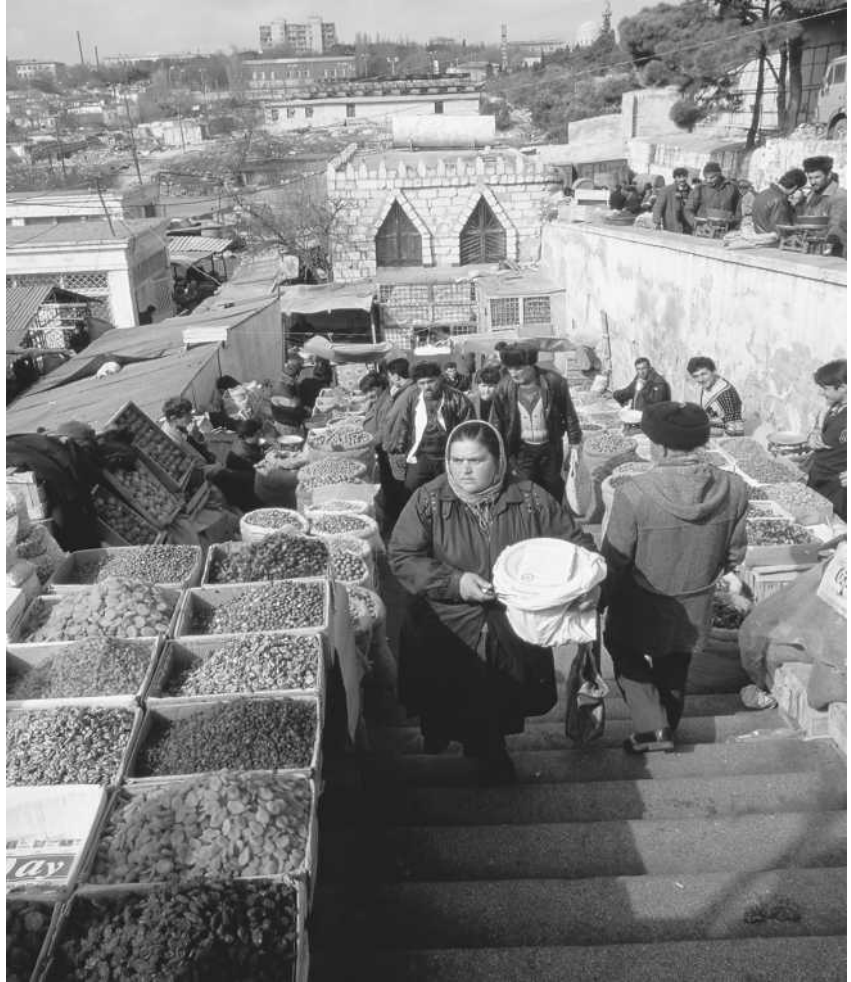
Azerbaijan's population is estimated at 7.7 million (2000 est). The majority of people (90%) are Azerbaijanis of predominately Turkish descent. Russians and Armenians make up 4.5% of the population; almost all live in central Azerbaijan or near Baku.

Approximately 93% of the people are Muslim, mostly of the Shiite sect (70 percent); the remainder are Sunni. The Muslim Board of Transcaucasia, which has spiritual jurisdiction over all Islamic sects in Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan, is located in Baku. The rest of the population is Christian—divided almost equally between Russian Orthodox and Armenian Orthodox.

Azerbaijani is the official language of the country and is spoken by 82 percent of the people.

Government

Azerbaijani sovereignty was declared in September 1989 and the Supreme Soviet (parliament) announced the country's independence from the Soviet Union on August 30, 1991. The Communist Party disbanded the next month. In a referendum held in December 1991, over 99 percent of the voters favored independence. On March 2, 1992, Azerbaijan was admitted to the United Nations and on April 30, the country officially adopted the name Republic of Azerbaijan.



Marketplace in Baku, Azerbaijan

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The executive branch of the government consists of the president and a 21-member Council of Ministers. The 360-seat Supreme Soviet (parliament) is the highest legislative body. In October 1991, the Supreme Soviet established another legislative body, the National Council. The 50-member (20 percent are also members of the Supreme Soviet) National Council meets in continuous sessions.

The judicial system is headed by a Supreme Court. Civil law is the basis of the legal system.

The flag of the Republic of Azerbaijan consists of three equal horizontal bands of (top to bottom) blue, red, and green. Centered in the red

band is a white crescent and an eight-pointed star.

Arts, Science, Education

Azerbaijan has a long history as an educational center. The educational system is extensive and illiteracy has been practically unknown. In 2001, the government adopted the use of the Roman alphabet, to replace the Cyrillic script that had been imposed by Stalin in 1939. The new alphabet affects all aspects of life, from official government documents to newspapers, magazines and billboards. The change was seen as an opportunity to move forward from a Soviet past and

strengthen ties with the Western world. Many citizens are already familiar with the Roman alphabet, since it is taught in primary schools, and as a country focused on education, it seems likely that the change will not cause too much trouble.

Education is free in Azerbaijan. In 1997, there were over 4,400 primary schools with about 719,000 students enrolled and over 35,500 teachers. There were also 819,600 students enrolled in secondary schools with about 85,000 teachers. The Azerbaijan Polytechnic Institute and the State University in Baku support at least 27,000 students. Other institutions of higher learning include the Medical University, Technological University, the Economic Institute, and the Oil and Chemistry Academy.

Commerce and Industry

Although Azerbaijan is not as industrialized as its Transcaucasia neighbors, Armenia and Georgia, its overall economy is the best of all the former Soviet republics. The future outlook, however, is clouded by the continuing civil unrest in Nagorno-Karabakh and the government's failure to enact needed economic reforms. Azerbaijan suffers high unemployment and a low standard of living. Foreign investment would offer a needed boost to the economy but Azerbaijan's current problems make such investment unlikely in the near future.

The economy is heavily dependent on industry and mining. Oil, gas, petroleum products, oil field equipment, steel, iron ore, and cement are the chief heavy industries. Major oil fields are located in the Apsheron Peninsula, where Baku and Sumgait are located, and around the cities of Siyar, Neftechala, and Ali-Bayramli. Pipelines connect the oil fields with Baku, where the refineries and processing plants are located. Large oil reserves have been discovered off-

shore, in the Caspian Sea, but are mostly unexploited. Azerbaijan's main exports are oil, gas, chemicals, and oil field equipment, mostly to the other ex-Soviet Union republics.

The chief crop is cotton, which is used in textile production. Other major crops include grain, rice, and grapes.

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Republic of Azerbaijan is located at 370601 Baku, ul. Kommunisticheskaya 31/33.

Transportation

Azerbaijani Airlines services several in-country cities, Russia, Georgia, Istanbul, and Turkey. Turk Hava Yolari is the only Western airline with flights into and out of Azerbaijan.

Travelers on airlines among the countries of the Caucasus may experience prolonged delays and sudden cancellations of flights. In addition to routine delays, flights are often overcrowded with passengers without seats standing in the aisle, along with excess unsecured cabin luggage. Even basic safety features such as seat belts are sometimes missing. Air travel to Azerbaijan on international carriers via the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Germany, and Turkey is generally more reliable.

Train travel in the Caucasus region is not secure. Public transportation in general is overcrowded and poorly maintained. The U.S. Embassy strongly discourages use of the Baku Metro.

Bus travel is not recommended either because they are rundown, overcrowded, and are often driven in an unsafe manner.

A reliable subway system operates in Baku, but it is often overcrowded.

Taxis are inexpensive, easy to flag down, and relatively efficient.

Communications

Local telephone service is poor by Western standards. Service is in the process of being updated.

Baku has several radio stations which broadcast in Azerbaijani, Russian, Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. Shortwave radio is a good means of staying in touch with world news.

There are four TV stations in Baku. One station broadcasts in Azeri, two are relayed from Russia, and one from Turkey.

There are over 300 newspapers printed in the country. Several English-language newspapers and journals are available in the major hotels, many days late and very expensive.

Health and Medicine

Medical care, considered very good before the breakup of the Soviet Union, does not meet Western standards. Health care and social services are free to all citizens by the government. But the state-run hospital system is limited and there is a lack of basic supplies and modern equipment. Emergency treatment for travellers may be free, but you will need to pay for medicines and other supplies.

There are a few drug stores in Baku with basic medicines, but it is best to bring an ample supply of any prescription or over-the-counter medications you may need.

Community Health

Eastern Azerbaijan has been called one of the most ecologically devastated regions in the world. The area around Baku and Sumgait suffers from serious pollution due to oil, gas, and chemical industries. Extensive environmental damage has resulted from the exploitation of offshore oil and gas reserves in the Caspian Sea.

Sanitation services are regular, but garbage is dumped into inadequate storage facilities. Water is not potable and must be boiled prior to drinking. Plumbing and water delivery services are substandard. Food storage practices are poor; great care must be taken during purchase and preparation of all fresh foods.

There is an increasingly high rate of vaccine-preventable diseases such as polio, measles, mumps, diphtheria, whooping cough, hepatitis, and gastroenteric diseases. Inoculations should be current before arriving in the region.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan. 1	New Year's Day
Jan. 20	Day of the Martyrs (Day of Sorrow)
May 9	Celebration of War Veterans Day
June 15	Day of National Salvation
Aug. 28	Republic Day
Oct. 9	Army & Navy Day
Oct. 18	National Independence Day
Dec. 31	Day of Azeri Solidarity
.	Kurban Mayram / Id al-Adha (Feast of the Sacrifice)*
.	Novruz Bayram*
.	Ramadan Bayram (End of Ramadan)*

*variable, based on Islamic calendar

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs & Duties

As a result of conflict in the Nagorno-Karabakh area of Azerbaijan, twenty per cent of Azerbaijani territory (in the southwest along the borders with Iran and Armenia) is occupied by insurgent forces. A cease-fire has been in effect since 1994, although reports of armed clashes along the cease-fire line and along the border with Armenia continue. Anti-personnel mines are a danger in areas close to the front lines. It is not possible to enter the self-proclaimed "Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh" from Azerbaijan. Travelers contemplating entering Nagorno-Karabakh are advised that because of the existing state of hostilities, consular services are not predictably available to Americans in Nagorno-Karabakh. Travelers, therefore, are cautioned to avoid travel to Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding occupied areas.

A passport and visa are required to enter Azerbaijan. Travelers with valid Georgian visas are permitted to enter Azerbaijan for a stay up to five days. Thereafter, they must include a letter of invitation from an individual or organization in Azerbaijan when applying for a visa. For additional information on visa requirements, travelers can contact the Embassy of Azerbaijan, 927-15th Street, N.W., Suite 700, Washington, D.C. 20005; telephone (202) 842-0001.

Americans are encouraged to register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy and obtain updated information on travel and security within Azerbaijan. The U.S. Embassy in Baku is located at Prospect Azadlig 83. The telephone numbers are (9) (9412) 98-03-35, (9) (9412) 98-03-36, or (9) (9412) 98-03-37.

Currency

Azerbaijan is mostly a cash economy country. Traveler's checks and credit cards are accepted only in some hotels and a few restaurants and supermarkets. The local currency is the *manat*. U.S. dollars are required in most hotels and preferred in many restaurants

RECOMMENDED READING

The following titles are provided as a general indication of material published on this country:

Alstadt, Audrey L. *The Azerbaijani Turks: Power and Identity under Russian Rule*. Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1992.

Azerbaijan Economic Review. International Monetary Fund, 1992.

Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States 1992. London: Europa (distributed in the U.S. by Gale Research), 1992.

Gink, Karoly. *Azerbaijan: Mosques, Turrets, Palaces*. Budapest: Corvina Kiado, 1979.

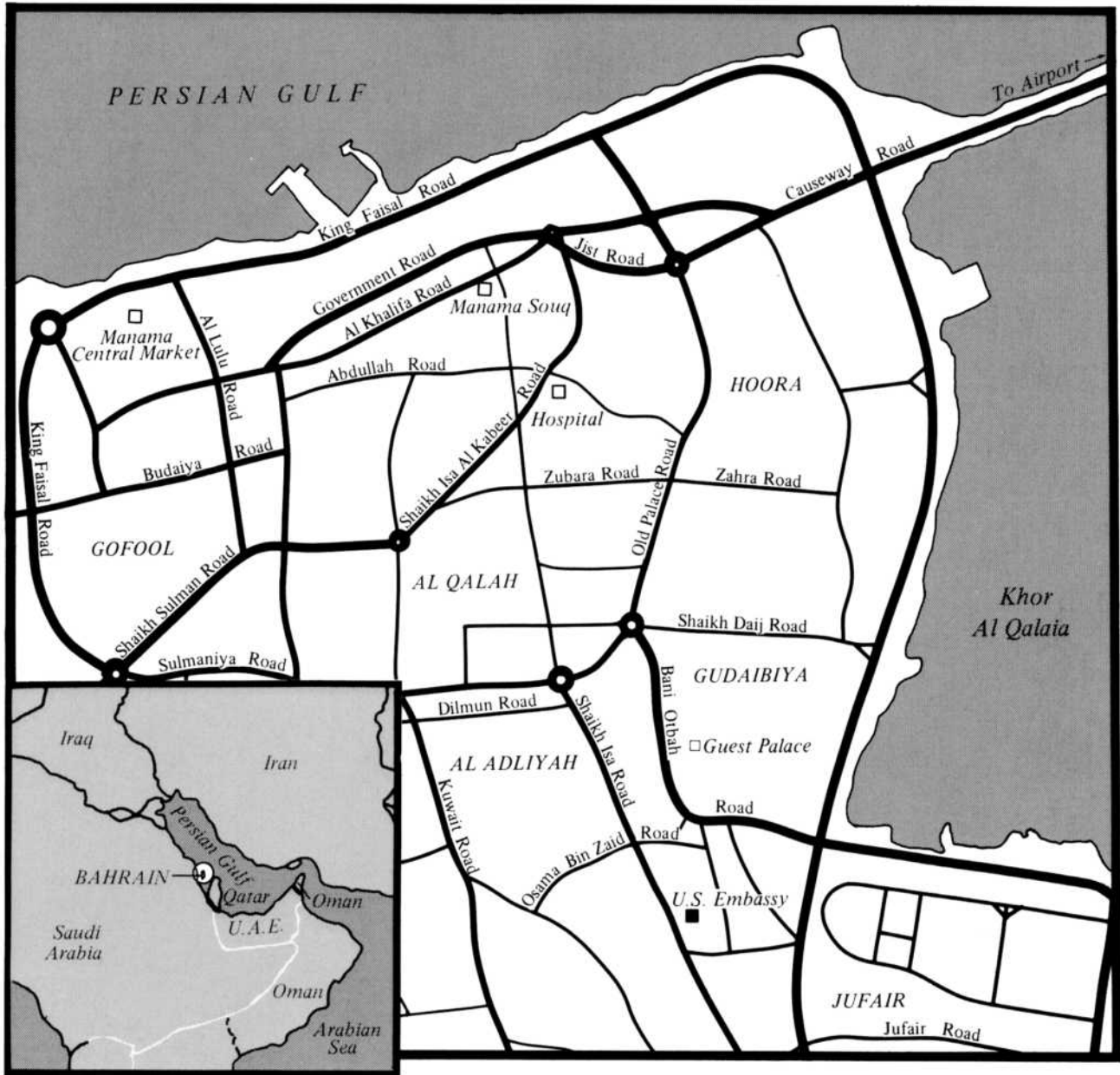
Henry, James Dodds. *Baku: An Eventful History*. New York: Arno Press, 1977.

Ibrahimov, Mirza. *Azerbaijani Poetry: Classic, Modern, Traditional*. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969.

Kazemzadeh, Firuz. *The Struggle for Transcaucasia 1917-1921*. Westport, CT: Hyperion Press, 1981.

Katz, Zev, ed. *Handbook of Major Soviet Nationalities*. New York: Free Press, 1975.

Suny, Ronald Grigor. *The Baku Commune, 1917-1918: Class and Nationality in the Russian Revolution*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972.



Manama, Bahrain

BAHRAIN

State of Bahrain

Major City:
Manama

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report 2000 for Bahrain. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

Site of some of the oldest civilizations in the world (thought by some to be the site of the Garden of Eden), Bahrain is packed with archaeological digs, historical museums, dhow-building yards, and back-street souqs.

As modern as central Manama may be, the basic rhythms of life in the island's many villages remain remarkably traditional. By the same token, where there is tradition in the Gulf there is Islamic conservatism: Women cover themselves from head to foot.

Traditional craftwork continues in Bahrain: Dhows (fishing boats) are built on the outskirts of Manama;

cloth is woven at Bani Jamrah; and pottery is thrown at A'ali. A few goldsmiths still operate in the souq. One of the mainstays of Bahraini culture is the drinking of traditional Arabian coffee. You cannot go far without finding a coffee pot in a shop or a souq. Traditional Arabian street food like shawarma (lamb or chicken carved from a huge rotating spit and served in pita bread) and desserts such as baklava are also ubiquitous. While a bit thin on Arabic food, Bahrain has a bonanza of Indian, Pakistani, Thai, and other Asian specialties.

Bahrain's main island has almost certainly been inhabited since prehistoric times. The archipelago first emerged into world history in the 3rd millennium BC as the seat of the Dilmun trading empire. Dilmun, a Bronze Age culture that lasted about 2000 years, benefited from the islands' strategic position along the trade routes linking Mesopotamia with the Indus Valley.

Eventually Dilmun declined and was absorbed by the Assyrian and Babylonian empires. The Greeks arrived around 300 BC, and Bahrain remained a Hellenistic culture for some 600 years.

After experimenting with Christianity, Zoroastrianism, and Manicheism, in the seventh century

many of the islands' inhabitants converted to Islam.

In the 1830s, Bahrain signed the first of many treaties with Britain, who offered Bahrain naval protection from Ottoman Turkey in exchange for unfettered access to the Gulf. Oil was discovered in 1932, and large-scale oil-drilling soon followed. Oil money brought improved education and health care to Bahrain. It also brought the British closer: The main British naval base in the region was moved to Bahrain in 1935.

In the 1950s, the waves of Arab nationalism that swept through the region led to increasing anti-British sentiment. Bahrain proclaimed its independence on August 14, 1971.

As the price of oil went through the stratosphere during the 1970s and 1980s, the country grew by leaps and bounds. Despite the Gulf-wide economic downturn of the late 1980s, Bahrain remained calm and prosperous.

Bahrain's reputation as a relatively liberal and modern Arabian Gulf State has made it a favorite with travelers in the region and an excellent introduction to the Gulf. While their neighbors staked everything on oil, Bahrainis diversified their economy and created some of the

region's best education and health systems. Years of British influence have made English widely spoken. Development has been swift, but it hasn't swallowed up everything.

MAJOR CITY

Manama

Manama is a cosmopolitan city of about 144,000. Central Manama is undergoing extensive urban development, featuring new banks, hotels, offices, and six-lane, divided highways on land reclaimed from the sea during the past 15 years. The growth has resulted in moderately increased traffic congestion and the distinct beginnings of urban sprawl. Yet the city is livable, and many consider it the preferred location in the Gulf. The discomfort of the outdoor summer weather and the real, as well as psychological, isolation of living on a small island community cause frustration for some.

Utilities

Electricity is 220v-240v, 50 hertz. Because voltage fluctuates, delicate electrical equipment such as stereos should have voltage regulators. These are available locally, but at high prices.

Food

Clean, modern, U.S.-style supermarkets are numerous. Excellent prawns and fish, superb dates, good eggs, fresh chickens, and fresh dairy products, including pasteurized milk, are grown or produced on the island. Depending on the season, fresh fruits and vegetables are also available. The latter is supplemented by an abundance of imported fresh fruit and vegetables. Beef, mutton, lamb, veal, pork, poultry, cheeses, other dairy products, cereals, and canned or dry goods are all imported, primarily from the U.S., New Zealand, Australia, and Europe, and are readily available in the island's supermarkets and shops. Prices, however, are often high. Smart shoppers spend time in



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Business district of Manama, Bahrain

the cheaper, covered central market in downtown Manama.

Clothing

Fabrics and sewing supplies are plentiful and moderately priced. Tailors are good at copying patterns and models, but most do not create or design clothing. Local stores offer expensive ready-made clothing of varying quality and limited selection from Europe and the U.S.

Bahrain has no official clothing taboos. As guests of a society that traditionally is very strict among its own members, especially the women, visitors are expected to dress modestly. Shorts, short dresses, and bare shoulders are inappropriate outside the home. Skirts and dresses for women and long pants for men are recommended for general wear. Sneakers for tennis and other sports are locally available but at high prices.

Men: Take cool, lightweight suits for summer wear and many cotton shirts. Sweaters and a moderate supply of light winter clothes are necessary. Winter nights can be as chilly as 45°F. Since winter is also the rainy season and some streets are unpaved, boots and galoshes are useful to negotiate the many puddles that linger after heavy rains.

Women: Shoe shopping presents a problem, especially for women. Only the latest European styles are available at local boutiques. Because of the heat and humidity, natural clothing fibers (especially cotton) are best during summer. Double-knits and synthetic materials are very uncomfortable during the hot season.

Children: Children's shoes and clothing are available but are usually expensive. Shoes are of poor quality, and children's galoshes are hard to find.

Supplies and Services

Almost everything is available in Bahrain, but is invariably more expensive. Laundry soaps and bleaches, though fairly expensive, are readily available locally. Small appliances, linens, utensils, tools, cosmetics, soaps, and perfumes are available but are also expensive. Specific brand names may not be available, but suitable substitutes abound. Color film is expensive. It may be processed locally or in the U.S. Dog, cat, and bird foods are available locally. Kitty litter, dog collars, leashes, and toys are usually available, but are expensive, and the selection is limited.

A large variety of personal and professional services are available in Bahrain, from picture framing to motor vehicle rust-proofing, legal and tax counseling, to insect extermination. However, costs exceed those of comparable services in the U.S.

Shoe repair shops provide reasonably priced and satisfactory work. Dry-cleaners are adequate for materials not requiring special treatment. Men's suits are cleaned and pressed for \$5. For women's silk clothing, however, reliable dry-cleaning may be \$7 for a dress.

Beauty shops are found throughout Manama. Their work is good and at prices comparable to those in the U.S. Barbershops are also common and fairly inexpensive.

Repairs for automobiles, radios, and electrical appliances are usually satisfactory. Long delays sometimes occur due to a prevailing lack of spare parts.

Finished carpentry products are inferior to and more expensive than U.S. products. Residential furniture is expensive.

Domestic Help

Most middle-class Bahraini families and Westerners in Bahrain employ domestic servants. Going rates (as of 1999) for domestic servants are as follows: Full-time cooking and cleaning \$160-\$350/month Part-time cooking and cleaning \$2.65-\$3/hour. Part-time gardener \$70-\$100/month Babysitter (American teenagers) \$2.50-\$3/hour.

Religious Activities

Bahrain allows freedom of worship. Although most Bahrainis are Muslims, several Christian churches serve the foreign community. Both Protestant and Catholic services are held every Friday and Sunday on the navy base (NSA). Protestant Sunday school is available for kindergarten through adult levels at the National Evangelical Church in Manama. Sacred Heart (Roman Catholic), St. Christopher's (Anglican), and the Church of the Latter-

day Saints, as well as Syrian Orthodox churches, have active congregations. Most churches hold services on Friday to correspond to the local Sabbath, but Sunday services are also held. Many churches have nurseries to care for children during services, and services are conducted in a variety of languages. Bahrain's Jewish community is too small to sustain a synagogue.

Education

The Bahrain School is an international school of about 1,000 pupils representing 50 nationalities for students in kindergarten through 12th grade. The school is operated by the Department of Defense Dependents Schools, Europe (DODDSEUR). In addition to a standard American curriculum, it offers the International Baccalaureate (IB) program that is recognized in more than 40 countries for university entrance. American colleges will generally give one year's advance placement for IB diploma holders. The Secondary School meets the accreditation standards of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools (NCA). Under DODDS regulations, children of U.S. military personnel are accorded priority in admission, while other students, including children of U.S. civilian agency personnel, are accepted on a space-available basis. The Bahrain International School Association (BISA) is the local governing body, but management authority is held by DODDS.

The school year runs from early September through late June. The school week conforms to the Muslim week, Saturday through Wednesday, with a Thursday to Friday weekend. The school day is from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. for all grades.

Group registration is held before the beginning of the new school year. Thereafter, parents may register their children in the school's administrative office upon arrival in Bahrain. Children must be accompanied by a parent or sponsor at registration and must present all records from prior schools, passport

number, and immunization records. Placement tests are also required upon registration.

The Habara School and the Nadeen School offer a pre-nursery and beginning primary school syllabus to a predominantly British and American enrollment aged 2-7 years, at a cost of about \$500-\$600 a term (i.e., \$1,500-\$1,950 per school year). Half-day summer play school is available for kindergarten and primary-school-age children. NSA also operates a year-round day care center for children.

Other schools, including St. Christopher's (British) and one with a French curriculum, are also available.

Special Educational Opportunities

The University of Bahrain offers bachelor's degrees in business, science, education, engineering, art, and health sciences. The language of instruction is Arabic.

The University of Maryland is a U.S. institution that offers undergraduate courses through the Bahrain School and on a part-time basis for adults wishing to begin or continue work toward an associate's or bachelor's degree. Additionally, seminar classes are scheduled at various times. These classes are one semester hour of credit that requires 16 hours of classroom instruction.

The Bahrain Government and some private schools offer Arabic-language, secretarial, business management, and computer classes. Several schools offer hands-on computer courses.

The Bahrain Arts Society offers classes in drawing, painting, and poetry. The Music Institute provides instruction in a variety of musical instruments to adults and children at reasonable cost. As funds permit, the Embassy also maintains an Arabic-language program. Classes are also available through the Bahrain Ministry of Education or various schools and individuals. Ballet, ice

skating, karate, aerobics, and yoga classes are available. Most of the five-star hotels also have thriving health clubs for men and women.

Recreation and Social Life

Summer is difficult for children and parents because the intense heat and humidity preclude outdoor activities. Bring games, handicrafts, hobby supplies, and beach toys. An outdoor grill and equipment for light camping are useful in winter.

Power boating and sailing are popular with many Westerners in Bahrain. There are four sailing clubs on the island. Used pleasure boats and sailboats are sold, but at high prices when available. Groups rent Arab dhows for a day of water sightseeing, swimming, fishing, and picnicking. Only saltwater fishing is done; take your own gear, as it is expensive there. Scuba diving is popular, and the sea floor around Bahrain is interesting in parts; but the water is often murky. Rental costs are prohibitive. U.S.-certified scuba diving classes are available, and two clubs offer courses at reasonable tuition.

The BAPCO (Bahrain Petroleum Company) Club at Awali permits some foreigners in the business and diplomatic communities to hold memberships (about \$300 yearly) to use its beach, bowling, dining, and swimming facilities. All the major hotels in Bahrain (Meridien, Hilton, Sheraton, and Holiday Inn) offer memberships in their swimming pool, health club, and tennis facilities, but the cost is high. Several private clubs (AlBandar and the Marina) offer membership to foreigners and have attractive, well-located facilities. There is a small indoor ice-skating rink open to the public. Horseback riding and riding lessons are available.

Attending the weekly horse races at the racetrack about 5 miles south of Manama is a pleasant way to spend a winter afternoon. Races are run using an excellent stock of Arabian horses and are free to all who wish to attend. Betting and alcoholic beverages are prohibited at the racing grounds.

A new sporting era has dawned in Bahrain. The Riffa Golf Club has created an 18-hole course on more than 150 acres. What was once a desert is now a green oasis of sporting excellence.

Local travel agents offer a range of tours, usually 3-7 days, to places in the Middle East, India, the Far East, or Europe. These package trips are popular among Westerners. In addition, excellent half day tours in Bahrain are available through private tour companies. Camping is possible in the central part of the island during the winter and spring. Private groups frequently arrange dhow trips into the Gulf during the non-winter months.

Many interesting archeological and historical sites are in Bahrain. This is the largest ancient necropolis in the world with more than 100,000 grave mounds, ancient forts, temples, and city sites going back to the Dilmun era, circa 2500 BC. The Bahrain National Museum has an excellent display of both ancient Bahrain and the more recent Arab traditions. Two restored houses can be toured and traditional craftsmen still work in some villages. At Jasra is a handicraft center where visitors can watch traditional Arab artisans plying their craft. Finished pieces can be purchased at the gift shop.

Several air-conditioned movie theaters show recent films in English, French, Italian, Arabic, and Hindi at modest admission prices. Several video rental outlets carry the latest U.S. and European films and most Westerners own video equipment.

Many good but expensive restaurants feature international cuisine and music groups. The major hotels schedule well-known entertainers for brief engagements in the fall, spring, and winter. Some medium-priced restaurants specialize in tasty Chinese, Thai, Turkish, Arabic, and Indian foods. American fast food is available at high prices from Kentucky Fried Chicken, Hardee's, Burger King, BaskinRobbins, Dairy Queen, McDonald's, Chili's, Pizza Hut, Dominoes Pizza, Fuddrucker's,

Hole-in-One Donuts, and Subway for deli-style sandwiches. Much entertaining is done at home.

Bahrain has a well-developed tradition of club life directed mainly at the sporting community. The BAPCO Club, Dilmun Club, Yacht Club, and British Club have extensive recreational facilities. High fees at the Marina Club make membership unattractive; however, pier and mooring facilities are available at various other locations on the island.

The American Women's Association is a focal point for American community activities, and the American Association arranges monthly luncheon meetings, an annual picnic, and other social events.

Bahrain abounds with attractive special interest clubs: the Historical and Archeological Society, Natural History Society, drama groups, the Garden Club, bridge groups, tennis league, and cross country and motor groups, plus some possibilities for Americans to enjoy rugby, soccer, and cricket.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The State of Bahrain is an archipelago of 33 small, low-lying islands in the Persian Gulf, halfway down the east coast of Saudi Arabia and about 15 miles from the Saudi mainland. Total land area is about 300 square miles.

Five of the six principal islands are linked by a causeway system. Bahrain Island, where the capital city of Manama is located, is the largest. It is about 30 miles long and 10-12 miles wide. A four-lane causeway links Manama with the island and town of Muharraq, site of the newly expanded international airport. Bridges also connect Sitra, Nabih Saleh, and Um al-Nassan Islands to

Bahrain Island, which is linked to the mainland of Saudi Arabia by a causeway to Dhahran and Al-Khobar.

Bahrain, with a desert climate, is one of the world's hottest areas. Its hottest and most humid weather is from June through September. Most buildings and all Embassy staff housing are air-conditioned. The weather is pleasant from November through May, but the combination of poor soil drainage and few storm sewers can result in its infrequent rainfall leaving muddy city streets and puddles.

A narrow strip of land along the northern and northwestern coasts of Bahrain Island is cultivated with date palms, alfalfa, and vegetables. A desert, punctuated by a north-south plateau, extends south of the cultivated area. Surrounding this plateau is a rolling basin surrounded by overhanging bluffs sloping

into the sea. The ground is hard and infertile with a gravel surface until the spring when a pale, soft green covering appears on the desert following the winter rains. It provides a welcome contrast to the summer's aridity.

Population

Bahrainis are Muslims. With an estimated 666,000 people, of whom 38% are non-Bahrainis, the population is divided between the Shi'a community and the ruling Sunnis. The Shi'a community is principally split between ethnic Arabs and Iranians. Indians, Pakistanis and other Asians comprise the majority of resident foreigners. Bahrain has a large Western community, which includes about 6,000 British and approximately 3,000 Americans. The majority of the indigenous population is under 25 years old.

Bahrainis are cosmopolitan people noted for their hospitality, moderation, and tolerance. Although many still wear traditional Arab dress, others have adopted Western attire. Modern Bahraini culture is the lat-

est in a succession of civilizations dating back thousands of years. The island of Bahrain was called Dilmun in the Babylonian and Sumerian eras, Tylos in the Seleucid era, then Awal, and finally Bahrain.

Government

The extended Al-Khalifa family has ruled the State of Bahrain since the late 18th century. It dominates Bahrain's society and Government. The constitution confirms the Amir as hereditary ruler, with the assistance of a Prime Minister and an appointed Cabinet.

Britain conducted Bahrain's foreign relations and ensured its defense through a treaty relationship from the mid-19th century until 1971, when Bahrain declared its independence. The mercantile and adaptive spirit of the Bahraini people enabled Bahrain to establish public schools, an effective and efficient modern bureaucracy, a Western legal system, and a sophisticated economy at an earlier stage than its Arabian Gulf neighbors. Bahrainis continue to welcome foreign contributions to the economic and social life of the country.

Since independence, Bahrain has joined the U.N., the Arab League, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and the Gulf Cooperation Council. The Gulf Cooperation Council was formed in 1981 to coordinate developmental, educational, commercial, and security affairs among its six Arab Gulf State members.

Arts, Science, and Education

The first public school in Bahrain opened in 1919, and its literacy level remains high by regional standards. Bahrain was the first country in the area to introduce co-education in public schools. Many Bahrainis are well educated and well traveled. Many have studied at the American University of Beirut or in England, Egypt, or in the U.S. English is widely spoken, especially

in the business community. Knowledge of Arabic is not essential, but the ability to communicate in Arabic opens many doors in Bahrain and increases social access for Westerners.

Bahrain has a national university and a college of health sciences. The regional Arabian Gulf University is also located in Bahrain. Its medical school opened in the fall of 1984. The campus is a modern architectural marvel, with separate facilities for men and women.

Bahrain features a number of talented artists whose works are displayed and sold at frequent exhibitions.

The role of Bahraini women is changing. Their position in society is expanding and developing. Many opportunities in both education and business that had never before been open to Arabian Peninsular women have become available. Some women still wear the "abaya," a traditional black cloth covering the whole body, outside their homes. Other Bahraini women dress in the latest European fashions, drive cars, and occupy positions of responsibility, including mid-level Government posts.

Commerce and Industry

Bahrainis have an ancient tradition of trade, travel, and receptivity to cultural influences from abroad. They are cosmopolitan and accept many Western customs.

Much of Bahrain's current prosperity can be traced to the discovery of oil in 1932, the first find on the Arab side of the Gulf. Bahrain does not have a large oil reserve and, therefore, has sought to diversify its industrial base. Banking, communications, oil-related services, general commerce, and industries, including aluminum smelting and downstream product production, have broadened the base of economic activity in the country.

Approximately 90 American firms capitalize on the geographic, service, and environmental advantages of having regional offices in Bahrain.

Despite modernization, traditional enterprises have not disappeared. Handmade Arab dhows ply the seas as they have for more than 1,000 years. From the sea come a variety of fish, including delicious shrimp. Expensive natural pearls, once the economic mainstay of the island, are still found in limited commercial quantities. Bahrainis take great pride in their quality and color. A limited number of craftsmen continue to make traditional baskets, cloth, and pottery. Also available in local markets are a variety of imported handicrafts from Middle Eastern and South Asian countries.

Transportation

Automobiles

All family members who are at least 18 years old and intend to drive in Bahrain should take along a valid U.S. driver's license. Local authorities permit U.S. license holders to drive for one month until a permanent Bahraini license is obtained.

Bahrain's climate and roads shorten a car's life span. Many people find a used car adequate in this small country. Ford, Chrysler, and General Motors products are available in Bahrain. European and Japanese autos are still cheaper than U.S. models. The local market for used cars is active.

Although it is difficult to drive large cars in many parts of Manama, they are very common. A mechanically simple car is preferable since maintenance/repair can be expensive, and spare parts are often in short supply. Local third-party insurance is required and is available for less than \$100 for most cars. Full coverage costs about 5% of the value of the car.

Gasoline prices are comparably lower than U.S. prices. Unleaded gasoline is available.

Rental cars are available locally, from about \$397 to \$550 a month, depending on condition and the comfort options requested.

Local

A network of roads connects Manama with other villages on Bahrain Island and to the three neighboring islands. Most major roads in the northern third of Bahrain are four-lane and well maintained. In the older parts of Manama and Muharraq, many streets are narrow and twisting or in poor condition. Congested areas of pedestrians, hawkers, and cars make driving difficult and dangerous, particularly in the market ("souq") area. Roundabouts (traffic circles) are found at most intersections. However, even with Bahrain's 140,000 registered vehicles congesting the streets, the drive to work from most residential areas takes no more than 15-20 minutes. Taxis are readily available, but most are not metered and fares are subject to intense negotiation.

Buses operate regularly, but are often crowded and sometimes require lengthy waiting periods in extreme heat. They are not air-conditioned and are not considered a suitable alternative to taxis by most Westerners.

Regional

Bahrain International Airport's ultramodern new terminal is one of the busiest in the Gulf. Approximately 22 carriers serve Bahrain with connections to other Middle Eastern destinations, Europe, Africa, and the Far East. There are no direct flights between Bahrain and North or South America. Bahrain also has a modern and busy port. It offers direct and frequent cargo shipping connections to the U.S., Europe, and the Far East. The four-lane causeway linking Bahrain with Saudi Arabia is open to vehicle traffic, affording access to most parts of the mainland. Only males are permitted to drive in Saudi Arabia.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

Bahrain has one of the most efficient telephone networks in the Middle East. A radio and telecommunications station links the Gulf, via INTELSAT, to the rest of the world with good connections. A call to the U.S. usually takes only a few seconds to place and costs about \$1.29 a minute. Reduced rates (\$1.04 a minute) are in effect between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m. daily, and all day Friday. INET services are available, in addition to AT&T and MCI "Dial America."

Mail

Bahraini international mail is also a quick and safe method of corresponding with the U.S.

Radio and TV

Several TV stations can be received clearly in Bahrain. Channel availability is strictly dependent on each housing compound, and the selection varies widely. The Bahraini Government-owned station has both Arabic- and English-language services. The latter airs from 5 to 11 p.m. and includes a 30-minute English-language newscast, as well as American series, movies, cartoons, and British and Indian programs. BBC World Service Television from Hong Kong is broadcast over open TV channels. CNN is available on a pay-for-service channel, as are a large number of other stations broadcasting American films and TV shows. Another English-language station is transmitted by ARAMCO from neighboring Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. This station presents mostly rerun American programs, but also offers several recently taped sports events on Thursday and Friday afternoons. Programming is provided only during the late afternoon and evening and is entirely English. With a suitable antenna, you can pick up four other stations, including Qatar, Dubai, and Kuwait. The English-language newspapers carry tentative schedules for some stations.

All local TV stations use the European scan (PAL/SECAM 625 lines). American NTSC TV's are not compatible and will not work. In addition to regular programs, an active video rental market offers many current movies.

ARAMCO also maintains an excellent AM/FM radio service. ARAMCO presents popular, classical, country-western, and rock music on two wavelengths. Radio Bahrain has an AM/FM stereo service with strong signals broadcasting modern and classical music, topical programs, and English newscasts on two channels. English programming from Qatar and Dubai is also received. The latest news is broadcast on shortwave and medium wave by VOA's Middle East and African services during the morning and evening, by the World Service of the BBC, and by Armed Forces Radio and Television Services (AFRTS). A dependable shortwave receiver is desirable due to atmospheric conditions around Bahrain, which frequently cause poor reception, especially of VOA. Equipment must be adjustable to the local 220V, 50-cycle power. An all-channel TV antenna that also serves for FM stereo might be the best buy, and it is available locally.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

The Gulf Daily News and Bahrain Tribune are two daily English-language papers that are published in Bahrain and directed toward the English-speaking community. The English-language Gulf News is available daily from the U.A.E. The International Herald Tribune usually arrives a day after publication and costs about \$2 per issue.

International newsmagazines such as Time, Newsweek, and The Economist are available uncensored locally at several bookstores. Women's magazines, mostly British, and hobby and sports magazines are found on many newsstands. These are expensive, so it is preferable to subscribe to magazines. Bookstores have a limited selection of

titles and are more expensive than in the U.S.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

The oldest hospital in Bahrain is the American Mission Hospital, run by the Mission of the Reformed Church in America, and the newest is the International Hospital. Emergency services are also available at the Bahrain Defence Force Hospital in Riffa, and Awali Hospital. Routine dental care is available at local Bahraini medical facilities, but it is advisable to have a thorough checkup and treatment of serious problems before leaving the U.S.

Community Health

The Government of Bahrain provides free public health care to all Bahrainis and foreigners through six hospitals and a network of clinics throughout the island. Most health care provided at the facilities is professional, competent, and modern. However, doctors and staff cannot always handle large numbers of people.

The most common insects are mosquitoes, cockroaches, flies, ants, and meal mites. Flies are troublesome during the spring, late summer, and early fall. Insecticides are available in local stores. Rats and mice are also found, particularly near uncollected and decaying garbage heaps throughout the city. Cleanliness and precautions such as storing food in airtight containers are advisable. Brownish-green lizards (geckos) are useful, silent friends who populate the upper reaches of house walls. Common in many parts of the world, they bother no one except the squeamish and feed on insects that find their way into houses despite screening and the use of insecticides.

Fleas, sand ticks, and wood ticks are prevalent in Bahrain and are a problem for pets. There is no heartworm in Bahrain. Veterinarians are available and competent, but expensive.

An extensive drainage system is currently under construction in Bahrain. Some houses still have septic tanks that can occasionally overflow.

When enjoying beach activities or indulging in water sports, wear either plastic or canvas shoes and avoid stepping on sharp pieces of shell, buried pieces of metal or glass, sea urchins, stonefish, and cone shells that can sting painfully and sometimes dangerously. Sea snakes, jellyfish, stingrays, and sharks are found in Bahrain waters but rarely pose a threat close to shore. Minor ear infections are sometimes contracted through swimming in polluted water and should receive prompt medical attention. Seek advice on the location of clean and safe swimming areas. Irritation to ears and eyes may also be caused by the draft from fans and air conditioners or the dust and sand carried in strong winds.

Preventive Measures

Health precautions include preventing sunstroke and heatstroke, which are real risks during the summer and fall. Outdoor activities must be carefully planned and exertion kept to a minimum during the daytime in that period.

In the summer, good health is best maintained by drinking a lot of liquid, getting plenty of sleep, and taking extra salt on food, or, if preferred, salt tablets, with a physician's guidance. The high summer humidity can be troublesome to those with asthmatic or bronchial ailments.

Summer colds are often brought on by sudden changes of temperature due to extensive air-conditioning in buildings and cars. Avoid direct drafts from air conditioners.

Some medications are not available in Bahrain. Take an initial supply from the U.S. that can be refilled through mail.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Customs, Duties & Passage

Passports and visas are required. Two-week visas may be obtained for a fee upon arrival at the airport. Prior to travel, visitors may obtain from Bahraini embassies overseas five-year multiple entry visas valid for stays as long as one month. Visitors who fail to depart the country at the end of their authorized stay are fined. An exit tax is charged all travelers upon departure. Residents of Bahrain who intend to return must obtain a re-entry permit before departing. For further information on entry requirements, travelers can contact the Embassy of the State of Bahrain, 3502 International Drive, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008, telephone (202) 342-0741; or the Bahrain Permanent Mission to the U.N., 2 United Nations Plaza, East 44th St., New York, N.Y. 10017, telephone (212) 223-6200. Information also may be obtained from the Embassy's Internet home page at <http://www.bahrainembassy.org>.

The following items are strictly prohibited: firearms and ammunition or other weaponry, including decorative knives; cultured, bleached, or tinted pearls and undrilled pearls produced outside the Arabian Gulf, pornography or seditious literature; and habit-forming or hallucinatory drugs. Videocassettes will be inspected and viewed on arrival and should not be shipped in hand or checked baggage.

Travelers should note that the local definition of pornography is considerably stricter than in the Western world.

Magazines such as Playboy are likely to be confiscated at the airport. Adults may import two bottles of alcohol, and the duty-free shop at Bahrain's International Airport is open to arriving as well as departing passengers.

Americans living in or visiting Bahrain are encouraged to register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Manama and obtain updated information on travel and security within Bahrain. The U.S. Embassy is located at Bldg. 979, Road no. 3119, Zinj District (next to Al Ahli Sports Club). (The mailing address is P.O. Box 26431, Manama, Bahrain.) The telephone number is 973-273-300. The Consular Section fax number is 973-256-242. The Embassy maintains an English language hotline providing information on current travel conditions in Bahrain at telephone 973-255-048. The Embassy's website, which includes consular information, is <http://www.usembassy.com.bh>. The workweek in Bahrain is Saturday through Wednesday.

Pets

The Bahrain Minister of Commerce and Agriculture issued a Ministerial decree in 1984 that banned the importation of dogs, cats, and monkeys into Bahrain from countries where rabies is found.

Bahrain is rabies free and certain rules have to be met when importing a pet. Within one month of your departure date, obtain a veterinary health certificate that identifies the pet, states the origin and name of the exporter; verifies that the animals/birds were examined prior to shipment, confirms that the animal is free from all contagious diseases (as well as ecto-parasites), and is fit for travel. The following vaccination certificates must accompany the animal when it arrives in Bahrain:

Cats: Rabies, Feline Enteritis
Dogs: Rabies, Distemper, PARVOV

If an animal is not permitted entry into Bahrain, it is the responsibility of the owner to pay for its return.

Firearms and Ammunition

Firearms and ammunition are not to be imported into Bahrain under any circumstances.

Currency, Banking, and Weights and Measures

Citibank is the only American bank currently established in Bahrain that provides full commercial banking services (individual Bahraini dinar, U.S. dollar checking and savings accounts, fund transfers). Citibank and several other banks, as well as commercial money changers, accept U.S. Treasury dollar checks or travelers checks and will disburse either U.S. dollars or Bahrain dinars at the established rate, often with a surcharge. However, banks usually do not cash personal checks.

The exchange rate is: US\$1.00 = Bahrain Dinar (BD).377 (or 377 fils); BD1=US\$2.65. The Dinar is pegged to the US\$; it will not fluctuate.

Bahrain officially adopted the metric system of weights and measures in December 1977.

Taxes, Exchange, and Sale of Property

Bahrain does not have personal or sales tax. An active resale market in Bahrain is open to those seeking to sell personal property, including automobiles. Bahrain has a free exchange of currency. Money changers will quickly convert dollars or travelers checks to virtually any currency desired.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

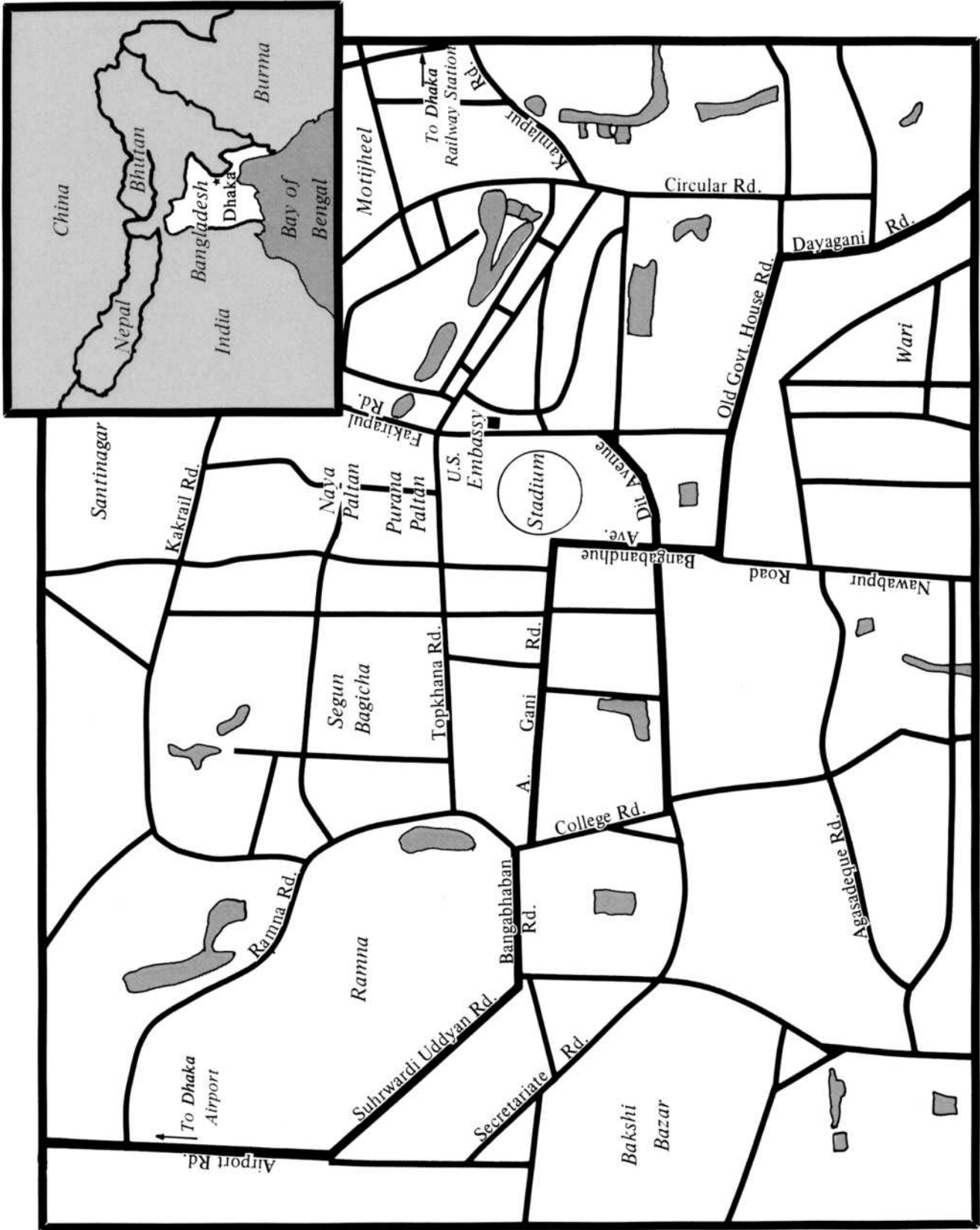
Jan. 1 New Year's Day
Dec 16 & 17 National Day
. Eid Al-Adha*
. Islamic New Year*
. Ashura*
. Prophet's Birthday*
. Eid al Fitr*

*variable, based on Islamic calendar

RECOMMENDED READING

These titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country.

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Dhaka, Bangladesh

BANGLADESH

People's Republic of Bangladesh

Major Cities:

Dhaka, Chittagong

Other Cities:

Barisal, Comilla, Dinājpur, Faridpur, Jessore, Khulna, Mymensingh, Narayanganj, Pabna, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Sirājganj, Sylhet

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated August 1997. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

BANGLADESH, on the Bay of Bengal between India and Burma, is the most densely populated, yet one of the least developed and poorest countries in the world. Its needs are many, and its resources few. Marked by famine, floods, an astronomical birthrate, and a tenuous economy, it is struggling to improve the welfare of its citizens.

Physically, Bangladesh is semi-aquatic. The land, basically flat, is broken by the delta system of the Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers, and thousands of lesser waterways, tributaries, and streams course through the country. Tea plantations and bamboo jungles add diversity to the landscape.

MAJOR CITIES

Dhaka

Dhaka, the capital, has developed over centuries as a city of culture, commerce, and government in the Bengal region. Buddhist and Hindu domination ended in the 13th century and was followed by 500 years of Muslim economic and cultural influence. In the 17th century, under Moghul rule, Dhaka occupied the role of capital city and was an important trade and commercial center. During the European domination of the 19th and 20th centuries, particularly during the British raj, Dhaka served as a district headquarters, although Calcutta was the chief seaport and industrial center of Bengal. It was not until independence in 1971 that Dhaka again achieved capital status. From a population of less than 2 million in 1971, it has grown to approximately 7 million today.

Divided into districts, Dhaka lies in the south along the banks of the Buringanga River. The once splendid buildings and residences have deteriorated into shops and small dwellings. The majority of Dhaka residents live in this area. Most of the modern public institutions and commercial development are con-

centrated in Dhaka center. However, due to increasing congestion some businesses are spreading to more newly developed areas. On a narrow strip of high ground north of the city, the upper-class areas of Banani, Gulshan, and Baridhara Model Towns have developed.

Food

Locally, you may purchase meat, fish, shrimp, eggs, fresh vegetables, and fruit. For the coolest 6 months of the year, a wide variety of vegetables are available, although the size and quality are not up to U.S. standards. Individuals should soak all vegetables in chlorine for 30 minutes. All meat must be frozen 7 to 14 days or cooked very well to avoid diseases. Several types of leaf lettuce, green beans, cauliflower, broccoli, green pepper, celery, and tomatoes are only in the market during the coolest part of the year. During the hottest 6 months, vegetables are limited to potatoes, onions, eggplant, cucumbers, carrots, cabbage, and a variety of local greens and squashes.

Several varieties of tropical fruits are available locally in season, including mangoes, pineapples, bananas, papayas, lychees, and guavas. Oranges, apples, and grapes are imported from India or Pakistan. Packaged food items can be

found on the local market but at considerably higher prices.

Home gardens can provide a variety of foods to your diet. For those who don't have a yard in which to plant a garden, large flowerpots on the roof can be used to plant vegetable seeds. Tomatoes, carrots, beets, snow peas, cabbage, broccoli, lettuce (leafy varieties), and herbs can be grown. Much attention needs to be given to a vegetable garden in order to keep the insects and crows from consuming the fruits of your labor.

Clothing

An umbrella is good protection against the rain or sun. Bring a large supply of summer clothing and shoes for all occasions. Loose-fitting cotton clothes are more comfortable than synthetics for the high humidity that prevails throughout much of the year. Clothes wear out due to frequent washing and required changes.

Because black rust permeates everything and mildew is prevalent 9 months of the year, clothing and leather items must be given special attention. Plastic garment bags are not recommended. Use old sheets, etc., to cover stored clothes and to act as dust covers on open clothing racks. Local tailors can make basic men's, women's, and children's clothing. Success is most often achieved when a garment copy is supplied. Bring a good supply of fine cotton fabrics and sewing notions and have clothes made locally. Tailors cannot use paper patterns, but include them if you sew yourself. Local fabric and notion selections are limited in quality, color, and selection.

Wool clothing and sweaters can be worn a few weeks during the cool season and for traveling to neighboring India and Nepal. Clothing customs vary with the season; lightweight suits are worn by men more often during the cooler months.

Men: Local safari suits or sport shirts and slacks are worn to work most of the year. Ties are appropriate in most offices. During the cool

season, lightweight suits are often worn. Sweatsuits are handy for the cooler months.

All-cotton shirts and slacks are most comfortable for 9 months of the year. Blends, however, are tolerable for work in the air-conditioned office and for cooler weather. Bring an adequate supply of shoes for work and sports, including sandals and thongs for poolside use. Sweaters and other lightweight wool clothing are used during the cool months and for travel. Include a good supply of cotton underwear, socks, and proper athletic wear for a variety of sports.

Women: Bring lightweight, comfortable clothing for home or office wear. Mid-calf-length dresses or sleeved blouses with skirts are most common; pants with long blouses are also appropriate. Bring washable fabrics; dry-cleaning is available but not reliable.

Modest attire with covered back and shoulders and mid-calf skirts is appropriate for occasions that include Bangladeshis. A lightweight shawl or jacket to cover shoulders is often sufficient to use with more typically U.S. summer styles; jackets are handy for air-conditioned rooms as well. Sundresses and shorts can be worn at home, at the home of an American friend, or at the American Recreation Club. Two-piece swimwear is acceptable at private clubs. It is important, however, to be covered when you are traveling between home and your destination.

Many discover the practical comfort of the "shalwar kamiz," a traditional costume with cool, loose-fitting pants and a long tunic or blouse. It may be purchased locally in cotton or silk or tailored for you in a fabric of your choice.

Children: Good-quality, ready-made clothing for children is not available. Clothing for boys is particularly hard to find. Bring a good supply and keep in mind how quickly children grow. Bring a large supply of tennis shoes and sandals.

Consider the warm weather and include sundresses, shorts, T-shirts, cotton underwear, a large supply of socks, and several bathing suits. Sweatpants, jeans, and sweaters are necessary for winter and travel. Dressy clothes are seldom needed. A typical school outfit includes shorts, T-shirts, and tennis socks for both boys and girls.

Besides umbrellas, you might want to bring a lightweight rain slicker, galoshes, or gumshoes. However, the heat during the rainy season may render such items impractical. The galoshes might be more practical for children who might play outside after a storm. Bring nonskid shoes and slippers, as the floors in most houses are a noncarpeted tile. Costumes for Halloween and school plays are useful items, but costumes can easily be made by the local tailors.

Bring all clothing for infants. Rubber pants with diapers encourage skin rashes; try improved products available in the U.S. Bring diapers and good-quality pins and rubber padding. Some cotton clothing, but not the best quality, can be found locally.

Supplies and Services

Bangladesh has strict import laws. Many items may be found on the local market but at very high prices.

Dhaka has several beauty parlors. Bring your own hair-coloring products; henna is available here and has been popular among the Americans. Dry-cleaning services are inexpensive but not very reliable. Picture framing is also reasonable; however, proper matting material is not available. Film processing is adequate and reasonably priced. Local tailors can sew basic styles or copy an existing garment successfully and inexpensively; local fabric selection and notion supplies are limited. Basic vehicle repairs are done locally, though parts are sometimes difficult to find.

Religious Activities

The Constitution of Bangladesh grants all religions the freedom to



Three-wheel taxis in Dhaka.

Cory Langley. Reproduced by permission.

preach, practice, and propagate their faith. Catholic and Protestant congregations have been established for generations in Dhaka.

Most Roman Catholics from the American community attend English-language Masses held on Saturday at St. Mary's Cathedral in Ramna or on Sunday at Banani Seminary in Banani. Many priests are U.S. citizens (Holy Cross Fathers). First communion and religious education classes are also held.

An interdenominational Protestant church holds English-language services every Friday morning in Gulshan. This interdenominational congregation sponsors an active group for all youth from grades 6 through 12. The Anglican church, St. Thomas' New Centre, has English-language services twice weekly. Seventh-day Adventists,

Latter-day Saints, Mennonites, Bahai, and Assemblies of God are also represented in Dhaka.

Education

The American International School Dhaka (AIS/D) is a coeducational day school for students of all nationalities from preschool (4 years old) through grade 12.

The school is divided into three sections, elementary school, middle school, and high school, with a student population of approximately 500. AIS/D is administered by an American superintendent and two principals and governed by a 10-member school board comprising parents of students enrolled in the school. Three positions on the board are direct-hire U.S. Embassy employees, two are other Americans, and four are other nationalities. AIS/D is accredited by the Middle States Association of Col-

leges and Schools and the European Council of International Schools.

The school occupies a 4-acre campus in Baridhara, a suburb of Dhaka. The modern, air-conditioned building consists of a library; 47 classrooms, including 2 art, 2 music, 5 science, and 3 computer rooms; a gymnasium; a multipurpose room; and an auditorium. School grounds encompass a softball/soccer field, volleyball and basketball courts, a 25-meter swimming pool, and a playground area.

A library of 25,000 volumes is available for students and their families. The facility is available on a fee basis to expatriate employees of any organization that sponsors children attending the school. All instructional and art materials are furnished by the school. AIS/D operates its own fleet of 15 modern buses for transporting students to

and from school. Transportation is also provided for all after-school activities.

The curriculum is based on the American model. Numerous specialty teachers are employed: art, music, physical education, computers, English as a Second Language, resource specialist, French, Spanish, and south Asian studies. The school's scholastic standards are high, and graduates attend many fine universities worldwide. AIS/D can accommodate some students with minor learning difficulties, but it does not have a special education program. Parents of children with special needs must contact the school before accepting a posting in Dhaka.

A strong extracurricular program is maintained for students of all ages. Each quarter, after-school activities are offered for a small fee. On average, 30 different activities are scheduled each quarter. The school participates in the South Asia Inter School Association (SAISA) and sponsors athletic teams including swimming, track and field, basketball, volleyball, and soccer. In addition, the school's PTA sponsors a weekend soccer program and scouting opportunities. PTA activities depend on parent volunteers.

Students travel in and out of the country to participate in SAISA events and educational field trips. A summer session is available but is recreational in nature. The academic year begins in mid-August and ends in early June.

Parents wishing to enroll their children should write: Superintendent, American Embassy (AIS/D), Dhaka, Bangladesh, Department of State, Washington, DC 20521-6120. There is an application fee and a yearly capital fee. Tuition rates for 1995-96 were as follows: Preschool, \$2,700; Kindergarten-Grade 3, \$6,850; Grades 4-5, \$7,250; Grade 6, \$8,550; Grade 7, \$8,450; Grade 8, \$8,800; Grade 9, \$9,000; Grade 10, \$9,400; Grade 11, \$9,000; Grade 12, \$9,500.

Alternative schooling is very limited in Dhaka. Several other preschools are available.

High school students may choose to attend a boarding school in the U.S. or one of two schools in India. The schools in India are missionary founded and of high quality. Woodstock begins and ends in June with a 3-month break from December 1 to March 1. Kodaikanal follows a more typical American calendar. For additional information, write directly to the schools:

Woodstock School
Mussoorie, U.P.
India

Kodaikanal School
Kodaikanal, Post Box 25
Tamil Nadu 624101, India
Fax: (91) 4542-41109

Special Educational Opportunities

The Heed Institute in Dhaka offers lessons in Bangla scheduled for half-day sessions. French may be taken at the French School and Alliance Française. Trenton State College periodically offers graduate courses for the faculty of AIS/D in which members of the community may also enroll. AIS/D recently began a few short courses for adults at the school. Such courses include computer and swimming classes.

Sports

The American Recreation Club is an extremely attractive compound covering about half a city block and located in Gulshan Model City. It includes two lighted, hard-surface tennis courts; one air-conditioned squash court; swimming and wading pools; volleyball and badminton areas; a basketball court; two playgrounds; and (in 1996) a weight/aerobics room. Inexpensive squash and tennis lessons are available, but we suggest you bring all of your own equipment and sportswear, as local availability of such goods is sporadic.

Club amenities also consist of a restaurant and bar, a large multipurpose room, a cabana by the pool, a

video rental facility (U.S. specifications), and a fine catering service. Special activities are featured monthly, sports tournaments are held frequently, and the weekly Thursday highlight of Pizza Night is a popular event. The club is open for breakfast on weekends and holidays. Monthly dues apply.

The Kurmitola Golf Club is located on the Dhaka Cantonment near Gulshan. In addition to an 18-hole golf course, the facility has a swimming pool and a restaurant/bar open daily. Membership fees are high and fluctuate from year to year. There is restricted access to the golf club for nonmembers. Members must pay an additional monthly fee. Lessons are available, usually from a caddie since the club has no pro on staff. No rental clubs exist. Bring all equipment including clubs, balls, and pull-cart if desired.

The Sheraton and Sonargaon hotels also provide recreational opportunities. Memberships are available for the health club, tennis, and swimming facilities. Fees are moderately high.

Numerous opportunities for adult team sports are available. Currently, active teams exist for slow-pitch softball, volleyball, basketball, rugby, tennis, and soccer. Hashers race throughout the year. Aerobics classes are also available. Activities vary depending upon expatriate interest.

Bicycles may be used in residential areas, but traffic is congested, and it is quite dangerous for children learning to ride.

Boating and fishing are limited, but it is possible to either buy or rent a country boat. Large boats can be hired at Sadarghat in Old Dhaka or Narayanganj, approximately 10 miles from Dhaka. Groups often go on boating parties.

Cox's Bazar, which is south of Chittagong, is the only usable ocean beach in Bangladesh. Swimming in local rivers and ponds is not safe.

There are several clubs operated by other foreign embassies and international groups. Most of the clubs have tennis courts, squash courts, and swimming pools. Several of these clubs have open nights when members of other clubs are welcome to attend. Each of the clubs sponsors various social events throughout the year for the expatriate community.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Interesting buildings and sights in Dhaka include the High Court, Dhaka Museum, Lalbagh Fort, Armenian Church, and Nawab's Palace. The Star Mosque, known for its lovely blue star external ornamentation, and the Baital-Mukarram, built in the style of the Kaaba at Mecca, are two of the most notable of the several hundred mosques throughout the city.

The zoo and botanical gardens provide interesting diversions from the crowded city streets. The narrow, winding streets of the Chowkbazaar section of Old Dhaka have picturesque bazaars and shops. The main riverfront of the city, Sadarghat, lies on the bank of the Buriganga River; a visit to the ferry terminal is a good starting point to see Old Dhaka.

Many people limit their travel outside and around Dhaka due to traffic congestion and lack of public services. During monsoon season, bridges are often washed out, which restricts land travel, making people rely on the airline and train companies, which are not always reliable.

Approximately 10 miles from Dhaka is Narayanganj, the center of the jute trade in Bangladesh and a thriving river port. A number of Moghul and Buddhist ruins are within 25 miles of the city. A river trip to Khulna is an enjoyable 3-day outing from Dhaka. The beautiful scenery and the active life of the Bangladeshis along the river's edge can be viewed from the calmness of the boat's deck.

Cox's Bazar, 94 miles south of Chittagong, has a 75-mile, unpopulated

beach along the Bay of Bengal. The Bangladeshi Government encourages the development of Cox's Bazar as a tourist resort; three modern, modest hotels are there. Round-trip flights from Dhaka are available at relatively reasonable rates.

Sylhet, with 78,000 acres and 132 tea estates, offers a pleasant and relaxing change from city life. Rangamati, in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, is a tribal area recently opened to expatriates. It is a nice place to visit, where you can take quiet walks and visit some of the tribal villages. A visit to the Sunderbans is pleasant if you like roughing it. The Sunderbans claims to be the largest mangrove forest in the world. It might be your one chance to see the famous Bengal tiger (but don't count on it!).

Round-trip flights from Dhaka leave daily for Calcutta. There is currently a direct flight to New Delhi on British Airways four times a week.

Daily flights to Bangkok leave Dhaka. Bangkok is a busy city and a nice diversion from Dhaka. Flights to Katmandu leave Dhaka five times a week, offering cooler weather in Nepal and an opportunity to trek in the Himalayas. On Thursdays and the second and fourth Wednesday of each month, there are direct flights to Rangoon.

Entertainment

There are no acceptable recreational facilities for picnicking, hiking, or hunting within easy reach of Dhaka. There are no theaters that offer movies in English. Recreation is limited in variety and consists largely of self-generated dinners or receptions. Everyone makes use of the limited facilities and activities available—primarily the American Recreation Club, school, and private residences. Reception rooms in the two hotels can be rented at a high cost.

Western cultural presentations are limited. USIS and other diplomatic agencies, including the British Council, Alliance Française, and

German Cultural Center, occasionally sponsor plays, lectures, films, and musical programs. Plays are presented throughout the year by the Dhaka Stage theater group and AIS/D. The Dhaka Chorus and AIS/D present concerts during the year.

A number of restaurants serve Asian dishes. Italian and Indian restaurants are also available. The Sonargaon and Sheraton hotels have several restaurants that offer a greater variety of entrees.

The National Museum, Shilpakala Academy, and Osmani Hall host exhibitions and cultural performances. You may enjoy folk music, dance festivals, plays, poetry readings, art exhibitions, and recitals.

Other sponsoring groups include the Art Council of Bangladesh, the Bulbul Academy of Fine Arts, the College of Music, the College of Arts and Crafts, Nazrul Academy, and foreign cultural missions (USIS and the British Council, German Cultural Institute, and Alliance Française). The Dhaka Museum includes collections of 10th- and 12th-century Hindu and Buddhist sculpture, folk arts and crafts of tribal groups, painting, ancient coins, and Moghul arms and jewelry.

Social Activities

Organizations within the American community include the ARA and the Dhaka American Women's Club (DAWC). Currently, a complete Boy Scouting program is available, as are Brownies for girls. Several organized play groups for small children are active.

All women are invited to join the DAWC. In addition to charitable work and community service, the DAWC organizes excursions and activities. A monthly newsletter, the *Bangladasher*, is also published by the club.

A number of expatriates, who can best be met through the cultural, special interest, and sports activities, live in Dhaka. The U.N. Women's Association (UNWA) offers



Cory Langley. Reproduced by permission.

Street scene in Chittagong.

an associate membership to women who are not spouses of U.N. employees. There is an active Dhaka International Garden Club. The Dhaka Stage theater group welcomes volunteers for its productions. Dhaka has several international service clubs. Individual and team sports competitions provide a good opportunity to meet the large expatriate community. The Dhaka Chorus sings each week and gives two concerts a year. Duplicate bridge and mah-jongg groups meet weekly.

Chittagong

Chittagong is located 12 miles from the mouth of the Karnaphuli River in southeast Bangladesh, near the Bay of Bengal and about 125 miles south of Dhaka. It is situated in one of the regions of heaviest annual rainfall in the world. Bangladesh's chief port, with modern facilities for oceangoing vessels, Chittagong is also an important rail terminus and

administrative center. Exported items include jute, tea, skins, and hides, while cotton and other fabrics, machinery, and construction materials are items imported.

During the 1960s, oil installations were set up offshore. Chittagong has an oil refinery and blending plants, as well as other industries that include cotton and jute processing mills, tea and match factories, engineering and chemical works, iron and steel mills, and fruit canning, leather processing, and shipbuilding facilities. Power for the local industries is supplied by the Karnaphuli hydroelectric project.

The city has a current population of nearly 2 million (1991 est.), and has landmarks that include Hindu temples, Buddhist ruins, and several examples of Mogul art. There are a university, founded in 1966, and several arts and professional colleges.

Historically, Chittagong was known to the civilized world in the early centuries (A.D.). The port was used by Arakan, Arab, Persian, Mogul, and Portuguese mariners; the latter called the city Porto Grande. Chittagong was originally part of an ancient Hindu kingdom and was conquered by a Buddhist king of Arakan in the ninth century. It became part of the Mogul empire in the 13th century, was retaken by the Arakans in the 16th century, and was recaptured by the Moguls a century later. The British East India Company took control in 1760. Chittagong's port facilities were damaged during the Indo-Pakistani War in 1971.

OTHER CITIES

BARISAL is an important river port in southern Bangladesh on the Ganges River delta, 90 miles south

of Dhaka. With a population of approximately 188,000 (1991 est.), Barisal is a transshipment point for jute and rice, as well as a market for fish and betel nuts. Jute, oilseed, flour, and rice mills are also located here. The city has three colleges affiliated with the University of Dhaka. A phenomenon named the “Barisal guns” occurs in the city; these are unexplained sounds that resemble thunder or cannons, and are believed to have a seismic origin.

COMILLA, 50 miles southeast of Dhaka, lies on an affluent of the Meghna River. Situated on the main railroad and highway linking Dhaka and Chittagong, Comilla is an administrative center and collection point for hides and skins. The city also has a cottage industry in cane and bamboo basketry. The site of three colleges affiliated with the University of Dhaka, Comilla has a population exceeding 155,000 (1991 est.) and is one of the most densely populated areas of Bangladesh.

DINĀJPUR is the headquarters of the eponymous district, located about 190 miles northwest of Dhaka. Employment here is provided by mills, farms, and a power station. Dinājpur’s northeastern section contains the old city, with the former house of the maharajah. The University of Rājshāhi is associated with two government colleges here. An estimated 138,000 people live in Dinājpur (1991 est.).

FARIDPUR, named for the Muslim holy man Farid Shar and the site of his shrine, is in southern Bangladesh, about 50 miles west of the capital. With a population of about 50,000, Faridpur is an administrative center, railway terminus, and market town for rice and jute. Two colleges affiliated with the University of Dhaka are located here.

JESSORE lies on the Bhairab River, 90 miles southwest of Dhaka. An administrative headquarters, the city has approximately 154,000 residents (1991 est.). Landmarks here include shrines of Muslim saints and the Rajbāri of Chanchra.

Supposedly, Jessore’s name is taken from *yaśohara*, or “glory depriving”; Gauer was the pre-eminent city at the time, until Jessore surpassed it in importance. A library, a stadium, and four government colleges are located here.

KHULNA, whose population is 1 million (1991 est.), is located near the Ganges delta about 125 miles southwest of Dhaka and 77 miles northeast of Calcutta, India. The city is one of Bangladesh’s chief ports and the trade and processing center for the products of the Sundarbans—a swampy, forested region. Rice, jute, and other agricultural products are processed here, and there is also some shipbuilding and textile manufacturing in Khulna. Timber and forest products are exported.

MYMENSINGH (also spelled Maimansingh) is in north-central Bangladesh, on an old channel of the Brahmaputra River. Rice, jute, sugarcane, oilseeds, tobacco, mustard, and pulse (edible seeds of leguminous plants) are traded in Mymensingh. The city was once known for the manufacture of glass bangles, and now its industries include jute pressing and electrical supply factories. Mohan College, affiliated with the University of Dhaka, is located here. There is also an agricultural university, a veterinary training institute, and the Institute of Radiation Genetics and Plant Breeding. Formerly called Nasirabad, the city today has a population close to 202,000 (1991 est.).

NARAYANGANJ (also spelled Narayungunj) is the river port for Dhaka and one of Bangladesh’s busiest trade centers. Located at the confluence of the Bakhya and Chaleshwari Rivers, the city’s population is estimated at 296,000 (1991 est.) Dhaka and Narayanganj together comprise Bangladesh’s principal industrial region. Narayanganj is also a collection center for hides and skins, and a receiving point for imports from and exports to Calcutta, India. Industries in the city range from jute presses, cotton and textile mills, and ship repair

facilities, to leather, glass, footwear, and undergarment manufacturers. The famous shrine of the Muslim holy man Kadam Rasal is located nearby.

PABNA is in western Bangladesh on the Ichamati River, about 75 miles northwest of the capital. Known for its handmade products and hosiery, Pabna is the site of the Hindu temple of Jor Banga. With a current population of close to 112,000 (1991 est.), Pabna has a college affiliated with Rajshahi University.

RAJSHAHI is in west-central Bangladesh on the Ganges River, about 130 miles southwest of Dhaka and 40 miles west of the Indian border. Formerly called Rampur Boalia, the city is the administrative center for a region that produces nearly all of the country’s silk. Industries in Rajshahi include oil pressing plants, match factories, and sawmills. The Varendra Research Museum, a silk institute, and a university (founded in 1953) with several affiliated colleges, are also located here. Rajshahi has a population of over 430,000.

RANGPUR, in northwest Bangladesh on the Little Ghaghet River, is 175 miles north of Dhaka. Situated in a tobacco growing district, Rangpur manufactures cigarettes and cigars and is noted for its cotton carpets. With an estimated population of 549,000 (1991 est.), Rangpur has a college that is affiliated with Rajshahi University.

SIRĀJGANJ, located about 68 miles northwest of the capital in the north-central region, is a principal jute center. The first jute mills in the Bengal were opened here. Sirājganj became a city in 1869; it has three colleges and a population of about 108,000 (1991 est.).

SYLHET, situated just south of the Indian border and 125 miles northeast of Dhaka, is the administrative center for a region that cultivates rice and tea and has extensive limestone quarrying. Industries within the city include tea factories and a

well-known cane facility. Sylhet is a center of Islamic culture and is the site of several tombs of Muslim holy men. Three colleges affiliated with the University of Dhaka are located in Sylhet. The city's population is close to 117,000 (1991 est.).

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Bordered on three sides by India and sharing a border with Myanmar (Burma), Bangladesh is located in south Asia on the northern edge of the Bay of Bengal. Approximately 120 million people inhabit an area the size of Wisconsin.

Bangladesh consists primarily of low-lying plains that never rise more than 35 feet above sea level. The delta region of 55,598 square miles is formed by the Ganges and Brahmaputra Rivers and smaller tributary rivers. Changes in topography occur only in the northeastern hilly tea-growing regions of Sylhet and the southeastern forest regions of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The capital, Dhaka, is less than 25 feet above sea level.

Bangladesh has three main seasons. The mild (70°F) season, from mid-October to the end of February, is characterized by clear sunny skies and cool (50°F) evenings. This is when cyclones are least likely, making travel in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and Cox's Bazar ideal.

The hot season, from March until the end of May, has little rain. The early part is pleasant (75°F), but as the monsoon approaches, hot (95°F) temperatures and high humidity make life extremely difficult.

The monsoon season is June to mid-October. At the beginning of the monsoon, the continuous rains cool the atmosphere. Temperatures are milder (85 to 90°F), but it is the

oppressive humidity that makes the climate uncomfortable.

Tropical cyclones that emerge from the Bay of Bengal with high winds and tidal waves hit Bangladesh an average of 16 times a decade. Travelers must be prepared for flooding and cyclones, particularly in the coastal areas, throughout the monsoon season. Unpredictable weather patterns during the monsoon season greatly affect living conditions and agricultural crops throughout the country.

Population

The population of Bangladesh is estimated at 131.3 million (1991 est.) with an annual growth rate of 2%. Bangladesh is the most densely populated agricultural country in the world. The areas around the capital city, Dhaka, and around Comilla are the most densely settled. The Sunderbans, an area of coastal tropical jungle in the southwest, and the Chittagong Hill Tracts on the southeastern border with Myanmar and India are the least densely populated areas. Population growth is a concern of the Bangladeshi Government.

About 35% of the population is under 15 years of age. The literacy rate is 63% for males and 49% for females. Life expectancy is 60 years, and unemployment and poverty are considerable. Over 35% of the population lives at or below subsistence level; the average per capita income is approximately US\$1,570 (2000 est.).

Urbanization is proceeding rapidly, and it is estimated that only 30 percent of the population entering the labor force in the future will be absorbed into agriculture, although many will likely find other kinds of work in rural areas. Unemployment and underemployment will remain substantial problems.

Bangladesh, like all modern countries, has a mixture of people of varied origins. The great majority of the Bangladeshis are of mixed Aryan-Dravidian stock; however,

many families can also track their ancestors back to the Middle East and central Asia. These Bengalis inhabit most of the broad plains of Bangladesh. The original tribal people, with less than 1 percent of the population, migrated hundreds of years ago from Burma, Thailand, Assam, and other areas in Southeast Asia. They possess oriental features and live mainly in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and along the northern borders of the Dinajpur, Mymensingh, and Sylhet Districts. Bangladeshis are mostly Muslim; Hindus comprise a 16 percent minority. The other religions in Bangladesh, Buddhists, Christians, Baha'is, and animists, number only 1 percent. Islam was declared the state religion in 1988 and affects all aspects of life in Bangladesh.

Although English is spoken in some urban areas and among the educated, Bangla (also referred to as Bengali) is the official language. English is no longer used for instruction in public primary or secondary schools; it is used sporadically in judicial proceedings, businesses and universities. Technical writing is in English.

The statutes of Bangladesh conform to Islamic laws, but the system of law in the courts derives from English common law. In rural areas, where most of the people live, interpretations of conservative Islam and local customs predominate. Freedom of religion is guaranteed; however, minorities do not have the same access to upward mobility as Muslims.

The people of Bangladesh are friendly. Crowds are everywhere. The vast numbers of people sometimes overwhelm a newcomer. The tradition of secluding women creates a largely male population to be seen on the streets and in the marketplace in older sections of Dhaka and the villages. With the expanding garment industry, however, more women are working and in public view.

Public Institutions

The region encompassing Bangladesh, the delta of two major river systems, has been a center of commerce and culture since the beginning of recorded history. Bangladesh attained its independence in 1971.

British rule over modern Bangladesh ended in August 1947, when India and Pakistan became independent nations. The serious political, linguistic, historical, cultural, and economic differences dividing East and West Pakistan were temporarily masked by enthusiasm for independence from the British. Although East Pakistan (Bangladesh) had a larger population and was the chief foreign exchange earner, government power was centered in West Pakistan. As Islamic brotherhood as a rallying cry lost its appeal, Bangladeshi identity in East Pakistan began to take precedence over Muslim identity.

In March 1971, the leader of the East Pakistan Awami League, which stood for Bengali nationalism, was arrested for political activities and unwillingness to compromise on the issue of provincial autonomy. Other Awami League leaders fled to India and established a government in exile. Civil war began. Millions crossed the Indian border, and hundreds of thousands were displaced in Bangladesh. Approximately 35,000 were killed in 9 months. A beleaguered Pakistani Army fought the Mukti Bahini (Liberation Army).

The refugee pressure in India in the fall of 1971 produced new tensions. Indian sympathies were with East Pakistan. In November, India intervened on the side of the Bangladeshis. On December 16, 1971, Pakistani forces surrendered, and the new nation of Bangladesh was born. The U.S. extended diplomatic recognition on April 4, 1972, and the People's Republic of Bangladesh became a member of the U.N. in September 1974.

The People's Republic of Bangladesh is governed under the provision of a written Constitution. The Constitution created a strong executive Prime Minister, an independent judiciary, and a unicameral legislature on a modified Westminster model. The Constitution adopted as state policy the Awami League's four basic principles of nationalism, secularism, socialism, and democracy.

There are 30 to 40 active political parties in Bangladesh. Only four parties have more than 10 members elected to the current parliament.

Arts, Science, and Education

Bangladeshis take great pride in their rich and subtle language, Bangla, and in its long tradition of literature, poetry, and music. Assertion of their national identity and language became a prime rallying point during the Bangladeshis' struggle for independence from West Pakistan and remains a dominant theme in all sectors of life and culture.

Bangladeshi artistic expression is best expressed in its handicrafts: inlaid woodwork, brass, and pottery. Bangladeshi folk embroidery, "nakshi kantha," depicts realistic and stylized scenes or designs and may be found intricately stitched and greatly detailed or in rustic and simple form. Representational art shows a distinct traditional Moghul influence. Modern painters can also be found.

Music and song are greatly appreciated in Bangladesh in both folk and classical forms. The songs of the "bauls," the traditional wandering folk minstrels, are especially popular. The bauls sing simple and lively songs that tell tales and describe mystic inspiration, playing rudimentary stringed instruments and drums, with the singer dancing and interacting with his audience. Also popular are songs of revered Bengali poets. Moghul traditional court music forms the basis for modern

classical counterparts, using instruments such as the sitar, a stringed instrument, with percussion accompaniment of the tabla. Classical dance is similar to the stylized forms of Northern India. Bangladeshi pop music consists of songs from Bangla and Hindi films and is ubiquitous throughout Bangladesh, as it is throughout the subcontinent.

The educational system in Bangladesh includes 5 years of primary education, 5 years of secondary education, and 2 years of college (U.S. senior high equivalent), which results in an intermediate arts degree. The final 2 years of higher education for a bachelor of arts or science degree are equivalent to a U.S. associate of arts degree. Formal education in Bangladesh ends at this level, although some students may pursue a graduate-level master's degree (equivalent to a U.S. bachelor's degree). The quality of public education is low due to lack of facilities and supplies. Attendance for school-age students is 70% in primary education and 18% in secondary education. In 1996, only about 3% of the GDP was allocated to education.

Commerce and Industry

Bangladesh's economy is primarily based on agriculture. Despite devastating floods in 1998, successive record harvests have led to a slight rebound in the economy. Agriculture accounted for 26% of GDP in 2000 and is the primary occupation of about 70.0% of the population.

Major industries include jute and leather goods and cotton textiles. Others are sugar, iron and steel mills, fertilizer plants, and a small number of food-processing plants. Natural gas deposits are being exploited, but Bangladesh does not have many other natural resources. A growing garment industry is located throughout Bangladesh for assembling garments for export.

Aid from the U.S. and other donors is about 60 percent of the domestic

development budget. In addition to the U.S., major donors are the World Bank/International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Japan, Canada, Australia, Saudi Arabia, and Western Europe. Most of Bangladesh's exports—raw jute and jute goods, leather, frozen seafood, and tea—go to the U.S., Italy, the U.K., Germany, and Japan. Bangladesh imports most of its food grains, machinery, petroleum, vegetable oils, and fertilizer from Japan, the U.S., Singapore, Hong Kong, and China. Over 80 nongovernmental voluntary aid agencies (NGO's), in addition to official agencies, operate in Bangladesh.

The USAID program in Bangladesh is one of the U.S. Government's largest. It focuses on reducing poverty by reducing the rate of population growth, increasing agricultural productivity, and building democratic institutions. The Bangladeshi Government places a high priority on these development goals.

Transportation

Bicycle rickshaws, baby-taxis (small three-wheeled motorized vehicles), and buses provide public transportation. A private vehicle for personal use around Dhaka is useful. Driving is on the left, but both right-hand- and left-hand-drive vehicles may be used. Only leaded gas and diesel fuel are available in Bangladesh. Compact or intermediate-sized cars are best suited for the congested road conditions. Many city streets are narrow, rough, and crowded with buses, trucks, rickshaws, pushcarts, animals, and pedestrians. Air-conditioning is strongly recommended.

A few car rental agencies are available; prices are high but include both insurance and driver.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

Phone services are inadequate. Though efforts are slowly underway

to upgrade the telephone system, including expanding domestic and international capacity and installing digital exchanges, the government-run service currently has only about 580,000 lines to serve 130 million people.

Four private companies now are operating cellular service. Several Internet service providers now exist in Dhaka.

Radio and TV

Bangladesh currently has one local TV station broadcasting in Dhaka and to relay stations around the country. TV is government controlled, and telecasts are 7 hours daily with extended hours on Fridays. Programs include a 10 pm English newscast. A few popular U.S. and British serials and movies may be seen following the late-night news. In the morning, the BBC (7 am to 8 am) and CNN (8 am to 11 am) are broadcast.

Bangladesh TV uses the PAL TV system (625-line color). A PAL or multi-system TV and video recorder are necessary to view local TV or rental tapes from local private video shops. An American TV (NTSC system) will work with a VCR but will not receive local programs.

Radio is the primary communications medium in Bangladesh. Radio Bangladesh broadcasts a wide schedule of AM programs and also programs in FM through the TV system. Occasionally you are able to pick up signals of Western music on the FM station, including BBC transmissions. A high-quality short-wave radio is needed to receive broadcasts of Voice of America, Radio Australia, and the Armed Forces Radio and Television Network.

Health and Medicine

Preventive Measures

Before arrival in Bangladesh, individuals should ensure that all of their immunizations are current. In addition to the standard childhood

immunizations, the following immunizations are strongly recommended: hepatitis A, hepatitis B, meningitis, rabies, and typhoid fever. Immunizations are available at post, but postponing the immunizations until arrival will delay for several months the onset of disease immunity.

Malaria prophylaxis is no longer recommended within Dhaka but is required for travel outside the city. Either mefloquine or the chloroquine/Paludrine combination is recommended.

Dhaka's water supply is contaminated. All water used for drinking, brushing teeth, and washing fruits and vegetables must be boiled for 1 minute. Servants should be instructed carefully and supervised frequently in the boiling procedure.

The water in local restaurants is often not boiled. Drink only bottled water without ice cubes. Restaurants allow you to bring your own drinks.

It is possible to shop for meats, fish, and fresh fruits and vegetables locally. Fruits and vegetables must be carefully soaked in Clorox. Cook meat from local markets thoroughly and determine the freshness of fish before eating.

Occasional gastrointestinal upsets are unavoidable. With normal precautions, serious amebiasis, bacillary dysentery, and intestinal parasites can be kept at minimal levels. Respiratory and superficial skin infections are common. Even the smallest of wounds should be carefully cleaned.

By taking necessary precautions, most people in Dhaka remain healthy. Most problems are not exotic tropical diseases; rather, they are the same pattern of colds, allergies due to unhealthy and polluted local conditions, and childhood illnesses encountered at home.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan. 1	New Year's Day
Feb. 21	Martyrs' Day
Mar. 26	Independence Day
Mar/Apr.	Bengali New Year*
Aug. 15	Day of Mourning
Nov. 7	Revolution Day
Dec. 16	Victory Day
.	Muharram*
.	Id
.	e-Milladunnabi*
.	Janmashami*
.	Shab-e-Quadr*
.	Ramadan*
.	Id al-Fitr*
.	Id-al-Adha*

*variable, by Islamic and Hindi calendars

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs & Duties

Routes via London or Amsterdam are on an American carrier. Through London, British Airways flies to Dhaka 4 days a week, Biman Bangladesh Airlines flies 5 days a week and Emirates flies to Dhaka 4 days a week. If you route through Amsterdam via New York or Boston, there are flights to Dhaka arriving on Monday and Thursday on KLM.

Northwest or United Airlines may be flown from the west coast via the Pacific to Hong Kong, Bangkok, or Singapore. Daily connections to Dhaka are available from these cities via Dragon, Thai, Singapore, or Biman Airlines.

A passport and onward/return ticket are required. A visa is not required for a tourist stay of up to 15 days. Visas (landing permits) are available for a fee upon arrival by air. Further information on entry requirements can be obtained from the Embassy of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 3510 International Drive, N.W., Washington,

D.C. 20008, telephone 202-244-0183, fax 202-244-5366, web site <http://www.bangladeshembassy.com> or from the Bangladesh consulates in New York, 211 E. 43rd Street, Suite 502, New York, NY 10017, telephone 212-599-6767, or the Bangladesh Consulate in Los Angeles, 10850 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 1250, Los Angeles, CA 90024, telephone 310-441-9399, web site <http://www.bangladeshconsulatela.com>.

Americans living in or visiting Bangladesh are encouraged to register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Dhaka and obtain updated information on travel and security within Bangladesh. The U.S. Embassy is located at Diplomatic Enclave, Madani Avenue, Baridhara, Dhaka, telephone (880-2) 882-4700 through 22, fax number (880-2) 882-4449. For emergency services during business hours, call (880-2) 882-3805. For emergency services after hours, call (880-2) 882-4700 and ask for the Duty Officer. The Embassy's Internet home page is <http://www.usembassy-dhaka.org/state/embassy.htm>. Their workweek is Sunday - Thursday.

Pets

Bangladesh has no quarantine requirements for pets. Have your pet fully inoculated (rabies, distemper, etc.) and bring vaccination certificates and certificate of good health properly executed by a veterinarian. If pets accompany the traveler as excess baggage, no customs formalities are required. No established kennels are available. Veterinarians are available, although their competence varies. Bring a leash and all other pet supplies, including a good quantity of medicated flea shampoo and deworming medicine.

Currency, Banking and Weights and Measures

Bangladesh currency is in denominations of takas and paishas (one-hundredth of a taka). The exchange rate fluctuates frequently but not by a great amount. The current exchange rate is approximately

US\$1 = Taka 57 (July 2001). Currency notes are 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, and 500 takas.

The metric system is used in Bangladesh. Occasionally the old system of weights and measures of seers, mounds, tolas, and bighas is used. The old system is rarely seen in Dhaka.

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BHUTAN

Kingdom of Bhutan

Major Cities:

Thimphu, Paro

Other Cities:

Punakha, Tongsa

INTRODUCTION

BHUTAN is a land of great beauty and mystery. Situated in the Himalaya Mountains, this tiny kingdom was largely isolated from the rest of the world for centuries. However, the late 20th century marked an end to Bhutan's isolation. The absorption of Tibet, Bhutan's major trading partner, by China in 1959 and India's annexation of Bhutan's neighbor, the Kingdom of Sikkim, in 1975, prompted the Bhutanese to realize that they could no longer remain isolated while surrounded by two powerful neighbors. Under the guidance of its leader, King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, Bhutan joined the United Nations in 1971. Three years later, the country was opened to foreign tourists for the first time.

Today, Bhutan remains largely unknown to most Westerners. It is a land of unspoiled alpine valleys and beautiful mountain peaks dotted with *dzongs* (fortresses). Centuries of isolation allowed Bhutan to develop a rich religious, cultural, and artistic heritage. As more of Bhutan becomes accessible, new locations and new experiences are opening to visitors.

MAJOR CITIES

Thimphu

Thimphu, located in west-central Bhutan, is the nation's capital. Once a sleepy rural community, Thimphu is now the country's center of government, religion, and commerce. Nestled in a fertile agricultural valley, Thimphu is a trading center for the rice, corn, and wheat grown in the area. Industrial activity in and around Thimphu is extremely sparse. Most industrial production is centered on lumbering. A large sawmill is located in Thimphu. In 1966, a large hydroelectric plant was built in Thimphu. This plant produces power to the surrounding region. The city has no major airport, but is served by a small airstrip. The population of Thimphu is about 30,000 (1993 est.).

Recreation

Recreation in and around Thimphu is centered on government-sponsored walking tours. Because many of Bhutan's monasteries, sacred mountain peaks, and *dzongs* are off-limits to foreigners, the number of accessible sites in Thimphu and other areas is extremely limited. However, beautiful attractions are available in Thimphu. One example is a *chorten* (shrine) in honor of one

of Bhutan's earlier rulers, Jigme Dorji Wangchuck. The shrine, which has several floors, is adorned with paintings depicting various Buddhist deities. It was constructed in 1974 and offers a beautiful view of Thimphu.

Thimphu's most beautiful building is Tashichhodzong (Fortress of the Glorious Religion). Constructed in 1641 and renovated in the late 1950s, Tashichhodzong is an example of Bhutan's unique architectural style. Traditionally, Bhutanese structures are built without the use of architectural plans or nails. Tashichhodzong contains 100 rooms, including a throne room for the king, and is filled with beautiful paintings and sculptures. The structure is also the home of Bhutan's largest monastery. In the summer, when monks reside at Tashichhodzong, foreigners are not allowed to enter.

Entertainment

Entertainment opportunities popular in the West, such as nightclubs and theaters, are non-existent in Bhutan. As a result, most entertainment in Bhutan revolves around shopping for Bhutanese handicrafts and souvenirs. Two stores in Thimphu, the Dorji Gyeltshen Shop and Senghay Budha, offer beautiful scarves and shawls. These stores also sell long robes of wool or silk.



Aerial view of Thimphu, Bhutan

© Alison Wright/Corbis. Reproduced by permission.

These robes, known as *kho* (for men) and *kira* (for women), are the native dress of Bhutan. A government-owned Handicrafts Emporium sells a wide variety of Bhutanese jewelry, handicrafts, sculpture, table linen, and *thang-kas* (religious scrolls).

For those interested in stamp collecting, the government's Philatelic Office sells Bhutan stamps. Bhutanese stamps are considered exquisite by many collectors and are highly popular souvenirs.

Bhutan's National Library, located in Thimphu, operates a bookstore which sells a few English-language publications. Brass replicas of Buddhist statues are also sold here.

Paro

Bhutan's second largest city, Paro, is located 40 miles (64 kilometers) west of Thimphu. The city, constructed in the 1970s, is relatively new and exhibits beautiful white-washed buildings adorned with Buddhist symbols. As in Thimphu, all buildings are constructed without the use of nails or architectural plans. Bhutan's only major airport is located here and the city has some beautiful temples. Throughout the city, lamas can be seen in solemn prayer. The presence of the lamas makes Paro a very peaceful, tran-

quil city. Paro has approximately 10,000 residents.

Recreation

Several walking tours are available for those who wish to view the temples, *dzongs*, and monasteries in Paro and the surrounding area. Paro is the home of the Paro Dzong. This fortress is the official residence for several monks and serves as a Buddhist headquarters for Paro and the surrounding region. The building, constructed in the 1600s, was nearly destroyed by fire in 1907. The structure sustained heavy damage and many priceless statues, artifacts, and religious scrolls (*thang-kas*) were lost. Only one *thang-ka* was saved and can be viewed by the public during special festivals. The Drukgyel (Victorious Druk) Dzong located in a valley near Paro, offers a beautiful view of Mt. Chomolhari. Much of this *dzong* was destroyed by fire in 1954. Another popular attraction has been the Taktsang (Tiger's Nest) Monastery, nestled on a cliff 2,952 feet above Paro. This monastery, however, was destroyed by fire in 1998.

One of Paro's principal attractions is the National Museum. This five-story building offers beautiful and informative displays of Bhutanese costumes, masks, jewelry, weapons,

stamps, books, and textiles. Of particular interest are statues carved from butter, priceless religious scrolls, and an enormous carving of the Tree of Life. This carving, which pays homage to Buddhism's four sects, is located on the top floor of the museum.

OTHER CITIES

The town of **PUNAKHA**, located in west-central Bhutan, was established in 1577 and served as the capital of Bhutan. Punakha's primary attraction is the Punakha Dzong, a fortress located at the confluence of the Pho Chu and Mo Chu Rivers. This fortress serves as a winter retreat for monks living in central Bhutan. Punakha Dzong has been severely damaged by fires and earthquakes over the centuries. In recent years, the fortress has been threatened by high water levels on the Po Chu and Mo Chu Rivers. The town's population has been estimated at 1,100 residents.

TONGSA, a town situated in central Bhutan, is the ancestral home of Bhutan's royal family. The town is noted for the large Tongsa Dzong, which used to guard the only east-west route through Bhutan. Today, Tongsa Dzong is occupied by several government offices and is a home for a large group of Buddhist monks. Tongsa has approximately 5,000 residents.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The Kingdom of Bhutan is a small country nestled in the Himalaya Mountains. It occupies an area of 18,147 square miles, approximately the size of Vermont and New Hampshire combined. Bhutan is landlocked, surrounded on the north by China and on all other sides by India. The northern part of the

country is extremely mountainous, containing some of the most rugged terrain in the world. The central part of Bhutan has fertile valleys and arable land. Southern and eastern Bhutan contain densely forested foothills.

Each region of Bhutan exhibits a different climate. The mountainous northern regions are extremely cold with perpetual snowfall. Central Bhutan's climate is more temperate, with warm summers, cold winters, and moderate rainfall. Warm, humid temperatures and heavy rainfall characterize the climate in southern and eastern regions of the country.

Population

The population of Bhutan is estimated at 2,049,000 (2001 est.) and can be divided into three ethnic groups. The most numerous group are the Sharchops. They are often considered the earliest inhabitants of Bhutan and predominantly settle in eastern regions of the country. Western regions of Bhutan are inhabited by Ngalops, an ethnic group of Tibetan origin. The Sharchops and Ngalops comprise about 50 percent of Bhutan's population. Thirty-five percent of the population are Nepalese who emigrated to Bhutan in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. They are farmers and live in southern areas of the country. Over 85,000 Nepalese were expelled to Nepal in the early 1990s, and live in refugee camps monitored by the United Nations. The remaining 15 percent of Bhutan's population are small minorities of indigenous or migrant groups.

The official language of Bhutan is Dzongkha, although Nepali is predominant in southern regions of the country. English is widely used in schools, colleges and by government officials.

Buddhism is the state religion and is practiced in nearly two-thirds of the country. Southern Bhutan is predominantly Hindu. The Bhutanese government promotes religious freedom and celebrates all

major Buddhist and Hindu religious festivals.

The life expectancy in Bhutan in 2001 was approximately 53 years for males, 52 years for females. Bhutan's literacy rate is 42%.

History

Very little is known of Bhutan's early history. It is believed to have been inhabited as early as 2000 B.C. Bhutan's recorded history began in the eighth century A.D. with the introduction of Tantric Buddhism. From the 12th to the 17th century, Tibet ruled Bhutan. Under the tutelage of Tibetan lama, Ngawang Namgyal, Bhutan developed an intricate and comprehensive system of laws that served as a check against the ambitions of various ecclesiastical and civil administrators. This system worked effectively until Namgyal's death. Without the presence of a strong leader, Bhutan dissolved into a 200-year period of political chaos as numerous regional governors and local administrators vied for power. By 1907, the management of Bhutan's civil affairs were controlled by Sir Ugyen Wangchuck, who became Bhutan's first hereditary king. In an attempt to stabilize the political situation, King Ugyen invited the British to establish a presence in Bhutan. Bhutan and Great Britain signed a friendship treaty in 1910. The British government agreed not to interfere in the internal affairs of Bhutan, but reserved the right to guide Bhutan's relations with other countries. After the British relinquished their control of the Indian subcontinent, Bhutan signed a treaty with the new Indian government in 1949. The provisions of the treaty were nearly identical to those made with Britain 40 years earlier. The main difference was that India agreed to pay yearly compensation to Bhutan for portions of its territory annexed by the British in India in 1864. The treaty between these two nations is still in effect.

Government

Since 1907, Bhutan has been ruled by a monarchy. Each Bhutanese monarch has brought political stability to the country and implemented numerous reforms. In 1926, the son of Bhutan's first monarch, Jigme Wangchuck, created Bhutan's first public school and repaired monasteries that had been damaged after fires, earthquakes, and centuries of wear and tear. Jigme Wangchuck was succeeded in 1952 by his son, Jigme Dorji Wangchuck. Jigme Dorji implemented many positive changes during his reign. He supported the creation of Bhutan's postal system, built modern roads, launched long-range economic planning, welcomed trained medical personnel into Bhutan, and dissolved the kingdom's ancient serfdom system. In 1953, King Jigme Dorji instituted a constitutional monarchy and created a National Assembly. The National Assembly, or *tshogdu*, has 151 members and meets twice a year. All Bhutanese citizens 25 years or older are eligible for election to the Assembly. Once elected, each representative serves a three-year term. The king established the Royal Advisory Council in 1965, which is responsible for advising the king on governmental matters and regulating the policies of the National Assembly. In 1968, a Council of Ministers was formed and given the authority to implement government policy. The Bhutanese government does not allow the formation of political parties.

Upon his death in 1972, King Jigme Dorji was succeeded by his son Jigme Singye Wangchuck. For the most part, the present monarch has continued the governmental changes implemented by his father. King Jigme Singye's most notable contributions to Bhutan are the development of the country's telephone system, the construction of numerous factories and hospitals, and the building of over 100 schools. In September 1990, government forces ruthlessly crushed pro-democracy rallies in southern regions of Bhutan.

The flag of Bhutan is divided diagonally with yellow on the left over orange on the right. A white dragon is located in the center.

Arts, Science, Education

There is no compulsory educational system in Bhutan and only half of the children attend school. The educational system consists of seven years of primary schooling followed by four years of secondary school. In 1993, there were 235 primary schools with 1,859 teachers and 56,773 students. For those who complete a secondary education (junior high and high school), the majority of Bhutanese university students receive higher education in India.

Commerce and Industry

Bhutan is an agrarian society, with over 90 percent of the population engaged in farming and animal husbandry. The main crops are corn, rice, millet, wheat, oranges, apples and potatoes. Bhutan is also the world's largest producer of cardamom.

The industrial capacity of Bhutan is small. Chemical, cement, and food processing factories have been developed. Homemade handicrafts also comprise part of Bhutan's industrial sector.

Bhutan has a wealth of untapped natural resources. These include forests, rivers with excellent hydroelectric potential, and rich deposits of limestone, marble, graphite, copper, lead and coal.

Over 90 percent of Bhutan's trade is with India, although timber, cardamom and liquor are exported to Singapore, the Middle East and Western Europe. Principal exports are agricultural products, timber, cement and coal. Textiles, cereals and consumer goods are Bhutan's primary imports.

Bhutan's estimated per capita gross national product (GDP) was \$420 million in 1995. The paper currency, the *Ngultrum*, was introduced in the early 1970s. Coinage is known as *Chetrum*. Indian currency is also legal tender in Bhutan.

Transportation

In 1996, there were more than 805 miles (1,296 kilometers) of roads, 260 miles (418 kilometers) of which were paved. Fairly good roads connect Bhutan with India. The Bhutan Government Transport Service and about 30 private operators provide bus service. Within most of the country, however, travel is by foot or pack animal.

The national airline is Druk Airlines (Royal Bhutan Airlines). It is based at an international airport near Paro and provides service to Calcutta, Dhaka, Katmandu, New Delhi, and Bangkok.

Communications

Telephones are available in Thimphu and Paro. International calls can be made from hotels in the city. However, it often takes over an hour for connections to be completed. In remote locations, wireless telephones are the only reliable communication device.

Bhutan has excellent postal and teleprinter services. An international microwave link connects Bhutan's capital, Thimphu, to Calcutta and Delhi. International telegraph and telex communication is available.

There were approximately 28,000 radio receivers (1994 est.) in Bhutan. Although Bhutan does not have its own television station, broadcasts are transmitted from India and Bangladesh. In 1989, however, the Bhutan government ordered the destruction of all television antennas and satellite receiving dishes, claiming that it wanted to protect Bhutan's national culture.

There are 39 radio stations for internal government communications. However, the Bhutan Broadcasting Service offers shortwave programming in Dzongkha, Shar-chopkha, Lhotsam and English.

Health and Medicine

Medical facilities in Bhutan are limited. Some medicine is in short supply. Serious medical problems requiring hospitalization and/or medical evacuation to the United States can cost thousands of dollars or more. Doctors and hospitals often expect immediate cash payment for health services.

Cholera, typhoid fever and malaria are health concerns throughout the country.

Diligent water purification and food preparation methods must be exercised when visiting Bhutan. Immunizations for tetanus, typhoid, polio and hepatitis are recommended.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Tourists are admitted only in groups by pre-arrangement with the Tourism Authority of Bhutan, P.O. Box 126, Thimphu, Bhutan, tel. (975-2) 23251, 23252; fax (975-2) 23695. Entry is available only via India, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Thailand. The border with China is closed.

Visitors to Bhutan are required to book through a registered tour operator in Bhutan. This can be done directly or through a travel agent abroad. The minimum daily tariff is regulated and fixed by the Royal Government. The rate includes all accommodations, all meals, transportation, services of licensed guides and porters, and cultural programs where and when available.

A passport and visa are required for entry into and exit from Bhutan. All visitors, including those on official U.S. Government business, must obtain visas prior to entering the country. There are no provisions for visas upon arrival.

For additional entry/exit information, please contact the Bhutan Mission to the United Nations (Consulate General), 2 UN Plaza, 27th floor, New York, NY 10017, tel. (212)826-1919, fax (212)826-2998, or via the Internet at <http://www.embassy.org/embassies/bt.html>.

There is no U.S. Embassy or Consulate in Bhutan. Although no formal diplomatic relations exist between the United States and Bhutan, informal contact is maintained through the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi. Updated information on travel and security in Bhutan may be obtained at any U.S. consulate or embassy in India or Bangladesh. Americans living in or visiting Bhutan are encouraged to register at the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi. They may also obtain assistance from the U.S. consulates in India or, to a more limited degree, from the U.S. Embassies in Dhaka, Bangladesh or Kathmandu, Nepal.

The U.S. Embassy in New Delhi is located at Shanti Path, Chanakyapuri 110021, tel. (91)(11)419-8000, fax:(91)(11)419-0017. The Embassy's Internet home page address is <http://usembassy.state.gov/posts/in1/wwwh-main.html>

The U.S. Consulate General in Mumbai (Bombay) is located at Lincoln House, 78 Bhulabhai Desai Road, 400026, tel. (91)(22) 363-3611/ Internet home page address is <http://usembassy.state.gov/mumbai/>

The U.S. Consulate General in Calcutta is at 5/1 Ho Chi Minh Sarani, 700071, tel. (91)(033)282-3611 through 282-3615. The Internet home page address is <http://usembassy.state.gov/posts/in4/wwwh-main.html>

The U.S. Consulate General in Chennai (Madras) is at Mount Road, 600006, tel. (91)(44) 827-3040. Internet home page address is <http://usembassy.state.gov/chennai/>

The U.S. Embassy in Dhaka is located at Diplomatic Enclave, Madani Ave, Baridhara, Dhaka 1212, tel. (880) (2) 882-4700-22, fax (880)(2) 882-3744.

The U.S. Embassy in Kathmandu is located at Pani Pokhari, Kathmandu, tel. (977)(1)411179, 410531, fax(977)(1)419963. The Internet home page address is <http://www.south-asia.com/USA/>.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

- Jan. 25..... Traditional Day of Offering
- June 2..... Coronation Day of His Majesty the King
- Aug. 8..... Independence Day
- Nov. 11..... Birthday of His Majesty the King
- Dec. 17..... National Day
- Parinirvana*
- The First Sermon of Lord Buddha *
- Thimphu Drubchen*
- Thimphu Tshechu (3 days)*
- Dashain*
- Descending Day of Lord Buddha*

*variable

RECOMMENDED READING

The following titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country:

Apte, Robert Z. *Three Kingdoms on the Roof of the World: Bhutan,*

Nepal, Ladakh. Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press, 1990.

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Kamatsu, Yoshio. *Children of the World: Bhutan.* Milwaukee, WI: Gareth Stevens, 1988.

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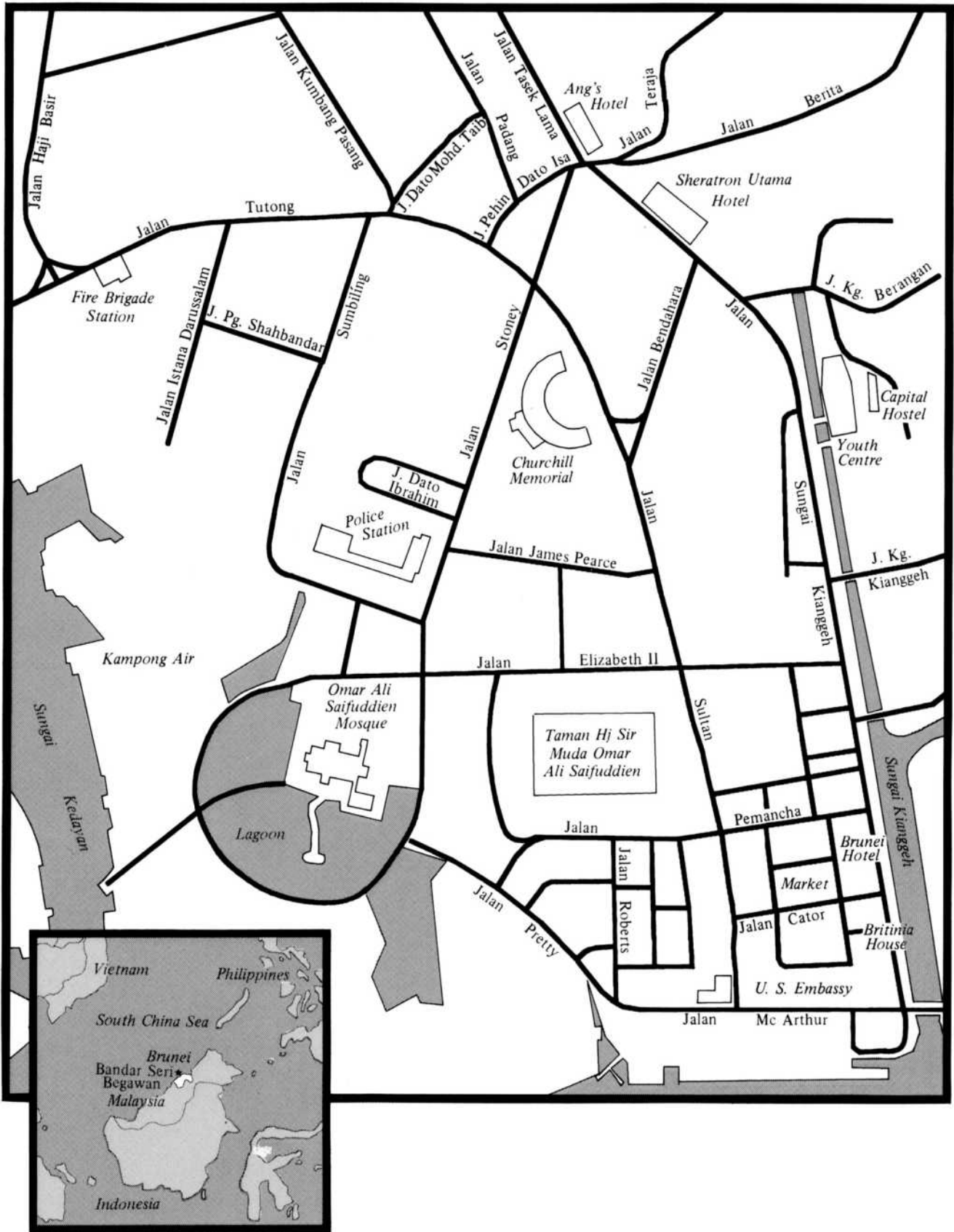
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Robinson, Francis, ed. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan & the Maldives.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Sinha, A.C. *Bhutan: Ethnic Identity & National Dilemma.* New York: Apt Books, 1991.

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Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei

BRUNEI

Brunei Darussalam

Major City:

Bandar Seri Begawan

Other Cities:

Jerudong, Kuala Belait, Seria

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated April 1992. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

The oil- and gas-rich state of **BRUNEI**, on the northern coast of the island of Borneo, is one of Asia's oldest kingdoms. Early Chinese records refer to it variously as "Polo," or "Puni." The present sultanate dates to 1514, and the conversion to Islam; during this era, Brunei was the center of a vast empire which stretched far north to the Philippines. By the end of the 19th century, however, most of its power had been lost in the colonial expansion of South-East Asia.

Brunei Darussalam, the country's official name (Abode of Peace), was a protectorate of the United Kingdom from 1888 to 1984, when it gained full autonomy. For a quarter of a

century before independence, it had been a self-governing constitutional monarchy, with the British assuming responsibility for foreign affairs and defense.

MAJOR CITY

Bandar Seri Begawan

The capital and main center of population, approximately 75,000, (and site of the only international airport) is Bandar Seri Begawan at the northeastern corner of the main part of the State. Downtown area consists of shops, banks, government offices, and hotels. Several places of interest are situated along the bank of the Brunei River.

Food

Subject to seasonal variations and occasional shortages, a wide variety of foods is available in Brunei. Fresh fish, fruits, and vegetables are available locally. Canned and frozen vegetables from the U.S., Europe, and Australia are sold at supermarkets. Frozen meat and poultry are imported from Denmark, Australia, New Zealand, or the U.S.

Fruit is limited to definite seasons. Apples, peaches, pears, oranges, grapes, and plums are imported seasonally from Australia, New Zealand, and the U.S. Buy local fruits such as bananas, papayas, pineapples, and grapefruit at outdoor markets and supermarkets.

Sterilized milk and powdered milk are available in Brunei. Fresh milk is available but expensive.

Any local foods, as well as various Western foods, can be catered.

Soft drinks, such as Coca-Cola, Pepsi, 7-Up, Sprite, Orange, etc., are available and are inexpensive. Sales of alcoholic beverages are currently prohibited.

Clothing

An extensive summer wardrobe is the only type of clothing necessary for Brunei. Order ladies clothing via mail facilities, but ready-made clothing is available in Brunei. Sizes are limited and fit may be difficult. Ordering usually takes several weeks. Sports attire varies.

Men: Lightweight summer suits are appropriate for office wear; slacks and sport shirts for casual wear. Acceptable dry-cleaners exist. Tails and morning dress are not worn in Brunei. English and U.S. men's shoes, underwear, shirts,



Susan Rock. Reproduced by permission.

Omar Ali Saifuddin Mosque in Bandar Seri Begawan

neckties, socks, and ready-made suits are available but are expensive, and the selection of sizes, styles, and quality varies.

Women: Conservative dress is the rule. Bring cotton summer dresses, slacks, skirts, blouses, and pantsuits for all occasions. Shorts are not worn publicly but can be worn at poolside or at beaches. Skirts and blouses, dresses, and pantsuits are worn to the office. Stores selling women's clothing offer various ready-made dresses, skirts, and ensembles at medium-to-high prices, but sizes, selection, fit, and quality are limited.

Lingerie and stockings are available at reasonable prices, but selection is

limited. Formal hats and gloves are seldom worn. European shoes of limited sizes are available at varying prices.

Children: Clothing and shoes for children and babies are available at reasonable prices. A wide variety of fabric is available at reasonable cost. Local dressmakers and tailors have been used with varying degrees of success, but good tailors are expensive.

Supplies and Services

Toilet articles and cosmetics are available but are much more expensive than in the U.S.

Most common brands of American and British cigarettes, some Ameri-

can brands of cigars and pipe tobacco and smoking accessories are available at prices comparable to, or lower than, U.S. prices.

There are local bookstores but prices are 50 to 100 percent higher than those in the U.S., and the selection is not good.

Several beauty shops in Brunei are available and moderately priced.

Religious Activities

Both Roman Catholic and Anglican Church services are conducted in the downtown area of the city at their respective facilities.

Education

Brunei has no American schools. The International School has an essentially British curriculum and provides an adequate education from kindergarten through grade 6.

The school operates from 7:30 am to 12:30 pm. But if your child is having difficulty in a subject, bring some additional study materials to assist you in working with your child, as the British system here does not encourage parental involvement as an American school would. Other schools open to expatriate children are Mission schools and the Chinese school, which is also adequate through the elementary grades. A good boarding school is available in Singapore.

Space at all schools is limited. There is a long waiting list.

Sports

Tennis, swimming, badminton, table tennis, billiards, soccer, golf, basketball, sailing, windsurfing, bowling, and squash are available in Brunei. There are two golf courses—one at Pantai Mentiri near Bandar Seri Begawan and the other in Seria, which manages the Brunei Shell Recreation Club. Obtain permission to play at both courses in advance. A member of the club must accompany guests. Memberships are available at Pantai Menter.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Omar Ali Saifuddien Mosque, a symbol of Brunei's adherence to Islam, is one of the most magnificent in Asia. It is an edifice of classical Islamic architecture consisting of gold mosaic, marble, and stained glass. Its minaret, which has a lift inside and distinctive gold dome, rises to 166 feet and 160 feet.

Linked to the mosque and built in the middle of the lagoon is an elegant concrete boat that resembles a 16th-century royal barge.

The mosque has been the country's most important feature since its completion in 1958.

The official residence of the Sultan of Brunei is the Istana Nurul Iman in Bandar Seri Begawan, which was completed in 1982, and believed to be the largest royal palace in this part of the world.

The Sultan of Brunei, as Prime Minister, has offices located in the Istana, which has become a symbol of national pride. In keeping with ancient Brunei, trading the Ruler's Istana is the seat of Government, and the Council of Cabinet Ministers meets under the presidency of His Majesty.

The Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah Aquarium, housed in the Churchill Memorial Building, has various species of tropical fish found in Brunei waters.

The Lapau (Royal Ceremonial Hall) and the Dewan Majlis (Parliament House) form a sprawling complex featuring a blend of traditional Malay and Western architecture.

The Lapau, which contains the Patarana (Throne), where numerous solemn ceremonies are held, is beautifully decorated in exquisite gold motifs. In the Lapau on August 1, 1968, the Sultan was crowned the 29th Sultan of Brunei.

The famed and centuries-old Kampong Air (water village) is composed of several villages housing 38,000

persons. It is an extensive collection of houses on stilts in the Brunei River. The Government provides a wide range of facilities that include schools, clinics, a Post Office, and electricity and water supplies. A boat cruise along the Brunei River is a pleasurable experience and a must for all tourists. Single women should always be accompanied.

The Arts and Handicraft Center is situated on the bank of the Brunei River, facing Kampong Air, and, thus commands a panoramic view. It offers a wide selection of locally made silverware, brasserie, and bronzeware crafted and inspired by the rich Malay cultural heritage. The silver, brass, and bronze are hammered and crafted by hand into a variety of articles, such as jugs, trays, gongs, boxes, napkin rings, spoons, threads, bracelets, etc. There are also an assortment of beautifully woven baskets and mats of bamboo and pandan. Brunei, during the 15th century, was a dominant power in the region under its ruler Sultan Bolkiah, the 5th Sultan of Brunei, whose mausoleum rests on the bank of the Brunei River at Kota Batu, near the Brunei Museum.

The Brunei Museum is of unique eastern architecture and is situated on the picturesque bank of the Brunei River. It is about 4 miles from the town center and has a large collection of exhibits, including brassware, bronzeware, Chinese porcelain and ceramics, historical records, and artifacts of the cultural heritage of this country.

The beaches at Brunei are fine golden sands with scenic picnic spots. However, rusted debris and broken glass pose serious threats to badly littered areas where the waters are calmer. The beaches facing the South China Sea are substantially cleaner, but bites from sandflies and stings from jellyfish are often a nuisance.

Although the above activities are interesting and diverting for a few weeks, they provide no relief from

Brunei's climate, both atmospheric and cultural.

Entertainment

Brunei, as an entertainment center, is undistinguished. Occasionally, the music society and other diplomatic missions sponsor concerts, but legitimate theater, opera, and ballet do not exist in Brunei. The one local movie theater is not a place for family diversion. There are no night-clubs. Art exhibits are held occasionally at the Brunei Museum and foreign missions.

Dining out is one of the most popular forms of recreation and entertainment in Brunei. Restaurants are plentiful but expensive. An international hotel, the Sheraton, has dining rooms, a bar currently not used to serving alcoholic beverages, and a coffee shop. Other establishments regularly offer specials on food from foreign countries.

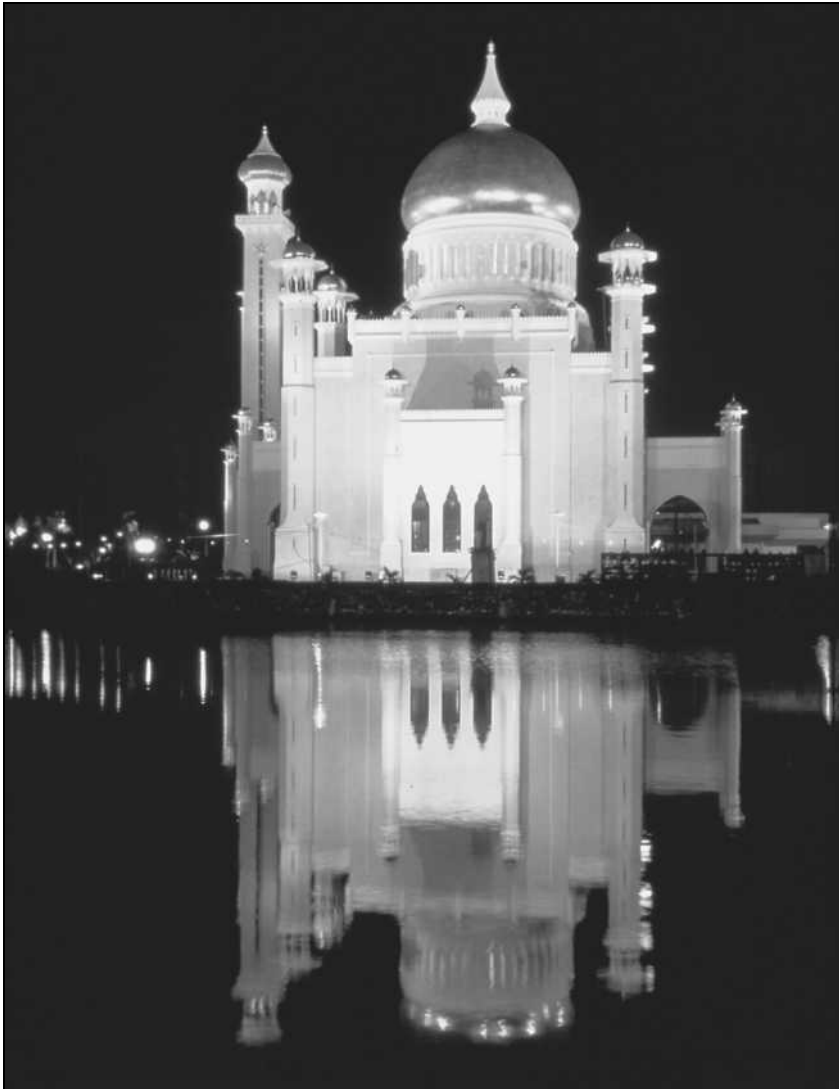
Videotaped movies are available in Brunei for the VHS system. Quality of recordings is poor. TV and radio services are broadcast in English, Malay, and Chinese on the Brunei channel. Two Malaysian TV channels can also be received.

Social Activities

Many foreigners belong to one or more of the various sports and recreation clubs available in Brunei, such as the yacht club or tennis club. Social life is restricted to home entertainment among members of the diplomatic and business communities.

OTHER CITIES

A short drive to the northeast of the capital, **JERUDONG** is known as "the playground of the Sultan." The biggest attraction is the new amusement park which opened in 1994 to celebrate the Sultan's birthday. The park covers 104 hectares with a wide variety of thrill rides and amusements from roller coasters to a calmer carousel. A children's park includes playgrounds, mazes and swings. A large auditorium offers



Cory Langley. Reproduced by permission.

Night view of Omar Ali Saifuddin Mosque in Bandar.

musical entertainment, which has included two concerts in 1996 given by Michael Jackson. The Musical Fountain in the park offers a 20-minute high-tech laser, music and light show every night. Behind the park is Jerudong Beach, which offers a lovely site for swimming. Admission to the park and all rides is free.

Jerudong Park, a grand polo stadium complex with a beautiful equestrian center, a golf course and facilities for trapshooting and croquet, is where the Sultan goes for recreation. However, since entry to the park is by invitation only, you may only get a chance to see it through special tours.

There are several fine hotels in this area and tour packages are offered through various agencies.

KUALA BELAIT is a river port situated west of Seria, near the South China Sea. The city is a district capital surrounded by oil fields. There is a government vocational school here, and a coastal road runs eastward toward Bandar Seri Begawan. Kuala Belait's population is approximately 25,000.

SERIA is a major oil center of some 24,000 residents, located on the South China seacoast about 40 miles southwest of Bandar Seri Begawan. This is also the headquarters of Brunei's only oil and gas cor-

poration, Brunei Shell Petroleum. The oil produced in the region has supplied most of the funds used in the country's growth.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Brunei occupies 3,459 miles on the northern coast of the island of Borneo and is 350 statute miles north of the Equator at 5° N, 115° E. It comprises two separate areas: the capital area and a thinly populated enclave to the east, consisting mostly of jungle. Separating the two is a salient of the Malaysian State of Sarawak, which on the landward side surrounds both parts of Brunei. The north shore is on the South China Sea.

From the 14th to the 16th century, Brunei was the center of a powerful empire covering most of the northern part of the island of Borneo and extending north through the Philippines to Manila.

By the 19th century, much of Brunei's empire had been whittled away by piracy, wars, and the spread of European nations into the Far East. By the end of the 19th century, Brunei was a British protectorate, and, in 1906, the British Resident system was introduced. The discovery of major oil fields in the western end of the State in the 1920s brought economic stability to Brunei and created a new style of life for the population.

Constitutionally, Brunei was regulated by an agreement with Britain that was concluded in 1959 and was amended in 1971. By this agreement, the State was internally self-governing, with Britain looking after only foreign affairs and having a consultative role in external defense. In 1984, Brunei resumed full sovereign status and assumed responsibility for its own defense and foreign affairs. The country has

joined the U.N., the Association of South East Asian Nation (ASEAN), and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Brunei is a small oil and gas-producing state. The oil and gas fields are centered in the towns of Seria and Kuala Belait, 67 miles southwest of the capital. Other large towns are Tutong, which is midway between Bandar Seri Begawan and Kuala Belait, and Bangar in the Temburong District.

The country is mainly primary and secondary tropical rain forest with only a narrow coastal strip from Kuala Belait to Bandar Seri Begawan cultivated. The rain forest produces as much as 146 inches of rain to the interior but only about 108 inches a year is recorded on the coast. The climate is equatorial with uniform temperatures and high humidity.

Brunei has no personal income tax, and the people enjoy, among other things, free education and medical care.

Population

Of a total population of approximately 331,000, 64 percent are Malays, 20 percent are Chinese, and 16 percent are non-Malay indigenous people, mainly Ibans and Dusuns, as well as several other minor tribal groupings. Europeans make up a small percentage of the population.

Malay is the official language, but English is spoken almost everywhere in the State. The Chinese community speaks Hokkien; other languages and dialects include Hakka, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Hindi.

Public Institutions

Brunei is a traditional Islamic monarchy, with supreme political power vested in the Sultan. He is assisted and advised by the four councils: the Privy Council, the Religious Council, the Council of Cabinet Ministers

and the Council of Succession. All members are appointed by the Sultan. The Sultan presides over the cabinet as Prime Minister and also holds the positions of Minister of Defense and Minister of Finance.

Brunei's legal system is based on English common law, with an independent judiciary, a body of written common law judgments and statutes, and legislation enacted by the Sultan.

Arts, Science, and Education

Brunei has 177 primary schools and 29 secondary schools (including non-Government schools). Children begin school at age 5, and education is available for 10 years (6 years for primary and 4 years for lower secondary). However, no programs or facilities exist for disabled children or for handicapped children.

Brunei's education system has been extended since 1985 by the foundation of the nation's own university—the University of Brunei Darussalam. Currently, the University has four faculties—Education, Science, Arts, and Social Science and Management.

The small population and the need to build up generalist skills rapidly is reflected upon the University's decision to concentrate initially on only these few selected disciplines. The development of degree courses such as Law, Medicine, Dentistry, Engineering, and Accounting were not deemed economically justifiable, since they are readily available overseas. The University's academic staff is mainly non-Bruneian.

Other institutions at tertiary level include an agricultural training center and various technical institutes. These are designed to meet skill shortages.

Many schools for expatriate children are located in Brunei, including the International School, where instruction is in English, and missionary schools. Currently, school-

ing is available from kindergarten through grade 6. The International School is considering opening a grade 7 class, but this is still in the planning stage.

Commerce and Industry

Oil and natural gas, the economic backbone of the country, represent 9% of the total exports of Brunei and 56% of its gross domestic product. Some 31% of Brunei's petroleum and 6 million tons of liquefied natural gas are exported to Japan annually.

Apart from oil and gas, forestry is playing an increasing role in the country's economy. The Government is also placing greater emphasis on agricultural development to enable the country to reduce its dependence on the importation of foodstuffs.

Transportation

Local

Most Bruneians own cars and as a result, public transport and taxis are not in great demand, although buses operate between the major centers. Chauffeur driven or rental cars are available for hire through major hotels or the airport.

Taxis are not metered and fares, though negotiable, are expensive. The fare from the airport to Bandar Seri Begawan varies from about US\$12 to US\$29, depending on taxi availability and the driver's whim.

Water taxis are the most common form of transport in Kampong Air, Brunei's renowned water village. Regular water taxis and boat services ply the routes between Bandar Seri Begawan, Bangar, Limbang (in Sarawak), Labuan, and some towns in the Malaysian State of Sabah. But single women should be accompanied when using these services.

Regional

Air transportation is commonly used for destinations outside Brunei. Several international airlines

and the national airline, Royal Brunei Airlines, serves Brunei.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

Local telephone calls are free (except by public phone booth). Long-distance telephone, FAX, and telegraph service to the U.S. is good but expensive. Use of public phones requires the pre-purchase of a calling card, because the phones are not coin operated.

Radio and TV

The government-owned Radio Television Brunei (RTB) broadcasts daily on AM and FM from 6:30 am to 10 pm, with programs in English, Malay, and Chinese. Programs are varied and international news is reported twice a day—at 12:15 pm and 9:15 pm.

One local TV channel and two Malaysian channels are received. Brunei programs, which have included some award winning documentaries, comprise about 40 percent of programming. Other ASEAN countries, Australia, the U.K., and the U.S. import the remaining 60 percent. CNN headline news is broadcast 6 days a week, from 7 to 7:30 pm via Malaysian TV. Ownership of satellite dishes is strictly regulated.

The TV system is PAL as opposed to the NTSC system used in the U.S.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

Western publications are available. Occasionally, censored copies of *Time* and *Newsweek* are available at local vendors. The ASEAN edition of *Reader's Digest* is also available. Other U.S. magazines appear on the newsstands about a month late and at a price two or three times their U.S. price. Many outdated magazines are available at newsstands. One English-language newspaper, the *Borneo Bulletin*, is published weekly in Brunei. International newspapers available daily include the *Straits Times* (Singapore), the *New Straits Times* (Malaysia), the

Asian Wall Street Journal, and the *International Herald Tribune*.

A limited selection of American and British books on various subjects is available in selected bookshops at 50 to 100 percent above publisher prices. The library downtown has a collection of books in English.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

Health services are free for Brunei citizens with a nominal charge for permanent residents and expatriates. Health care is a three-tier system, with health clinics providing primary care, health centers providing secondary care, and district hospitals providing tertiary and specialized care.

The most important medical facility in Brunei is the 550-bed central referral hospital in Bandar Seri Begawan known as Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Saleha Hospital (RIPAS Hospital). This hospital, built at US\$95 million, provides diagnostic and therapeutic facilities for the entire country.

Most doctors and dentists in the country are non-Western expatriates. For specialized care, patients are sent abroad.

Routine dentistry is available. Opticians and optometrists are available, and there are many doctors in private practice.

Bring an extra set of glasses or contact lenses, if needed, from the U.S. If you or a family member are taking long-term medications or allergy injections, bring a supply and arrange beforehand for regular refills.

Community Health

Respiratory infections, colds, coughs, sore throats, etc., lead the list of common complaints. Middle-ear and external-ear infections, sinusitis, and bronchitis are not uncommon.

Sanitation of human waste has improved over the years. However, other waste carried by contaminated water often runs in the open storm drainage system, resulting in chronic unpleasant odors. Some town and residential areas are marred by indiscriminate dumping of waste and garbage. The Municipal Department provides garbage collection services for about US\$9 a month to most residential areas. Although scheduled regularly, this service is often intermittent.

Preventive Measures

Clean fruits and vegetables well before eating. Cook meat thoroughly. Insect control is rudimentary. Malaria suppressants are not necessary in Brunei.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan. 1	.....	New Year's Day
Feb. 23	.....	National Day
May 31	.....	Armed Forces Day
July 15	.....	HM the Sultan's Birthday
Dec. 25	.....	Christmas
	.....	Prophet Muhammad's Birthday*
	.....	Israk Mikarj*
	.....	Ramadan*
	.....	Revelation of the Holy Koran*
	.....	Chinese New Year*
	.....	Id al-Fitr*
	.....	Id al-Adha*
	.....	Islamic New Year*

*variable

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs and Duties

Most travel to Brunei is by air. Several airlines provide direct, nonstop flights to Brunei on most weekdays from Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Thailand, the Philippines, and Hong Kong. Some of the more popu-

lar international airlines serving Brunei are Singapore, Thai, Malaysian, and Philippines Airlines. The most direct route from the U.S. to Brunei is via the west coast, with connections made at any Asian cities serving Brunei.

U.S. passport-holders may take advantage of Brunei's participation in the Visa Waiver Pilot Program (VWPP), which allows visitors to Brunei for business or pleasure to obtain visas upon arrival for up to 90 days at no charge. The existing airport tax upon arrival/departure is Brunei dollars 12. For further information about entry requirements, travelers may consult the consular section of the Embassy of Brunei, 3520 International Court, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008; Tel: (202) 342-0159 (<http://www.embassy.org/embassies/bn.html>).

Brunei customs authorities enforce strict regulations concerning the temporary import or export of items such as firearms, religious materials and alcohol. For non-Muslims, very limited amounts of alcohol for personal consumption are permitted (i.e., 12 bottles of beer and two bottles of wine/spirits). It is advisable to contact the Embassy of Brunei in Washington for specific information regarding customs requirements.

Brunei has a mandatory death penalty for many narcotics offenses. Under the current law, possession of heroin and morphine derivatives of more than 15 grams, and cannabis of more than 20 grams, carries the death penalty. Possession of lesser amounts carries a minimum twenty-year jail term and caning.

Americans living in or visiting Brunei are encouraged to register in person or via telephone or fax at the consular section of the U.S. Embassy in Bandar Seri Begawan and obtain updated information on travel and security within the country. The U.S. Embassy is located on the 3rd floor, Teck Guan Plaza, Jalan Sultan, in the capital city of Bandar Seri Begawan. The U.S.

mailing address is American Embassy, PSC 470 (BSB), FPO AP, 96507. The telephone number is (673)(2)229-670, fax number (673)(2)225-293 and e-mail address amembbsb@brunet.bn. The after hours number for emergency calls is (673)(8) 730-691.

Pets

Travelers coming to Brunei with pets must request entry for the pet by writing to:

Veterinary Officer
 Veterinary Clinic
 Ministry of Agriculture
 Bandar Seri Begawan
 Brunei Darussalam

Include in the letter, all particulars about the pet and a health certificate. The clinic requires at least 2 weeks' notice before the pet's arrival.

Quarantine is not required for pets arriving from England, New Zealand, Australia, Singapore, and other parts of Borneo. If arriving from other parts of the world, the pet is quarantined for about 2 weeks. No fee is imposed for incoming pets, but an outgoing fee of US\$1 is charged for each pet. Pets must arrive in Brunei as cargo.

Currency, Banking and Weights and Measures

The monetary unit of Brunei is the ringgit (dollar), which is issued in notes of 1, 5, 10, 50, 100, 500, 1,000, and 10,000. The coins are in the denominations of 5, 10, 20, and 50 cents. Currently, US\$1 is equivalent to about B\$1.70. The exchange rate fluctuates daily.

The Brunei dollar is at par with the Singapore dollar, and the currencies are interchangeable in both countries.

Brunei uses the metric system of weights and measures. Gasoline is sold by the liter; temperatures are cited in degrees Celsius; and distances are measured in kilometers.

U.S. citizens living in or visiting Brunei may register in person or via

telephone with the U.S. Embassy in Bandar Seri Begawan and obtain updated information on travel and security within the country. The U.S. Embassy is located in Teck Guan Plaza, Third Floor, Jalan Sultan, in Bandar Seri Begawan. The mailing address is American Embassy PSC 470 (BSB), FPO AP, 96534; the telephone number is (673)(2) 229-670; the fax number is (673) (2) 225-293.

RECOMMENDED READING

These titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country. The Department of State does not endorse unofficial publications.

Beccari, Odoardo. *Wanderings in the Great Forests of Borneo*. London, 1904. The best natural history of Borneo.

bin Mohamad, Mahatir. *The Malay Dilemma*. The famous book-length essay by the author who is now the Prime Minister of Malaysia.

Brooke, Sylvia and H.H. *Queen of the Headhunters*. London, 1936. An eccentric but quite interesting account by the wife of one of the White Rajahs.

Brown, D.E. *Brunei: The Structure and History of a Bornean Malay Sultanate*. Brunei Museum, 1970.

Chalfont, Lord Alun. *By God's Will*. A flattering portrait of the Sultan of Brunei penned by Lord Chalfont, one of the few authors to have gained the royal confidence.

Crisswell, Colin N. *Rajoh Charles Brooke—Monarch of all He Surveyed*. Oxford University Press: 1983.

Finlay, Hugh, and Peter Turner. *Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei: A Travel Survival Kit*. Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet, 1991.

Harrison, Tom. *World Within, A Borneo Story*. Singapore, 1984. A fascinating account of the Iban people by an officer who recruited

- them to fight the Japanese in World War II.
- Krausse, Sylvia C. Engelen and Gerald H. *Brunei*. Santa Barbara, CA: Clio Press, 1988. An annotated bibliography.
- Leake Jr., David. *Brunei—The Modern Southeast-Asian Islamic State*. A former sub-editor of the Borneo Bulletin, Brunei's only English-language newspaper, Leake examines Brunei's history and its future. Hundreds of anecdotes and insights into the Brunei Malay character. Written after the author was expelled from Brunei.
- MacDonald, Malcolm. *Borneo People*. Oxford University Press: 1985. The best account of the racial and tribal group make up of North Borneo written by a former British High Commissioner from Singapore.
- McArthur, M.H.S. *Report on Brunei in 1904*. Athens, OH, 1987.
- Pringle, Robert. *Rajas and Rebels*. Offers another account of the Brookes.
- Ranjit, Singh. *Brunei, 1839–1983: The Problems of Political Survival*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1984.
- Runciman, Sir Steven. *The White Rajahs of Sarawak*. Cambridge, 1960. The best account of the Brooke family's involvement in North Borneo and its relationship to the Sultanate of Brunei.
- St. John, Spenser. *Life in the Forests of the Far East*. London, 1862. A classic mid-19th century description of the environment, people, and customs of Borneo.
- Sidayao, Corazon Morales. *The Offshore Petroleum Resources of South-East Asia, Potential Conflict Situations and Related Economic Considerations*. Oxford University Press: 1980. Title is self-explanatory.
- . *The Supply of Petroleum Reserves in South-East Asia, Economic Implication of Evolving Property Rights Arrangements*. Oxford University Press: 1980. Title is self-explanatory.
- Singh, Rajit. *Brunei 1839–1983: The Problems of Political Survival*. Oxford University Press. The only available account in book form of political developments in Brunei in this century and particularly since the Second World War.
- Tregonning, K.G.P. *British North Borneo*.
- Turnbull, C.M. *A History of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei*. Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1989.
- Weaver, Mary Ann. "In the Sultan's Palace." *The New Yorker*. October 7, 1991. A whimsical account of Mary Ann Weaver's 6 weeks in Brunei. Charming and humorous accounts of the befuddled Bruneian bureaucracy.
- Zaini Haji Ahmad, Haji. *The People's Party of Brunei: Selected Documents*. Petaling Jaya: Institute of Social Analysis, 1988.

CAMBODIA

Major City:

Phnom Penh

Other Cities:

Angkor, Battambang, Kampong Cham, Kampong Chhnang, Kampong Saom, Kampot, Koh Kong, Kratie, Pursat, Siem Reap

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated October 1994. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

CAMBODIA is a shattered nation that is struggling to find peace and stability. For nearly 25 years, Cambodia has been torn apart by civil war, genocide, and an invasion from neighboring Vietnam. Cambodia's troubles began in 1969 when American planes bombed North Vietnamese bases in eastern Cambodia during the Vietnam War. In 1975, the Khmer Rouge, a radical Communist group, overthrew Cambodia's pro-Western regime. Immediately after its victory, the Khmer Rouge evacuated all cities and towns. Virtually the entire population was sent into the countryside to clear jungle and till the land. Approximately two million Cambodians died from executions, disease,

or starvation at the hands of the Khmer Rouge. Vietnam invaded Cambodia in 1978 and drove the Khmer Rouge from power in 1979. The Khmer Rouge and three non-Communist groups formed a military coalition to force Vietnamese troops from Cambodia. The Vietnamese fought against the Khmer Rouge and its coalition allies until September 1989, when it announced that it had withdrawn all of its forces from Cambodia. Following the withdrawal of the Vietnamese, the coalition disintegrated and a bloody civil war erupted between the Khmer Rouge and the three non-Communist groups. Several international attempts to end the fighting were unsuccessful until October 1991, when a United Nations peace plan was signed in Paris by the Khmer Rouge and the three non-Communist groups.

In March 1992, the United Nations sent its first contingent of peacekeeping troops to Cambodia. The mission of the United Nations troops during 1992 was to disarm all warring factions, repatriate 375,000 Cambodian refugees living in camps in Thailand, and prepare the country for democratic elections. However, the Khmer Rouge refused to disarm and launched attacks against civilian targets and United Nations troops. Opponents of the Khmer Rouge have also refused to

give up their weapons. By early 1993, several thousand refugees had returned to Cambodia but many others have stayed in Thailand out of fear that the civil war may resume. At press time, the Khmer Rouge continued to ignore the peace agreement it signed in October 1991. Also, attacks by Khmer Rouge guerrillas on United Nations peacekeepers increased in number and ferocity. Several U.N. soldiers had been killed or taken prisoner since their arrival in Cambodia in early 1992. The United Nations had nearly 19,000 soldiers in Cambodia in February 1993.

MAJOR CITY

Phnom Penh

Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia since the mid-15th century and the country's largest city, has a population of approximately 1 million. The city lies at the confluence of the Mekong River, the Bassac River, and the Tonle Sap, and consists of four urban districts and three suburban districts. Phnom Penh is a sprawling city, with a mix of wide, tree-lined boulevards and narrow dirt roads, large French-colonial houses, apartment buildings, and small wooden thatch-roofed dwell-

ings. The city is laid out in a rough grid system, with odd numbered streets running basically north/south and even numbered streets running east/west. However, streets are not always numbered sequentially, and a map is frequently helpful in locating streets and addresses. The *Phnom Penh Post*, a local English-language newspaper published semimonthly, prints a useful city map in each issue. The streets have been renamed and renumbered several times in recent years, and to avoid confusion, people frequently use both the old and the new street names and numbers when giving directions or listing addresses. Most of the posted street numbers reflect an old numbering system.

Ninety percent of Cambodia's population live in rural communities, but in recent years, an increasing number of residents have relocated to the capital city, most to try and make a better living and some to attend school or receive technical training. Like all of Cambodia, Phnom Penh is a city struggling to overcome the ravages and neglect of civil war and the city's basic infrastructure is in various states of disarray and disrepair. Phnom Penh is hot and humid year round, with a rainy monsoon season from June to October, cooler at the turn of the year and hot from February to May. September and October are the months of heaviest precipitation.

Food

Food shortages are not a problem in Phnom Penh, and a variety of locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables are always available. There are four markets that stock supplies of imported meat, both fresh (imported from Australia and New Zealand) and frozen (imported from the U.S.). Available types of meat vary but usually consist of various cuts of beef, pork, and chicken. Prices for imported meat are higher than in the U.S. Locally produced meat is available but is not recommended as there are no standards for quality control or hygienic handling or processing. Locally produced milk should be avoided, but

imported fresh pasteurized milk is sometimes available at two markets, and four markets stock UTH milk, dried milk, and canned condensed milk. Imported western-type foods are available at several markets, but selection and availability vary. Imported processed baby food is available at two markets.

Clothing

Cambodian culture and custom dictate modesty in dress, particularly for women. Very short skirts and shorts should be avoided, although sleeveless tops are acceptable for women (shoulders should be covered when visiting temples and wats). Many Cambodians wear western-style clothing, particularly in Phnom Penh, but traditional skirts and sarongs are also common. Clothing appropriate for a tropical climate is worn year round, and most occasions call for casual attire.

Local markets stock a wide supply of inexpensive secondhand western clothing, including an abundance of children's clothing. Clothing can also be made locally at very low cost (the material—cotton, silk, polyester—is more expensive than the labor), and local tailors are adept at copying favorite articles of clothing. Good quality shoes are difficult to find. Leather shoes and sandals, for adults and children, can be custom made locally at relatively inexpensive prices.

During the raining season, rubber boots, a long, lightweight raincoat, and a rainhat are desirable. Umbrellas are also a necessity during the rainy season.

Men: At work, men are most comfortable in short-sleeved dress shirts and cotton pants. Long-sleeved dress shirts and neckties are appropriate for more formal occasions. Cotton material is available locally and dress shirts can be made inexpensively. Personnel should bring tropical-weight suits for formal occasions, although for most situations shirt and tie is adequate. Formal entertaining is rare in Cambodia.

Women: Women are most comfortable at work wearing at or below the knee lightweight skirts and dresses, or appropriate slacks. Shorter styles are acceptable for Westerners but are not customary in Cambodian culture. Tight, scanty, or otherwise revealing clothing should be avoided. In Cambodia's tropical climate, natural fiber clothing, especially cotton, is usually the most comfortable. Sandals or other casual shoes are appropriate for work; for more formal occasions, pumps or dress sandals are appropriate. At more formal functions, women should wear skirts or dresses rather than dress pants. Women should not wear black or white to Cambodian weddings (these colors are worn at funerals).

Supplies and Services

Necessary toiletries, cleaning and household supplies can be purchased locally, although selection and brand names are limited. Most available products are imported from Thailand, and some European and a few American brands are available.

Local tailors are adequate and inexpensive. Fine quality is sometimes limited by sewing machines that are very basic and frequently manually powered. Some minor shoe repairs can be done locally, and leather shoes and sandals can be custom made at inexpensive prices. Good quality repair services can be hard to find. Poor quality, dry-cleaning services are available at two hotels. Beauty- and barbershops are widely available locally, at very low prices by American standards, although services are generally limited to haircuts. There is also a more expensive French salon located at the Cambodiana Hotel.

Religious Activities

Religious facilities in Phnom Penh include two Muslim services (conducted in Arabic), a weekly Catholic mass, and several Protestant services. The Anglican Church of Christ Our Peace and the Assemblies of God both hold English-language services. Buddhist services, conducted in Khmer, are also



View of Phnom Penh, Cambodia

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readily available. There are no Jewish or Eastern Orthodox services currently available in Phnom Penh (although there is an Eastern Orthodox chapel located at Norodom and 352 streets).

Education

There are two suitable primary/secondary schools located in Phnom Penh. The International School of Phnom Penh, founded in 1989, is an independent coeducational school that offers an educational program from preschool through grade 10 for students of all nationalities. The school year comprises four terms extending from August through June. The curriculum is an internationally based program focusing on the academic needs of students from more than 30 countries. All instruction is conducted in English. The school is housed in four separate buildings on three interconnected

compounds and includes 12 classrooms, a library, an outdoor eating area, and a theater. A basketball and volleyball court and an elementary playground comprise the outdoor facilities. The school is governed by a 7-member board, elected annually by the Parents' Association, which is automatically conferred on the parents or guardians of children enrolled in the school. About 98% of the schools income is derived from school tuition and fees.

The Ecole Francaise, operated as part of the French school system under the direction of the French Foreign Ministry, offers an educational program from kindergarten through age 15 (approximately equivalent to U.S. grade 10). The academic program emphasizes basic skill development, and American personnel who have young children

in attendance feel that at the primary level the school is comparable to schools in the U.S. school system. All instruction is conducted in French. The Ecole Francaise does not have lunch facilities and students go home for 2 hours in the middle of the day. Tuition fees are about \$2,000 per year.

Sports

Because of Cambodia's hot and humid weather, sports enthusiasts should take proper precautions to avoid heat stroke, sunburn, and dehydration. Tennis, swimming, boating, volleyball, soccer, and running are among the locally available sports. The International Youth Club has several hard packed tennis courts that can be reserved in advance. They also have an Olympic-sized swimming pool and a weight room equipped with a variety of free weights, weight

machines, and stationary bicycles. There are plans to build a squash court in the next year.

There are several types of individual and family memberships (in various price ranges) available at the International Youth Club; non-members and guests are required to pay a small entrance fee. There is also a smaller swimming pool at the Cambodiana Hotel (entrance fee for non-hotel guests), and the Hotel is in the process of building a small fitness center.

The National Olympic Stadium has two soccer fields, several volley ball and basketball courts, and a 400-meter dirt running track. Facilities are rudimentary, but are free and open to the public. To avoid traffic, dust, smog, and curious stares, most runners prefer to run at the Olympic Stadium rather than through the streets of Phnom Penh. The Hash House Harriers, an expatriate running club, meet weekly for group runs and socializing.

Boating and fishing can be done on the Mekong and Bassac Rivers. Small, rudimentary fishing and motor boats can be rented at reasonable cost by the hour or the day (usually a driver is included in the rental cost). Local boats are not equipped with life preservers or other safety equipment. Some basic fishing tackle can be purchased locally, but anglers will be better off if they bring gear with them. For gardeners, Cambodia's lush tropical climate encourages rapid growth of a wide range of fruits, vegetables, and tropical flowers.

Spectator sports include volleyball and soccer tournaments, and Thai kick-boxing matches. Occasionally, boat and swimming races are held on the Mekong and Bassac Rivers, usually in conjunction with a local holiday or festival. Cyclo races have recently become an annual event.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Travel by air is possible to some locations in Cambodia, and in many cases is required due to unsafe or

impassable road conditions. Cambodia has eight usable airports, with daily flights to Siem Reap and the temples at Angkor Wat, and several weekly flights to Battambang (Cambodia's second largest city, located to the northwest of Phnom Penh), Stung Treng, Ratanakiri, and several other destinations. A newly available "high speed" boat service offers daily trips up the Mekong River to Kompong Cham and Kratie. Package boat tours are also available to Mekong Island, situated in the Mekong River near Phnom Penh. Visitors can see a variety of local handicraft demonstrations, visit a small zoo, and have lunch on local cuisine.

The white sand beaches at Sihanoukville, located on Cambodia's coast on the Gulf of Thailand, are approximately a 3-1/2 hour drive from Phnom Penh. Koh Kong Island, located just off of Cambodia's western coast in the Gulf of Thailand, is being developed as a tourist destination. Flights are available from Phnom Penh, and the Island can also be reached by boat from Sihanoukville.

Day trip destinations from Phnom Penh include Udong, Cambodia's capital from 1619 to 1866, located 24 miles north of Phnom Penh; Tonle Bati and Ta Prohm and Yeay Peau Temples, located 20 miles south of Phnom Penh; temples at Phnom Chisor, located 33 miles south of Phnom Penh and 13 miles south of Tonle Bati; and Koki Beach, which is not really a beach at all but a popular Khmer destination—especially on Sundays—located on the Mekong River, 7 miles east of Phnom Penh.

Entertainment

Formal and organized entertainment in Phnom Penh is limited. The French Cultural Center shows movies in French and sponsors a monthly schedule of lectures. Several times a year they bring classical musicians or theater performances to Phnom Penh. The Phnom Penh Players, an amateur acting group, put on two plays a year. Cambodian dance perfor-

mances are held occasionally. Performances, ceremonies, and races are also held in conjunction with most Cambodian national festivals. There are a number of nightclubs in Phnom Penh that offer dancing (most clubs play a combination of Cambodian, Thai, and western rock music).

Social Activities

The international community in Phnom Penh is small, and it is easy to meet and get to know people of all nationalities. Although opportunities for formal socializing and entertainment are minimal, opportunities for meeting host country nationals and nationals of other friendly countries include the International Youth Club, the Hash House Harriers, socializing at local restaurants and bars, and the Women's Forum (an international group that meets monthly for brunch and socializing).

Special Information

Undetonated land mines are a hazard that travelers outside of Phnom Penh should beware of. Bombs and mines were laid throughout Cambodia during the 1970s, and many of these still remain. As skirmishes between the Khmer Rouge and the Royal Government Army continue, new mines continue to be laid everyday, even in areas previously cleared and deemed safe. At the end of 1993, it was estimated that there remain 6–9 million mines yet to be cleared. Countrywide, there are nearly 100 casualties per day from mine blasts, and mine accidents rank among malaria and tuberculosis as Cambodia's greatest public health hazards. As a result of mine accidents, Cambodia has a higher percentage of amputees than any other country in the world.

OTHER CITIES

Located about 200 miles north of Phnom Penh, **ANGKOR** offers some of the countries most beautiful archeological sites. The Angkor was once the capital of the Great Khmer Empire, which reigned from the 9th



View of Angkor Wat, Cambodia

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to 15th centuries AD. The ruins of 100 or more temples and buildings are hidden beneath a stunning rain-forest canopy. Sandstone carvings on the sides of the temples tell their stories. Local tour guides can help you interpret them. One of the most magnificent sites is Angkor Wat, the temple complex built between 879-1191AD to honor the Hindu god Vishnu. The complex covers 500 acres and boasts a number of soaring towers, beautiful courtyards and galleries, and a large moat meant to symbolize the ocean surrounding the world. The Wat contains one of the largest bas relief sculptures in the world, which depicts scenes from Hindu legends.

Nearby is Phnom Bakheng Hill, the first “temple mountain” at Angkor. The temple there originally had 109 towers supporting a seven level structure, meant to symbolize the seven heavens of Hinduism. According to Hindu mythology, this temple mountain represents Mount Meru, the center of the universe.

Visitors may need to stay in Siem Reap, a town located only a few miles away from Angkor. Package tours, ranging from 2 to 5 days in duration, can be arranged through several travel agents in Phnom Penh. Prices include all ground and air transportation, hotel and meals, admission fees at all temples, and an English-speaking guide. Trips can also be arranged individually. Round-trip airfare to Siem Reap is approximately \$100 (daily flights are now available from Phnom Penh), and there are government-set fees to visit the temples.

BATTAMBANG is located in western Cambodia along the banks of the Sangker River. It is approximately 160 miles (258 kilometers) northwest of Phnom Penh. The city is situated in the heart of large rice growing region and has developed into a major marketing center. Before 1975, Battambang was the site of productive textile and cigarette manufacturing industries. These industries were heavily dam-

aged by the Khmer Rouge. Two ancient Khmer temples, Prasat Sneng and Prasat Banon, are located near Battambang. These temples date back to the 11th and 12th centuries, respectively. Within the city, the Pothiveal Museum contained many beautiful examples of Khmer art. The present condition of Prasat Sneng, Prasat Banon, and the Pothiveal Museum is unknown. With a population of approximately 195,000 in 2002, Battambang is Cambodia’s second largest city.

One of central Cambodia’s largest cities is **KAMPONG CHAM**. It is located roughly 45 miles (75 kilometers) northeast of Phnom Penh. Kampong Cham is situated near a heavily forested region of Cambodia where several varieties of trees, particularly rubber trees, are found. Several large rubber plantations have been constructed near the city. Kampong Cham’s location on the Mekong River has led to the development of a productive fishing industry. The soil around Kampong

Cham is extremely fertile and supports the growth of corn, cassava, beans, tobacco, sugarcane, cotton, rice, and potatoes. An 11th century Buddhist shrine, Wat Nokor, is located on the outskirts of the city. Kampong Cham has a population of over 35,000. Current population figures are unavailable.

KAMPONG CHHNANG, with a population of approximately 56,000, is situated on the Tonlé Sap River and is the home of a large fishing industry. The city is central Cambodia's transportation hub and is linked by rail, road, and river ferry with Phnom Penh. The residents of Kampong Chhnang and the surrounding region are noted for the creation of beautiful Cambodian pottery.

KAMPONG SAOM is Cambodia's major port city. The city was constructed in 1960 with French assistance. By 1966, Kampong Saom had developed into a modern city with parks, schools, and hospitals. The city was heavily damaged during years of civil war and all port facilities were closed by the Khmer Rouge. All port facilities were reopened in late 1979. In 1984, Kampong Saom's port handled 2.5 tons of cargo per day.

The coastal city of **KAMPOT** is located in southern Cambodia near the border with Vietnam. Kampot is located in a rich agricultural region and is a trading center for the rice, bananas, coconuts, and pepper grown near the city. Kampot is also noted for the population of durian, a tropical fruit whose seeds are roasted and eaten like chestnuts. The city is connected by road and rail with Phnom Penh. Road conditions near Kampot are extremely poor. Kampot was heavily damaged by the Khmer Rouge and many areas of the city need to be rebuilt. Kampot has a population of approximately 19,000.

The name **KOH KONG** refers to the province, the town, and the island located in southwest Cambodia near the border of Thailand. The main attractions of the island are

the white sand coves and lush tropical forests. Though the island has not been fully developed for tourist stays, day trips can be made for those interested in swimming, diving, or backpacking around the island. The village boarder town on the mainland offers several hotels, restaurants, and even a few night clubs for an active nightlife.

KRATIE (also spelled Kracheh) is northeastern Cambodia's largest city. The city is situated along the Mekong River in the heart of a fertile agricultural region. Rice, vegetables, bananas, potatoes, sugarcane, corn, and cotton are grown near the city. The area around Kratie is heavily forested and is an excellent source of hardwoods such as teak, mahogany, and rosewood. Vestiges of Cambodia's proud history, such as the monastery of Phnom Sambok and the ancient city of Sambor, are located on the outskirts of Kratie. The city has a population of nearly 20,000. Current population figures are unavailable.

The city of **PURSAT** (also spelled Pouthisat) is located on the Pursat River in western Cambodia. The region around Pursat is one of Cambodia's largest rice-growing regions. Corn, potatoes, bananas, cotton, and vegetables are grown near Pursat. Other economic activity in the city revolves around distilling and trading in horns and hides. Pursat has an estimated population of 42,000 in 2002.

SIEM REAP is one of northwestern Cambodia's largest cities. The city is Cambodia's largest producer of pharmaceuticals. Located north of Siem Reap are the remains of Angkor Wat, an ancient temple city complex constructed in the 12th century. The largest religious edifice in the world, Angkor Wat is considered the greatest architectural work in Southeast Asia. Siem Reap has a population of approximately 142,000 in 2002.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The Kingdom of Cambodia covers an area 181,040 sq. km. (69,900 sq. mi.), approximately the size of Missouri. It is bordered on the northwest by Thailand, on the north by Laos, and on the east and southeast by Vietnam. Cambodia has a short coastline on the Gulf of Thailand.

The country terrain is largely flat, low-lying plains that are drained by the Tonle Sap (Lake) and the Mekong and Bassac Rivers. The Mekong River flows 189 miles through Cambodia; in places it is up to 3 miles wide. The rich sediment deposited during the rainy season when the Mekong River swells and floods each year adds to the very fertile growing conditions that exist throughout the Upper Mekong Delta. The Tonle Sap, located in western central Cambodia, connects with the Mekong River at Phnom Penh via a 60 miles long channel.

During the dry season when the water level of the Mekong is low, water flows southeast out of the Tonle Sap into the Mekong River. However, during the wet season when the level of the Mekong rises, an extraordinary phenomena takes place. The swollen Mekong River actually causes the flow of the Tonle Sap to reverse, forcing water to drain back into the Tonle Sap and over time causing the Lake to more than double in size. As a result of this unique occurrence, the Tonle Sap is one of the richest sources of freshwater fish in the world. The central lowlands are characterized by seemingly endless, flat rice paddies, fields of reeds and tall grass, and fields of cultivated crops such as corn, tobacco, sesame, and tapioca. Sprinkled throughout are tall sugar palm trees and occasional wooded areas. Rice is grown in 90 percent of the cultivated land. However, only two-thirds of the land cultivated before 1970 is cultivated

today, largely as a result of dangerous land mines and a lack of equipment and irrigation.

There are heavily forested areas located away from the Lake and Rivers and mountainous areas in the southwest (the Cardamom Mountains), the south (the Elephant Mountains), and the north (the Dangrek Mountains). Most of the country lies at an elevation of less than 100 meters above sea level. The highest elevation, Phnom Aoral (60 miles northwest of Phnom Penh) is 1,813 meters. The mountainous areas are largely forested, with virgin rain forests in the southwest, evergreen and mangrove forests along the coastal strip, and towering broadleaf evergreen forests in the north. Much of the north and northeast is covered by a thick jungle of vines, bamboo, palm trees, and assorted other ground plants. The southwest provinces support large (although old) rubber plantations.

Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia since the mid-15th century and the country's largest city, has a population of approximately 1 million. The city lies at the confluence of the Mekong River, the Bassac River, and the river flowing from the Tonle Sap and consists of four urban districts and three suburban districts. Phnom Penh is a sprawling city, with a mix of wide, tree-lined boulevards and narrow dirt roads, large French-colonial houses, apartment buildings, and small thatch-roofed wooden dwellings. Many residents have relocated to the capital from rural provinces, most to make a better living and some to attend school or to learn English. Phnom Penh is a city struggling to overcome the ravages and neglect of civil war, and most of the city's basic infrastructure is in disarray.

Upon leaving Phnom Penh, the scenery immediately becomes very rural. Cambodia's second largest city, Battambang (population approximately 200,000), is located 175 miles to the northwest. Approximately 3 hours (by road) to the southwest of Phnom Penh is the

port of Sihanoukville on the Gulf of Thailand, with white-sand beaches. In the far northeast, Ratanakiri province is the home of Cambodia's ethnic minorities.

The climate in Cambodia is consistent throughout the country—hot and humid. There are two distinct seasons: a cooler dry season that last from November to May, and a hotter rainy season lasting from June to October. The country has an average annual rainfall of between 50 and 75 inches with the southwestern mountains, the area with the highest rainfall, receiving nearly 200 inches per year. October–December are the coolest months of the year, when temperatures can fall to the mid to upper 60°F (25–27°C). April is the hottest month, when temperatures regularly exceed 100°F (40°C). The average relative humidity is 81 percent. Although the heat and humidity, particularly during April and May, can be uncomfortable and fatiguing, all U.S. Embassy housing and offices are equipped with air-conditioning. During the rainy season, periodic flooding is a problem, as are increased mosquitoes, silverfish, and vermin infestation. High levels of humidity and moisture encourage damage caused by mildew and rust.

Population

The population of Cambodia is approximately 12 million, with an annual growth rate of 2.25% (2001 est.). Cambodia is the most homogeneous of the Southeast Asian nations, with ethnic-Khmers comprising nearly 90% of the population. There are small percentages of ethnic-Chinese and ethnic-Vietnamese, and a small Cham Muslim population that was nearly wiped out by the Khmer Rouge during the 1970s. Cambodia's ethno-linguist minorities (hill tribes), numbering fewer than 100,000, reside in the country's mountainous regions and are concentrated primarily in the northeast. As sporadic fighting continues between the Khmer Rouge and Royal Government forces, a fluctuating population of Cambodi-

ans seek refuge in Thailand. Years of violent and bloody civil war have taken their toll on the population and are reflected in the demographics of the country. Nearly 65 percent of the population are women, and 40% (4 million) is under age 15.

Cambodia's population is mostly rural with approximately 80 percent employed in agriculture or fishing. Nearly 90 percent of the population resides in the central lowlands. The average population density in Cambodia is 61 people per square kilometer.

The official language of Cambodia is Khmer, and it is spoken throughout the country. Unlike Thai and Vietnamese, Khmer is a nontonal language with many disyllabic words. The Khmer language descends from Sanskrit and borrows a number of words from Pali. It is not directly related to either Thai or Vietnamese. For over a century during the period of French colonization, educated Cambodians also learned French. Today, however, the second language of choice is fast becoming English. Young people crowd English-language classes and practice their language skills with foreigners at every chance they get.

Buddhism is the state religion in Cambodia, and the vast majority of Cambodian people are Buddhist. Cambodians practice Theravada Buddhism, an earlier form of the religion that originated in India. Every male Buddhist is expected to become a monk for at least a short period of his life. Under the Khmer Rouge, the practice of Buddhism (and all religion) was forbidden. Monks were executed, and nearly all of the country's 3,000 wats (Buddhist temples) were severely damaged or destroyed. In recent years, despite a critical lack of resources, great emphasis has been placed on restoring and rebuilding the wats.

Cambodia's small Muslim community was nearly annihilated by the Khmer Rouge. There are several mosques in Phnom Penh, however, and in a number of villages to the

north and east along the Mekong River.

Public Institutions

The Kingdom of Cambodia is struggling to overcome decades of civil war, isolation, and massive destruction by the Khmer Rouge of its population, infrastructure, and national identity and culture. Historically, however, the Khmer nation has been both powerful and influential throughout the region. From the 9th to the 14th century, the Khmer Empire successfully ruled much of the area that is today Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam. During the 14th and 15th centuries the power of the Khmer Empire waned, and a succession of Kings alternately fought with neighboring Vietnam and Thailand. In 1863, Cambodia signed a treaty of protectorate with France, and over the course of the next century became established as a French colony. Cambodia, under the leadership of King Norodom Sihanouk, declared independence from France in 1953. Shortly thereafter King Sihanouk abdicated the throne to his elderly father in order to be elected prime minister and then Chief of State. Sihanouk severed diplomatic relations with the U.S. in 1965. In 1970, when Sihanouk was temporarily out of the country, his cousin, General Lon Nol staged a coup d'état, and replaced Sihanouk as chief of state. Sihanouk established a government-in-exile operated out of Beijing, and became a figurehead leader of the group known as the Khmer Rouge. Meanwhile under Lon Nol, extreme levels of government greed and corruption led to violent fighting and the deaths of several hundred thousand Cambodians between 1970 and 1975.

On April 17–18, 1975, the Khmer Rouge invaded Phnom Penh and systematically and methodically emptied the city of all residents. Over the next 4 years, the Khmer Rouge attempted to implement a totally agrarian-based self-sufficient society, forcibly relocating Cambodia's citizens to rural work camps to work in the fields and per-

form manual labor. Under the genocidal leadership of the Khmer Rouge, nearly 1 million Cambodian people were tortured and executed and almost an entire generation of educated and professionally trained citizens was methodically annihilated. Widespread starvation, disease and despair contributed to the massive numbers of deaths that occurred during the 1975–79 reign of the Khmer Rouge regime. During this period, the country's basic infrastructure—systems of transportation, communication, education, health, economics, and government—was destroyed.

In January 1979, Vietnam invaded Cambodia and forced the Khmer Rouge westward to the Thai border, and installed a new communist government headed by Hun Sen and Heng Samrin, two former Khmer Rouge leaders. For more than a decade Vietnam presided over the chaotic situation in Cambodia, plagued by continued guerrilla warfare with the Khmer Rouge, widespread famine, international isolation, and political, social, and economic instability.

Amidst international pressure and a declining economic situation at home, Vietnam ceased its occupation of Cambodia in 1990, and a year later the 1991 Paris Peace Agreements promised to end 13 years of Cambodian civil war and establish the country as a democracy. The Cambodian peace agreement called for the deployment of the largest and most costly peacekeeping force in the history of the U.N. The U.N. Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) was created and charged with custodial administration of the country until a democratically elected constituent assembly could form a new government and ratify a national constitution. In May 1993, Cambodia held its first free and open elections (in which the Khmer Rouge refused to participate), with 95 percent of eligible voters registered to vote, and of those 90 percent casting a ballot.

The National Assembly, the leading legislative body, is made up of 120

elected members representing three major political parties. The Royalist FUNCINPEC party (the French acronym for Cambodian National Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia) and the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) share a majority of power in the National Assembly (with the two co-prime ministers, H.R.H. Norodom Ranariddh and Hun Sen representing those two political parties), and the Buddhist Liberal Democratic Party (BLDP) has a smaller presence.

The main goals of the new government are national reconciliation to rebuild the country and to restore peace and stability where chaos has existed. A major obstacle confronting Cambodia is a severe lack of resources. Over the past two decades the country's infrastructure was nearly completely destroyed, and Cambodia is now faced with reestablishing basic levels of transportation, communication, food and water supplies, and government services. Poverty is a serious problem, and living standards and social indicators in Cambodia place it among the poorest countries in the world. Cambodia's new leaders have been working hard to reestablish ties with the international community and formulate a policy for foreign relations. A big part of this has been seeking desperately needed international aid and assistance. To date, Japan, France, Australia and the U.S. have been the major contributors. A key to the new government's success will be its ability to strengthen Cambodia's economy and improve living standards throughout the country.

The Kingdom of Cambodia is divided into 21 provinces that are broken down into districts, communes, and villages. Seats in the National Assembly are allocated proportionally by province.

Arts, Science, and Education

Cambodia, a country with a rich history of traditional architecture,



Man on a bicycle on a Cambodian street

Cory Langley. Reproduced by permission.

music, dance, and handicrafts, suffered near cultural devastation under the Khmer Rouge regime. Pagodas and temples, museums, libraries, and theaters were routinely ransacked and destroyed. Between 1975 and 1979, the rich history and culture that had accu-

mulated over thousands of years in the form of buildings, sculptures, paintings, and manuscripts was ruthlessly wiped out.

Today, the country is struggling to restore, rebuild, and resurrect its cultural institutions. Historically,

Cambodia is perhaps best known for its unique and impressive architecture that climaxed during the Angkorian period (the 9th to the 14th century). At that time, Khmer art and architecture were widely influential throughout Southeast Asia. The most magnificent exam-

ple of Khmer architecture can be seen at the world famous temples of Angkor, including Angkor Wat, the Bayon, and Angkor Thom. Although attacked and ransacked by the Khmer Rouge, these spectacular temples remain one of the architectural splendors of the world. With international assistance, a variety of conservation efforts are underway to protect and preserve these national monuments.

The National Museum of Khmer Art and Archaeology, located in Phnom Penh, has some of the finest examples of Khmer art and sculpture. Pagodas around the country are in various states of refurbishment and repair, and the Royal Palace and its surrounding compound including the Silver Pagoda—with its floor covered with 5,000 silver tiles—has undergone an impressive renovation and has sections that are open to the public for tours.

Cambodia's classic dance, with its graceful and controlled movements and colorful silk costumes, is performed to the accompaniment of traditional string and percussion instruments and vocalist. Under the Khmer Rouge, 90 percent of Cambodia's classical dancers were killed, and it is only recently that the government reestablished a national dancing troupe. Theater in Cambodia recently received a severe setback when the Bassac Theater, a historic site in Phnom Penh and Cambodia's national theater, caught fire and was destroyed. The country currently has no funds to replace or to rebuild the theater and is hoping for international assistance to help restore this culturally significant site.

Like most institutions in Cambodia, the educational system suffered greatly under the Khmer Rouge. By 1979, the educational system ceased to exist. In addition, the country was left with a severe lack of trained teachers, most of whom were executed during the Khmer Rouge regime. School buildings, books, supplies, and printing facilities were all destroyed. However, a major effort in the 1980s to reestab-

lish a national school system resulted in the opening of nearly 4,700 primary schools and 440 secondary schools throughout the country. There are now over 2 million primary school students and 190,000 secondary school students, as well as a small university and technical school population in Phnom Penh. However, quality of education remains low. Primary school graduates risk lapsing into illiteracy, and secondary school graduates lack the required level of knowledge, particularly in the fields of mathematics, science, and foreign languages, to gain college admission.

One of the major problems facing the educational system in Cambodia is a continued shortage of competent and qualified teachers. For example, approximately one-third of all primary schoolteachers themselves have only a primary school education. In addition, teaching salaries are so low that new teachers are discouraged from entering the field (the World Bank recently calculated that average teacher salaries cover only half the cost of a typical household's monthly rice consumption). Educational resources of all types are lacking; only 4 percent of the projected 1994 national budget was allocated for education. Adult literacy in Cambodia is believed to be around 35 percent, a slight decline from where it was 25 years ago.

Commerce and Industry

Cambodia's economy, even before the widespread destruction and devastation brought on by the Khmer Rouge, was one of the least developed in Southeast Asia. Although with assistance from the international community, the economy has improved, Cambodia remains a poor, underdeveloped country, and its economy continues to suffer from decades of civil war and internal corruption. The average per capita income is approximately US\$1,300 (2000 est.). Future economic development and

growth will depend heavily on international aid and assistance and foreign investment.

Agriculture, including rice farming, livestock, forestry, and cultivation of other crops, is a primary part of the economy, involving 75% percent of the labor force. Agriculture accounted for about 37% of GDP in 1999. Excellent rice harvests in 1999 contributed to Cambodia's better-than-expected economic growth. With its large amount of arable land, ample rainfall, and close proximity to the major ASEAN markets of Thailand and Vietnam, agriculture will continue to have strong growth potential for the economy.

Industry and manufacturing remain low. Mining activities (for clay, dolomite, gold, limestone, pagodite, phosphate, quartz, sapphire, ruby, silica sand, and other precious stones) are also low. Although Cambodia's natural resources include a variety of gemstones, the largest gemstone mines are currently not under government control, and their output remains largely unreported.

Since 1993, Cambodia has received major assistance from the IMF, World Bank, ADB, UNDP and other bilateral and multilateral donors that is earmarked for economic reform. Cambodia has already made considerable progress by improving control of the forestry industry, which had been plagued with management corruption and illegal logging operations. Timber and firewood are the main forest products (Cambodia does not have a large quantity of teak or other valuable hardwoods).

Cambodia is a member of ASEAN and the Asian Free Trade Area. Cambodia has begun the process of accession to the World Trade Organization.

Transportation

Local

In Phnom Penh and throughout Cambodia, vehicles drive on the

right-hand side of the road as they do in the U.S. However, in most locally available automobiles the driver's seat is on the right side of the vehicle. Traffic conditions in Phnom Penh can be confusing and dangerous, primarily because traffic regulations are rarely enforced. Few Khmer drivers have had any type of formal driving instruction and most do not have a license. The streets are shared by large cargo trucks, cars, a plethora of motos, bicycles, cyclos, a few ox-pulled carts, and pedestrians. The absence of stop signs at even major intersections adds to the confusion and danger of driving in Phnom Penh. Additionally, some informal but significant "rules of the road" may prove initially confusing to American drivers. For example, in Cambodia, the meaning of another car flashing its headlights is "you are in my driving path and I am not yielding my right of way to you."

Traffic conditions at night can be particularly challenging. Street lights in Phnom Penh frequently do not work, and in any case are only present on a few major roads. The roads are dark, and many cars, motos, cyclos, and bicycles travel at night without any lights. During the rainy season when roads frequently become flooded, drivers should beware of potentially slippery conditions and hidden potholes.

"Moto taxis"—small motorcycles that accept passengers to sit behind the driver—are widely available and are used regularly. Cyclos—large tricycles with a passenger seat in front and a peddler or driver behind—are also a widely used form of transportation. Both of these forms of transportation are inexpensive (usually costing between 20¢ and \$1; prices are negotiable) and are readily available. Cars with drivers can be hired by the hour or by the day; rates are reasonable.

Regional

Transportation facilities available within Cambodia are limited. There are five National Highways linking Phnom Penh to other provinces. The conditions of these roads, the only

main roads in the country, vary considerably and in some cases they are not passable even with a four-wheel-drive vehicle. In 1990, it was estimated that only about 20 percent of the roads in Cambodia were covered with asphalt and were in passable condition. Missing or damaged bridges also creates travel difficulties as ferry services are frequently not available. To date, the government has not allocated significant budget resources for repairing the country's roads, and little attempt has been made to find private funding for road construction and repair. The highway system is being rebuilt in stages with the help of foreign assistance projects and loans, as they become available.

The Khmer Rouge continue to mine bridges, including those recently restored and rebuilt. Incidents of banditry, robbery, and kidnapping by Khmer Rouge and government soldiers has made road travel to many destinations additionally dangerous and unreliable. Private taxi service can be arranged to some destinations outside of Phnom Penh, subject to the same dangers as previously described.

Travel by air is possible to some locations, and in many cases is required due to impassable roads, damaged bridges, and unsafe travel conditions. Cambodia has 8 usable airports with daily flights to Siem Reap (and the temples at Angkor Wat), and several weekly flights to Battambang (Cambodia's second largest city, located 175 miles to the northwest of Phnom Penh), Stung Treng, and a few other destinations. Flights to the northeast of Cambodia fly only once per week, and there is no road access to this part of the country. Organized trips to visit the temples of Angkor Wat (accompanied by an English-speaking guide) are available through local travel agencies; trips ranging from 2 to 5 days can be arranged, although prices are expensive. There are daily flights from Phnom Penh to Bangkok (a one hour flight), where connections to other international carriers can be made. Daily or

weekly flights to other international destinations, including Singapore, Ho Chi Minh City, Hong Kong, and Kuala Lumpur, are also available directly from Phnom Penh.

Cambodia has two rail lines, both originating in Phnom Penh, and a total of 367 miles of government owned single, one-meter-gauge track. Guerrilla activities continue to disrupt service, and the railroad is not safe for travel by American by Americans for either official or personal travel.

Likewise, Cambodia has 169 miles of navigable inland waterways for boats drawing up to 1.8 meters of water. Although several cities are theoretically reachable from Phnom Penh by boat, due to high incidents of banditry and generally unsafe conditions of equipment and lack of life preservers and safety devices, transportation by boat is generally not recommended.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

In Phnom Penh and throughout Cambodia, local telephone service consists of individual mobile telephones carried by the small (but growing) percentage of individuals who can afford them. There are only a few businesses and almost no homes with installed telephone lines, and they are difficult to get. Motorola telephones cover an area 18 miles around Phnom Penh where the antenna is installed. Samart telephones service a wider area of the country including Siem Reap, Sihanoukville, and Kompong Cham.

Phnom Penh does have a limited local telephone system, but overseas calls are frequently easier to make than local ones. There are a small but growing number of pay phones located in Phnom Penh, and local emergency telephone numbers have recently been established.

Because many businesses and most individuals do not have telephones, communication frequently requires

a hand-delivered message or personal visit.

Radio and TV

Post receives shortwave radio broadcasts in English from the BBC, VOA, and Radio Australia. Radio France International, a French station, can be received on FM radio. Local TV programs (news programs, sitcoms, dramas, movies) are broadcast in Khmer, the official language of Cambodia. Occasionally, programs in French, Thai, or English are shown. The French channel CFI is retransmitted over Phnom Penh by the French cultural center. A small regular TV antenna is sufficient to receive it. A Thai company also operates a TV channel out of Bangkok. Cable TV (including Star TV that transmits BBC 24 hours per day, and CNN) can be viewed in several local restaurants and hotels.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

Reasonably current news magazines are available, including international editions of *Time* magazine, *Newsweek*, and *The Economist*. English-language books are difficult to find in-country, but there are several well-stocked English-language bookstores in Bangkok.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

Although there are several well-trained Cambodian medical specialists in Phnom Penh, local hospitals are poorly equipped and inadequately staffed. Locally available medications and sterilization techniques are for the most part inadequate.

Community Health

A rudimentary and unsophisticated public health system exists in Cambodia, with hospitals established in most provinces and districts. In Phnom Penh there are nine hospitals (including both public and private facilities). However, throughout the country health services remain inadequate. The Min-

istry of Health recently began trying to rebuild a national health system, but resources are scarce and there remains a critical lack of trained doctors and nurses. In 1993, there were only 986 trained physicians in all of Cambodia, and due to very low civil service salaries there is little incentive for medical professionals to enter the public health sector.

Despite existing difficulties, the health sector has made significant progress in the past 2 years, and this trend of improvement is expected to continue. International aid and assistance has accelerated, largely in the form of direct assistance to individual facilities at the local level, and the availability of medications and supplies has increased throughout the country. Priorities facing the Ministry of Health include reestablishing functioning primary health services through a district-based health system approach, strengthening national programs aimed at the principal communicable diseases afflicting the country (including tuberculosis, malaria, immunizable childhood diseases, AIDS, diarrheal diseases, malnutrition, acute respiratory infections, and adequate birth space), and improving the capacity of the health system to perform functions and to manage resources efficiently (the public health system has become very decentralized in its management, which accounts for widely varying levels of service and unevenly distributed assistance throughout the country).

Sewage and garbage disposal facilities are generally inadequate but improving. Currently, the city of Phnom Penh has only 15 serviceable garbage trucks, and rubbish collection is notoriously bad due to a lack of government funds. Recently however, the Phnom Penh Municipality signed a tentative contract with a French company to improve the garbage collection and disposal in the city. To pay for the new services, the city has proposed new taxes for households and businesses.

Preventive Measures

Sickness is a significant problem, but with proper attention to methods of prevention and general sanitation, and by keeping immunizations current, many common diseases can be avoided. Malaria suppressants should be taken regularly when traveling up-country, but are not required within the confines of Phnom Penh where the risk of malaria is minimal. Recommended inoculations include typhoid fever, cholera, Japanese encephalitis, Hepatitis A and B, measles, mumps, rubella, and a post-childhood polio re-booster. All pets should be inoculated against rabies. To reduce the risk of mosquito-borne diseases, it is advised that insect repellent be used at night, and protective clothing be worn during the dusk to dawn hours.

Tap water in Cambodia is not potable, and for drinking purposes most people use readily available and reasonably priced bottled water. Tap water can be used if it is boiled first for 10 minutes and then filtered. Iodine is also effective in purifying water. Tap water can be used for washing and bathing. Fresh fruits and vegetables are abundant all year round, but they must be thoroughly cleaned and soaked in an iodine or chlorine solution and then rinsed with purified water before consumption. Where possible, fruits and vegetables should be peeled. All meat and seafood must be well cooked before eating. Locally produced milk should be avoided, but UTH whole milk, dried milk, canned condensed milk, and occasionally imported fresh milk is available.

The climate in Cambodia is hot and humid year round, and care must be taken to avoid prolonged sun exposure, sunstroke, heatstroke, and dehydration. Regular use of sunscreen is recommended, and individuals will appreciate having UV protective sunglasses, and a hat or sun visor. Dehydration can be a problem, particularly among children, but it can easily be prevented

by consuming proper amounts of water throughout the day.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs & Duties

The normal flight pattern from Washington, D.C. to Phnom Penh leaves from Dulles International Airport and flies to the U.S. west coast, and from there flies to Bangkok with one stop over (usually in Taipei, Taiwan). It is necessary to change planes in Bangkok to fly to Phnom Penh; no U.S. carriers currently fly to Cambodia.

A passport and visa are required. Tourists and business travelers may purchase a Cambodian visa, valid for one month, at the airports in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap. Both require a passport-sized photograph.

There is a \$20 local entry fee (payable in U.S. dollars), and an \$8 departure tax for all international flights. There is no restriction on the amount of currency that can be imported into the country, but amounts in excess of \$10,000 must be declared. Current information about entry/visa and other requirements may be obtained from the Royal Embassy of Cambodia, 4500 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20022, telephone number 202-726-7742, fax 202-726-8381. Overseas inquiries may be made at the nearest embassy or consulate of Cambodia.

All U.S. citizens in Cambodia are encouraged to register with the U.S. Embassy in Phnom Penh where they may obtain updated information on travel and security within Cambodia. The U.S. Embassy is located at no. 16, Street 228 (between streets 51 and 63), Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The telephone number is (855-23) 216-436 or 218-931; fax (855-23)-216-437. A recording of security information is available twenty-four hours a day at telephone (855-23) 216-805.

Pets

Pets are permitted entrance into Cambodia. All pets should have standard vaccinations and certificates Contact the airlines for shipping information. There is an established veterinarian in Phnom Penh.

Currency, Banking and Weights and Measures

The official currency of Cambodia is the riel; there are approximately 2500 riel to the dollar (June 1994). Paper riel notes are issued in 100, 200, and 500 denominations. There are no coins in use. The U.S. dollar serves as a widely used unofficial currency and is accepted virtually everywhere in the country. Many times prices are given in U.S. dollars instead of riels. All monetary transactions in Cambodia are conducted in cash; credit cards are accepted only at the Cambodiana Hotel and at some airlines. U.S. travelers checks can be exchanged at local banks (for a fee), but they are not accepted by local merchants or businesses as a form of currency.

Cambodia uses the metric system for all weights and measures.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan. 1	New Year's Day
Jan. 7	Victory Day
Jan/Feb.	Chinese & Vietnamese New Year*
Apr.	Khmer New Year *
Apr/May	Royal Ploughing Ceremony*
Apr. 17	Independence Day
Apr/May	Vesak Baucha*
May 1	Workers Day
June 1	Children's Day
June 19	Memorial Day (Revolutionary Armed Forces founded)
June 28	Memorial Day (Revolutionary People's Party founded)

Sept. 24	Constitution Day
Sept/Oct.	Prachum Ben*
Oct. 30	King's Birthday (3 days)
Oct/Nov.	Water Festival*
Nov. 9	Independence Day

*variable

RECOMMENDED READING

These titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country. The Department of State does not endorse unofficial publications.

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CHINA

People's Republic of China

Major Cities: Beijing, Hong Kong, Guangzhou, Shanghai, Shenyang, Chengdu, Nanjing, Chongqing, Harbin, Wuhan

Other Cities: Anshan, Cheng-chou, Chengdu, Fuzhou, Guilin, Guiyang, Hangzhou, Lüda, Suzhou, Tianjin, Xi'an, Yangshuo, Zibo

Regions: Macau, Tibet

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Reports dated December 1999 (Hong Kong) and December 1996. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

CHINA has the longest continuous historical and cultural tradition of any country on earth. The civilization which took shape in the Yellow River Valley of North China in the second millennium B.C. eventually came to dominate all of East Asia, including Japan, Korea, and Vietnam. The products of that civilization bear the unmistakable stamp of the vast nation which today is the home of nearly one-fourth of the world's population.

The process of change in a society structured by more than 3,000 years of civilization has not been an easy one, and China in the 20th century has been exhausted by political, eco-

nomie, and intellectual chaos. The Chinese Communist Party assumed control of the mainland in 1949, after almost a generation of war and social upheaval and, on October 1 of that year, formally proclaimed establishment of the People's Republic of China.

In the intervening years, and during the period of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, diplomatic relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China (P.R.C.) were interrupted. In the late 1960s, steps were taken toward relaxing tension between the two countries, and on March 1, 1979, the United States and the P.R.C. exchanged ambassadors and established embassies in Beijing and in Washington, DC.

MAJOR CITIES

Beijing

Beijing is on the northern edge of the North China Plain. To the west and north are hills, rising to 11,000 feet, 60 miles to the west, while flat, fertile farmlands stretch to the south and east. In 2000, Beijing's population was approximately 12,033,000.

Beijing's modern architecture is undistinguished, but pockets of splendid old buildings—notably the Forbidden City of the Ming and Qing Dynasties—still preserve the charm of premodern Beijing. In the past 25 years, many new multistory buildings have been built along the broad east-west access, which passes through Tiananmen Square. In all sections of Beijing, new high-rise office buildings, hotels, shopping complexes, and apartment houses are either under construction or recently completed. The city is constantly changing, although certain sections are still largely characterized by narrow streets fronted by gray walls, beyond which gray roofs with slightly upturned gables mark courtyards and residences, intersected with blocks of brick apartments for workers. The city has three ring roads (some sections are raised highways) that allow for easier access around the city and to the outskirts. The six-lane airport expressway has recently been completed. While a fourth ring road is under construction, it is not expected to alleviate worsening overall traffic congestion, caused by a proliferation of taxicabs and privately owned vehicles on city streets.

Food

With the increasing availability of Western products and their Chinese

counterparts, it is now possible to find locally most of the components of a typical American diet. The drawbacks to the local scene are mainly price and lack of convenience: imported goods are still quite expensive, and food shopping outside the major hotel supermarkets is very time consuming. A summary of what is and isn't available is listed below.

All kinds of meat are available, both fresh and frozen, including beef, pork, and lamb. There are various delicatessens around town, as well as a German butcher who offers Western cuts. Frozen chickens (both whole and cutup), turkey, and duck are available at the Friendship stores and other outlets. Fresh and frozen seafood comes in many varieties, including such delicacies as scallops, squid, and some imported fish such as rainbow trout and salmon; prawns are available locally, but the quality varies. Also widely available are various cold cuts and sausages (some imported, some made locally) such as hot dogs, ham, and bacon as well as liver pate and caviar. Imported cheeses (at very high prices), deli meats, and fresh baked goods are also available widely at several hotel delicatessens and bakeries.

Dairy products are readily available. Fresh pasteurized, homogenized milk is sold almost everywhere for about 12 Yuan per liter. UHT (long-life) milk (low-fat and skim as well as full-fat) is widely available as well, imported mainly from Australia. A Swedish-Chinese joint venture company produces a heavy cream similar to *creme fraiche*, yogurt (plain and limited selections of flavors), cottage cheese, and sour cream. With the exception of yogurt, however, these items are expensive. Butter, margarine, and cheddar-style cheese are all available, in both locally made and imported varieties. An Italian cheese store that recently opened offers locally made fresh ricotta, mozzarella, and soft Italian cheeses, and lately, fresh pasta.

Fresh produce is abundant, and the availability of a wide variety of

fruits and vegetables has increased dramatically over the past few years. Local produce markets dot the city, with some around the diplomatic compounds catering to Westerners and their tastes.

Produce available year-round includes cabbage, potatoes, onions, cucumbers, beets, carrots, garlic, bean sprouts, broccoli, cauliflower, celery, corn, eggplant, lettuce, green peppers, spinach, and string beans. The popularity of "hothouse farming" has made available such diverse items as fresh white and cremini mushrooms, Italian parsley, okra, zucchini, Japanese eggplant, and beautifully ripe tomatoes. Boutique fruit stands offer the likes of mangoes, lemons, imported apples, cherries, and Asian pears in addition to bananas, watermelon, peaches, lychees, strawberries, persimmons, pineapples, plums, mandarin oranges—all of which are available at different times of the year.

Frozen vegetables are available at several stores, although at considerably higher prices than in the U.S. Canned tomatoes, peas, asparagus, mushrooms, and carrots, as well as a variety of canned fruits are available; their quality may vary, but their prices are consistently high. If you cook a lot of Italian food, bring your own tomato paste as no acceptable substitute is available, and imported cans are expensive. A variety of juices are regularly available either fresh, canned, or in cartons: orange, grapefruit, pineapple, tomato juices, guava, grape, and various juice blends. All are expensive compared to prices in the U.S.

Some other items available in Beijing stores are grains (several varieties of rice, cornmeal, oatmeal, macaroni, spaghetti, millet), spices (bay leaves, cinnamon, coriander, noniodized salt, pepper, curry powder, chili powder, sesame seeds and paste, anise), chicken and duck eggs, nonegg noodles, sandwich bread, walnuts and pine nuts, granulated sugar, cooking oils, cookies, jams, honey, ice cream, rice vinegar, catsup, beer, wine (both imported

and Chinese), soda water, mineral water, imported spirits, and many Western brands of candy and gum.

Clothing

In July and August, the weather turns hot and humid similar to that of Washington, D.C., and rain showers are frequent. Autumn is the best time of the year, with warm, pleasant clear days and little wind. December through March is cold, extremely dry and windy, with occasional snow. Beijing spring is mostly dry, with frequent strong winds that stir up heavy dust storms. Prepare your wardrobe with these extremes in mind. In winter most buildings are overheated, but restaurants frequently have little or no heat.

The Chinese, both men and women, wear long winter underwear and trousers with a padded tunic in winter. A light open-necked shirt is the usual dress in the summer. Foreigners' clothing is informal and reflects prevailing fashions in Europe or the U.S. Daytime requires sturdy, practical, and washable items. Bring your deck shoes, tennis shoes, or hiking boots for climbing the Great Wall (it's steep).

Warm clothing, including boots, is needed during winter. Synthetic fabrics are a problem because they collect excessive electricity in the dry winter months. Static spray is a great help in controlling static electricity in clothing, and some consider it essential. Local department stores carry limited selections of men's underwear, sports and dress shirts, polo shirts, socks, and sweaters and down jackets for men, women, and children. A number of Western designers contract with Chinese firms to produce high-style items. Some of the items, often seconds, appear in the free markets at prices that are bargains compared to their U.S. equivalents.

For older children, Chinese clothing is adequate but has a distinctly Chinese look. Clothing for school should include sweatsuits for physical education class and sneakers. Dresses and trousers are available locally, though the styling may not be West-



Great Wall of China near Beijing

Susan Rock. Reproduced by permission.

ern. Shoes of cloth and rubber are inexpensive and come in all sizes, but quality is poor.

Supplies and Services

Local toiletries and cosmetics differ widely from what Americans are used to, and Western products, available at selected shops, are limited in selection and quantity and priced exorbitantly. Bath oils and lotions, moisturizers, and creams are popular because skin becomes exceedingly dry and itchy in the dry winter climate. Dandruff shampoos and hair conditioners are also useful.

There are a few hotel laundry and dry-cleaning facilities. Service time varies, and cleaning is marginally satisfactory. Shrinkage of woolen suits is not unknown, and clothing has been lost or damaged. Simple tailoring and dressmaking can be done locally. Tailors can copy clothes from pictures, and with a fitting session or two, they do adequate work. Good silk, wool, linen, blended suit

fabric, and brocades (inexpensive by U.S. standards) are available, but cotton, men's shirt, and wash-and-wear fabrics can be hard to find. Many people have been pleased with the clothes they have had made here.

There are men's barbers and women's beauty/barber salons in the hotels and the International Club, and if you speak Chinese, you can go to the generally improving local salons. Prices range from inexpensive to expensive. The Chinese have their own supplies, but some women may prefer to use their own hair spray, conditioners, coloring, shampoo, and equipment such as rollers.

Religious Activities

Catholic Mass is offered in English every Saturday night at the Canadian Embassy and every Sunday at the Philippine Embassy. A Catholic Mass is also offered Sunday morning at two Chinese cathedrals in Beijing; the churches are indepen-

dent of Rome, and the service is in Latin.

Nondenominational Protestant services in Chinese are held Sundays at two local Protestant churches and in English at the Sino-Japanese Center.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints holds meetings in the homes of members.

Informal Jewish services are held for the major holidays, as are Passover Seders. These services are coordinated by longtime residents of Beijing. Weekly services are not available.

Information on religious services is available from American Citizen Services, American Embassy.

Education

With the rapid growth of the foreign community, Beijing has experienced a deficit of educational opportunities for children.



Rickshaw on a street in Beijing, China

Courtesy of Thomas Musthaler

Three new schools, all with programs limited so far to elementary and middle school grades, have also opened recently in Beijing: the Western Academy of Beijing (WAB), the New School for Collaborative Learning (NSCL), and the Beijing Singapore International School (BISS). The WAB and BISS both attract mostly children whose native tongue is not English, with extensive English as a Second Language (ESL) programs. The WAB's curriculum, developed by the European Council of International Schools (ECIS), is more British in its orientation as well.

It must be stressed that none of the schools in Beijing are equipped to handle children with anything but mild learning disabilities. If your child has special educational needs, be sure to have these assessed before you make the decision to come to Beijing.

International School of Beijing: Jiang Tai Road, Dongzhimenwai, Beijing 100004, People's Republic of China Tel: 86-10-6437-7119 Fax: 86-10-437-6989

The International School of Beijing, jointly sponsored by the governments of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the U.K., and the U.S., was

established in 1980 as the successor to the American Educational Association and the former Australian, Canadian, and British schools. ISB is an independent, coeducational day school offering a program ranging from pre-kindergarten through grade 12 for government dependents and other citizens of the founding nations. As space is available, qualified children of citizens of other countries are also admitted. The school year extends from mid-August to mid-June.

Organization: The school is governed by an 11-member Board of Directors, 6 of whom are appointed by the sponsoring embassies, and 5 of whom are elected by the International School Association of Beijing. All parents of children who are registered for attendance in the school and members of the Board of Directors are automatically members of the Association.

Curriculum: The curriculum is based on, but not limited to, American models. Language arts and mathematics are emphasized. Social studies, science, computer studies, Chinese, French, art, music, drama, physical education, and health education are also taught. The International Baccalaureate (IB) program is also offered to

students in grades 11 and 12, along with several advanced placement courses. All grades meet in regular classes, from self-contained elementary (pre-kindergarten through grade 5) through middle school (grades 6 to 8) to high school (grades 9 to 12). All students study about China within the regular subjects and through special field experiences. There are limited programs for ESL, resource, and English enrichment.

Accreditation: The ISB is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

Faculty: There are about 80 full-time and 16 part-time professional staff members, many of whom are American.

Enrollment: Enrollment is about 1,000 students (50% Pre-K through grade 5, 25% grades 6 to 8, 25% grades 9 to 12).

Facilities: The school operates in 2 modern and 10 new buildings with 48 classrooms, 4 science labs, 5 music rooms, 2.5 art rooms, 3 computer labs, a learning Media Center, and a multipurpose room with stage, 14 language rooms, 8 resource and ESL classrooms, 2 gymnasiums, shower rooms, and 2 food-serving kitchens. It is located partly on the compound of the Lido Hotel Company Ltd., and partly on land leased from the Chinese Government. With the addition of 10 new buildings to the campus during the summer of 1994 to add needed enrollment capacity, the outdoor/play/sports places were cut back somewhat.

A new school facility for 1,500 students on a new 40-acre site is in the construction stages. Until the site is complete, students in grades K through 2 will attend a new "satellite" campus a short distance away from the Lido campus, accommodate the growing student.

Finances: About 95 percent of the school's income is derived from regular day school tuition. Annual tuition rates for 1996-1997 were as

follows: Pre-K: \$7,500; K-grade 5: \$11,870; grades 6 to 8: \$12,710; grades 9 to 12: \$14,030; capital fee: kindergarten—\$1,500, grades 1 to 12—\$3,000. A mandatory building fee of \$15,000 per student (refundable under certain terms and conditions upon withdrawal) was introduced for the 1996-97 school year to raise funds for the new campus. (All fees are quoted in U.S. dollars.)

The New School of Collaborative Learning: Shangdi West Road, Haidian District, Beijing 100085 PRC

The New School of Collaborative Learning is a cross-cultural international school sponsored by the Alliance for International Collaboration and Development (AICD), an American nonprofit educational corporation. Established in 1994, it offers, in English and Chinese, a program ranging from preprimary through 9th grade. An alternative school in the heart of Beijing's intellectual district, NSCL emphasizes immersion in Chinese and American cultures and languages and self-motivated learning through individualized education. The school sees its location in China as a positive benefit and seeks to have its students take full advantage of the unique opportunities afforded by this location. Administrators are actively involved in Chinese educational reform, with NSCL serving as a model school for the Haidian Reform Initiative.

Organization: The school year extends from the beginning of September through mid-June. The school is governed by a Board of Trustees composed of both American and Chinese educators, private sponsors, and parents. The administration has a Head of School, a Director of Education, a Director of Administration, and a Director of Outreach Programs.

Curriculum: The curriculum has been designed with the ongoing assistance of educators from Sidwell Friends School of Washington, D.C., and the bilingual program follows

that of the Chinese American School of San Francisco. The best of both American and Chinese teaching is brought to the instruction of mathematics, science, social studies, and language arts. Western and Asian art, music, physical education, computer training, and a program of community service complete the curriculum. Wherever possible and appropriate, an active learning/integrated learning approach is used.

Accreditation: The NCSL is applying for accreditation from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

Faculty: There are team teachers at every level.

Enrollment: During its first year, the school enrolled 25 students on three levels: primary, elementary, and middle school. The school in its second year enrolled approximately 60 pupils.

Facilities: The school operates in a new educational facility on 30,000 square meters, which includes the site for a track and a Chinese garden. It will share facilities with a Chinese elementary school until enrollment expands to fill the entire building. The school's 12 classrooms include a library and an assembly room. The track is soon to be completed. A science and library building and gymnasium are to be built in the next 3 years.

Finance: In the 1994-95 school year, about 95 percent of the school's income came from regular day school tuition. Annual tuition rates for 1995-96 are Pre-K: \$7,000; Primary I: \$8,000; Primary II: grades 3 and 4: \$10,000; grades 5 to 9: \$11,000.

Preschool Options: There are a variety of preschool options in Beijing, with two Montessori schools, several private preschool programs, and the American Community Preschool (ACP).

Adult Educational Opportunities

A number of interested students in Beijing have arranged to study the Chinese language or Chinese traditional art and music at Chinese institutions and universities. Occasionally American universities offer U.S.-led extension courses in Beijing. These latter opportunities vary with the composition of the American community at post at a given moment.

Sports

China presents limited participant sports and recreational opportunities.

Cycling, hiking, tennis, golf, and ice skating are enjoyed by some. Several private tennis clubs, in addition to the various embassy courts, have both indoor and outdoor (lighted) tennis courts with varying hourly fees. The International Club holds tournaments each year for members of the foreign community. Though local tennis equipment is generally adequate, tennis enthusiasts should bring a supply of balls.

Biking is a very popular mode of transportation in Beijing. Individuals find cycling a convenient way to exercise and sight-see at the same time. Chinese bicycles are heavy and have no gears, but are sturdily made and comfortable, and some people use them to commute to work. Recent to the marketplace are an increasing variety of made-for-export mountain bicycles and accessories, available at about 50 percent of the cost in the U.S. Since Beijing is flat, gears are not really necessary, but bicycles with gears have their advantages, especially for bike trips outside the city or on windy days. Imported bikes are subject to theft, so a good locking system is recommended.

Sports facilities include several golf courses in Beijing, and the cost is relatively affordable. There are roughly 6 weeks of ice skating in Beijing every year, with outdoor, unimproved rinks at the Summer Palace and Beihai Park.

Spectator sports in Beijing include basketball, volleyball, ping-pong, badminton, soccer, gymnastics, and hockey, but tickets are very hard to get.

Health clubs are now available in many of the better hotels, including such facilities as indoor swimming pools, tennis and squash courts, a range of aerobics equipment and weight machines, and sauna, steambath, and locker facilities. Membership fees vary, as does the equipment or facilities in each club, but there is generally something for everyone, from the hardcore to the occasional club goer, in terms of facility and budget.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Sight-seeing in and around Beijing and the rest of the PRC is a favorite activity.

Private groups also offer sight-seeing, but arrangements are often difficult. For a variety of reasons—the language barrier, frequent delays, logistical difficulties—travel in China is a real adventure, more fun to accomplish in groups than on one's own. Fortunately, there are many fascinating sights in the PRC, which make the challenge of travel worth the effort, but travel is rarely relaxing or restful, and transportation and lodging costs are rising rapidly as well.

Entertainment

There are lots of interesting activities going on all over Beijing—symphonies, operas, acrobatics, theater groups, and sporting events. However, hearing about events in time to get tickets is often difficult. Events are often not publicized ahead of time, or ticket distribution is unknown.

There is a Chinese film series (with English subtitles) with weekly showings at a nearby hotel and a foreign film program at a downtown hotel, although the foreign films are not all that current.

Hong Kong

Hong Kong is Cantonese for “fragrant harbor,” a name inspired either by the incense factories that once dotted Hong Kong Island or by the profusion of scented pink Bauhinias, the national flower.

The island is a dazzling melee of human life and enterprise. Its animated nature seems all the more perplexing when you add in the mix of nationalities, languages, customs, and fashions. People came to this city for many reasons—to find a better life or to find freedom from restrictive governments—and enough have stayed to turn a once-quiet trading village into one of the world's busiest international business centers.

From the harbor the city's latest architectural wonders stand against a green-mountain backdrop, while on the other side of the island beaches and quieter villages slow the pace considerably. Hong Kong has the best shopping in the world. Although the thought of crowded streets and mind-boggling choices can be daunting, no place makes big spending easier than this center of international commerce.

It was in the late 1970s that Hong Kong began to focus on the issue of its future. The colony's officials and business people realized they could no longer put off the question of what would happen to the New Territories, which makes up more than 90 percent of Hong Kong's land area. The New Territories were leased to Britain by China in 1898, for 99 years. That lease was set to expire on July 1, 1997.

After months of negotiations, both sides agreed in 1984 to Beijing's proposal for a Joint Declaration-making Hong Kong a Special Administrative Region, with its own distinct laws, freedoms, and way of life. On July 1, 1997, Hong Kong reverted to Chinese sovereignty amid intense interest from the international community.

So far, the transition has been smooth. Hong Kong has grown steadily more prosperous. While an estimated 387,000 citizens had emigrated over the past few years, many have been coming home as their confidence returns.

Landscape

The landscape is one of contrast, marked by a mix of old and new types of architectural design. It is quite apparent from the old churches and government buildings that are a few stories high to the high-rise skyscraper office and apartment buildings that cover the landscape from the harbor's edge and climb dramatically to the Peak.

The developed areas consist of high-density, high-rise office buildings and apartments. Hong Kong has experienced a very ambitious building program during the past decade, and more is planned for the future. Incorporated into this scheme are plans to ensure that park areas remain part of the landscape. This setting complements the steep green hills that surround the city and provide a pleasantly spectacular visual background.

Utilities

Electrical current is 220v, 50 cycle, AC. Power is dependable with little voltage fluctuation. Transformers are required for 110v appliances. Employees may purchase additional transformers locally. Synchronous 60-cycle appliances, such as electric clocks, record players, and tape recorders, will not function properly on 50 cycles without modification. American and Continental European plugs will not fit into the three-prong U.K. standard sockets used in Hong Kong,* but adapter plugs are available. Hong Kong has a wide variety of 220v appliances available at prices comparable to those in the U.S. Color TVs, video players, stereo components, and electric clocks with built-in converters for either 50 or 60 cycles and voltage adjusters from 120v to 220v are also readily available.



Sun Yat Sen Mausoleum in Nanjing

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Food

Food markets and supermarkets in Hong Kong provide a wide variety of fresh, processed, canned, and frozen foods catering to both the Western and Asian diet. It is possible to find almost everything here that one buys in the U.S. However, certain items will carry a premium price tag, and what is on the shelf today may not be there tomorrow. Food shopping in Hong Kong is perhaps best and most economically accomplished in the European fashion rather than American, i.e. going to different shops and markets for different foods. However, the larger outlets of the two major supermarket chains (Wellcome and Park N' Shop) are stocked to European tastes and carry standard products. American products are beginning to be seen on the shelves with more regularity. Credit cards are accepted at Wellcome and Park N' Shop. Most meats in the supermarket are imported from the U.S., Australia, and New Zealand. Phone/fax orders and delivery are available. Local markets sell fresh fruits, vegetables, meats, poultry, fish, and seafood at prices somewhat less than in supermarkets. Seasonal fruits and vegetables are imported from both the northern and south-

ern hemispheres and are available most of the year in Hong Kong. Specialty shops are popular in Hong Kong, providing an ever increasing selection of imported gourmet food and beverage items from around the world. Condiments and spices for Asian cooking are available in supermarkets and gourmet shops, as well as from vendors in the local markets. Coffees and teas from all over the world are sold here. Bakeries produce a variety of pastries, breads, and rolls. There are good quality butcher shops in addition to supermarket meat counters. Local dairies provide pasteurized milk and dairy products including yogurt, sour cream, and cottage cheese. Butter and cheeses are imported. Even health food stores have found a niche in this cosmopolitan city.

Clothing

General: With its increasing prosperity, Hong Kong has become very fashion conscious in recent years. In central Hong Kong and the shopping arcades of Kowloon, more and more fashion boutiques, including the finest of European import houses, cater to the affluent tastes of this economically flourishing territory. The sophistication of conser-

vative big-city business attire predominates, and Hong Kong "dresses up" not only for the office but also for teas, lunches, and dinners. On the other hand, designer label "casual wear" is also very common all over Hong Kong; and jeans and sneakers identify the tourist and resident alike, whether sight-seeing or bargain shopping.

A varied wardrobe, similar to what you would wear in Washington, is appropriate for Hong Kong. Definite seasons call for summer lightweight garments most of the year with mediumweight or lightweight wool for the Hong Kong winter. The winter although short, December through March, can be cold with temperatures averaging 15°C (59°F).

Three other general comments:

1) during the humid months, cotton is highly preferable to synthetic fabric for clothing as well as undergarments; 2) getting around Hong Kong requires considerable walking, uphill as well as down, therefore special attention should be given to comfortable footwear for all activities; and 3) if you wear an unusual or especially large size, you may have difficulty with some items such as shoes or underwear.

Men: Men need lightweight suits from April through November and lightweight wool suits for the cooler months.

American and British summer and winter suit materials are stocked locally, and getting a suit made to order is still one of the best deals in Hong Kong. Prices will vary depending on your tailor and the quality of material being used. Custom-made shirts are also quite popular and also vary in price according to design and material. Shoes can also be custom made to suit your taste. Most of the popular brands of shoes used for leisure activities are available at reasonable prices. You can also find many outlets that stock popular sweaters and ties. Hats are seldom worn for formal occasions, but you will see all the familiar logo



Street scene in Hong Kong.

David Johnson. Reproduced by permission.

caps and styles as you walk around Kowloon and Hong Kong.

Women: Women should bring a supply of summer cottons and other lightweight dresses. Women who plan to work in Hong Kong should bring suits and other professionally appropriate outfits such as one would wear in Washington. Although dry cleaning services are readily available, the costs are similar to the U.S., so many prefer to use wash and wear apparel.

Materials such as cotton and varieties of silks and woollens are stocked for tailor-made dresses, suits, and coats. Some fabrics are inexpensive, but tailoring of women's clothing is not and the finished product often leaves much to be desired.

An increasing number of shops carry imported American and European ready-to-wear sweaters, dresses, suits and coats but prices are higher than in the U.S. unless found at bargain factory outlets or markets. Locally manufactured clothing is also available but is very limited in sizes above U.S. size 12. Evening wear, both informal and formal, is more difficult to find and is more expensive in Hong Kong than in the U.S.

Lingerie, including British and U.S. brands, is available; however, it is

more expensive than in the U.S. Cotton undergarments, which are preferred due to heat and humidity, are not easily found. The supply of U.S. or British hosiery items is very limited and very expensive; tall or queen-sized hosiery is virtually unavailable.

Lightweight coats or lined raincoats are often worn during the cooler months; unlined raincoats are desirable for the warmer, rainy season. If you have a fur jacket or stole, you will probably have an opportunity to wear it in the winter.

Some ready-made American and European shoes are available but expensive and usually come in wider widths. Narrow shoes and sizes above 7-1/2 are difficult to find. Once here, you may enjoy having shoes made by Hong Kong shoemakers whom many consider to be good. Because of the need for comfortable walking shoes and the level of fashion seen in the main shopping/business district, "smart-casual" (a British term) shoes are recommended.

Sports clothes, including bathing suits, are sold here but generally in small sizes and with price tags higher than in the U.S. Locally made, inexpensive knits are also available in the street markets. Women do not generally wear shorts

on the streets in Hong Kong, but slacks and pantsuits are often worn. White is still the only color acceptable on most tennis courts.

Children: Children dress just as in the U.S. Parents can enjoy the fact that heavy winter wear is not needed and blue jeans are standard streetwear. Hong Kong street markets are full of clothing for toddlers and young children. Many children's shops have attractive clothes but prices are high.

With the exception of sports shoes, children's shoes cost more than in the U.S. and the choice is limited. It is hard to find shoes of correct size, proper fit, and desired styles. Orthopedic shoes are not readily available.

Supplies and Services

As with food and clothing, almost anything you want is available in Hong Kong; however, unless it is made locally, it may be hard to find, and, it will most probably be more expensive than in the U.S. American, British, French, and German toiletries, cosmetics, and hygiene products are available in Hong Kong, but are expensive. You may wish to bring an ample supply of cosmetics. French perfumes, however, can be purchased at a reasonable price as compared to prices in the U.S. Pharmacies in Hong Kong are good; however, bring any needed prescriptions with you. Most household products are available in several brands.

Hong Kong is renowned for its toys, but you have to be careful that what you purchase complies with U.S. safety standards. Toys "R" Us has two outlets in Hong Kong and Kowloon and carries approved brands that comply with U.S. standards, although the prices are higher than you will find in the U.S. In shopping for toys locally, you must remember that there is a great difference in quality between export quality and local quality. Both kinds are available on the local market.

There are many excellent bookstores in Hong Kong but be pre-

pared for prices considerably higher than in the U.S. Most people mail order their reading material. It should be noted, however, that paperback editions of best sellers are often out in Hong Kong long before paperback. International magazines and newspapers are readily available.

Men's and women's hairdressers are located throughout Hong Kong and have generally high standards at reasonable to expensive prices. Many use the facilities located in major hotels located near the at which appointments can be made. Hong Kong has reliable dry cleaners, many using American methods and materials. The price is similar to that charged in the U.S. and several pick up and deliver. Good laundries are also available. Shoe repair services operate on the street, in stairways, or in alleys. The service is fair and reasonably priced. Car maintenance and repairs are moderately priced for locally-sold models. Parts and service for American cars are more difficult to obtain.

Domestic Help

Domestic help is available in Hong Kong but has become quite costly. Full-time Chinese cooks are almost a thing of the past and very expensive. Any live-in Chinese help is a rarity and extremely costly. Although part-time help is available, it is also expensive and difficult to arrange. Most families looking for domestic help choose to hire Filipina domestics who live in and are reasonably priced. By law, minimum wage for overseas domestic helpers (Filipinas, Thais, etc.) for 1998 was set at HK \$3,860 per month. Additionally, the employer is required to provide either all food or a food allowance (usually about HK \$400/Mo.), housing, uniforms, medical insurance, and one round trip to the home country every 2 years for home leave. By law, these domestics have eleven local holidays, 1 week of annual leave after 1 full year of successful performance, and home leave (2 weeks) every 2 years. All domestic helpers should have a medical examination including chest x-ray, blood serological,

and stool examination. All costs are borne by the employer.

Religious Activities

Religious services are held in English by the following denominations: Assemblies of God, Bahai Faith, Baptist, Christian Missionary Alliance, Christian Science, Church of Christ, Church of England (Episcopal-Anglican), Iglesia de Cristo, Jewish (Orthodox and Reform congregations), Latter-day Saints, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian/ Congregational, Quakers, Roman Catholic, Seventh-day Adventist, United Pentecostal, and others. Various Buddhist sects also have English speaking congregations in Hong Kong.

Education

Hong Kong International School. The vast majority of American school-age children attend the Hong Kong International School (HKIS). It is recognized as one of the leading international schools and provides a U.S.-style education and U.S. curriculum. HKIS is sponsored by and operated under the auspices of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (USA). It is registered with the Office of Education of the Hong Kong Government and is associated with other American overseas schools in the Far East. Its accredited status by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges of the U.S. reflects its conformity with American educational standards. Half the staff is composed of trained teachers recruited in the U.S. through the Lutheran school system and appointed for a minimum of 3 years. The remainder of the staff, also professionally trained and experienced, consists of members of the American and European community in Hong Kong plus a few Chinese instructors.

HKIS serves a religiously diverse community. Although religious instruction is mandatory, course offerings may be selected that encompass Christian or Bible subjects as well as a variety of non-Christian topics such as existentialism and oriental religions. Chapel is voluntary for students in grades 7-

12. For kindergarten through grade 6 there are weekly chapel services and 20-minute religious instruction classes.

Of its approximately 2,000 students, slightly more than half are U.S. citizens, while fewer than 100 are dependents of U. S. Government employees. Instruction is in English with emphasis on academic or college preparatory courses. Some advanced placement courses are offered. More than 90% of graduates enroll in American colleges and universities. In the recent years, HKIS has made great strides to include programs for special needs children. However, there is currently no school in Hong Kong, including HKIS, which is staffed or equipped to handle students with severe learning, physical, or emotional disabilities. Parents with special educational needs for their children should consult directly with the school to see how those needs can best be met.

The elementary school (K-5) in Repulse Bay is an air-conditioned "open space" facility consisting of six clusters of over 4,000 sq.ft. each. There is also a gymnasium, library, and swimming pool. Educational approaches range from self-contained classrooms to independent learning and team-teaching situations. The middle school (grades 6-8) and high school (grades 9-12) are located together at Tai Tam, several miles from Repulse Bay. The multi-million dollar facility features an open air campus similar to schools found in many parts of the U.S. with classrooms, separate science laboratories, computer lab, music rooms, a cafeteria, gymnasium, swimming pool, audio visual center, bookstore, library, and guidance offices.

Sixth grade through High School students participate annually in an "Interim Program" which consists of a week of cultural explorations in Hong Kong or overseas. These programs are a prerequisite for graduation. The school offers approximately 37 interim trips each year with about 20 students enrolled in each. The cost of these



View of Shanghai, China

Courtesy of Cliff Brackett

trips must be borne by the parents. For example, the least expensive trip is US\$350 (for 6th grade), and the most expensive is a High School trip for US\$1,600. Parents/children are allowed to indicate their preferences but sometimes are not placed in their top choice.

A full program of American-type extracurricular activities is offered, including a broad selection of clubs, drama, choral and band groups, publications, scouts, and sports: badminton, baseball, basketball, bowling, cross-country, field hockey, gymnastics, rugby, soccer, squash, swimming, tennis, track and field, volleyball, and water polo. Inter-scholastic competition includes meets with other schools in Hong Kong as well as the International School Bangkok (ISB) and the Taipei American School (TAS). HKIS also hosts an invitational basketball tournament each December that attracts schools from other Asian cities. Some emphasis is placed on inter-cultural programs. Mandarin is taught in elementary school and is offered as an elective in middle school and high school. French and Spanish are offered in grades 6-12.

The school year normally runs from the third or fourth week in August until mid-June.

Since the school is normally at capacity enrollment, it is vital that application forms be requested and forwarded well in advance. Application forms can be requested, in writing, from the Admissions Office, Hong Kong International School, 6 South Bay Close, Repulse Bay, Hong Kong. It is particularly important that parents discuss well in advance any instances in which a student has poor academic records or special needs.

English Schools Foundation (ESF) (British Curriculum). This is an alternative to HKIS. Before an application can be submitted, the student must be a resident of Hong Kong. Admittance and decision as to grade level placement are based on age, the results of an entrance examination in English and mathematics, an interview and availability of space. A medical examination is also required. The city is zoned and children attend the ESF schools according to where they live. ESF schools previously used by Consulate General families and located in Mid-Levels where many employees are housed include Glenealy Junior School and Kennedy Road Junior School for children 5-10 and Island School for children 11-17.

Other specialized school options include the Chinese International

School and Singapore International School, both providing bicultural English-Mandarin programs; the French International School which has both French and English streams; the German-Swiss School which has both German and English streams; the International Christian School which is based on Taiwan's American-based Morrison Academy; and the American International School, a Catholic Church sponsored school in Kowloon. Kellett School, the only private British Primary school in Hong Kong, is another alternative considered by American families. Good preschools are available on Hong Kong Island but are quite costly.

School websites:

Hong Kong International School

<http://www.hkis.edu.hk>

English Schools Foundation

<http://www.esf.edu.hk>

German Swiss International School

<http://home.netvigator.com/-gsis>

Chinese International School

<http://www.hk.super.net/-cis>

Parkview International Pre-school

<http://www.hk.super.net/^pips>

Carmel School Hong Kong

<http://www.carmel.edu.hk>

Special Educational Opportunities

Adult education courses conducted in English are available at both Hong Kong University and the Chinese University of Hong Kong. The courses cover literature, history, journalism, philosophy, architecture, pottery making and many other subjects. Entrance as a full-time student either to the University of Hong Kong or to the Chinese University is very difficult. The entrance examinations are based on a British educational background, and the universities generally only admit students who are permanent residents of Hong Kong, except as non-credit auditors. Elsewhere, there are excellent opportunities to study many phases of Chinese culture, especially Cantonese. Instruction in modern dance, ballet, voice, instrumental music, Western and Asian painting, and sports are available. The YWCA English

Speaking Members Department, Island School, Towngas, Electric Co., and the American Women's Association also offer a good variety of adult education courses. Language classes are taught at the Alliance Francaise, Goethe Institute, and the Italian Cultural Society. The YMCA and YWCA offer adult language courses in Cantonese and Mandarin.

Recreation and Social Life

Recreation and social activities are plentiful in Hong Kong but one needs to be willing to seek out opportunities, especially for sports, since public venues are extremely crowded and private facilities (clubs) are beyond the financial means of most Consulate General personnel. In addition, waiting lists for membership in most clubs exceed the average tour in Hong Kong. On the other hand, facilities for entertainment and cultural activities are quite extensive and affordable.

Sports

Most sports facilities such as golf, tennis, squash, riding and swimming pools are available through private clubs only. The Consulate General has a tennis court located on the grounds of the Consul General's compound on Barker Road and a swimming pool located at the Shouson Hill compound which are available to employees and families.

The recent opening of two public golf courses in Hong Kong has made it affordable for non-club members to hit the links. Also, the Macau Golf and Country Club (one hour away by hydrofoil) features a challenging and fun course; and within a two hour bus or boat ride from Hong Kong, there are six courses in China that offer affordable golfing packages.

Sailing and yachting are popular and possible year round. Joining a sailboarding, kayak or rowing club often provides the opportunity for sport without the expense of a recreational club. There are some very nice beaches in the territory. Beaches on Hong Kong Island, espe-

cially on the South Side of the island, tend to be quite crowded. There is also a concern about pollution, and beach-goers need to pay attention to environmental reports in the media on pollution ratings. The more remote beaches in the New Territories and on Outlying Islands are more appealing; these beaches are reached by ferries, private "junks," and/or on foot.

If you are a runner or tri-athlete, there are numerous associations to join as well as several Hash House Harriers groups that meet weekly. There are many events sponsored by such groups throughout the year for competitors. One of the more popular means of recreation and exercise for both Chinese and expatriates is walking and hiking. The opportunities are endless and the territory has a multitude of very well-marked and maintained paths and trails that meet the needs of the leisurely stroller, the family on an outing, the casual hiker, and the ardent mountain trekker.

Tenpin bowling has been popular among Consulate General personnel.

Some Americans participate in the activities of the Hong Kong Softball Association which includes men's and women's softball teams. Because of the summer heat the softball teams are active only from September through April, and games are played at night. Some Americans entered teams in the Dragon Boat Festival held annually in June and for the 100 km Trail-walker event held in November. Popular spectator sports include soccer, cricket, rugby, softball, tennis, basketball, and horse racing (October-May).

Touring and Outdoor Activities

The Outlying Islands of Cheung Chau, Ping Chau, Lamina, and Lantau, which are accessible by ferry, offer hiking and browsing opportunities for day trips. Overnight "vacation rentals" are also available at reasonable prices. Macau is an interesting place to spend a day or

weekend. This 400-year-old Portuguese colony (until December 1999), 40 miles west of Hong Kong, is a place of old and gentle Mediterranean charm on the one hand, and a city on the move on the other; bright lights, large construction sites and new high rises are rapidly changing its skyline. It is the oldest European settlement in Asia. Travel by high-speed ferry takes just about an hour. Cuisine, a mixture of Portuguese, English, and Chinese styles, is tasty and interesting. Antique shopping is another good excuse to make the trip to Macau. Hong Kong is a crossroads to most destinations in Asia. Vacations in Southeast Asia, Japan, and the Philippines are popular. Many use Hong Kong as a door to tourist travel in China. Travel agents are plentiful and are eager to assist you with package deals and self-determined itineraries.

Hong Kong itself has many interesting sights for tourists and photographers. Tourist agencies offer excellent tours. Among the more interesting excursions are the water tours of the island, tours of Kowloon, the New Territories, Hong Kong Island, the fishing village of junks and sampans at Aberdeen, and the ride to the top of the Peak by funicular cable car (Peak Tram). There are also heritage tours and opportunities to visit local housing areas and schools. Ocean Park is one of Hong Kong's most popular recreational attractions. Facilities include the world's largest aquarium, an ocean theater, a zoo, flower and water gardens, and oriental and Western restaurants. Middle Kingdom, a cultural village, portrays customs, costumes, architecture and entertainment from 13 dynasties of China. A visit to Ocean Park makes a pleasurable and interesting outing for the entire family. Water World, which is located adjacent to Ocean Park, has water slides and pools galore. A visit to Water World is a great way to escape the heat of summer.

Entertainment

Eating is the most popular form of entertainment in Hong Kong. About



Junks in Hong Kong harbor

Courtesy of Ellen Bowden

1.5 million people eat in restaurants daily, the highest per capita rate in the world. The range of restaurants runs from world class to street vendors. All types of Western restaurants are available, and the choice of Asian cuisines is practically endless.

A variety of performing arts programs are presented throughout the year, including symphony concerts, recitals, ballet and dance performances, drama, and Western opera. The Hong Kong Cultural Center, the Academy for the Performing Arts, the Hong Kong Arts Center and City Hall are the centers of Hong Kong's cultural life. The Hong Kong Cultural Center includes a 2,085-seat concert hall, a 1,724-seat grand theater, and a flexible 300- to 500-seat studio theater for experimental drama. It is the home of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra. The Cultural Center complex also houses the Hong Kong Museum of Art, with its collections of Chinese arts and antiquities, ethnographic materials and archaeological finds, and the Hong Kong Space Museum. The Hong Kong Academy for the Performing Arts (APA) is a professional degree granting institution providing training, education, and research in the performing arts and related fields. Students from the APA

Schools of Dance and Drama give public performances throughout the year in the APA's theater. The Hong Kong Arts Center features a multi-purpose theater, a recital hall for music performances and films, and art galleries. It is a multidisciplinary center, featuring contemporary work in the performing, visual, and cinematic arts. The Center also offers classes in painting, ceramics, and other art forms for children and adults. The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra is the nucleus of Hong Kong's musical life. It has an 11-month season from April through February and season subscriptions are available. Guest artists of world renown appear regularly with the orchestra.

Other performing arts groups that perform at Hong Kong's cultural venues include the Hong Kong Repertory Theater, the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra, the Hong Kong Dance Company, City Contemporary Dance Company, the Hong Kong Ballet, and the Chung Ying Theater Company. The American Community Theater (ACT) is Hong Kong's most active amateur theatrical group and produces several plays a year. It has an international membership and stages American theatrical productions, including musicals. The most active and best known choral groups are the Bach

Choir, the Hong Kong Singers, and the St. Cecilia Singers. These non-professional groups present one or two cantatas, operettas, or musicals a year. Free lunch time concerts and recitals are held each Wednesday in St. John's Cathedral (Episcopal), which is located one-half block from the Consulate General. The program includes both sacred and secular music.

Social Activities

All travelers have the opportunity for a very active social life as they enjoy the wonderful restaurants of Hong Kong, theaters, school activities, wine tastings, food fairs, night spots.

The American Women's Association (AWA) has about 1,600 regular and associate members; by charter the membership is at least 51% American regular members with international members as associates. The Association has a number of popular monthly activities and several special membership luncheons/meetings/programs during the year. It supports many community projects and offers a wide variety of both social and charitable activities. Joining AWA is a good way to meet Americans outside the Consulate General and also to get to know women of other nationalities. The English Speaking Members' Department of the YWCA located near the Consulate General offers their members a vast number of day and evening activities including lectures on Asian Affairs, seminars on family issues, bridge, tennis, exercise, cooking and language classes, computer and other skill development sessions, and a variety of arts and crafts offerings. Their "At Home in Hong Kong" program is highly recommended for newcomers to the territory. The Rotary Clubs, American Chamber of Commerce, Lions Clubs, Toastmaster and Toastmistress Clubs, the American University Club, League of Women Voters, Hong Kong, (an integral part of the League of Women Voters of the U.S.), and many other groups where individuals can meet local residents and expatriates are available. The Brownies, Cub Scouts,

Girl Guides, and Little League baseball are active in Hong Kong. A public children's library is in City Hall. HKIS sponsors summer sports and skills programs. Various churches also have youth activities. The Welfare Handicrafts, Mother's Choice, the Red Cross, YMCA, and many other welfare agencies—some branches of U.S. organizations—offer a variety of opportunities for both men and women for volunteer service. Both civic and professional associations are numerous.

Geography and Climate

Hong Kong, a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China, covers an area of 404 square miles, about six times the size of Washington, DC. Hong Kong is a bustling, vibrant, very Chinese, and very international city. This colorful mix of East and West, old and new, is alive with an overwhelmingly entrepreneurial spirit. To the 6.8 million residents, the city represents the dream of prosperity and the opportunity for personal betterment. One has to admire the incomparable tenacity of the Hong Kong people—their strength of purpose and devotion to work and family are striking. The SAR consists of Hong Kong Island, the Kowloon Peninsula, the New Territories, and various surrounding islands.

Hong Kong was a British colony from 1841 until June 30, 1997. On that date, which coincided with the expiration of the 99-year British lease on the New Territories, it became a Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China. Under a unique “one country, two systems” formula agreed to by Britain and China in the Joint Declaration of 1984, Beijing has granted Hong Kong people the right to govern Hong Kong with a high degree of autonomy in all areas except defense and foreign affairs. In practice, this means that life in Hong Kong after the transition to Chinese sovereignty has changed very little.

From the small fishing villages of 150 years ago, Hong Kong has grown into one of the most impor-

tant trading, industrial, and financial centers in Asia. Official representatives of most major countries reside in the territory, along with a host of international bankers, lawyers, and business people who participate in Hong Kong's booming trade and industry. Hong Kong Island, the site of most of the territory's governmental, commercial, and financial activities, is about 32 square miles in area. The island's population and business centers are located across the harbor from Kowloon and extend from Pok Fu Lam to North Point, encompassing the Central, Mid-Levels, Wan Chai, and Causeway Bay areas of Hong Kong. The Consulate General office and official housing for American staff are located on the island. The seaward, or south side of Hong Kong Island, is made up of a rugged shoreline with high cliffs and sheltered bays. The interior is rough terrain with steep hills and small valleys. The highest area, known as the Peak, is 555 meters (1,830 ft.) above sea level and has a breathtaking view of the scenic harbor and Kowloon on one side and the offshore islands and South China Sea on the other. The Kowloon Peninsula is directly across the harbor from Hong Kong Island. It is separated from the New Territories by groups of hills, the highest of which rises to more than 3,000 feet. The Kowloon area, with its major subdivisions of Mong Kok and Tsim Sha Tsui, is the leading industrial area of Hong Kong, as well as a major residential area and tourist center with many hotels and shops. The major railway station, Hunt Hom, serving Guangzhou, is also located in this densely populated area. The New Territories comprises an area of 355 square miles between Kowloon and the Chinese border and also includes some 235 small offshore islands. This area accounts for most of the territory's agricultural activity and a growing portion of its industrial and residential sectors. The topography is mostly steep hills and marshes, but many places are used for small farms. The only major agriculture on the offshore islands is on Lantau Island, the largest. The

remaining islands are small, and, if inhabited, are primarily fishing bases. The rustic character of the New Territories has been transformed in recent years with the construction of major satellite towns such as Sha Tin and Tuen Mun, where large numbers of Hong Kong residents live.

Hong Kong's climate is governed by the monsoons. Although the territory lies within the Tropics, it enjoys a variety of weather because of these seasonal winds. The winter monsoon blows from the north or northeast from September to mid-March, and the summer wind blows from the south or southwest from mid-March to September. During the summer monsoon, the weather is hot and humid; during the winter monsoon it is cool. Average temperatures range from 58°F in February (with lows in the 40s) to 82°F in July (with highs in the 90s). The mean relative humidity ranges from a low of 67% in November to 84% in May; many days the humidity approaches 100%, accompanied by heavy clouds. Late fall is the most pleasant time of year, generally with dry and sunny weather and high temperatures of 70° to 75°F. The average annual rainfall is 95 inches.

Population

Hong Kong's population at the end of 1998 was approximately 6.8 million, with the overwhelming majority being ethnic Chinese. Most were born in Hong Kong, with others coming from China or other countries in Asia. The rest of the expatriate community includes mainly government officials and business people representing many nationalities. About 50,000 U.S. citizens (including 11,500 dual nationals) are resident in Hong Kong, representing a major foreign presence in the territory. The other major expatriate groups are from Canada, the Philippines, Thailand, and the United Kingdom. The official languages of Hong Kong are Chinese and English. Cantonese is the most common Chinese dialect spoken, and English is widely used in government and business. Most people

follow traditional Chinese beliefs. The two main religions are Buddhism and Taoism. About 600,000 or 10% of the population are Christian. Hong Kong has about 50,000 followers of Islam, most of whom are Hong Kong Chinese. The Hindu community, which has been part of the territory since its earliest days, has increased to 12,000. Hong Kong's Jewish community numbers about 1,000.

Public Institutions

Hong Kong has retained almost the entire administrative structure put in place by the British. The Hong Kong Government is staffed by an effective civil service numbering more than 184,000 people.

Some 30 executive bureaus organized along functional lines constitute this administrative framework. The executive-led government is headed by the Chief Executive (who replaced the British Governor); he was selected by the Hong Kong people in late 1996 and serves for a five-year term. He is advised by the Executive Council, prominent local residents whom he appoints. The 60-member Legislative Council, whose powers are limited, consists of a mixture of directly and indirectly elected members. Beneath these bodies, the Urban Council is responsible for various local matters like recreation and sanitation for Hong Kong Island and Kowloon, while the Regional Council performs the same function for the New Territories. At the lowest level, 19 District Boards cover the entire territory, serving as grassroots advisory bodies for monitoring public opinion regarding government policies.

Environment

Due to its small size and location in the Pearl River Delta, Hong Kong's environment is strongly influenced by the rest of China. A closely-packed city, Hong Kong suffers from smog on a regular basis. Air quality is continuously monitored by the government, and a report on the air quality is announced daily. The range is usually 60 to 80 or "moderate" which means fair. An index of

over 100 (which occurred in the summer of 1997) is unhealthy. Air pollution from diesel vehicle emissions remains a priority concern. In November 1997, the Hong Kong government launched a trial of liquefied petroleum gas vehicles to address this problem, but it is unlikely that there will be a major shift away from diesel vehicles in the next 3-5 years. Quality of inshore water, particularly around the beaches, is also deteriorating. This will not improve until the major government infrastructure program to treat all raw sewage and waste before discharge into the ocean is completed around 2004.

Fresh water, mostly piped from China, is treated at several water treatment plants located in Hong Kong before being used. The quality of water meets current World Health Organization requirements. However, some people choose to use distilled water or use filters to remove sediment from water sources at home.

Arts, Science, and Education

Hong Kong has a rich cultural life that embraces the arts and traditions of both East and West. A variety of performing arts is presented, including symphony concerts, recitals, ballet and dance performances, drama, Western opera, and Chinese traditional stage arts. There are two professional orchestras, three full-time dance companies, a handful of professional drama groups, and scores of amateur orchestras, choirs, dance groups and drama clubs, plus overseas artists and groups who visit the territory throughout the year. Long-established performing companies like the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra, the Hong Kong Repertory Theater, and Hong Kong Ballet offer annual subscriptions for their performances. The primary venues for arts events are the Hong Kong Cultural Center, with a 2,085-seat concert hall and a 1,724-seat grand theater, the Hong Kong Academy for the Performing Arts, the Hong Kong Arts Center, City Hall, and the three major town halls in ShaTin, Tsuen Wan and Tuen Mun.

The annual Hong Kong Arts Festival in February/March brings a wide array of well-known local and overseas groups and is the highlight of the cultural year. The Festival of Asian Arts is a biennial event featuring performing arts from Asian and Oceanic cultures. The International Arts Carnival in the summer aims to introduce children and young people to the performing arts. The annual Hong Kong International Film Festival is one of the world's major noncompetitive film festivals. The Fringe Festival in January/ February is an open platform for the arts. Hong Kong has several museums and small galleries. The Hong Kong Museum of Art houses a collection of Chinese bronzes, ceramics, and paintings and stages major international loan exhibitions of Chinese and Western art. Its branch museum, the Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware, is devoted exclusively to Chinese tea ware. Both the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the University of Hong Kong have museums exhibiting Chinese art and cultural artifacts. The Tsui Museum of Art displays a privately-owned collection of Chinese fine art. Galleries at the Hong Kong Arts Center emphasize contemporary and Western arts. Small commercial galleries sell works by Chinese and overseas artists.

The Hong Kong Museum of History focuses on local and Chinese history. The Hong Kong Space Museum has visitor participatory exhibits and a planetarium to introduce visitors to astronomy and space science. Exhibits at the Hong Kong Science Museum cover basic science principles, mathematics, earth science, life science, the applications of technology, and high-tech areas such as computers and robotics.

Education is highly valued by the Government and people of Hong Kong; no other element takes a larger share of the government budget. Full-time education is compulsory between the ages of 6 and 15. Instruction is mainly in Chinese in primary school and in Chinese and English in secondary school.

Ten degree-granting institutions are supported by the Hong Kong government's University Grants Committee. They all follow the British three-year system. The University of Hong Kong, founded in 1911, uses English as the language of instruction. The Chinese University of Hong Kong, a federated university composed of four colleges, uses both English and Chinese in teaching. Both universities offer academic as well as professional courses and include graduate and extension programs. The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, opened in 1991, offers first and advanced degrees primarily in science, engineering and business management. The Hong Kong Polytechnic University and the City University of Hong Kong offer degree and diploma courses combined with work and vocational training programs. The Hong Kong Baptist University and Lingnan College Hong Kong offer degree programs, primarily in social sciences, business, and liberal arts. The Hong Kong Institute of Education was formed in 1994 by merging four colleges of education. It provides pre-service teacher education for primary and secondary school teachers. It enrolled its first degree program students in 1998. The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts offers comprehensive multidisciplinary professional training for performing and related technical and media arts, leading to diploma and first degree. The Open Learning Institute of Hong Kong provides the adult population with opportunities for further education in non-degree and degree programs.

Commerce and Industry

Hong Kong is a leading international manufacturing, trading, and financial center, as well as a strategically located regional entrepôt, especially for products originating from or destined for the People's Republic of China. Hong Kong maintains a free and open trading regime, and the government pursues a policy of minimum interference in the economy. These factors, together with Hong Kong's skilled and industrious work force and a

legal framework that encourages business initiative, have contributed to the territory's success and have helped transform it into the world's 8th largest trading economy. An important Asian financial center, Hong Kong plays a leading role in regional banking, shipping, and communications. The local currency, the Hong Kong dollar, is freely convertible and fluctuates in a narrow band around 7.8 to the U.S. dollar. There is complete freedom of capital movement. At the end of 1998, 172 fully licensed banks operated in the SAR (14 are subsidiaries of U.S. Banks). U.S. firms are the third most numerous in the insurance industry with 22 wholly owned. Taxes are low. The current salary and corporate tax rates are 15% and 16%, respectively. There are no taxes on royalties, interest, or capital gains. Hong Kong imposes no import tariffs. Excise taxes are levied for revenue purposes on tobacco, cosmetics, alcoholic beverages, ethyl alcohol, methyl alcohol, and some petroleum products. Reflecting the growing importance of services in the economy, Hong Kong's visible trade is increasingly in deficit (\$17.7 billion in 1996 and \$20.5 billion for 1997).

With few natural resources, the territory must depend on imports. Principal imports consist of food, textile yarn and fabrics, iron and steel, plastic molding materials, consumer products, paper, and machinery. Principal exports consist of textiles and apparel, watches and clocks, electronic components, and other light industrial products. The value of domestic exports alone was equal to 14.6% of Hong

Kong's gross domestic product (GDP) in 1998 (a declining percentage as labor intensive production moves across the border into China). Tourism constitutes a major industry for the economy with 10.4 million visitors passing through the territory in 1997 and 9.6 million in 1998.

The U.S. is the territory's second largest trading partner (after the PRC), with 14.4% of total trade. In

1998, the U.S. was the second largest market for domestic exports with a 29.1% share. The U.S. supplied 7.5% of imports and was the number two destination for re-exports with 22.4%. Principal imports from the U.S. are electrical machinery; computer and office machines; telecommunications, sound recording and reproducing equipment; plastic, meat, vegetables, and fruit. Principal domestic exports to the U.S. are textiles, apparel, electrical machinery, photographic equipment, watches and clocks, computer and office machines, textiles, yarn and fabric. Currently, about 1,100 U.S. firms operate here and U.S. direct investment was estimated at \$20 billion in 1998. The American business community is well represented by the American Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong.

Transportation

Driving in Hong Kong is on the left (right-hand-drive). Automobile insurance is expensive; however, substantial discounts can be obtained based on the length of accident-free or "no-claim" driving documented by presenting a letter from your previous insurance companies).

Parking throughout the territory, especially in the downtown areas, is extremely limited and costly (approx. US\$3/HR). Parking fees often exceed the cost of travel by taxi. The Consulate General will assist you in registering your car and in obtaining a valid Hong Kong driving license. Driving tests are not required for those presenting a valid license from the U.S. or from other countries whose licenses are recognized by the Hong Kong Government.

Public transport (buses, taxis, subways, ferries, and trams) is readily available and reasonably priced. Carpools, shared taxis, or public transport are the most commonly used modes of transport between home and work.

Local. The MTR (Mass Transit Railway) subway system connects Hong

Kong Island with Kowloon and nearby portions of the New Territories. Since opening in February 1980, it has become a highly efficient, reasonably priced mode of transportation. The Island Line, which connects much of the harbor side of Hong Kong Island to the existing system, opened in 1985. Streetcars (trams) operate only in urban areas of Hong Kong Island. Bus service, including minibuses, covers almost the entire island, Kowloon, and the New Territories. Buses and streetcars are quite crowded during peak hours. Taxi service is relatively inexpensive and generally available at all hours. Radio-dispatched taxis are available.

The Peak Tram is a very popular tourist attraction, providing a breathtaking view of Hong Kong and Kowloon as you climb to its terminus on the Peak. At the Peak, the view is spectacular and there are many shops and restaurants. The Peak is also served by bus, mini bus and taxi for easy transport back to the City or other locations on Hong Kong Island.

An extensive network of roads exists throughout the territory; however, most are narrow and many are steep and winding because of the terrain. Traffic, which moves on the left, is heavy, but well regulated. There are three cross-harbor tunnels connecting Kowloon and Hong Kong Island. For those with a more romantic bent, the Star Ferry operates a very efficient and inexpensive passenger service between Central on the Hong Kong side and Ocean Terminal in Kowloon. Ferries also operate from numerous points on Hong Kong Island and the Kowloon Peninsula to many of the outlying islands.

Regional. In July 1998 Hong Kong's venerable Kai Tak Airport was replaced by a new airport at Chek Lap Kok just north of Lantau Island. An impressive road, bridge, and tunnel link connects the airport to Hong Kong Island. In addition, a high speed rail link speeds passengers to the Central business district

in Hong Kong. Departing passengers can obtain boarding passes and check their baggage at the new terminus in Central. Air service in and out of Hong Kong is excellent. About 50 airlines operate over 700 scheduled flights per week to Hong Kong. The U.S. carriers currently offering non-stop flights to Hong Kong are United and Northwest.

Hong Kong Harbor, one of Asia's busiest, handles more than 8,000 incoming ships a year, principally cargo ships but also a large number of cruise ships as well as U.S. Navy ships on port call. Trains run between Kowloon and Guangzhou (Canton), China. Hydrofoil and air transportation between Hong Kong and Guangzhou are also available, with connections there to other cities in China. Helicopter, hydrofoil and ferry transport between Hong Kong and Macau operate frequently throughout the day and evening.

Communications

Telephone, Fax, and Internet. Excellent local and international telephone and computer services are available throughout Hong Kong. Hong Kong was one of the first Asian cities to install fiber optics (replacing copper) throughout its telephone and communications infrastructure. Other services, such as Internet, mobile phones, call waiting, call forwarding, and pagers, are available from Hong Kong Telecom and other local vendors. Many employees have found it convenient to utilize a U.S. calling card. Internet service costs vary depending upon which of the over 100 Internet Service Providers (ISPs) available in Hong Kong an employee decides to use. CompuServe and America On Line are also available in Hong Kong.

Mail. International mail service is reliable, and transit time to the west coast is 3-5 days.

Radio and TV. Hong Kong has 13 radio channels: seven operated by government-affiliated Radio Television Hong Kong. Cantonese, English, and Mandarin programming includes classical and popular

music, BBC World Service, local news, and public affairs. Transistor radios and short-wave receivers are available in abundance at reasonable prices in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong uses the PAL 625 system for television broadcasts; a multi-system television set, readily available in Hong Kong, is the most convenient option. American NTSC sets are not compatible. Two local television stations each provide one Cantonese and one English channel. Most English-language programs are U.S. or U.K.-produced and present a variety of entertainment, including various U.S. news programs tailored for the Far East. Satellite and cable TV are available in many areas with such offerings as CNN, BBC, and HBO. The Consulate General commissary has a tape (NTSC format) rental program, and there are numerous video rental stores throughout Hong Kong that rent both video cassettes and laser disks. The most popular local cassette format is VHS-PAL System.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals. Hong Kong has vibrant media. It has one of the highest newspaper readerships in Asia, and is the world's largest center for Chinese-language publications. American, British, and other European periodicals are readily available in Hong Kong. American magazines and technical journals are expensive but are available. Both Time and Newsweek have Far Eastern editions on the newsstands weekly. There are two local English-language morning dailies, the South China Morning Post and the Hong Kong Standard. In addition, the Asian Wall Street Journal, the International Herald Tribune, and USA Today are available. There are numerous bookstores carrying a good selection of paperbacks and magazines, but prices are higher than in the United States.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities. The quality of medical care in Hong Kong is high. Hong Kong is the medical evacuation center for posts in China and

Manila. Medications, from the UK and U.S., are readily available. The cost for medical (especially dental) care is high in comparison to U.S. prices. Dentists and physicians on the Consulate General's referral list speak English and are trained in the U.K., Australia, or the U.S. Nursing care is good. Although the majority of pregnant women elect to stay in Hong Kong for delivery, the Health Unit supports the M/MED world-wide policy which recommends that pregnant women return to the U.S. for delivery.

Community Health. Although the territory has more than doubled the reservoir capacity in the past few years, water shortages still occur when rainfall is below normal. Water sources are reported to be potable, adequately chlorinated and fluoridated. Water from taps can, at times, be discolored due to pipes in buildings. Filters can be purchased locally to improve the quality of the water. In September 1997, Hong Kong reported 290 patients with AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome) and 2000 HIV positive patients. The blood supply in Hong Kong is screened for the HIV virus and other communicable diseases by the Red Cross. Individuals requiring blood or blood products are advised to contact the Health Unit. Tuberculosis remains one of Hong Kong's major community health problems. However, an active anti-TB program has succeeded in reducing the morbidity and mortality rate.

Preventive Measures. Individuals are encouraged to have immunizations updated before traveling to Hong Kong. The yellow fever vaccine can be received (inconveniently) at a local clinic. Japanese B encephalitis vaccine is available only in Hong Kong. Children 6 years old and under are encouraged to have annual blood lead levels screenings for the prevention of lead poisoning. Do NOT put them in air freight. The following immunizations will be reviewed and updated as needed: typhoid, diphtheria, tetanus, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, HIB, Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B.

Keep your immunization records with your passport. Individuals requiring daily medications are encouraged to bring an adequate initial supply. Don't pack your medications in your sea freight or checked luggage.

Notes for Travelers

Passage, Customs & Duties. Hong Kong is served by many of the world's major airlines including leading U.S. carriers. United and Northwest offer several flights a day including nonstop service from the west coast of the U.S. and Minneapolis-St. Paul and, seasonally, to Chicago. Continental Airlines provides services via Guam. Traveling via the Pacific can take a rest stop en route in several cities in the continental U.S., as well as Honolulu, Tokyo, or Guam.

Passports and evidence of onward/return transportation by sea/air are required. A visa is not required for tourist visits by U.S. citizens of up to 90 days. An extension of stay may be granted upon application to the Hong Kong SAR Immigration Department. U.S. citizens must have passports with at least four months' validity for entry into Hong Kong. A departure tax of \$80 HK (approximately \$10.30 US), must be paid at the airport, unless this has been included in the traveler's airfare. Visas are required to work or study in Hong Kong. With approval from the Hong Kong Civil Aviation Department, airlines began collecting an insurance surcharge from passengers in November 2001. The insurance surcharge ranges from \$30 HK (\$3.80 US) to \$40 HK (\$5.10 US) depending on the airlines. Effective November 5, 2001, travel agents in Hong Kong which are members of the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong (TIC) are allowed to charge a service fee of \$5.00 HK (approximately \$0.64 US) per sector for each air ticket issued. Public transportation from Hong Kong's International Airport at Chek Lap Kok to Central Hong Kong (about 25 miles) is readily available, as are taxis. Travelers should exchange sufficient money for transportation at the airport

exchange facility located immediately outside the baggage claim area. For the most current information concerning entry and exit requirements, travelers can consult the Hong Kong SAR Immigration Department, Immigration Tower, 7 Gloucester Road, Wanchai, Hong Kong (tel. (852) 2829-3001, fax (852) 2824-1133, Internet Home Page: <http://www.info.gov.hk/imm/d/>), or the Embassy of the People's Republic of China, 2300 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington D.C. 20008, tel. (202) 328-2500. Internet home page: <http://www.china-embassy.org>, or the Chinese consulates general in Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, New York City, or San Francisco. Overseas, inquiries may be made at the nearest Chinese embassy or consulate.

A Hong Kong driver's license may be issued without a test to individuals who hold a valid U.S. driver's license, provided they have resided in the United States for not less than six months. American visitors who do not plan to stay in Hong Kong for more than twelve months can drive in Hong Kong on their valid U.S. driver's license.

Americans living in or visiting Hong Kong are encouraged to register at the U.S. Consulate General and to obtain updated information on travel and security conditions within the Hong Kong SAR. Americans can register on-line at <http://www.usconsulate.org.hk>, in person at the Consulate General or by fax or mail. The U.S. Consulate General is located at 26 Garden Road, Central, Hong Kong. The mailing address is PSC 461, Box 5, FPO AP 96521-0006, tel. (852) 2523-9011, fax (852) 2845-4845; Internet: <http://www.usconsulate.org.hk>.

Pets. Dogs and cats imported from any country other than the UK, Ireland, Australia, or New Zealand must remain in quarantine for 1-4 months, depending on country of origin. One month is the standard quarantine period for pets imported from the U.S. if they are accompanied by appropriate certificates attesting that they come from

rabies-free areas and that their inoculations are current. Pets that have been in the United State for 6 months or longer are sometimes granted immediate entry if certain, very specific veterinary and documentary requirements are met. Quarantine regulations are rigidly enforced. Boarding fees for animals for the quarantine period are expensive and are calculated according to the weight of the animal.

The Hong Kong Government requires that all animals arrive under an airway bill via air-freight, not as accompanied baggage. Airlines will require you to present a special import permit before accepting your pet as Hong Kong-bound cargo. You should apply for this special import permit in advance.

This application must include the appropriate fee in Hong Kong dollars by check or local bank draft to the Hong Kong Government and be sent to: Senior Veterinary Officer, Agriculture and Fisheries Department Room 819, 8/F 393 Canton Road Kowloon, Hong Kong. Tel No.: (852) 2733-2142, Fax No.: (852) 2311-3731 24 Hour Interactive Inquiry: (852) 2733-2452.

The current fee schedule and an up-to-date form can be found at the Hong Kong Government web site: <http://www.info.gov.hk>.

The Hong Kong Government requires that all dogs brought into the territory receive a microchip identification device immediately upon entry. A tiny, encapsulated microchip is injected under the skin between the neck and the shoulders using a single-use needle. This device, which can be read by a scanner held close to the dog, is linked to ownership and vaccination records stored in government computers.

Animals under quarantine can only be housed in government kennels or the private Pok Fu Lam Kennel. It is extremely difficult to secure space at the government kennels. Reservations for the private kennel should be made well in advance.

Pok Fu Lam Kennels 698 Victoria Road Hong Kong, Tel. No.: (852) 2551-6661.

Local veterinarians and international moving firms can also provide excellent airport-to-kennel service.

Firearms and Ammunition. Possession of personally owned weapons is prohibited under the laws of Hong Kong. This restriction applies to the possession or importation of any firearms, sporting weapons (including spear guns, harpoons, etc.) or ammunition.

Currency, Banking, and Weights and Measures. The local currency is the Hong Kong dollar, which is pegged to the U.S. dollar and is freely convertible to other currencies. The value in relation to the U.S. dollar fluctuates slightly according to market conditions (usually around 7.8). Any currency may be brought into the territory.

For longer stays you may want to open a local checking account as most local shops and stores accept personal checks. A local account is also useful since many clubs, grocery stores, and service stations require payment by automatic monthly withdrawal from a local bank account. Automated teller machines on the Plus and Cirrus networks abound and accept most debit cards and credit cards. Major credit cards are accepted by most stores and restaurants.

Hong Kong is a major financial center and can provide most services that are typically found in the U.S. Checking accounts, savings accounts, travelers checks, and foreign exchange facilities are readily available. Minimum balances are common, and you should be aware of this before opening a new account. The time to clear checks drawn on banks in the U.S. is about four days.

Hong Kong has converted to the metric system, but pounds, inches and gallons still compete with grams, meters and liters. Local markets continue to use the catty, which

is roughly 1-1/4 pounds. Temperature is recorded in Celsius.

Guangzhou

Guangzhou (formerly Canton), the capital of Guangdong Province, is the gateway to southern China. Over 2,000 years old, Guangzhou is now the center of one of the world's fastest growing economic regions: the booming Pearl River Delta.

Lying just south of the Tropic of Cancer, Guangzhou is 1,150 miles south of Beijing and 80 miles northwest of Hong Kong. With a subtropical monsoon climate, the long summers are hot and humid. August is the hottest month, with an average temperature of 82°F. January, with an average of 55°F, is the coolest. Average annual rainfall is 77 inches; April and May are the rainiest months.

Metropolitan Guangzhou encompasses an area of over 4,500 square miles, with a population of over 3 million plus at least 1 million migrant workers. The city proper has an area of 21 square miles and an official population estimated over 3.8 million. In recent years, Guangzhou's industrial, commercial, and residential areas have greatly expanded, particularly to the south and east of the old city core. The surrounding Pearl River Delta is a fertile agricultural region supporting two rice crops yearly. Other agricultural mainstays are jute, sugarcane, oil-producing plants, pigs, chickens, ducks, and fish.

Goods from Guangzhou are marketed in nearly all countries. Light industrial manufacturing, including textiles, shoes, toys, furniture, and exportable consumer products, accounts for most of these exports. Principal heavy industries include shipbuilding, sugar refining equipment, and tool and motorcycle manufacturing.

Bustling food markets and busy restaurants are a big part of the Guangzhou street scene. Cantonese cuisine is renowned and local res-



Susan Rock. Reproduced by permission.

Tiananmen Square and gate in Beijing

restaurants are packed daily with patrons. Local markets thrive and stores are stocked with both Chinese and foreign products. Brightly decorated storefronts and brisk trading in noisy markets contribute to the lively atmosphere. Buildings trimmed in lights and neon signs and billboards illuminate the city at night.

Food

A fair range of fresh fruits, vegetables, and meats is available most of the year, and these can usually be found at the famous Qing Ping market. There you can also stock up on Chinese herbal medicines, have a dog, cat, or some exotic animal slaughtered fresh for supper, and feast on a meal of snake, turtle, or scorpion.

Staple products and canned goods can be purchased from the duty-free Daily Living food store or at Park 'N Shop, a Hong Kong-based supermarket chain with several branches

in Guangzhou, including one about a mile from Shamian Island. Some small shops near the Consulate are beginning to stock Western staples. Selection is often limited, and many employees make regular shopping trips to Hong Kong. Fresh milk (USDA standard), ice cream, breads, and a very limited selection of cheeses and cold cuts are available (at high prices) from the White Swan delicatessen next door to the Consulate.

Liquor and wine can be ordered from Hong Kong or purchased at Daily Living. China brews some good beers; those and some U.S. brands are readily available.

Environmental pollution and public sanitation are serious problems in Guangzhou. Fruits and vegetables must be thoroughly washed. All drinking water outside major hotels should be considered suspect. Unpeeled fruits and vegetables that are not to be cooked should be

soaked in a bleach solution, then rinsed before eating. Although the variety of vegetables available is limited, the produce is organically grown without the use of night soil, so it does not have to be soaked in a sterilizing solution.

Clothing

Because the climate of Guangzhou is hot and humid most of the year, lighter weight natural fiber garments and shoes are needed. Cottons, silks, and lightweight suits are best. During the cooler, rainier months, a light topcoat, raincoat, or sweater is essential. However, for a few weeks of the year the weather turns quite cold, and heavier sweaters and a winter coat are necessary.

Buying shoes and clothing on the local market is possible if you are petite. Sizes are generally too small for larger-than-average foreigners. Fabric is available and some tailoring and dressmaking can be done locally.

Some adequate children's clothes can be found on the local market.

Supplies and Services

Laundry and dry-cleaning facilities are available major hotels, as are barber and beauty shops. Service is good and prices are reasonable. Haircuts at local area barbershops are inexpensive, but the quality of service is not always up to Western standards. Hygiene is also a consideration. The White Swan's salon offers facials and other beauty treatments.

Simple shoe repair can be done locally; more difficult repairs are easily handled in Hong Kong.

Religious Activities

The Guangzhou International Christian Fellowship holds ecumenical religious service at the American School for the expatriate community. The Guangzhou Chinese Catholic Cathedral and the Shamian Island Catholic Church hold Masses in Latin, Mandarin, and Cantonese. Protestant services in Cantonese are held at Christ Church, across the street from the Consulate, and at Dongshan Church and Zion Church. Huaisheng Mosque holds services at noon on Fridays.

Education

The American School of Guangzhou (ASG) is located in the Tianhe district. ASG is fully accredited in grades K to 12. In 1995-96, the school had approximately 200 students from more than 20 countries. The teaching staff is recruited from the U.S., supplemented by several locally hired, accredited American teachers. The school offers an American curriculum, with classes in art, music, Chinese culture, and physical education. All instruction is in English, with an ESL program for nonnative English speakers. ASG's principal is Dr. Nancy Stephan.

ASG address:

American School of Guangzhou
PSC 461 Box 100
FPO AP 96521-0002
Tel: 86-20-758-0001
Fax: 86-20-758-0002

Two church-supported schools are operating in Guangzhou.

Guangzhou has several preschools accepting children from 2 to 5 years old. Half-day (morning) English-language preschools are located at the China Hotel, Garden Hotel, and Ramada Pearl Hotel. Fees of a few hundred dollars a month apply. Other international preschools plan to open in the future.

A Chinese-language, local government-sponsored preschool and kindergarten for children 3 to 5 years old operates half-day or full-day programs on Shamian Island. Care is very good. The school provides meals, or parents may provide their own. Most children without Chinese-language ability are able to adapt easily and interact with the Cantonese-speaking children. The language of instruction is Mandarin, though teachers often lapse into Cantonese. Full-day and half-day fees apply.

Sports and Outdoor Activities

Ping-pong, badminton, tennis, and tai chi are popular local sports. There are several health clubs near the Consulate and in the major hotels, some of which include swimming pools and squash and tennis courts. The city has several large, modern bowling facilities, as well as good quality indoor roller skating and ice skating rinks operating year round. Basketball and soccer games have been organized at local universities. Horseback riding is available.

Every other Saturday, joggers and walkers may join the local Hash House Harriers at various suburban locations. Guangzhou has several large parks, though they tend to be crowded on weekends. Nearby Baiyun Mountain Park has hiking trails. Guangzhou's sports complex, located near the American School, has hosted events for the Asian games, professional tennis matches, the 1995 world weightlifting championships, and the 1992 women's soccer World Cup. An 18-hole golf course is located in the northern

part of the city. Shenzhen boasts a championship golf course; other golf clubs are planned.

Shamian Island is a reasonable location for jogging and is also home to an excellent tennis facility with nine indoor and outdoor lighted, hard-surface courts.

Touring

Traveling in China can be difficult (especially if you do not have some Chinese-language ability) but also rewarding. Popular trips from Guangzhou include Guilin, Macau, Hainan Island, and Kunming. A weekend of shopping and dining in Hong Kong can be expensive, but getting there is convenient via plane, overnight boat, high-speed catamaran, bus, or train. The train ride is about 2 hours one way; the bus takes about 3-1/2 hours. One can also drive as far as Shenzhen, leave the car in a parking lot, and use Hong Kong's public transportation the rest of the way. Bicycles can be rented for touring the city, and mountain bikes can be purchased at local factory outlets for outings to area villages and rice farms.

There are direct flights from Guangzhou to dozens of Chinese cities and many international destinations, including Australia, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Entertainment

Theaters in Guangzhou occasionally show ballets, symphonies, and plays by touring musical or theatrical groups. Occasional concerts feature Chinese or foreign pop performers. Local movie theaters show dubbed films and some English-language. Private lessons in Cantonese and Mandarin language, music, traditional painting, and calligraphy for adults and children are easy to arrange.

Shopping and browsing are a favorite pastime in Guangzhou. The famous (some would say infamous) Qing Ping market, which sells many live and exotic animals for consumption, is just north of Shamian Island. The antique market, one of

China's best, is also within walking distance of the Consulate. Beijing Road has dozens of upscale clothing and jewelry stores. The semiannual Canton Trade Fair provides an opportunity to examine and purchase products, including baskets and silk carpets, from all over China.

Social Activities

The growing international business community informally organizes fund-raisers and parties. The American School is a social gathering point, especially for those with children. The Guangzhou Women's International Club is one of the most active groups in the expatriate community, organizing a wide variety of events for its members and guests. The American Chamber of Commerce branch in Guangzhou holds monthly breakfast meetings, and occasional lunches and dinners, at the major hotels. Nightclubs and karaoke clubs have become popular night spots, creating new opportunities for Chinese and foreigners to socialize.

Eating Out

Guangzhou is famous for its cuisine, and eating out is a favorite pastime for local and foreign residents. Restaurants serving Cantonese cuisine abound, though many do not have menus in English. For those in search of a change, try one of the Sichuan or Beijing-style restaurants. There is a growing number of other Asian restaurants, including Japanese, Korean, Malaysian, and Thai. Western cuisine is unavailable except at the major hotels. Of course, Guangzhou has not been excluded from the invasion of Western fast-food establishments: Pizza Hut, McDonald's, and Kentucky Fried Chicken.

Special Information

Before coming to Guangzhou, individuals should take care of all potential medical problems, including dental and eye care. Trips to Hong Kong for medical attention are costly.

In cases of accident or sudden illness, local medical facilities have

been used, but they are not recommended for routine care and are considered to be a last resort option. Hospital outpatient clinics are busy and there are few private doctors. One local dental clinic comes close to meeting U.S. standards.

Shanghai

Although Shanghai is a young city by Chinese standards, with 13 million residents, it vies for the title of the most populous city in the world. The Shanghai metropolitan area (including the suburban counties) is China's most important industrial, commercial, and financial center, accounting for 5 percent of the Gross National Product. The Shanghai-ese, as the city's residents are known, speak their own distinctive dialect and are recognized as being among the country's most able businessmen. Today, Shanghai is a hub for several Chinese industries, including iron and steel, shipbuilding, textiles and garments, electronics, clocks, bicycles, automobiles, aircraft, pharmaceuticals, computers, publishing, and cinema. Shanghai is China's largest port and most important foreign trade center. Shanghai itself accounts for 8 percent of all Chinese exports but handles nearly two-thirds of China's total exports through its ports. Once the world's third-largest port, Shanghai remains China's principal shipping center. Shanghai is the most cosmopolitan of Chinese cities and its shops, restaurants, and night life reflect this. Shanghai-style food (seafood) is distinctive and elegantly presented. There are numerous night clubs, discos, and karaoke bars, but cultural entertainment for the expatriate family (movies, music, theater, etc.) is very limited.

Shanghai is acknowledged as the busiest and most exciting shopping center in China. From antiques to pottery, clothing to cotton goods, rugs, furniture, and jewelry, shoppers will find something for every taste in Shanghai's 24,000 stores, supplemented by shopping streets and free markets.

Food

Thanks to the construction of new joint-venture shopping complexes, shopping for food in Shanghai is now almost as convenient as shopping in a supermarket in the U.S., although the cost is considerably higher and the selection more limited. Shanghai has numerous open-air markets where fresh fruits and vegetables, meat, fowl, and fish and seafood are available. Most fresh produce is available year-round. The prices in these markets, where most Chinese shop, are much lower than in the upscale supermarkets. Locally produced and imported soft drinks (Coke, Sprite, Fanta), soda water, tonic water, and beer are available. In addition, a limited selection of local and imported liquor and wines is available at a duty-free shop at reasonable prices. However, at commercial outlets, whereas soft drink and beer prices are comparable or cheaper than those in the U.S., prices for liquor are somewhat higher.

Clothing

Shanghai has four seasons, with weather slightly warmer than that of Washington, D.C. Except for joint-venture enterprises and places frequented by tourists, few other buildings in Shanghai are heated or air-conditioned. China exports numerous items of clothing, including wool sweaters and down clothing, which are available locally at reasonable prices. Prices of cashmere sweaters have increased substantially in the past few years, but are still below those in the U.S. Children's clothing is plentiful and inexpensive. In planning your Shanghai wardrobe, remember that the summers are hot and humid, while the winters can be cold and damp, with temperatures sometimes dropping below freezing. Most items of clothing can be purchased locally, although not always in the larger sizes. This is especially true for shoes, so be sure to bring an adequate supply.

Supplies and Services

Personal care and household cleaning and paper supplies can be purchased locally. Local equivalents are

available but inferior in quality, while imported ones are considerably higher in price. Locally produced American brands are mid-range in price and quality.

Religious Activities

Shanghai has Catholic and Protestant churches, Buddhist/Daoist temples, and Islamic mosques. The Catholic Patriotic Church is independent of Rome. Catholic services are conducted in Chinese, except for a small Sunday morning service for expatriates that is conducted in English. Protestant services are conducted in Chinese, although simultaneous interpretation/earphones are provided at the Sunday service of the International Community Church. Judaism is not one of the five religions recognized by the Chinese Government and no synagogues exist.

Education

Utilizing a twin-campus design, the Shanghai American School offers a comprehensive educational program on both the east and west sides of Shanghai. Each campus includes pre-kindergarten through 12th grade on 25 to 30 acres, with approximately 30,000 square meters of building space. The west campus, completed the fall of 1996, is located in Zhu Di Township, about 3 km north and west of the Hong Qiao Airport. The east campus, completed the fall of 1997, is located in Pudong at the Shanghai Links residential community, approximately 18 km east of the Bund. The Shanghai American School can be reached at 86-21-6221-1445 (telephone) or 0-86-21-6221-1269 (fax).

Sports

Sports facilities are limited to a members-only golf club and several municipal tennis court complexes. Several hotels (as well as joint-venture housing complexes) offer health club memberships, most of which include indoor/outdoor pools, tennis/racquetball courts, weight/fitness rooms, and bowling alleys. There are occasional pickup softball, volleyball, and basketball games with members of the university and business communities.

Touring and Related Activities

Since Shanghai is an industrial and commercial center, sight-seeing in the city is relatively limited. The city has several picturesque temples and gardens, the oldest (Ming Dynasty) being in the recently renovated Old City Temple area, which has also been reconstructed in the Ming style. The countryside around Shanghai is flat and lends itself to hiking and long bicycle rides, although current traffic congestion and poor road conditions make this a bit of a trial. Short trips to the historic and scenic cities of Suzhou, Hangzhou, and Nanjing offer additional sight-seeing opportunities at relatively limited expense. Note, however, that travel outside of Shanghai is regulated. Travel by public transportation outside a 24-mile radius of Shanghai requires 48-hour notification to the Shanghai Foreign Affairs Office.

Social Activities

An active Expatriate Association sponsors monthly luncheons, sight-seeing, cultural activities, and social events such as the annual Christmas Ball. There is also a large and growing American Chamber of Commerce and a professional women's organization, both of which have monthly lectures and get-togethers centering on business-related activities. However, organized family-oriented social and recreational activities are very limited and most expatriates entertain at home.

Special Information

Like many large cities in developing countries, Shanghai has a problem with water and air pollution. The water has a high concentration of minerals and metals. Bottled distilled water is available for purchase locally. Those who suffer from hay fever and sinus- or bronchial-related allergies will find these conditions aggravated by the high level of suspended particulates (dust and coal dust) and carbon monoxide in the air.

Shenyang

Shenyang is the political, military, and economic capital of northeast China, the region once known as Manchuria. The northeast, composed of the provinces of Liaoning, Jilin, and Heilongjiang, is home to over 100 million people.

A frontier land settled in the late 1800s, the northeast has for the past century been a strategic battleground and center of intrigue between Russia, Japan, Korea, and the forces of Chinese nationalism.

The two pillars of Manchuria's economy are heavy industry and agriculture. The region is home to some of China's largest state enterprises, including the massive Anshan Steel Works, the First Auto Works, and the Jilin Petrochemical Corporation. Efforts to reform ailing state enterprises remain a problematic but critical part of the nation's overall drive to achieve economic development with social stability. Jilin is China's largest exporter of corn and tobacco. Heilongjiang is known as "the king of soybeans," and Liaoning's apples, peaches, and pears are exported throughout Asia. In addition, ginseng from southern Jilin's Changbai mountain range has fortified Chinese traditional medicines for years.

The northeast is an extremely diverse part of China. Geographically, the region stretches from the magnificent natural harbor at Dalian, through the heavily populated Manchurian plain, east along the spectacularly rugged Sino-Korean border, and north to the wetlands and forests that characterize the Sino-Russian border.

The region is ethnically diverse as well, a unique blend of Han Chinese, Manchu, Mongolian, and Korean culture. In fact, the southern quarter of Jilin Province contains the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture, known as "China's Korean Corner" and home to nearly 1 million ethnic Korean Chinese.

The city of Shenyang itself is a heavily polluted, industrial metropolis of about 5 million people in the midst of unprecedented economic growth. It is home to several of the region's largest state enterprises, but also contains several prominent universities and cultural attractions. For example, Shenyang is home to a smaller version of Beijing's Forbidden City, used by the Manchus before they captured the imperial capital in the 17th century and established their own dynastic rule. The founder of the Qing (as they called themselves) line is also buried in Shenyang.

The region's climate is mainly influenced by the continental landmass of central Asia. Shenyang's winter is a little longer than Beijing's and compares to that of Chicago without the Windy City's raw winter winds and is much drier. Traveling south to the ice-free port of Dalian on the southern tip of the Liaodong peninsula, the extremes of weather become less pronounced.

Food

Pork, chicken, duck, mutton, some seafood (frozen fish and shrimp), and beef are normally available, but quality varies and only chicken is available in American-style cuts.

A variety of vegetables and fresh fruits, including excellent strawberries and peaches, are available in the market in season. Recently, at least three to four fresh vegetables and two to three fresh fruits have been available throughout the year.

Some imported foodstuffs are available, but many locally available substitutes are acceptable. Some imported beers, wines, and liquors are available at prices comparable to those in the U.S. Local beer is available.

Clothing

Shenyang has a short, warm summer sandwiched between an extended spring and fall. The winter is long and cold, comparable to the northern Midwest in the U.S. Most buildings are heated but not to U.S. standard.

Supplies and Services

Toiletries, cosmetics, and household cleaning products are available locally but differ widely from similar American products. Shenyang's winters reduce the usual problems with cockroaches and insects found in developing countries, but moth infestation is a big problem.

Shenyang does not have the large international hotels found in China's major tourist centers. As a result, the usual services found in such establishments are generally unavailable. Barbers and beauticians at the few hotels provide a utilitarian if not high-fashion service. Local dry-cleaning services are of variable quality.

Winter outer garments and sweaters can sometimes be purchased locally. A wide range in size, style, and color of other garments is nonexistent.

Religious Activities

One nondenominational Protestant church in Shenyang conducts services in Chinese. Mass at the Chinese Catholic Church is in Latin. No synagogue exists, but Shenyang does have one mosque and several Buddhist and Daoist temples. Protestant services for foreigners are conducted at China Medical University and at Riverside Gardens.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Shenyang has some interesting parks and monuments. Nanhu and Lu Xun Parks provide good jogging paths during the less crowded times of day. Consulate General families have enjoyed picnicking at Dongling, the imperial tomb of the first Qing emperor, during the warmer months.

Entertainment

Three local TV stations broadcast in Chinese every evening, in color. One English-speaking channel, Star Plus, offers a variety of old movies and TV series. There are also up-to-date sportscasts on Star Sports. Liaoning Radio has recently begun offering a nightly English news pro-

gram, and VOA, BBC, Radio Australia, and others can be picked up by shortwave radio.

Special Information

The facilities at local clinics are modest by U.S. standards. Individuals with serious medical problems should be evacuated to Hong Kong.

Chengdu

Chengdu is the capital of China's most populous province, Sichuan, and the traditional center of government and transportation in southwest China. The Chengdu consular district is made up of the provinces of Sichuan, Yunnan, and Guizhou, as well as the Xizang Autonomous Region, more commonly known as Tibet.

As Chengdu serves as the air transport hub of southwest China, air service is provided to all major Chinese cities. Centrally located, Chengdu is between a 2- and 2 1/2-hour flight to Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Lhasa. There is also a twice weekly flight to Hong Kong, which is Chengdu's sole international connection at this time. Chengdu also has rail service to all major destinations.

Chengdu has a moderate climate with fairly mild winters, early springs, rainy summers, and warm autumns. Though not uncomfortable in terms of temperature, there is a near-perpetual overcast. This condition is attributable to Chengdu's location in the Sichuan basin, one of the world's most productive agricultural plains. Pollution, caused primarily by the burning of coal in winter, is also an irritant.

Chengdu has been a governmental and cultural center since at least 400 B.C., undergoing numerous name changes over the years. During the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 220) it was known as the "City of Brocade," becoming so prosperous that it gained the nickname "Storehouse of Heaven." Under the Five Dynasties, the local warlord planted

so much hibiscus on the city walls (since destroyed) that it was known as the "City of Hibiscus."

Present-day Chengdu has a population of 8.7 million, of whom about 3 million live in the city center. There has been a great deal of new and unimaginative high-rise construction over the past few years as is the case with most of China's major cities. Nonetheless, the city maintains a great deal of charm with several nice city parks and areas where old-style buildings have remained. These older smaller buildings have been central to the renaissance of small private businesses. In Chengdu's alleys, one can amble for hours, on foot or bicycle, going from small shop to small shop.

Chengdu's role as a regional center of government, transportation, and culture, as well as of electronic and other industries, has brought increasing numbers of foreigners. The tourist trade continues to increase, and one now frequently encounters American and other tourists, as well as expatriates employed as English teachers.

Food

Chengdu is acknowledged as the center of authentic Sichuan cuisine. Several good Sichuan restaurants and countless "xiaochi" or traditional snack restaurants exist. The major hotels have Western restaurants. Chengdu has two fast-food restaurants.

There are a number of Chinese-produced canned and dry goods on the market. Some Western products, such as instant coffee, artificial creamer, and powdered whole milk, are widely available, and one can usually find American peanut butter and Australian dried pastas. Other than yogurt, fresh dairy products are not found. UHT milk is available but expensive (15 to 20 yuan per liter). Pork, beef, shrimp, and chicken are available, but quality and presentation vary.

On the positive side, there is an impressive array of fruits and vege-

tables available year round. There is a proper joint-venture bakery that sells French bread, wheat bread, croissants, cakes, and pies. Some foreign liquors are available, but the wine selection is almost exclusively Chinese. Hotel shops and major department stores also stock a small variety of Western goods at higher than U.S. prices.

Clothing

Clothing and shoes of unreliable quality are available at both small stores and large department stores. Although winter temperatures are not extreme, it is nonetheless a damp and penetrating cold. Long underwear may be needed in the winter months.

Supplies and Services

Procter and Gamble hair care items and detergents are widely available, but not their toothpaste and other toiletries.

Barber and beauty facilities are available in hotels and elsewhere. These are adequate but not quite up to Western standards. Simple and inexpensive shoe repair is available. Personnel have used local tailors/dressmakers with varying results. The major hotels do dry-cleaning.

Religious Activities

Chengdu has two Protestant churches and one Chinese Catholic cathedral. All services are conducted in Chinese. Mass is said in Latin. There are two mosques. There is no synagogue nor are there any informal organized Jewish services.

Education

There are no Western schools in Chengdu.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Most people ride bicycles both for practical and recreational purposes. Within Chengdu, a bicycle is actually more convenient than a car. Chinese-made bicycles can be purchased locally at reasonable prices. Basic one-speed bikes, tricycles, multispeed bikes, and export-stan-

dard mountain bikes are all available.

There are some close-by sights, such as the Du Fu Thatched Cottage, that make for a nice cycling outing. Sights of interest within a several hours' drive are Emei Shan, Le Shan, Dujiangyan Irrigation Works, and the Wolong Panda Reserve.

Entertainment

Occasionally there are visiting Western song or dance troupes brought in under the auspices of cultural exchange programs. There is almost no locally available English-language reading material.

Special Information

Calling cards with your name in English on one side and your Chinese name on the other are a must in both business and social circumstances. They can be obtained in Chengdu within a few days. The quality of those done in Beijing or Hong Kong is much better, but harder to arrange.

Nanjing

Nanjing (Nanking), the provincial capital of Jiangsu (Kiangsu) Province in eastern China, is a city of ancient culture that has several times, during 10 dynasties, been the capital of the country. Its history spans 2,400 years. The Treaty of Nanking, signed here in 1842, was the pact that opened China to foreign trade.

Industry has developed considerably since 1950, and Nanjing is now a production center for iron, steel, chemicals, machine building, optical instruments, textiles, and foodstuffs. The city is one of China's intellectual centers, having 18 universities and several other institutions of higher learning. Nanjing's population is over 2.4 million.

The Nanjing Bridge over the Chang Jiang (Yangtze) River is one of China's most spectacular spans. It is a double-deck bridge handling

both rail and motor vehicles, making Nanjing a major transportation center for north-south traffic.

Scenic and historic spots abound throughout Nanjing. On the Purple Mountains east of the city is the Zijin Shab Observatory of the China Academy of Sciences, with its extensive collection of ancient astronomical instruments. Also here are the Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum and Ming Xiaio Tombs, both national historical monuments, and the Linggu Si (Soul Valley Temple). The Lantern Festival in the central marketplace and the zoo near the city gates are popular attractions. Lovely lakes and luxuriant greenery add to the charm of this famous tourist city.

Chongqing

Chongqing (Chungking), built on a rock promontory at the confluence of the Yangtze and Chia-ling Rivers, was once the headquarters of the Chinese National Armies and the political capital of the nation. In 1937, shortly before the capture of Nanking in the Second Sino-Japanese War, national administrative offices were moved here, where they remained until 1945. The city was also an American air base during World War II (1944-1945).

Chongqing is a misty, mountain city, encircled by rivers on three sides. Natives call it "fog city" because there are about 200 foggy days a year. It was opened in 1890 as a treaty port, and is the trade center for much of western China. It has textile mills, chemical plants, steel and cement factories, and several other smaller industries. Chongqing's population is 2.83 million.

Two of the city's interesting natural features are its north and south hot springs parks, Beiwenquan and Nanwenquan. The zoo, with its exhibits of rare animals and birds, and the beautifully landscaped Goose Peak Park are popular tourist spots. The Research Institute of Traditional Chinese Painting,

where the area's top artists work and reside, is also located here.

Harbin

Harbin (Ha-erh-pin) is one of the great trade marts and communication centers of the Far East. Located on the Sung-hua, or Sungari, River, almost at the exact midpoint of Manchuria, it is the capital of Heilungkiang (Black Dragon) Province, and has an estimated population of 2.9 million. Food processing, tractor and ball bearing manufacture, and wire and cable factories are its main industries.

Harbin was only a village until 1896, when the Russians contracted to build the Chinese Eastern Railway branch of the Trans-Siberian Railroad. Wide avenues and European-style architecture are evidence of the strong Russian influence on the town in the years between the start of rail construction and the surrender of the Russian concession in 1924. A major influx of White Russian refugees after 1917 gave Harbin the largest European population in the Far East, but most of those who had fled the revolution left after the Chinese Communists rose to power.

The town was captured in 1932 by Japanese forces invading Manchuria, and fell again, in August 1945, to the Soviets. The Chinese Communists eventually took possession, and developed Harbin into a major industrial city.

Wuhan

Wuhan is a consolidation of three Han cities in Hubei (Hupei) Province of east central China. Wuchang, Hankou, and Hanyang came under one administration in 1950 and these cities, as a unit, now flourish as a commercial and industrial center and the transportation hub of central China. The city lies on the spot where the Han and Yangtze rivers meet, and is home to 5.2 million people.

It was in the place that is now Wuhan that the revolution against imperialist China took form in 1911.

Many industrial enterprises and commercial ventures have helped to build Wuhan into one of China's most important cities. Tea, silk, cotton, rice, oils, soap, timber, and steel are among the diverse products that are transferred through the bustling city port. Also, tourists are attracted to Wuhan to view the temples, the scenic landscape, and the ancient musical terrace called Guqintai.

OTHER CITIES

ANSHAN is an industrial center of about 1,450,000 residents, situated 350 miles northeast of Beijing. The site of some of China's main iron and steel facilities, the city also relies on cement and chemical production. Iron smelting here dates to 100 B.C. and progressed until Manchu emperors shut down the operations. The Japanese, who occupied the vicinity early in the 20th century, resumed production. The steel works were founded here in 1918. Anshan was the scene of intense fighting in the Chinese civil war (1946-1949), with both sides taking control of the district 11 times. The city was rebuilt following the war and is now twice as large in area as it was sixty years ago. Two parks are noteworthy in Anshan. Tang-gangzi Park, a few miles south of the city limits, has two historic homes—one that belonged to a Manchu warlord, and another to the last Qing emperor. The park's hot springs and sanitarium attract visitors from many parts of the country. The other park, Eryijiu Park, boasts three huge lakes and several walkways.

CHENG-CHOU (formerly spelled Zhengzhou and Chengchow), located about 40 miles southwest of Beijing in the east-central region, is the capital of Honan Province. This is a crucial railroad junction for both north-south and east-west

lines. Cheng-chou has been inhabited since about 1500 B.C., and flourished as the terminus of the New Pien Canal from the seventh through the 10th centuries. The railway has been important to the city from the arrival of the Peking-Han-k'ou line 80 years ago. A tower in the center of town commemorates a 1923 workers' strike that began in Cheng-chou and extended along the rail line. The Communists changed the area from a strictly commercial and administrative center to an industrial hub when they took over in 1949. Today there are textile and flour mills, tobacco factories, locomotive repair plants, and a thermal generating station. Nearby countryside is irrigated by a pumping station erected in 1972. A major improvement project saw the planting of thousands of trees to cut down on the sand that was blown through the city by strong gusts. Cheng-chou's population is an estimated 2.1 million.

CHENGDU (also spelled Ch'eng-tu) is one of China's ancient cities. It dates back to the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 220), and in early times was an imperial capital. Chengdu is the administrative seat of China's most populous province, Szechwan (Sichuan), where the beautiful Shu embroidery is produced. Noted for its famous cuisine, and for its annual flower fair, the city is also the transportation and cultural center of southwest China. Chengdu was the site of an American air base in 1944-1945, during the Second World War. The city is located on the irrigation system of the Min River and is the center of a fertile region. It is the site of a university and technical college, and has a population of approximately 5.3 million. No western schools exist in Chengdu; preschoolers attend local Chinese kindergartens. Older children use Calvert correspondence courses. Martial arts and painting classes are available for children.

FUZHOU (also spelled Foochow), the capital of Fujien Province in southeast China, is a seaport on the

Minjiang River midway between Hong Kong and Shanghai. This city of 1.4 million residents is known for its handicraft industries which produce horn combs, umbrellas, and lacquers. It became famous also for the export of black (Bohea) tea, named for the Chinese hills where it is grown. Fuzhou dates back to 202 B.C., in the Han Dynasty. The early city walls remain, and in the adjacent hills are many beautiful examples of architecture, among them the spectacular White and Black Pagodas. Fuzhou was one of the first ports opened to trade in 1842 by the Treaty of Nanking.

GUILIN (also spelled Kweilin), a city of spectacular scenic beauty, lies on the Lijiang River in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous province. The Chinese call it a "city of culture" because of the great numbers of celebrated artists and intellectuals who congregated here during the Japanese aggression. It is an ancient community, founded during the Qin Dynasty of the third century B.C. Silk is a major export of Guilin. During World War II, an American air base was established here, first in 1944 and, after a devastating attack by the Japanese, again in 1945. Today, Guilin is a city of more than 400,000. It has light industry as well as all of the by-products of urban life—dust, noise, and traffic congestion.

GUIYANG (formerly spelled Kueiyang) lies on the Nan-ming Ho River, 200 miles south of Chongqing. With a population nearing 2,500,000, it is a provincial capital and industrial center. Industries here include iron, coal, and bauxite production, as well as the manufacture of mining equipment and automobile tires. Guiyang experienced great economic progress during the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945), when highway, railroad, and communications construction began. The city has a teacher-training college, medical school, and university.

HANGZHOU (also spelled Hangchou and Hangchow) is located on the north bank of the lower reaches

of Qiantang River. One of China's scenic spots and a major tourist center, it is said to have been called "the world's most beautiful and splendid city" by Marco Polo. Hangzhou is particularly famous for Xi Hu (West Lake), a mirrorlike body of water encircled by hills, and surrounded by terraces with flowers, trees, and pavilions. In addition to being the capital of Zhejiang Province, it is one of China's major silk-producing centers. Hangzhou silk is internationally famous. Light industry has also developed considerably in recent years. The city has 1.78 million residents.

LÜDA (also spelled Lüta, formerly called Dalian) is a leading port in the northeast, located on the south coast of Liao-tung Peninsula, about 300 miles from Beijing. The Russians first developed the region in 1898, calling it Dalny, but lost the city to the Japanese after the Russo-Japanese War of 1904. Shipbuilding and other industries were introduced by the Japanese and have been growing since. The industrial base of Lüda is varied, including oil refining, paper and fertilizer production plants, and steel factories. Tourism here has a great economic impact. This is one of China's foremost summer resorts, known for its beaches and many hotels. The city has an engineering college. Lüda's population is an estimated 1,630,000.

SUZHOU (also spelled Soochow) is China's historic garden city and one of the oldest towns in the Chang Jiang River basin. It is a center for tourism, and many of its historic parks have been restored and reopened to the public. The Great Pagoda was built here in the year 1131. Suzhou is also famous for its silks and embroidery, a centuries-old tradition. Since 1950, the city has expanded its textiles and chemical industries, but its most famous products remain handicrafts. Sash has a current population of over 1.2 million.

TIANJIN (also spelled Tientsin) is a river port about 75 miles south-

east of Beijing, and a major commercial and industrial city. It also is an educational center of long standing, and the site of the more recently inaugurated (1960) Hupei University. For centuries Tianjin was a military post, having become a garrison town in the second year of the Ming Dynasty. It was occupied for a few years by the British and French in the middle of the 19th century, and was seized during the Boxer Rebellion in 1900. The city then came under direct control of the central government, and is one of only three Chinese cities which are thus administered. Tianjin has a metropolitan population of over 9 million.

XI'AN (also spelled Hsi'an and Sian), one of the most historically interesting of all of China's cities, is situated in the center of the Guanzhong Plain in east-central China. It is a significant origin of Chinese civilization and, as early as the third century B.C., was a focal point for international exchange between China and other countries. It was the starting point of the famous "Silk Road," the overland trade route to the West. Xi'an served as the capital of 10 dynasties over a period of 1,000 years. Many notable tombs and other ancient relics are preserved here and at Pei-lin, south of the city. In Xi'an's more recent history, it is also remembered as the scene of the communist kidnapping of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek in 1936. The population of Xi'an is approximately 3.1 million.

YANGSHUO, a southern suburb of Guilin, is a market center and county seat on the Li River. It is known for its mountain scenery; tourists come to this small town regularly on the noted Li River boat tours. Four mountain peaks assure a dramatic setting for photographers: Dragon Head Hill, Crab Hill, House Hill, and Green Lotus Peak. Shopping and hotel accommodations are limited but the government tourist office here has been called the country's most helpful. There are boat and bus connections to Guilin; bicycles can be rented in Yangshuo.

The industrial city of **ZIBO** (also called Chang-tien) is located in a rich coal field, 175 miles south of Tianjin in the eastern region. As it is known today, Zibo was formed in 1949, when the counties of Tzuch'eng and Poshan merged. Historically, the city can be traced to the second century B.C.; the extensive mid-20th-century development started with completion of an important railway passing just north of town. Textile manufacturing and food processing are growing in significance. Zibo has an estimated population of 2,775,000.

REGIONS

Since 1999, **MACAU** has been officially designated as a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China, an agreement which allows the region a high degree of autonomy in just about every aspect of government except in foreign affairs and defense. The region is made up of two islands and a peninsula reaching off the Guangdong mainland into the South China Sea. The population is about 440,000 (2000 est.) Since it is a separate government entity, you will need a separate passport to enter and you should make certain that your China passport allows multiple entries for your return trip. The extra effort could be well worth it, since there is much to see and do in Macau.

One of the most famous historic sites is the Ruínas de São Paulo, the ruins of St. Paul's Cathedral, originally built in 1602 and rebuilt after major destruction from an 1835 typhoon. A museum in the former nave of the cathedral reportedly holds the tomb of the Cathedral's builder, Jesuit Father Alessandro Valignano, and an arm bone of St. Francis Xavier. On the hill overlooking the cathedral there are ruins of the fort that once protected the settlement of the cathedral, as well as a second museum and a metrological observatory.

There are seven major temple complexes in Macau. The oldest, A-Ma, is dedicated to the seafarers' goddess and dates from the early 16th century. The Kun Iam Tong complex is dedicated to the Goddess of Mercy. It was founded in the 13th century, but some of the present structure was built around 1627. It is the largest and wealthiest of the temples and contains several special halls dedicated to the Three Precious Buddhas, the Buddha of Longevity and Kun Iam herself.

Macau has several modern attractions as well. One of newest is the Macau Tower, a 338m tower which houses an entertainment and convention center. Located on the coast of the Nam Van Lakes, the tower is the 10th largest in the world. There are a total of ten casinos in Macau, mostly located in the Lisboa tourist complex. The Macau Cultural Center, opened in 1999, consists of two auditoriums for seminars, lectures and other cultural events and a second building housing three museum areas with exhibits on Macau culture, history and arts. There are ten other museums throughout Macau.

For nature lovers, Macau offers a variety of hiking trails and walking tours throughout the area. There are also 15 showcase gardens, the oldest one being the St. Francisco Garde, which was started in 1580 by the Castilian friars of the Franciscan order which founded a convent at the area.

Getting around is fairly easy, since there are buses throughout the region as well as plenty of taxis. If you'd like, you can try one of the three wheeled pedicabs along the waterfront.

Known as the "rooftop of the world," **TIBET** has long been considered a place of great beauty and mystery. Some of the mystery developed as China periodically restricted or prohibited travel to the area. There are an estimated 2.6 million people in Tibet (2000 est.). Since 1965, Tibet has been designated as an Autonomous Region linked to China, and though travel is still somewhat com-

plicated, the scenery and culture are worth the trouble.

Lhasa, the “city of the gods,” is the capital of Tibet and sits at an altitude of about 12,000 ft. The Potala, home to several past Dalai Lamas, is a main attraction. Built in the 7th century, this UNESCO World Heritage site now houses a unique museum which includes underground labyrinths and dungeons, large decorative statues of Buddha, and chapels decorated with human skulls and thigh bones. The tombs of past Dalai Lamas are also located in Lhasa, as is the Jokhang Temple.

Tibetan monasteries are located in Gyantse and Sakya. The one in Sakya contains a collection of religious relics that may be viewed by visitors with some restrictions by the monks.

Naturally, one of the most popular sites in Tibet is Mt. Everest. At 29,035 ft, it is the world's highest peak. In Tibet, the name of the mountain is Qoomolangma, which means “mother goddess of the universe.” Its European name was given to honor Sir George Everest, the British surveyor-general of India who first accurately recorded the height and location of the mountain in 1865. Before then, it was known to the Western world as Peak 15. The Qoomolangma Nature Preserve surrounds the Tibetan base of the mountain and offers a variety of programs to protect and preserve the local environment and culture. A hike to the Everest Base Camp, the most famous starting point for trekkers, will take more than a few days of strenuous climbing. Or, you can find a tour with a 4-wheel-drive vehicle that takes you there for a visit.

It is possible to make travel arrangements to Tibet from outside of China. Once in China, travelers wishing to visit Tibet must join a group, which can be arranged by almost any Chinese travel agency. The travel agency will arrange for the necessary permits and collect any fees. The Chinese government requires foreigners (including U.S.

citizens) wishing to visit Tibet to apply in advance for approval from the tourist administration of the Tibetan Autonomous Region. More information is available from the Chinese Embassy or one of the Chinese consulates in the United States, or, while in China, from the U.S. Embassy or nearest U.S. consulate general. (Please see the above section on Entry Requirements.) Recently, some Americans with long-term Chinese visas have experienced difficulty obtaining permits to visit Tibet

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Occupying an area of about 3.7 million square miles, the People's Republic of China (PRC) is the third-largest country in the world, after Canada and Russia. It shares borders with North Korea, Russia, Mongolia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Burma, Laos, and Vietnam. Hong Kong and Macau are situated on China's southern coast. Two-thirds of China's area is mountainous or semidesert; only about one-tenth is cultivated. Ninety percent of its people live on one-sixth of the land, primarily in the fertile plains and deltas of the east. The country lies almost entirely in the Temperate Zone. Only the southernmost portions of the Provinces of Yunnan and Guangdong, and the Shuang Autonomous Region of Guangxi, lie within the tropics. A monsoon climate is a major influence in the south, but the north and west have a typical continental climate, except that winters are extremely dry and summers quite rainy.

During summer, warm, moist, maritime airmasses bring heavy rains to eastern China, and hot, humid, summer weather is typical. Winter offers a sharp contrast when cold, dry Siberian air-masses dominate and often penetrate to the southern

provinces. Little precipitation falls during the colder months; clear days with low humidity and low temperatures are the norm. During late winter and early spring, strong north winds sweep across northern China, and hazy days, caused by dust storms, are common.

Population

A little more than 21% of all the world's people live in China. The Chinese Government estimates that the Chinese population has reached 1.26 billion. Population density varies strikingly, the greatest contrast being between the country's eastern and western halves. The high mountains, plateaus, and arid basins of the Tibetan Highlands and the Xinjiang-Mongolia Region comprise slightly more than half of China's area but contain only about 5% of the total population. In the eastern half of China, population density generally ranges upward from 130 people per square mile. Major heavily populated areas—those in excess of 520 people per square mile—coincide with level-to-rolling alluvial plains on which intensive agriculture is centered.

Most Chinese inhabitants are of Mongoloid descent, and ethnic distinctions are largely linguistic and religious rather than racial. The Han people comprise about 92% of the population; the remaining 8%—about 50 groups—are termed “minority nationalities” by Beijing. Although non-Han peoples are relatively few in number, they are politically significant. Most inhabit strategic frontier territory, and some in the southwest, Tibet, Xinjiang, and Inner Mongolia have religious or ethnic ties with groups in adjoining nations. However, the preponderance of non-Han groups in many parts of western China is lessening, because Han Chinese have entered these regions in increasing numbers since 1950.

Although unified by tradition, written language, and many cultural traits, Han Chinese speak a score of mutually unintelligible tongues.

Most Han Chinese use the northern dialect, commonly called Mandarin, or one of its variants; a national vernacular based on the Beijing variant of this dialect (“putonghua”) is in general use.

Religion plays a more significant role in daily life in southern China than it does in the north, but many mosques, temples, Daoist shrines, and churches have been reopened since the Cultural Revolution, and a great deal of restoration work is being done on ancient Buddhist temples. Ideology guides artistic expression and social behavior less than it used to, but despite artistic experiments with modern themes and techniques, China remains an austere and authoritarian state.

The dress of the average Chinese is increasingly colorful and stylish, particularly in urban areas. Chinese cuisine can be among the best and most varied in the world. The number of good restaurants is growing, and Western food is available in Beijing, Guangzhou, and Shanghai, where private restaurants have sprung up to compete with those in the major hotels.

Public Institutions

The 48-million-member Communist Party of China (CCP) dominates or influences virtually all sectors of national society. Party policy guidance is implemented through utilizing the party structure present in all important government, economic, and cultural institutions. Nearly 70 percent of government employees are party members, and the percentage is even higher in the more senior ranks. Party control is the tightest in government offices and in urban settings; it is considerably looser in the rural and national minority areas where 80 percent of the Chinese people live and work.

The party is headed by a Politburo, which currently has 21 members. The Politburo itself is headed by a seven-member Standing Committee. The General Secretary, a member of the Politburo Standing Committee, heads the Secretariat,

which is responsible to the Politburo and helps handle the day-to-day work of the party center and its relations with regional and local party committees. The Politburo, aided by the Secretariat, also oversees the work of the Organization, International Liaison, Propaganda, and United Work Front Departments.

The Politburo is chosen by the Party Central Committee, which is elected every 5 years at a Party Congress. The Central Committee meets twice a year in formal plenary session and at other times holds informal work conferences on important topics. In addition to the Central Committee, the Party Congress also elects a Central Discipline Inspection Commission and a Central Advisory Commission. Provincial and local party groups are patterned on the central model.

A Party Central Military Commission, consisting of about a dozen top-level members, oversees the People’s Liberation Army (PLA). The direct subordination of the PLA to the party underlines the special status and political importance of the PLA.

The party also uses such mass organizations as the Young Communist League, the Women’s Federation, and the labor unions as conduits for policy directives. Disrupted by the Cultural Revolution, these organizations have been rebuilt and revitalized.

The National People’s Congress (NPC) is formally the state’s highest organ of power. A new NPC is elected every 5 years and meets in plenary session for about 2 weeks once a year to review and adopt major new policy directions, laws, the budget, and major personnel changes. The NPC Standing Committee and the deputies who participate in the NPC’s specialized committees meet every 2 months for 10-day sessions to review and approve the lion’s share (90%) of Chinese legislation. The State Council, an executive body corresponding to a cabinet, is nominally

subordinate to the NPC, but in reality is the key player in the government structure and is charged with policy implementation. Members of the State Council include the premier, vice-premiers, state councilors, ministers, and heads of various commissions and special agencies. A court and a procuratorial system are also subordinate to the NPC.

The Chinese Constitution promulgated in 1982 guarantees freedom of speech, press, and assembly, but the government interprets the Communist Party’s “leading role” as circumscribing those rights. Outright opposition to the government is not tolerated. Self-censorship is common. Nevertheless, criticism of official corruption and even ad hoc, small-scale protests against petty grievances have been allowed to take place. Foreign books and periodicals—and Chinese translations of those materials—are available in libraries and bookstores. Commercial Internet service has also been available since mid-1995, but the government has pledged to monitor and censor content.

Arts, Science, and Education

The Chinese Government’s modernization-drive and its policy of “kaifang” (opening to the outside world) have combined to create a period of tremendous cultural ferment. Not since the early years of this century has China tried to assimilate such a rapid influx of foreign ideas. At the same time, conservative members of the old guard and bureaucrats—those wary of the onset of modernity, who cling to the past—still occupy key positions of power, thus creating a continuing tension between the new and the old, between the urge to rejoin the international community and the wish to protect China from its dangerous influences.

The impetus to modernize China culturally and economically stems, in part, from the desire to see China regain the position of influence it once held in Asia. The civilization

and culture that developed in the Yellow River Valley of North China in the second millennium B.C. eventually came to dominate virtually all of East Asia, including Japan and Korea. Since 1949, however, many aspects of traditional Chinese culture have disappeared from the land of their origin or have been severely altered by the socialist transformation of China.

Prior to the violent suppression of the Democracy Movement in June 1989, China's international cultural exchanges had been flourishing. The PRC has signed formal cultural agreements with many nations, including the U.S. Private sector exchanges, such as those carried out by People to People, Sister City and Sister State programs, and U.S. universities, are too numerous to count. Hundreds of performing and visual artists; scholars of politics, economics, law, and literature; and interested citizens representing a full spectrum of professions came to China from the U.S. every month. Thousands of Chinese, too, traveled to the U.S. under government and private auspices to enhance their expertise and make contacts in the international cultural community. Since the Tiananmen incident Western cultural influence has been viewed skeptically by Chinese officials, and they have been very selective in their support for international exchange.

The cultural life of China takes place under the watchful eye of a variety of organizations, including the Propaganda Department of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee, the Ministry of Culture, the All-China Federation of Literary and Art Circles, and the local offices of these national organizations. During the past 10 years, China has restored many cultural institutions damaged by the Cultural Revolution and rehabilitated many artists and writers. However, the government's once-substantial support for the arts has been sharply reduced in the last few years because of budget constraints and a policy of decentralization. Many cultural organizations, art

schools, and performing arts groups have been told to become self-supporting. The full effect of the new policies is not yet apparent as cultural institutions must now grapple with financial and artistic problems they have not faced since before 1949.

Under the policy of opening to the outside world, international cultural exchanges are flourishing. Many countries, including the U.S., have signed formal cultural agreements with China, but it is the private sector that has shown the most rapid growth. Privately arranged cultural exchange activities are now too numerous to count. Through them, numerous foreign performers and teachers of art, music, dance, and drama visit China; art exhibits are exchanged; and many Chinese artists go abroad. This has had a profound impact on Chinese arts, but this Western influence is not without controversy. The interest of Chinese artists in Western literature and art is upsetting to those with traditional ideas. Some avant-garde or politically sensitive works continue to be banned and their authors silenced.

The Chinese cultural scene also includes a large number of art and history museums throughout the country. The museums include many important and exceptionally beautiful pieces. Particularly noteworthy are the museums in Liaoning, Xian, and Shanghai, along with the Beijing Historical Museum and the Palace Museum, which houses art treasures of the Qing Dynasty.

The Chinese film industry is at the forefront of Chinese creative arts. Mawkish socialist dramas have given way to serious films examining and questioning the political and ideological basis of Chinese society. A prominent group of young directors, known as the "5th Generation," has won international awards for its work.

For those who like to purchase artwork and handicrafts, China offers a wide variety. Antique ceramics, scrolls, carvings and hardwood fur-

niture are available, but prices are high, and objects predating the 19th century cannot be taken out of the country. Export of antiques is subject to close scrutiny by the Cultural Relics Department, which must approve any item before packers are permitted to pack it. Modern copies are widely sold, though the quality varies. Contemporary Chinese painting—both traditional watercolors and oils—is receiving increasing international recognition. The handicraft industry has flourished under the economic reforms and offers many regional specialties: Guizhou batik, Suzhou embroidery, carved chops, paper cuts, porcelain figurines, cloisonné, cinnabar, carved lacquer, wicker work, basketware, and others.

In an effort to overcome the ravages of the Cultural Revolution, China has made a large and continuing investment in science. Most scientific efforts are devoted to immediate developmental needs: defense, industrial technology, agriculture, and public health, but important advances are being made in basic science research. From 1949 to 1960, PRC science was heavily dependent on support from the Soviet Union, where many Chinese scientists and technicians were trained. In 1978, China decided to adopt Western technology and expertise for its modernization effort and sent thousands of scientists and teachers to Japan and the West (to the U.S. in particular) for training in science and technology specialties. Despite the ideological break with the U.S.S.R., science in China continues to be organized largely along Soviet lines, with research concentrated at the various institutes of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. Chinese scientists now participate actively at international conferences, and thousands of Chinese scientific periodicals are published. The largest U.S. bilateral science and technology exchange program, by far, is with China, and the largest Chinese program is with the U.S.

Compulsory education is mandated in China for the first 10 years of



Bicycle parking lot in China

Susan Rock. Reproduced by permission.

schooling, although many students drop out of every grade, particularly in rural areas. The literacy in China is about 82%. The current emphasis in Chinese educational policy is on improving secondary, technical, and vocational education and on extending educational opportunities to remote areas and undereducated populations. China is investing in teacher training to address a shortage of qualified secondary school educators. An educational television network and a TV university are broadcast throughout the country.

To develop a highly educated elite with the technological and managerial skills necessary for modernization, China has sent thousands of students abroad—two-thirds of them to the U.S. Chinese-Foreign/Foreign-Chinese publishers have embarked on a massive book translation program. The study of English is booming in China, and interest in the U.S. is intense. The

Voice of America has 150 million listeners in China.

Commerce and Industry

China's economy has grown at an average annual rate of about 9 percent since 1978. In that year, about 270 million Chinese lived in conditions of absolute poverty, while official PRC figures stated that the number had dropped to 70 million people by the end of 1994. Although growth has accelerated into double digits in recent years, the Chinese economy is marked by significant regional disparities. Heavy state-owned industries are concentrated in the northeast and Shanghai. Once poor agricultural regions in southern China, particularly Guangdong and Fujian Provinces, have emerged as dynamic light industry and trade bases. While rural areas near the coast and

urban centers have in many cases joined in the country's rapid industrial growth, interior and western provinces lack the infrastructure to support rapid growth. The low tax base of the central government has constrained needed investment in the interior for roads, railways, electric power, and other infrastructure.

Agriculture remains key to China's economy, with roughly 80% of the population living in rural areas. China is the world's leading producer of many food crops, including rice, wheat, and sweet potatoes, and is also a major producer of many other crops such as soybeans and peanuts. Major cash crops include cotton, tobacco, and oil seeds. Reform policies encouraging peasants to diversify into vegetable farming, poultry and fish breeding, and animal husbandry have boosted the variety and quality of the Chinese diet.

The need to provide food for over a billion people, as well as industrial crops like cotton for rapidly expanding industries, is an unrelenting challenge. China has already achieved relatively high per-acre yields, but only about 10 percent of China's land is arable and is frequently ravaged by droughts and floods. After a series of record harvests in the early 1980s briefly propelled China into the ranks of net food exporters, grain production dipped slightly. Rising domestic demand has forced China to again increase grain imports from the U.S., Canada, and Australia. Beijing hopes to boost grain production through increased investment, wider dissemination of scientific techniques, and some added incentives to peasants, but limited government financial resources will constrain these options.

China's modernization drive has benefited from a rich natural resource base. China's coal reserves are virtually inexhaustible, but transportation bottlenecks and air pollution are major drawbacks to China's dependency on this fuel. China is the world's sixth-largest oil producer, but production at some of the largest oil fields has peaked and is beginning to decline. Offshore drilling by Western oil companies has so far produced mixed results. China probably has large untapped oil reserves in the far west, but developing these fields and transporting the oil to markets will require large investments.

China's other mineral resources include iron, tin, tungsten, and many rare earths. China produces a full range of industrial products, from light industrial consumer goods to satellite launch systems. Chinese products lag behind Western standards in quality and design, however, and there is considerable demand for imported consumer durables as well as high-technology products. The policy of "reform and opening" has promoted the growth of joint ventures, which produce a variety of products for both the domestic market and export.

While growth has been both rapid and impressive, it has also outstripped supplies of energy and raw materials. Efficiency has suffered from bottlenecks in transportation and telecommunications. Energy and transport bottlenecks in particular will persist through the 1990s, with electricity supplies likely to be an important concern for many enterprises.

Foreign trade has grown rapidly since China opened to the outside world. At the end of the last decade, textiles overtook oil and coal as the main foreign exchange earner. In 1995, exports of mechanical and electrical products exceeded textile exports for the first time. Other leading exports include footwear, toys, travel goods, plastic articles, and steel products. China imports grain, timber, essential raw materials, high-technology goods, petroleum, aircraft, and machinery.

While reforms have brought about tremendous growth and societal changes, concerns about social stability have inhibited the implementation of potentially painful reforms needed to sustain China's rapid economic growth. China will face enormous social and economic challenges during the remaining years of this century.

Transportation

Local

A well-developed rail system exists in the densely populated eastern half of the country. Passenger service, including sleeping car accommodations, is available between all major cities. Domestic air service is extensive, and routes are now serviced almost entirely by jets, many of them American made. On less important routes, one finds a mixture of Russian-built turboprops and Chinese or Russian propeller planes. Transportation costs are high.

Taxi stands with English-speaking dispatchers are widely available in Beijing, and taxis of all shapes and sizes congregate in areas fre-

quented by Westerners in the hopes of getting a fare or can be hailed on the street.

In Beijing, most taxis are metered and charge about \$1.45 at flag-down and \$0.36 per kilometer. The fares are set, and passengers need not worry about being overcharged unless they enter a taxi without a meter in it. Receipts may be requested for payment. Taxi drivers normally do not expect tips, since tipping technically is illegal in China.

Regional

China follows a right-hand drive pattern, but a number of unique practices can make driving confusing for foreigners. Main roads are wide and in good repair, but the numerous pedestrians and bicycles make driving hazardous and often stressful. It snows in Beijing and Shenyang, but the streets are quickly cleared.

Nonstop international air service links Beijing with Japan and many cities in Europe, Southeast Asia, and Australia. Northwest has recently begun nonstop service to Detroit.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

Many improvements in telephone service have been made in recent years. The Chinese telephone system is quickly becoming a system meeting U.S. standards. An example of this is the addition of IDD lines. However, the new arrival may experience some frustration when dealing with the Chinese system. The monthly rate for basic service is comparable to that in the U.S.

International calls may be made to most parts of the world and English-speaking operators are on duty 24 hours daily. Connections to the U.S. and other countries are good, and the cost is comparable to that in the U.S. Both AT&T and Sprint offer access to the U.S. telephone system via a direct-dial num-



View of Nanjing from Yangtze River Bridge

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ber that can be accessed from apartment telephones and many public telephones in Beijing.

Domestic and international telex and telegraphic service is quick and reliable but can be expensive.

Computer Telecommunications

Beijing is undergoing a telecommunications revolution. In June 1995, commercial vendors began offering full Internet access at 9,600 baud data rates. Service providers are user unfriendly, but with perseverance, it is possible to establish an electronic mail link through the Internet. Lines, however, are unreliable, and frequent interruptions are common. Despite these problems, given the current rate of development, it is likely that Internet connections from other parts of China will soon be available as well.

Radio and Television

In addition to Chinese-language programming, local AM and FM radio stations now have daily news and feature programs in English, and regularly broadcast Western classical and pop music. A short-wave radio will provide you with the opportunity to listen to VOA, BBC, Radio Australia, and other English-language broadcasts.

Two to five TV channels can be received in most cities, with virtually all programs in color. While most programs are in Chinese, the national network, CCTV, and municipal stations in Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou broadcast English-language news programs six evenings a week. Popular American television programs are occasionally broadcast in Chinese.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

Since 1981, the Chinese authorities have been publishing the English-language *China Daily*, which appears 6 days a week. This newspaper contains local and international news, business reports, a sports page with scores from around the world, and several local features.

The *International Herald Tribune*, the *Asian Wall Street Journal*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, and some other American and European periodicals can be purchased in some hotels and bookstores in many major cities.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

While there are no expatriate hospitals, there are two expatriate

clinics. The International Medical Center is a joint venture with a tie to the International SOS Assistance. There are several expatriate physicians at this clinic, which is open 24 hours. The Asia Emergency Assistance evacuation company also has a clinic near the Ta Yuan diplomatic compound. Like everything imported into China, the care at these clinics is expensive. They have had problems importing vaccines and medicines, and only time will tell if these problems will be solved.

The dental facilities in Beijing are adequate for minor procedures such as routine fillings. There are two small expatriate dental clinics in Beijing, but their capabilities are limited. Individuals should have their routine dental work done before coming to Beijing. While there are several U.S.-trained orthodontists in Beijing, there are some concerns about infection control, and customer satisfaction has been mixed at best.

Most hospitals in China will not accept medical insurance from the United States. Travelers will be asked to post a deposit prior to admission to cover the expected cost of treatment. Many hospitals in major cities may accept credit cards for payment. Even in the VIP/Foreigner wards of major hospitals, however, American patients have frequently encountered difficulty due to cultural and regulatory differences. Physicians and hospitals have sometimes refused to supply American patients with complete copies of their Chinese hospital medical records, including laboratory test results, scans, and x-rays. All Americans traveling to China are strongly encouraged to buy foreign medical care and medical evacuation insurance prior to arrival. Travelers who want a list of modern medical facilities in China can e-mail the United States Embassy's American Citizen Services unit at AmCitBeijing@state.gov and request a list by return e-mail.

Ambulances do not carry sophisticated medical equipment, and

ambulance personnel generally have little or no medical training. Therefore, injured or seriously ill Americans may be required to take taxis or other immediately available vehicles to the nearest major hospital rather than waiting for ambulances to arrive. In rural areas, only rudimentary medical facilities are generally available. Medical personnel in rural areas are often poorly trained, have little medical equipment or availability to medications. Rural clinics are often reluctant to accept responsibility for treating foreigners, even in emergency situations.

Preventive Measures

Everyone should be current in their basic immunizations. In addition, the following are recommended for China: hepatitis B, Japanese B encephalitis (if staying more than 30 days), hepatitis A or gamma globulin, rabies for posts other than Beijing, and typhoid vaccines.

Overall, China is a healthier place than most countries in South Asia or Africa. Cholera, typhoid fever, and dysentery are not common, and most childhood diseases like measles and diphtheria are rare. Malaria prophylaxis is not needed except in Hainan Island and in areas near the Vietnam border.

Hepatitis is a major problem in China (types A, B, and E). Japanese encephalitis is still a threat during mosquito season. Since vaccines for these diseases require several series to provide full protection, please start them as soon as possible. Air pollution is bad in China and especially so in Beijing and Shenyang. Anyone with a chronic respiratory problem like asthma should not come to China. In the winter, severe dryness aggravates mucous membranes, and colds are common. Travelers should consult their doctor prior to travel and consider the impact seasonal smog and heavy particulate pollution may have on them. Humidifiers are essential for winters in Beijing and Shenyang. Because of the high population density of people, pigs, and water-fowl, China is a breeding ground for

influenza. Annual influenza vaccination is recommended, especially for those with chronic illnesses. Upper respiratory infection is the most common disease seen at the Medical Unit.

Most roads and towns in Tibet, Qinghai, parts of Xinjiang, and western Sichuan are situated at altitudes over 10,000 feet. Travelers should seek medical advice in advance of travel, allow time for acclimatization to the high altitude, and remain alert to signs of altitude sickness. HIV has become a significant concern in China. Travelers should always ask doctors and dentists to use sterilized equipment and be prepared to pay for new syringe needles in hospitals or clinics.

Water must be boiled for drinking, and it is full of sediments and minerals. A water distiller is highly recommended for Beijing and Chengdu. Night soil is still used for vegetables, and all vegetables should be soaked in a chlorine solution. The fluoride level in China is low, and a supplement is necessary for young children.

Please bring plenty of over-the-counter medicines like acetaminophen (Tylenol), cold medicines, and skin lotions or creams. These items are available locally but are more expensive. An extra pair of eyeglasses or contact lenses is recommended. The dusty atmosphere is especially hard on contact lenses.

Families with small children are advised to bring a cold mist vaporizer, which is helpful in dealing with the winter respiratory illnesses of the young. A heating pad may also be useful.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs & Duties

A valid passport and visa are required to enter China. Americans arriving without valid passports and the appropriate Chinese visa



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Temple of Eight Immortals in Xi'an

are not permitted to enter and will be subject to a fine and immediate deportation at the traveler's expense. Travelers should not rely on Chinese host organizations claiming to be able to arrange a visa upon arrival.

Visas are required to transit China. Persons transiting China on the way to and from Mongolia or North Korea or who plan to re-enter from the Hong Kong or Macau Special Administrative Regions should be sure to obtain visas allowing multiple entries. Permits are required to visit Tibet as well as many remote areas not normally open to foreigners.

For information about entry requirements and restricted areas, travelers may consult the Embassy of the People's Republic of China (PRC) at 2300 Connecticut Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008, or telephone (1-202) 328-2500, 2501 or 2502. For a list of services and fre-

quently asked visa questions and answers, travelers can view the Chinese Embassy's web sites at <http://www.china-embassy.org>, or visa@china-embassy.org. There are Chinese Consulates General in Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco. Americans traveling in Asia have been able to obtain visas to enter China from the Chinese visa office in Hong Kong and the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Seoul, South Korea.

Americans who overstay or otherwise violate the terms of their Chinese visas will be subject to fines and departure delays and may be subject to detention. Travelers should note that international flights departing China are routinely overbooked, making reconfirmation of departure reservations and early airport check-in essential. Passengers must pay a RMB 100 airport user fee (approximately \$12 US) when departing China on inter-

national flights and RMB 60 airport fee (approximately US \$7.20) for all domestic flights.

Chinese customs authorities enforce strict regulations concerning temporary importation into or export from China of items such as antiquities, banned publications or vehicles not conforming to Chinese standards. Information concerning regulations and procedures governing items that may be brought into China is available through the Chinese Embassy and Consulates in the United States. Students may bring into China only a limited number of items that are considered necessary for study and daily life. Some U.S. citizens residing in China have been required to pay customs duty on certain high-value items when departing China because procedures were not followed when the items were originally brought into China.

Americans in China who are not staying at hotels, including Ameri-

cans who are staying with friends or relatives, must register with local police. Americans who are questioned by police should immediately notify the U.S. Embassy or the nearest consulate. Foreigners detained for questioning may not be allowed to contact their national authorities until the questioning is concluded. Foreigners detained pending trial have often waited over a year for their trial to begin. Americans are rarely granted bail. Criminal punishments, especially prison terms, are more severe than in the United States. Persons violating the law, even unknowingly, may be expelled, arrested or imprisoned. Criminal penalties for possession, use, or trafficking of illegal drugs are strict, and convicted offenders can expect severe jail sentences and fines. Non-American foreigners have been executed for drug offenses. Several Americans currently incarcerated in China have been implicated in financial fraud schemes involving falsified banking or business documents, tax evasion schemes and assisting alien smuggling, including selling passports.

In the past, protesters detained for engaging in pro-Falun Gong activities have been deported quickly from China. Several of these protesters alleged they were physically abused during their detention. In addition, they alleged that personal property including clothing, cameras and computers had not always been returned to them upon their deportation. Chinese authorities report while they have deported these foreigners quickly after public demonstrations in favor of the Falun Gong, future adherents who intentionally arrive in China to protest against Chinese policy may receive longer terms of detention and possibly face prison sentences.

Chinese authorities have seized documents, literature, and letters that they deem to be pornographic, political in nature, or intended for religious proselytism. Persons seeking to enter China with religious materials in a quantity deemed to be greater than that needed for personal use may be detained and

fined. Chinese customs authorities may seize books, films, records, tapes, and compact disks to determine if they violate Chinese prohibitions. Individuals believed to be engaged in religious proselytism or in conduct Chinese officials consider immoral or inappropriate have been detained and expelled.

PRC authorities occasionally confiscate passports and levy exit bans against persons involved in commercial or other disputes. The U.S. Embassy or Consulate General will make inquiries with local authorities to ensure that the U.S. citizen's rights under the U.S. - China Bilateral Consular Convention are honored. The individual usually is not taken into custody, but is sometimes confined to a hotel or other facility until the dispute is resolved. The U.S. Embassy or Consulate General will issue another passport to any U.S. citizen who applies for one under these circumstances; however, even with a new U.S. passport, Chinese authorities will often block departure by refusing to provide a visa for exit purposes.

U.S. citizens other than tourists at major hotels are encouraged to register at the U.S. Embassy or at one of the U.S. Consulates General in China. They may also obtain updated information on travel and security within the country at the Embassy or Consulates General. It is possible to register from the United States via the Internet through the U.S. Embassy's home page at <http://www.usembassy-china.org.cn>.

Beijing: The U.S. Embassy in China is located at 2 Xiu Shui Dong Jie, Beijing 100600, telephone: (86-10) 6532-3431, 6532-3831, and after-hours: (86-10) 6532-1910; fax (86-10) 6532-4153. The U.S. Embassy web site address is <http://www.usembassy-china.org.cn> and the e-mail address is AmCit-Beijing@state.gov. The Embassy consular district includes the following provinces/regions of China: Beijing, Tianjin, Shandong, Shanxi, Inner Mongolia, Ningxia, Shaanxi,

Qinghai, Xinjiang, Hebei, Henan, Hubei, Hunan, and Jiangxi.

Chengdu: The U.S. Consulate General in Chengdu is located at Number 4, Lingshiguan Road, Section 4, Renmin Nanlu, Chengdu 610041, telephone: (86-28) 558-3992, 555-3119; fax (86-28) 558-3520; after-hours (86-0) 13708001422. This consular district includes the following provinces/regions of China: Guizhou, Sichuan Xizang (Tibet), and Yunnan, as well as the municipality of Chongqing.

Guangzhou: The U.S. Consulate General in Guangzhou is located at Number 1 South Shamian Street, Shamian Island 200S1, Guangzhou 510133; telephone: (86-20) 8121-8418; after-hours: (86-139-0229-3169; fax: (86-20) 8121-8428. This consular district includes the following provinces/regions of China: Guangdong, Guangxi, Hainan, and Fujian.

Shanghai: The U.S. Consulate General in Shanghai is located at 1469 Huaihai Zhonglu, Shanghai 200031 telephone: (86-21) 6433-6880, after-hours: (86-21) 6433-3936; fax: (86-21) 6433-4122, 6471-1148. This consular district includes the following provinces/regions of China: Shanghai, Anhui, Jiangsu, and Zhejiang.

Shenyang: The U.S. Consulate General in Shenyang is located at No. 52, 14th Wei Road, Heping District, Shenyang 110003, telephone: (86-24) 2322-1198, 2322-0368; after-hours: (86-0) 13704019790; fax (86-24) 2322-2374. This consular district includes the following provinces/regions of China: Liaoning, Heilongjiang, and Jilin.

Currency, Banking and Weights and Measures

Chinese currency (yuan) may not be brought into or taken out of China. Travelers checks, Hong Kong dollars, and U.S. currency may be exchanged at international airports, hotels, and government shops operating exclusively for foreigners.

Most exchange points require an official exchange certificate to

reconvert RMB to U.S. dollars. Be sure to save all receipts, therefore, when you change money upon arrival.

China's weights and measures are based on the metric system. However, a common unit of weight is the "jin," which is equivalent to one-half kilo.

Pets

Beijing: Starting May 1, 1995, the Beijing Municipal Government has implemented new regulations strictly controlling the registration of dogs in urban areas (limitations on size and breeds).

There are no similar restrictions against cats; however, there is a 1,000 RMB fee (\$118) payable at customs, and a general rule holding that only one pet per employee may be imported. Cats also need proof of a rabies shot (within the last year) and a certificate of good health dated no more than 30 days before arrival. While Chinese regulations call for a 1-month quarantine for cats in Chinese-designated facilities, health officials at the airport so far are allowing owners to "quarantine" the cat at home, but admonish owners to keep the cat indoors at all times and inform owners that during the month health officials have the right to come to the apartment to "inspect" the cat. No cat owner so far has reported such inspection visits.

The China Travel Service will not send unaccompanied pets from Hong Kong. You must make arrangements to ship your pet on a direct air route to Beijing.

Guangzhou: Official Chinese policy varies by locality. Most hotels will not accept dogs or cats.

Shanghai: Dogs cannot be let out on the streets of Shanghai and are limited to the grounds of your house or apartment complex. Dogs and cats must have valid rabies and health certificates accompanying them and will be inspected on arrival by local health officials. Authorities currently do not impose a quarantine. After arrival, dogs

must be registered with the Public Security Bureau, which will then issue individual identification cards. Cats are legal and do not have to be registered but are governed by the same regulations outlined for dogs. No facilities are available in Shanghai for boarding your pets. Pets should be shipped to Shanghai as check-in baggage.

Shenyang: Dogs and cats are available in the marketplace.

Chengdu: Pets are prohibited in Chengdu. There are no local kennels or veterinarians.

Disaster Preparedness

Some areas of China frequented by Americans, notably Yunnan Province, are prone to earthquakes. Coastal areas of Hainan, Guangdong, Fujian, and Zhejiang provinces are subject to typhoons during the summer rainy season. General information about natural disaster preparedness is available via the Internet from the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) at <http://www.fema.gov>. Travelers should check weather conditions for cities and areas in China prior to departure. Winter weather and summer typhoons often cause the closure of airports in some parts of the country.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

- Jan.1 & 2 New Year's Day
- Feb. Chinese New Year*
- Feb. Spring Festival*
- Apr. Qing Ming*
- Mar. 8 Women's Day
- May 1 Labor Day
- May 4 Youth Day
- May/June Dragon Boat Festival*
- July 1 Communist Party Foundation
- Aug. 1 People's Liberation Army Day

- Aug. 25. The Daughter's Festival (Chinese Valentines Day)
- Sept/Oct. Mid-Autumn Festival
- Oct. 1 P.R. China's Birthday
- Oct. 2 National Day
- *variable

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Recommended Reading for Hong Kong

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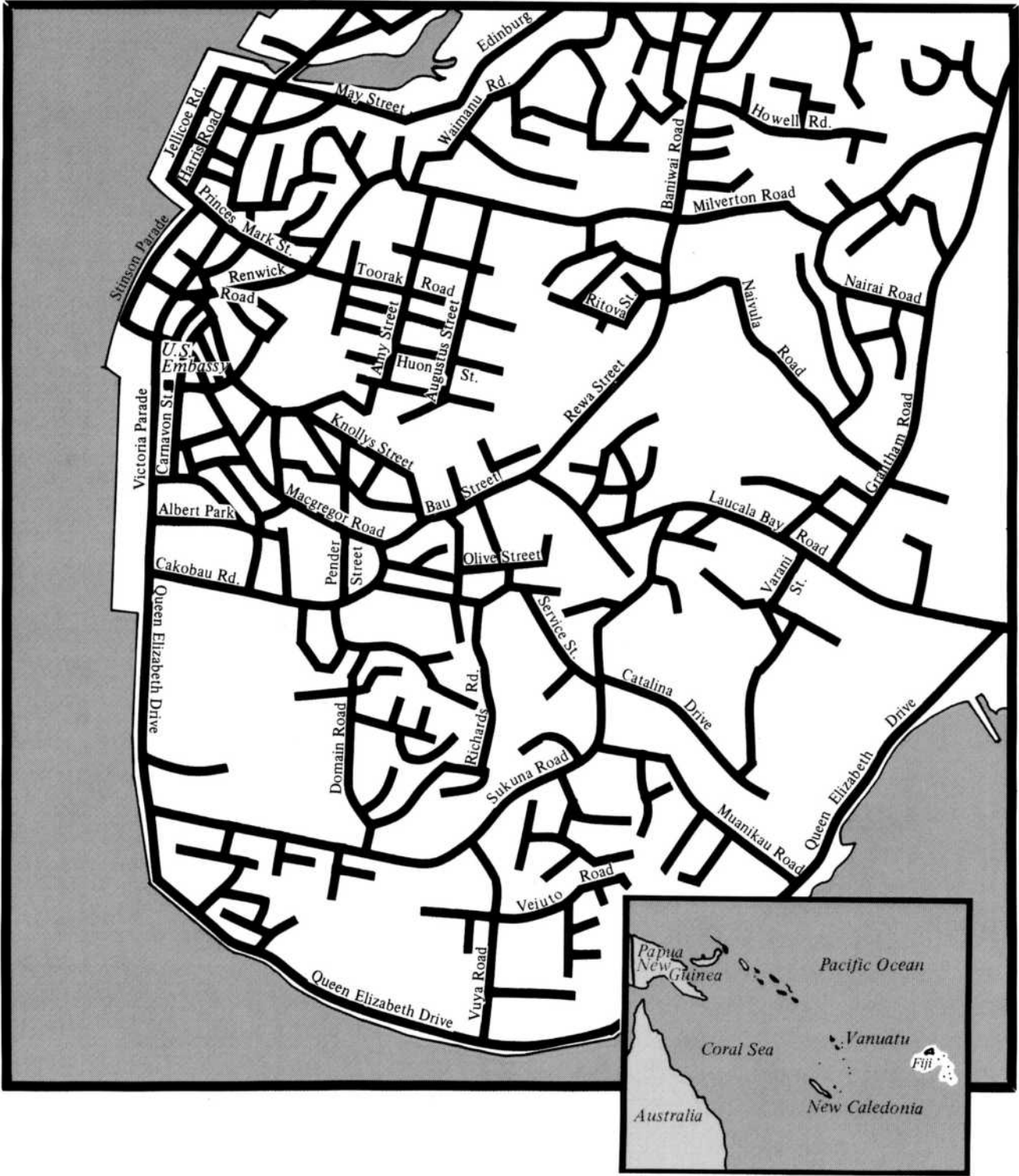
Recommended Web Sites

Department of State <http://www.state.gov>

Consulate General Home Page http://www.usia.gov/posts/hong_kong.html

Hong Kong Government Official Information Site <http://www.info.gov.hk>

Hong Kong Tourism Association http://www.hkta.org	Canadian Academy http://canada.canacad.acjp/canacad/welcome.html	Hong Kong University of Science and Technology http://www.ust.hk
American Chamber of Commerce Hong Kong http://www.amcham.org.hk	Morrison Academy-Taichung http://www.xc.org/mk/schools/morrison	Lingnan College http://www.ln.edu.hk
Hong Kong Telecom http://www.netvigator.com	Brent School http://www.wco.com/brent	Open University of Hong Kong http://www.ouhk.edu.hk
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Suva, Fiji

FIJI

Republic of Fiji

Major City:

Suva

Other Cities:

Lautoka, Levuka, Nadi

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report 2001 for Fiji. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

Fiji is a tropical archipelago with all the advantages and disadvantages associated with island geography. The country offers beautiful scenery, friendly people, interesting work and excellent opportunities for outdoor recreation. It also features a full complement of tropical conditions, including heat, humidity, rain, mildew, tropical diseases (but not malaria), significant political issues and a shortage of urban amenities to which Americans are accustomed.

Fiji is the crossroads of the Pacific, a center for transportation, trade and regional organizations. The Embassy has responsibilities in three other independent countries-

Tonga, Tuvalu and Nauru-and three French overseas territories. Officers with regional responsibilities can expect substantial official travel.

Racial tensions between the indigenous Fijian and Indo-Fijian communities exist and have been exacerbated by two military coups in 1987 and an attempt& coup and unconstitutional change of government in 2000. Although these problems have led to isolated incidents of violence, Suva, for the most part, and the rest of the country continue to retain a friendly atmosphere. A good standard of public courtesy prevails in spite of the communal differences. Those willing to make the effort will be able to make friends in all of Fiji's assorted racial communities.

For the person who appreciates its attractions, Suva can be a pheasant assignment. Adherents of scuba diving, snorkeling, boating, golf and tennis will find their leisure hours well occupied when it isn't raining. Suva's shops are well stocked, so shortages of basic goods are seldom a problem. But Suva is not Sydney; nor is it a holiday destination as you might imagine. It is small and urban, and functions primarily as a commercial and government center. Visitors whose preferences run to theater, television, shopping, concerts or other forms of city-life

entertainment may find Suva somewhat dull.

MAJOR CITY

Suva

The capital, Suva, is the chief port and only sizable city in Fiji (population approximately 166,000, metropolitan area approx. 300,000). It boasts a natural harbor and lies on a peninsula on the southeastern coast of the main island of Viti Levu ("Great Fiji"). Suva's business center is adjacent to the wharf and harbor frontage; a light industrial park is on the north along the shore; and a complex of government buildings and government housing extends south. On the surrounding low hills are scattered residential areas, including the better sections of Tamavua, Domain and Muanikau. Another popular residential area, Lami, lies along the coast to the west. Across the harbor from the city rises an amphitheater of rugged mountains. Suva's airport is 26 kilometers (15.6 miles) to the east on the Rewa River, just past the small, outlying town of Nausori.

Newer residential housing consists of concrete, ranch-style or two-story houses with surrounding gardens.

Some older houses have verandas, often identified with tropical colonial outposts. Most houses have corrugated tin roofs.

Throughout the city, lush tropical growth is supplemented by municipal and private plantings of hibiscus, poinsettias, orchids, gardenias and varieties of tropical trees such as bananas, papayas, coconuts, palms, mangoes and breadfruit. Islands in Suva Harbor provide small swimming beaches, but the nearest sand beach frontage is 56 kilometers (35 miles) away at Pacific Harbour.

The city's shops are generally small and owned mostly by Indo-Fijians. Most greengrocers are Chinese. The Suva Central Market is the largest public market in the South Pacific and offers a large quantity and variety of fruits and vegetables in season. Suva has a number of large department-type stores and associated supermarkets, including the American company, Cost-U-Less, a warehouse-type store that opened in Nadi and Suva in 1998. A small number of business people, a few missionaries, some teachers and a few Americans married to Fijians comprise the small American community. The Europeans of Suva are divided among a small group of old families dating from Fiji's earliest colonial days and a more transient population of expatriates (Australians, British, and New Zealanders) in the civil service, business, and education.

Utilities

Water quality is generally good but may decline with excessive rain, breaks in the water main or disruption in treatment schedules. Electricity is relatively reliable, though current can fluctuate, and outages do occur. Current is 220v-240v 50Hz, AC. Electrical outlets are three-pronged, and adapters are available locally. Transformers are available locally but are expensive. Bring small appliances that will run on 50 Hz current.

Food

Frozen, fresh, and canned foods from Australia and New Zealand are available in a reasonable variety and regular supply. The American store Cost-U-Less provides a limited selection of American products. Food supplies are not as varied or of the quality found in the U.S. The cost of living, including food prices, is higher than in Washington, D.C.

Seasonal tropical fresh vegetables and fruits are plentiful and excellent.

Temperate-zone fruits such as apples, pears and oranges, and vegetables such as broccoli, celery, beets and leeks are imported and usually available, though expensive.

Baby food is available, but of poor quality. Bring a blender or food grinder to provide for your baby's needs. Australian, but not U.S., formulas are available. Sterilized and pasteurized milk is available, as is powdered milk. Butter and cream are also available. Locally produced sour cream, cottage cheese, and yogurt are available. Eggs are plentiful. American coffee is readily available, either ground or instant, but expensive. Australian coffee in instant form is readily available and is comparable in price to U.S. coffee.

Most beef and all pork sold in Fiji are locally produced and are acceptable. Imported beef, lamb and veal are also available, but are expensive. Fresh fish, sweet-water crabs, clams and smoked fish are sold in the central market and specialized stores. Local frozen poultry is available and reasonably priced. Frozen turkeys and fresh and frozen local fish are available.

Many people buy the locally produced beer, which is excellent. Locally bottled (under franchise arrangements) soft drinks and mixers are good. Australian- and U.S.-produced diet beverages are available in limited quantity and are expensive.

The traditional Fijian diet, different from what most Americans are used to, consists mainly of starchy root crops, green leafy vegetables, seafood and coconut products. Fresh ingredients for Chinese and Indian dishes are available.

Clothing

Clothing in Fiji is more expensive and generally of poorer quality than clothing bought in the U.S. Plan to bring most of what you will need. Dress is casual. At work women wear lightweight dresses or blouses and skirts. Men wear long trousers and short or long-sleeved shirts.

Women dress smartly, but casually, and seldom wear pants. At more formal functions, men wear a shirt and tie while women wear simple evening or cocktail dresses. Hats are rarely worn and are never required, since neither Fijian nor Indian women wear hats as part of their dress. (Traditionally, Fijians regard the head as sacred and refrain from touching the head of another person or putting anything on their own.)

Dressmakers are inexpensive by U.S. standards and have a good selection of fabrics, but the quality of the work is variable.

The climate necessitates frequent changes of clothing. Therefore, the most suitable type of clothing for both men and women is that which is cool, e.g., cotton, and easily washable. Drycleaning facilities and adequate laundry facilities are available, but quality varies. Cardigan sweaters are useful in the evening during cooler months, or when attending air-conditioned movie theaters and restaurants.

Infants' clothing is available, but is of limited variety. A dressmaker can sew satisfactory children's clothing, which can be supplemented by clothes ordered from the US. Schoolchildren wear uniforms made locally.

Bring an adequate supply of shoes for your tour. Shoes available locally

are of poor quality and often do not fit well.

This is especially true of sport shoes. In deciding on quantity, bear in mind that with frequent rainy days, shoes will wear out more rapidly than they would in a drier climate. Fair-quality children's sandals are available locally; the International School uniform specifies black sandals.

Also bring non-tropical clothing for travel to New Zealand, Australia or back to the U.S.

Supplies and Services

The larger local stores stock adequate supplies and varieties of toiletries and cosmetics, but prices are higher than in the U.S. and American products are usually not available. Bring a supply of your favorite toothpaste, shampoo and cosmetics, as they may not be available locally.

Most household items are sold locally at much higher prices than in the U.S. Dishes, glassware, cookware, and plastic and paper products are expensive and of poor quality by U.S. standards. If you have children, bring a supply of toys, including some gifts, since those available locally are expensive and of limited supply and variety. Many people use mail-order catalogs to purchase such items. Gift wrap paper and cards are also in short supply and very expensive.

Baby bottles, disposable diapers and other infant supplies are stocked, but cost much more than American equivalents. American-made bottles and nipples are not sold in Fiji.

A large range of Japanese and some European electronic and photographic equipment is available locally. American TVs and VCRs, which are formatted in the NTSC system, will not receive local TV broadcasts or play local videotapes, which are formatted in the PAL system. Some people overcome this problem by purchasing multi-system TVs and VCRs, but they are expensive. Video cassettes (in the

PAL system) can be rented at local shops. However, such tapes are often of very poor quality, which may damage or reduce the life span of your VCR. Generally, VHS tapes are more widely used than Beta. Many 240v household appliances, ranging from mixers and food processors to washing machines and microwave ovens, are available in Suva but are more expensive than those available in the U.S.

In addition to garbage collection, the Suva City Council provides grass-mowing services, garden debris removal and drain cleaning services along the roads. Dry-cleaning and shoe repair services are available. Routine electrical, plumbing and mechanical repairs are adequate. With auto repairs, some patience is required. Barbers and beauticians are inexpensive and adequate.

Domestic Help

Well-trained domestics are hard to find. Cooks are difficult to find, but most servants can prepare breakfast and lunch if they are sufficiently trained. Most live-in maids prefer to cook their own meals and will often ask to install a small stove in their quarters.

Most servants are paid about F\$60-\$90 per week (current rate of exchange is about F\$2.10 = US\$1.00), plus quarters. They work a 5, 5-1/2, or 6-day week, with 2-4 hours off in the middle of the day. Domestics need at least some training to ensure that they understand what you want them to do. Most local maids are happy to take care of children, but training is required in this area as well.

Religious Activities

English-language services are held in many Suva churches, including Anglican (Episcopal), Wesleyan, Seventh Day Adventist, Presbyterian, Methodist, Latter-Day Saints, Pentecostal, Roman Catholic and the Assembly of God. Most churches have charitable organizations affiliated with them. Hinduism, Islam, and other world religions are also represented in Fiji. Suva has a

small Jewish community. However, no synagogue exists.

Education

Suva has several preschools or kindergartens that take children from age 3 for 3 to 5 days a week, 4-6 hours per day. Fees are reasonable and the preschool training appears to be adequate.

Most Americans attend the International School of Suva (ISS), which encompasses both elementary and secondary levels. Preschool classes opened in 1996-97. The school offers the International Baccalaureate Program. ISS is accredited by ECIS, the European Council of International Schools. It is not accredited by any American association.

Other Suva schools that might be considered minimally adequate at the elementary level include Yatsen School (run by the Chinese community), the Catholic Stella Maris and Marist Brothers Schools, the government-operated Suva Grammar School (grade 4 through high school), and the Holy Trinity Anglican Primary School.

Schools in Fiji other than the ISS are very crowded. All schools maintain strict teacher-pupil ratios and cannot guarantee placement.

Schools in Fiji, like those in many other southern hemisphere countries, begin their school year at the end of January and end in November. ISS divides terms into quarters. For others, the school year is divided into three terms. Summer vacation occurs from the end of November through the end of January.

Special Educational Opportunities

The University of the South Pacific (USP) began offering undergraduate degree courses in 1969. In the mid-1970s, it established master's and doctoral programs. These programs are available to the 11 member countries and have recently become available to overseas graduate students, including Fulbright grantees from the U.S. From an aca-



Local produce market in Suva

Susan Rock. Reproduced by permission.

demographic point of view, families with college-age children would be wise to have them study outside Fiji, since USP's methods and standards of instructions differ significantly from those of U.S. colleges and USP degrees are not easily recognized in the U.S.

The University's Extension Service offers a variety of academic, cultural and practical courses for those working full time, as well as students who cannot enroll for residential or part-time studies. Adults may participate in day or evening classes in Pacific cultures and languages. The USP Extension Service, with French and Japanese Government sponsorship, offers language-training programs. The Fiji Institute of Technology (FIT) offers some evening courses.

Sports

The people of Fiji are keen sportsmen and women, and there are many sporting activities available. However, sporting goods, clothes and shoes are expensive and sometimes unavailable. Bring them with you or plan to purchase them from the States through mail-order catalogs.

Boating and water sports enthusiast will find Suva's waters and boat-

ing facilities quite good, weather permitting. The lack of beaches in the Suva area makes ownership of a small boat attractive. Small sailboats and motorboats made locally are available at prices higher than those in the U.S. The local purchase of an imported boat is expensive because of high customs duties. Motors, fishing tackle, and snorkeling, scuba, and water skiing equipment are available in limited range and at high prices. Motorboats and snorkeling gear can be rented. Deep-sea fishing is available, but expensive. Fresh water fishing is possible along the interior rivers, but you will need a guide.

Scuba diving is popular in Fiji with two active dive clubs organizing day and weekend trips. Commercial dive operators offer trips near Suva, at several island resorts and on live-aboard and charter dive vessels. U.S.-recognized instruction is offered in Suva and at some resorts. Fiji's coral reefs are among the world's most beautiful. Dive sites range from shallow coral gardens suitable for beginners to challenging open water diving that will satisfy the most experienced hard-core fanatic. The omnipresent sharks are well-fed and generally non-aggressive; most divers quickly get used to their presence. A limited

selection of equipment is stocked locally, but prices are higher than U.S. levels. It is best to bring all equipment, including at least two tanks per diver. Underwater photographers should bring all their own gear. Diving safety standards in Fiji are reasonable, but the generally low standard of medical care and transport renders any accident more serious than in the U.S. or the Caribbean. There is only one decompression chamber in the country, located in the city of Suva.

Golf is a popular sport in both the expatriate and local communities. Suva has an 18-hole golf course at the Fiji Golf Club, which is only 10 minutes from the Embassy. The course condition is poor, especially due to frequent rain, but playable and very convenient. Membership is relatively inexpensive; as of September 2000 it was US \$150 per year. A Robert Trent-Jones designed championship course (that is also frequently wet) is available at Pacific Harbour, about 30 miles west of Suva. Annual fees there are US \$140 per couple and US \$93 per individual member. The best course in Fiji of international standard is located at the Sheraton Denarau Resort near Nadi, about 3 hours by car from Suva. Membership there is more expensive, at about US \$925 per year, which allows a maximum of 60 games annually. Carts are not available at the Suva course. Golf equipment is sold locally, but selection is limited and expensive so bring your own. Membership is not required to play at any of Fiji's courses. Green fees are reasonable by American standards, as are caddy fees.

Other popular sports are squash, tennis and lawn bowling. Tennis is very accessible and popular. Both lawn and synthetic courts are available. Local selection of tennis and squash equipment is limited, so bring your own. Two health/exercise clubs are available: Polaris and the Rabuka Gym. Suva has an Olympic sized pool, though water quality can be a problem. An organized swimming club for children meets at the pool and swimming lessons for both

children and adults are offered periodically.

Spectator sports include soccer, cricket, rugby, volleyball and basketball.

No hunting is done in Fiji.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Suva's small Fiji Museum, located in Thurston Gardens (the local botanical garden) has good Fiji and South Pacific ethnographic collections. Orchid Island, west of Suva, and the Fiji Cultural Center at Pacific Harbour also offer interesting glimpses of traditional Fijian village life, handicraft making and traditional ceremonies. Fijians make decorative woodbark cloth with geometric designs called "Masi" (Tapa). They also are accomplished at wood carving and mat weaving.

Fiji has a very well developed tourism sector. Information on services and facilities is readily available. Cruises to the outer island of the Fiji group can be arranged at reasonable cost on small inter-island vessels that service the country. These trips can take from several days to one or several weeks, with stops at many small copra loading points. Long weekend or holiday trips to the beaches and hotels on the southwest coast of Viti Levu can provide a pleasant break from Suva's more urban atmosphere. Hiking is possible along a nature trail, with waterfalls at Colo-i-Suva just 7 kilometers from the city, though crime has been a problem at times. "Blue Lagoon" cruises to the Yasawa Islands northwest of Viti Levu, a stay at the off island resorts in the Yasawas, or a weekend at Toberua Island near Suva can give comfortable exposure to the traditional idyllic South Pacific island image. Rivers Fiji offers river rafting and kayaking as well as sea kayaking. There are a number of ecotourism opportunities.

Entertainment

For many, the great drawback to living in Suva, aside from the frequent

rain and the isolation of island life, is the relative lack of cultural, social, intellectual or simply diverting activities for a person who is not sports-minded. The Fiji Arts Council sponsors performances by touring artists, usually under the auspices of other governments, but they are very infrequent. The drama group of the Fiji Arts Club puts on several productions each year utilizing local dramatic talent. Other sections of the club offer arts and crafts, photography, music and dance. The fine arts group organizes shows of members' work.

The American Women's Association holds monthly luncheons for its members, frequent social events for couples and holiday parties for children. In addition the International Women's Association has a monthly morning tea with a speaker; the Corona Society does many good works; and the Rucksack Club sponsors several trips each month to explore Fiji's interior, coastline and islands.

One six-screen, very modern multiplex cinema theater and three other movie theaters in Suva show European, American, and Hindi films. Movies often reach Suva within a couple of weeks of release in the U.S., especially if they are action flicks. Movie prices are low (about US \$2.25).

Dining in Suva is improving, but is limited by its population. There are several good Chinese restaurants, an excellent Indian restaurant and a very good Japanese restaurant. There are also several restaurants offering good Continental cuisine. Several establishments offer good seafood and a number of small pizza restaurants and snack bars exist. The pizza is very mediocre. Those who travel to Tahiti or New Caledonia can enjoy good French cuisine.

Rock and reggae music are popular in Suva, with a number of good local bands. Two of the town's several discos are upscale enough to be widely patronized by government officials and expatriates. Hotels occasionally

hold "island night" dances with live bands. Urban Fijians have carried their traditional love of music and dancing into the city with them, making the nightclub scene surprisingly lively.

Fijian rituals are often colorful. The best known is the fire-walking ceremony of the islanders of Beqa (pronounced Bengga). The "Meke" (traditional dancing and singing) is performed occasionally at Suva hotels and regularly at the larger coastal resorts. Indians also perform ritual fire walking, but this is more religious in nature.

Photography is a popular hobby in Suva and several well-stocked photography stores exist. Film is expensive to purchase and develop here. Black-and-white film and color prints can be processed in Suva at costs much higher than the US. Bird-watching is also a popular hobby in Fiji because of the many varieties of birds that flourish in the islands.

The larger towns in Fiji celebrate various festivals. Suva hosts the week-long Hibiscus Festival in August, which includes parades and native dances. Similar events on a smaller scale are held in Lautoka, Nadi, and Sigatoka.

Using a camera at Fijian events is permitted but requires some care. Fijians can become upset if amateur photographers disrupt the dignity of their traditional ceremonies. Standing up, even in front of your seat, is particularly frowned upon. You may take as many pictures as you wish from a seated position.

Social Activities

Since the American community is small, few social activities are planned exclusively for Americans. The American Women's Association sponsors some activities and a fair amount of non-representational entertaining is done by individuals.

Clubs play an important part in the social life of many local residents. A few clubs are for men only, with an occasional day when women are

permitted. Others are essentially private drinking clubs. Except for a few hotel cocktail lounges and some squalid public bars, the bars of the various clubs are the center of much of the local social life, especially for men. Most of the sporting clubs (open to women) have a yearly formal or semi-formal dance and occasional "island night" dances. Hobby-oriented clubs, such as the shell collectors club, hiking clubs, diving clubs, etc., offer opportunities for social contacts.

The Fiji Women's Club offers a wide selection of social and volunteer activities and international contacts for women.

OTHER CITIES

LAUTOKA, the second largest city in Fiji with a population of about 36,000 (1996 est.), lies on the dry, west coast of Viti Levu. It is a major center of the country's sugar industry. The Colonial Sugar Refining Company has a huge mill here that ships raw sugar to New Zealand. Residents are Indian shopkeepers, workers, and artisans. Lautoka is a base for interisland cruises. A number of water sports-oriented beach resorts are located nearby. Local administration is conducted by a town board.

LEVUKA is located on Ovalau Island just east of Suva. It is a seaport and an historic town that was once the capital of Fiji. The population is approximately 1,400.

NADI (also spelled Nandi) is a village on the west coast of Fiji's main island, Viti Levu. It lies at the mouth of Nandi River and has an international airport. Nadi is a duty-free port. About 9,000 people live in Nadi (1996 est.).

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Tourist literature on Fiji refers to "300 islands in the sun." Of the 320 islands and islets that make up the Fiji group, only about 150 are permanently inhabited. The total land area of the country, 18,272 square kilometers (7,055 square miles), is about the size of the State of Hawaii. The largest island, Viti Levu, 10,386 square kilometers (4,101 square miles), is about the size of the Big Island of Hawaii. Viti Levu has a mountainous interior penetrated by few roads. Most agricultural land and all towns are near the sea or along the river valleys. The highest point, Mt. Victoria, rises 1,323 meters (4,341 feet). Twenty-eight other peaks exceed 914 meters (3,000 feet). Vegetation on the windward side of the islands is luxuriously tropical, while grasslands prevail on the leeward sides.

The climate is warm and humid. Suva, on the eastern "wet" side of Viti Levu, averages 120 inches of rain annually. The western and northern sides of the island are drier and sunnier. Temperatures in Suva range from the high 60s in the winter, to the mid 90s in the summer.

Most of Fiji's sugarcane, the nation's primary crop, is grown on the western side. Nadi (pronounced Nandi), site of the international airport, lies on the western side, benefiting from the better weather and visibility. Many of Fiji's tourist resorts, some ranking among the best in the world, are in the West.

The wet summer season lasts from December through March. The cooler, drier winter season falls between May and October. Although temperature changes are noticeable, the average number of days of rainfall in Suva varies little from month to month. Humidity during summer is usually high, often

reaching 90% and above. Fiji is in the hurricane zone. The last hurricane to hit Suva directly was Cyclone Kina, in January 1991. In March 1997, Cyclone Gavin swept through northern Vanua Levu and the northwestern part of Viti Levu, devastating several outer island-groups. Southeast trade winds blow steadily from March to October, with variable winds during the Southern Hemisphere summer. Mildew and corrosion present constant problems. The use of air conditioning, dehumidifiers and "hot closets" reduce the danger of mildew damage to clothes, video tapes and other possessions.

Non-malarial mosquitoes are numerous, particularly in the summer. An epidemic of mosquito-borne dengue fever, which reoccurs every few years, occurred in early 1998. Poisonous insects, snakes and sea life are not common, though scratches and cuts, particularly those suffered while swimming or diving, need to be treated promptly as they can easily become infected.

Fiji lies near a major fault line and has suffered major earthquakes. Although the last severe quake was in 1953, small tremors are occasionally felt. In November 1998, quakes registering as high as 4.3 occurred on the island of Kadavu, southeast of Viti Levu.

Population

Fiji's population was estimated at 776,000 at the end of 1997. According to official figures, ethnic Fijians now outnumber Indo-Fijians. The Fijians are descended from Melanesian voyagers who arrived in the islands hundreds or thousands of years ago. Most of the Indo-Fijian population is descended from indentured laborers who arrived in the late 19th century to work on sugar cane plantations and stayed on when their indentures expired.

Emigration among the Indian population, already an established trend, accelerated after the 1987 military coups. Many emigrants were professionals and managers, resulting in

serious consequences for human resources and the economy. As many as half of Fiji's doctors and lawyers emigrated in the 18 months following the first coup. According to the last census, official population estimates for December 31, 1997 are as follows: Fijian 51%, Indian 42.5%, Others 6.5%.

The "others" category includes part Europeans (the local term for persons of mixed Fijian and European ancestry), Rotumans (Rotuma is an outlying island whose population is Polynesian), other Pacific islanders, Chinese and Europeans (whites).

Fiji straddles an ethnic line between Melanesia to the west and Polynesia to the east. As a result, Polynesian influence is prevalent in Lau, the eastern islands of the Fiji group. Fiji's diversity is also reflected in its many religions. The indigenous Fijian population is mainly Methodist, with strong minorities of other Protestant groups and Roman Catholics. Fijians, like most Pacific islanders, are devoted to their religion and maintain a strict Sabbath. Many Chinese are Roman Catholic. The majority of Indo-Fijians are Hindu; the remainder are Muslims, Sikhs, or Christians.

English, Fijian and Hindi are the three languages of the islands, with English being the official language of the government and the media. The older Chinese speak Cantonese as well as English. Despite the use of English in the country's schools, it is estimated that outside of the major urban areas, only 20% of Fiji's population can speak English fluently.

Fiji's several ethnic communities have maintained their unique cultural patterns, giving the country an attractive, multi-cultural atmosphere. Although various ethnic groups support separate churches, many schools are integrated.

Public Institutions

A decade after two military coups in 1987, Fiji made significant progress

toward the restoration of democracy with the approval of an amended Constitution in 1997, which encouraged multi-ethnic government while protecting traditional indigenous Fijian cultural and land interests. Under the amended Constitution, which included a strengthened bill of rights, the Prime Minister and the President could be of any race. For the first time, in addition to communally allocated seats, open seats were created that were not allocated to any racial community in the Lower House.

Democratic elections were held in May 1999, the first under Fiji's revised, more democratic Constitution, resulting in a change in government. The Labor Party-led coalition headed by Mahendra Chaudhry, was elected with a large parliamentary majority. Chaudhry was Fiji's first Indo-Fijian Prime Minister.

However, in May 2000, an armed group of militant ethnic Fijian nationalists, joined by a few military officers, seized the Prime Minister and his Cabinet in the Parliamentary complex and held them hostage for 56 days. Following continued political turmoil, the army usurped governmental authority, forced the resignation of President Ratu Mara, abrogated the 1997 constitution and installed an Interim Prime Minister and Cabinet. A commission to formulate a new constitution has been established by the Great Council of Chiefs and elections are promised by August, 2001. Fiji is likely to remain an undemocratic state for at least two or three years.

Fiji has a wide variety of nongovernmental, fraternal, and charitable organizations such as Rotary, Lions, Jaycees, YMCA/ YWCA, Red Cross, Girit Council, Muslim League and women's groups. Some such organizations are communally based; others are multiracial.

Arts, Science and Education

As a small, primarily agricultural country, far removed from any metropolitan center, Fiji has limited self-generating cultural activities or major scholarly centers. The Fiji Arts Council, with government support, sponsors a number of local arts and crafts clubs. The Fiji Arts Club presents five or six quality productions each year. Dancing, singing and various Fijian and Indian religious and secular celebrations and ceremonies are a colorful and authentic continuation of a long tradition.

The University of the South Pacific (USP), established in 1967 in Suva, contributes to the intellectual life of the regional community. Founded as a regional university for the English-speaking areas of the South Pacific, USP concentrates on educating professionals and teachers. Institutes of Marine Science, Natural Resources, and Research; Education and Extension in Agriculture; Social Sciences Administration; and Pacific Studies are expanding USP's scope of research and teaching. USP's School of Agriculture is located in Samoa, and the School of Law is in Vanuatu.

The small, but excellent, Fiji Museum has a good collection of traditional Fijian artifacts, as well as displays from throughout the Pacific. Art and other exhibitions by local or visiting artists provide some cultural diversions.

Commerce and Industry

Fiji is primarily an agricultural country, dependent on sugar and, to a lesser degree, other agricultural commodities for export income. In recent years, tourism has been the fastest growing foreign-exchange earner in Fiji and may well become the most important industry in future years. Gold is mined in the interior of Viti Levu, although production varies with market price. Timber, particularly Caribbean

pine, is an important export due to a major forestation project begun by the government in 1972. Major stands of mahogany, planted 30 or more years ago, are maturing and ready for harvest. Some light industry, including marine repair facilities, a brewery, flour mills, several rice mills, a cooperative dairy plant capable of producing both fresh and ultra-high temperature (UHT) milk, a steel-rolling mill, and a household paint factory have been established. Sugar and tourism constitute the mainstays of the economy, accounting for more than half of the nation's foreign exchange earnings.

Fiji imports from Australia, New Zealand, Japan, the U.S. the UK, and Southeast Asia. It is a member of the International Sugar Organization and exports sugar to the European Community under the Cotonou Convention.

Land in Fiji is either Crown land (owned by the government, 10%), freehold land (7%), or native land (83%). As in most of the Pacific, native land is held in common by extended family groups. Some land was alienated from these groups before Fiji became a British possession in 1874 and it is now freehold. Once Fiji became a colony, native land was protected and no further significant land sales were allowed. The native land is controlled by the Native Lands Trust Board, which administers the land for the family groups. Substantial areas of native land, however, are mountainous with only forestry as a potential commercial activity. Immigrant groups (mainly Indians) have had difficulty buying land and, as a result, have become tenant farmers or have entered commercial fields. Most agricultural land is currently leased for a period of 30 years, after which it reverts to the traditional land-owning group unless negotiations succeed in establishing new lease arrangements. Much of Fiji's land remains under-utilized. As leases expire, Fiji faces a dilemma. Ethnic Fijian landowners are increasingly eager to farm their own land or are demanding high lease rates. Consequently, many Indo-

Fijian farmers face the prospect of becoming displaced.

Fiji's largest commercial firms are, for the most part, owned by expatriates or naturalized European-Fijians. Business methods are predominantly Australian, New Zealand and British.

The undemocratic change of government in May 2000 had a devastating effect on the economy. GDP declined by over 10 percent. Tourism declined nearly 40 percent, resulting in the loss of thousands of jobs. The garment industry has faltered in the face of sanctions by Australia and New Zealand, costing many more jobs. In all, it is estimated that 7,000 jobs were lost in the four months following the May crisis. The 2000 sugar harvest was not immediately affected. However, the EU is reassessing its preferential sugar pricing for Fiji in light of the loss of democracy. Fiji also may lose preferential markets for its textiles. Such changes in preferential pricing would have devastating impacts on the sugar and garment industries. A serious contraction of the economy is expected in 2000 and beyond.

Transportation

Automobiles

You will want a personal vehicle. Travel on the main island of Viti Levu is mostly by road and moves on the left. The maximum speed limit is 80 kph (50 mph).

Fiji operates on the metric system and traffic moves on the left. Before shipping an American car by sea freight, consider the advantage of buying a right-hand drive car in Fiji. Vehicles manufactured in Japan and Australia are available. All imported cars must be inspected (called a warrant of fitness in Fiji) if it was previously registered in a foreign country. Do not attempt to convert a left-hand drive vehicle to right-hand drive in Fiji.

Adults (ages 18 and over) must have a Fiji driver's license. A valid US

license or a license issued by any other foreign country may be used for 6 months only. Third-party insurance is mandatory, but inexpensive. Bring "no-claim" letters for a discount, which will bring the cost down.

Resale of locally purchased cars is unrestricted. Applicable customs duty must be paid by the seller.

Given that unleaded gas is now readily available in Fiji, there is no longer any need to remove the catalytic converter from vehicles imported from the U.S.

Local

Suva has sufficient paved streets for the number of cars in the city. A generally good paved road circles most of the main island of Viti Levu. From Suva to Lautoka, following the southern and western coasts, the coastal road is called the Queens Road. Many of Fiji's tourist hotels are located along this stretch. From Lautoka to Suva, following the northern and eastern coasts, the road is called the King's Road and includes a 30-mile stretch of rough gravel road along the northeast coast. It takes about 50 minutes to drive to the Pacific Harbour Beach and Golf Resort to the west of Suva, and about 3 hours to drive from Suva to Nadi and the international airport.

Avoid driving out of the main cities and towns at night. Stray livestock occasionally wander in the road and have caused fatal accidents in the past.

Public transportation by bus is frequent and inexpensive, but the bus fleet is aging. Taxis are plentiful, equipped with meters and inexpensive. Most, however, are in poor condition and it is common for taxi drivers to speed and otherwise drive in an unsafe manner. Motorcycles and bicycles are rare in Suva. Frequent rain and hilly terrain make them impractical.

Regional

Air Pacific, Fiji's international flag carrier, and other regional airlines

have international flights that connect Fiji with Los Angeles, Honolulu, Australia, New Zealand, Tonga, American Samoa, Samoa, Tuvalu, Kiribati (formerly the Gilbert Islands), New Caledonia, Tahiti, Vanuatu (formerly the New Hebrides), and Japan.

International airlines serving Fiji from the U.S. are Air Pacific (in a code share with American Airlines from Los Angeles) and Air New Zealand (in a code-share with United Airlines from Honolulu). U.S. government travelers must travel on one of these code-share flights. Currently, no American flag carrier serves Fiji directly.

Air Pacific, Fiji Air and Sun Air operate routes within Fiji. They provide several daily flights between Suva and the international airport at Nadi, and also service the islands of Vanua Levu and Taveuni. Air Fiji and Sunflower fly to smaller airports in the Fiji group and Tuvalu, and Turtle Airways connects various resort areas by small amphibious aircraft. There is a helicopter service.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

Local telephone service is good. Fiji is served domestically by Telecom Fiji Ltd, while international communications are provided by Fintel, Ltd. Telephone connections with Australia, Canada, the U.S., Europe, and most of the rest of the world are excellent, but do experience occasional "fade out" and disconnection. Regional communications to the neighboring and smaller islands is somewhat less reliable and can vary in quality depending on the time of day and prevailing climatic conditions. E-mail and Internet communications are available through Telecom Fiji Internet Services, but are expensive, slow and subject to disconnection. Telephone Calling Cards are available as well as mobile (Vodafone) telephone services and voice mail. International and domestic telegram services,

including Western Union, are available 24 hours and are reliable. Though Fiji's communication services are good and generally keep up with emerging technologies, prices are high by US. standards.

Mail

International airmail takes up to two weeks to and from the U.S. Packages sent by international surface mail are transported via sea and can take up to 3 months to arrive. No censorship exists and packages pass through customs without delay. However, there have been complaints, though rare, about packages being stolen from the Fiji mail system.

Correspondents in the U.S. however, should be cautioned to put sufficient postage on letters and to clearly mark them "AIRMAIL" to ensure they are handled as airmail and not as surface mail.

Radio and TV

Fiji has one commercial TV station, which offers one free channel and two cable channels: Sky Entertainment and Sky Sports.

Two radio stations operate in the country. The government-owned Island Network Corporation broadcasts nationwide in three languages: Hindi, Fijian and English. Established in 1954, it is run by the Fiji Broadcasting Commission and broadcasts 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It directly rebroadcasts foreign news from BBC and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC). It also uses prerecorded and packaged music and current affairs programs to supplement local productions. FM 96 is commercially run and has a 24-hour, all-music format geared to younger listeners. It also broadcasts in three languages, and has brief news programs. It derives its world news output from the BBC, ABC, and VOA. FM 96 has transmitters in Suva and Lautoka.

Japanese short wave radios are available locally. Reception from Australia and New Zealand is good, but the same cannot be said for VOA or BBC.

Newspapers, Magazines and Technical Journals

Currently, the country has three daily English-language newspapers, The Fiji Times, The Fiji Sun and the Post. Locally published monthly magazines include Pacific and The Review. Hindi and Fijian language newspapers are published weekly by the Fiji Times. Up-to-the-minute news on Fiji can be found on the Internet at www.fijilive.com, a website run by The Review magazine.

Overseas papers are not readily available. Australian and New Zealand papers usually arrive several days late. The New Zealand editions of Time and Newsweek are sold locally at newsstands or by subscription. Some American magazines are available locally (House and Garden, Vogue, etc.), but arrive late and are expensive.

The Suva City Library has a small, dated selection of fiction and nonfiction.

The University of the South Pacific has a good library and limited bookstore. A small and expensive selection of paperbacks is available at bookstores in town.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

Most medicines are available at the many drugstores around town. Local doctors are competent to care for common ailments.

Most routine laboratory tests are performed by their staff or are sent to the main laboratory at the national hospital (Colonial War Memorial (CWM) Hospital) in Suva. Some tests, previously sent overseas, can now be tested at the two new private pathology laboratories in Suva. The Health Care Pacific Hospital (a new private hospital) houses one of the two private pathology labs. The Plaza Imaging facility provides private ultrasound and basic X-ray services in Suva. Special X-rays, ultrasound, CAT

scans and echocardiogram services are available at CWM in Suva.

A 60-bed private hospital (Health Care Pacific), associated with Colonial Insurance Company, opened in mid January 2001. It offers outpatient and inpatient services, operating theater services and a modern state-of-the-art pathology laboratory staffed by local and overseas specialists.

Due to the political crisis in Fiji that began in May 2000, professional people such as doctors, nurses, accountants, dentists and medical technicians are leaving the country. According to the president of the Fiji Medical Association, it is estimated that by January 2001 there will be a manpower loss of up to 30% not only among private practitioners, but also local and expatriate doctors currently staffing the main government hospital in Suva.

A cut in salaries in 2000 due to the political crisis has prompted even more nurses to resign and emigrate. As a result there is a move to hire ward assistants (nurses aides) to look after the basic nursing care of patients in the hospitals. In addition, many of the most qualified local nurses have been recruited from the Ministry of Health to staff the new private hospital (Health Care Pacific). This nursing shortage is likely to greatly affect the quality of care for patients in the government hospitals and community health centers in the country.

The Suva Colonial War Memorial Hospital is not recommended for treatment except in an emergency for the stabilization of a patient either in the coronary or intensive care units prior to an evacuation. The original hospital buildings are old and have only slowly been renovated and painted. The newer extension houses the Accident and Emergency Units, all specialty clinics, operating theatres, acute care wards, critical care units, the main laboratory, the pharmacy and lecture theatres for the medical students. The hospital does not meet sanitation standards of American

facilities. It is understaffed and the local training of medical and nursing personnel is not comparable to that found in the U.S. Nonetheless, the hospital is the best facility to cope with immediate treatment of serious medical emergencies until medical evacuation can be arranged. Most cases of serious illness or pregnancy are evacuated to Honolulu.

A new Children's Hospital (a new addition to CWM), which opened in April 2000, is a very clean and spacious facility and includes a neonatal unit, outpatient and inpatient services for children, a pharmacy and neonatal training facilities.

There are several American doctors currently working on contracts for the Fiji School of Medicine in Suva. They specialize in pediatrics, general surgery and research.

Dental care and orthodontic services are available in Fiji. There is only one qualified orthodontist in Fiji who is based in Lautoka on the western side of the island, 220 km. from Suva. He is good and inexpensive. Although several private dentists can provide routine care and are comparatively inexpensive, sanitation may not be up to U.S. standards.

Replacement eyeglasses are available in Fiji, and there are a few qualified ophthalmologists who offer limited eye diagnostic services. However, it is recommended that eye problems be taken care of before arriving in Fiji. Contact lens users should bring a supply of solutions with them, as supply and selection are limited.

If you require regular prescription medicine, make arrangements for refills to be sent to you from an American pharmacy.

Pharmaceuticals in Fiji are imported mainly from Australia and New Zealand, with a few imported from the U.S., Canada and India. Intravenous fluids are imported from Baxter Company in Australia. Insulin is imported from Lilly Com-

pany. Most antibiotics are imported from Alpha Med in Australia. Vaccines are imported from New Zealand and Australia. Fiji has no capacity to test the quality of these imported drugs, other than screening drugs for expiration dates and any unusual characteristics such as color or shape. Questionable drugs are sent overseas for testing. American over-the-counter medicines are generally not available. Bring a supply of anything you regularly use, or arrange for it to be sent to you.

Community Health

Sanitation in Suva is good by developing world standards. The general health of the population is also good. Filariasis and dengue fever exist in the islands. Infectious hepatitis is common but infectious disease rates are generally low. Leptospirosis has been the cause of several deaths in Fiji lately and preventive measures have been taken to educate the public on how to prevent contracting this disease. Tap water in Suva is usually potable, but not always. Boiling drinking water is recommended, especially during periods of heavy rainfall. The post provides water distillers at all residences. Most restaurants are safe. Homes in several residential areas use septic tanks rather than the sewer system. Garbage disposal is adequate. Vermin and insect pests, which thrive in this hot, wet climate, are always a problem that requires vigilance.

Lizards, lawn toads and mosquitoes are numerous but harmless, except in the case of the mosquitoes during dengue fever outbreaks. Bring a supply of insect repellent for use outdoors. Take care in choosing an appropriate repellent for children. Malaria does not exist in Fiji or in the island countries to the east of Fiji. Typhoid outbreaks can occur, but are quickly contained and rarely seen in Suva. Sexually transmitted diseases are on the rise, as are the number of HIV positive cases, especially among young people.

Preventive Measures

Only the usual State Department immunization requirements are

necessary. Gamma globulin shots are recommended before you come. Yellow fever and typhoid vaccines are available in Fiji for preventive measures if needed for regional travel. There is no malaria or yellow fever in Fiji.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Customs, Passage & Duties

Proof of sufficient funds, an onward/return ticket, and a passport valid for at least three months beyond the date of departure from Fiji are required for entry to Fiji. A visa is not required for tourist stays up to six months. Yachts wishing to call at the Lau group of islands need special permission granted at the first port of entry into Fiji. Fiji collects a departure tax, payable in local currency. For more information about entry/exit requirements, travelers may contact the Embassy of the Republic of Fiji, 2233 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W., No. 240, Washington, D.C., 20007; telephone (202) 337-8320, or the Fiji Mission to the United Nations in New York. This is particularly important for travelers planning to enter Fiji by sailing vessel.

U.S. citizens are encouraged to carry a copy of their U.S. passports with them at all times, so that, if questioned by local officials, proof of identity and U.S. citizenship are readily available. According to Fijian law, a criminal detainee may be held for a maximum of 48 hours before charges are brought. INTERPOL normally advises the U.S. Embassy of the detention or arrest within 24 hours of the incident. Nevertheless, U.S. citizens who are detained are encouraged to request that a consular officer at the U.S. Embassy in Suva be notified

U.S. citizens are encouraged to register at the U.S. Embassy in Suva. The Embassy will also be able to provide updated information on travel and security in Fiji. The U.S. Embassy in Fiji is located at 31 Lof-

tus Street in the capital city of Suva. The telephone number is (679) 314-466, and the fax number is (679) 302-267.

Pets

It is relatively easy to import pets from Australia, New Zealand or England. For pets originating from other countries, the procedures can be extremely cumbersome and expensive, e.g. long-term quarantine in England and Australia, or 6 months of quarantine in Hawaii, to be followed by 3-month quarantine in Fiji. However, a recent arrival's positive dealing with the Quarantine Department indicated that there has been a change in policy, resulting in less restrictive procedures. Depending on the type of pets, quarantine restrictions differ. Generally, however, importation requirements of dogs and cats originating from the mainland U.S. are: Directly from mainland U.S with 3 months of quarantine in Fiji. Via Hawaii with one month of quarantine in Hawaii, followed by 1 month of quarantine in Fiji.

Nonetheless, the process remains protracted and complicated.

The following breeds of dogs are prohibited from importation into Fiji: Dogo argentino, film brasileiro, Japanese tosa, pit bull terriers (including American pit bull terriers), rottweilers, staffordshire terriers or crosses of any of the above.

Firearms and Ammunition

The importation of firearms is prohibited. No exceptions are made.

Currency, Banking, and Weights and Measures

The official unit of currency in Fiji is the Fiji dollar. One U.S. dollar in September 2000 equaled Fiji dollar 2.10. The rate is determined daily and fluctuates slightly. Fiji currency is divided into cents, with 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50 cent and 1 dollar coins; and 2, 5, 10, 20 and 50 dollar notes.

Many commercial banks in Suva maintain exchange facilities. Personal Fiji dollar checks may be

cashed at any of these banks and will be accepted at most Fiji hotels and shops. U.S. dollar traveler's checks and greenbacks may be used to purchase Fiji dollars at any of the exchange facilities.

Fiji uses the metric system of weights and measures. Gasoline is bought by the liter, and the temperature is measured in Celsius.

Taxes, Exchange, and Sale of Property

All purchases in Fiji are subject to a 10% value added tax (VAT) placed on all goods and services.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan. 1	New Year's Day
Mar/Apr.	Good Friday*
Mar/Apr.	Holy Saturday*
Mar/Apr.	Easter*
Mar/Apr.	Easter Monday*
June (2nd Sat)	Queen's Birthday celebrated*
Aug.	Bank Holiday* Prophet Mohammed's Birthday*
Oct.	Fiji Day* Diwali*
Nov.	Prince Charles' Birthday celebrated*
Dec. 25	Christmas Day
Dec. 26	Boxing Day
	*variable

RECOMMENDED READING

These titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country.

Adrian. *Peasants in the Pacific. A Study of Fiji Indian Rural Society.*

Brown, Stanley. *Men From Under the Sky.*

- Derric, R. A. *A History of Fiji. Suva. Colony of Fiji.*
- Lonely Planet Publication. *Fiji, Ravel Survival Kit.*
- Oliver, D. *The Pacific Islands.* Honolulu: University of Hawaii.
- Nayacakalou, R. R. *Leadership in Fiji.* Oxford: Oxford Press.
- “Tradition and Change in the Fijian Village Suva.” *Fiji Times.*
- Pacific Islands Year Book.
- Ratu, Sir Rabuka, Sitiveni, *Autobiography - No Other Way.*
- Ratu, Sir Kamisese Mara. *The Pacific Way.* Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Siers, James. *Fiji in Color. Fiji Celebration.* London: Collins.
- Shapham (editor). *Rabuka of Fiji.* Central Queensland University.
- Tarte, Daryl. *Island of the Frigate Birds* (Mostly about Banaba and Nauru).
- Tompson, Peter. *Kava in the Blood.*
- Trumbul, R. *Tin Roofs and Palm Trees.* Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Williams, Thomas. *Fiji and the Fijian.* Fiji Museum, Suva.

GEORGIA

Republic of Georgia

Major City:

Tbilisi

Other Cities:

Batumi, Kutaisi, Rustavi, Sukhumi

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report 1999 for Georgia. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

Georgia is an ancient land, rich in history. It is the site of Colchis where, legend has it, Jason found the Golden Fleece. A Christian country since the fourth century, Georgia has been a crossroads and, at times, a battlefield for Assyrians, Arabs, Mongols, Persians, Turks, Russians, and others.

A new Georgia has emerged from the collapsed Soviet Empire. In today's Georgia, Western engineers are building oil pipelines where the Silk Road once ran. Fully occupied with nation building, Georgians are anxious to draw on the American experience to build a viable democracy and free market economy.

Tbilisi lies along the Kura River across a series of steep hills; its winding, tree shaded streets are at the heart of a charm that made Tbilisi one of the most livable cities in the former Soviet Union. Although it is just the size of West Virginia, Georgia enjoys some of the most spectacular natural beauty in the world. Mountain, desert, vineyards, sub-tropical groves and the fabled Black Sea Coast are within a few hours of each other. A visit to Georgia is a ticket into the very eye of history.

MAJOR CITY

Tbilisi

In 458 AD, the capital of Georgia was moved from the small, nearby town of Mtskheta to its present location, Tbilisi. The founder of Tbilisi, King Vakhtang Gorgasali, named the city Tbilisi (from the Georgian word "tbili," meaning warm) after discovering hot sulfur springs. Many hot sulfur baths are still in use today.

Tbilisi has a population of approximately 1,400,000 and is spread out over 135 square miles. Adding to Tbilisi's natural beauty is the Mtk-

vari River (also called the Kura in Russian) which flows through the city center. Tbilisi is neither European nor Asian but an exotic mixture of both, as illustrated by the architecture, houses of worship, open-air markets, sulfur baths, and different nationalities living together in common courtyards.

Utilities

The electrical current in Tbilisi is 220 volt/50 Hz.

Personal computer users should bring a high quality surge suppressor and an uninterruptible power supply (UPS).

Food

While many fresh fruits and vegetables, meats, dairy products, and spices are seasonally available, supply, selection, and quality also vary seasonally. Generally, pork, beef, veal, lamb, imported whole chicken and leg quarters, and fish (freshness is not guaranteed) are available in the local open markets. The art of carving is not practiced by local meat vendors: meat is cut off the carcass and not trimmed to Western standards. Cutting utensils, storage bags, and a meat grinder are essential in preparing meat for cooking or freezing. Likewise, those interested in freezing or

canning fruits or vegetables should bring all supplies required.

Yogurt, sour cream, eggs (bring egg cartons), butter, and local cheeses are available but textures and tastes vary. The joint venture stores have imported dairy products but the supply is unreliable.

A variety of fresh and dried spices is available year-round. Raisins, apricots, figs, and dried beans are also available but must be cleaned well before use.

Clothing

At present only a few small private shops offer a limited supply of Western-style clothing. It is advisable to bring all clothing and shoes to post as well as a supply of mail order catalogs. The climate in Tbilisi is similar to that in Boston or Washington; thus, clothing for a full range of seasons is needed.

Washable, lightweight cotton fabrics are appropriate for the late spring and summer months. Winter clothing is required for the cold months of November through March.

Locally available shoes are mostly imported from Turkey and Italy. Many Western-style shoes can be found but at unusually high prices. Sizes are generally erratic. To have clothing made locally, personnel should bring all fabric and sewing notions.

Supplies and Services

Although Tbilisi has several new supermarkets, items can be quite expensive and inventory is erratic. Bring a good supply of toiletries, cosmetics, hair care products, sanitary supplies, tobacco, home medicines, common household needs, household repair items, candles, cleaning equipment and products, laundry detergents, napkins, and postage stamps. In addition to all clothing and baby supplies, bring children's art supplies, books, and toys. A durable stroller is a must because the roads and sidewalks are extremely bumpy. Disposable dia-

pers, available only in small sizes, are obtainable but at somewhat higher prices than in the U.S. Other items to consider are clothes hangers, European plug converters, photographic supplies, flashlights (large and pocket-sized), batteries, computer supplies, battery operated lights, stationery supplies, pet supplies, and hobby supplies.

Tailoring, dress making, shoe repair, dry cleaning, beauty shops, and barber shops are available locally. It is advisable to take all beauty supplies to the barber or hairdresser because most of the shops do not exercise Western hygiene standards. The joint venture dry-cleaners do a fine job and shoe repair service is good. Tailoring and dress making are also done with care, and prices are reasonable.

Domestic Help

Reasonably priced domestic help, English-speaking nannies, and drivers are available. Few Georgians have had any exposure to Western cleaning techniques and products and thus require training.

Religious Activities

Places of worship for various faiths conduct services in Hebrew, Russian, Georgian, and Armenian. Additionally, the Salvation Army offers English-language Protestant worship services for the international community. Also, some Americans have opened their homes to sponsor church services, Sunday school, and Bible study.

Education

Quality Schools International (QSI), a non-profit institution which opened in September of 1995. QSI offers high quality education in English for elementary students from ages four through thirteen. Several Embassy families currently have children attending this school. The school's curriculum includes English (reading, grammar, composition, keyboarding, and spelling), mathematics, cultural studies (history, geography, economics, etc.), sci-

ence, computer literacy, art, music, physical education, and Russian or Georgian language. In the 1997-98 school year, the school had an enrollment of approximately thirty-one students. QSI also offers extension courses for older children through the University of Nebraska.

School-age children and adults may take private or group lessons in tennis, art, dance, music, horseback riding, gymnastics, and ice skating. One should, however, have some background in Russian or Georgian or make arrangements for an English-speaking instructor.

Sports

Small groups do get together with the international and local community to play softball, volleyball, or tennis, to run or hike, to practice aerobics or gymnastics, and to ice skate or fish at Tbilisi Sea, Bazaleti, or JINVALI Lakes. Staff interested in any of these activities should bring proper equipment and attire. For spectators, the most commonly held international competitions in Georgia are wrestling, chess, and soccer.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

The city of Tbilisi possesses many interesting historic sites. The Old City has preserved its intricate maze of its narrow meandering streets and lanes. Steep cobblestone streets often end in stairs leading up the mountain; courtyards are encircled by wooden balconies; domes of ancient churches and bath-houses catch the eye. Nearby is the 13th century Metekhi Church and the monument to Vakhtang Gorgasali, the founder of Tbilisi. Dominating Old Tbilisi are the ruins of the Narikala Fortress and the gleaming statue of Mother Georgia.

One of the greatest benefits of living in Tbilisi is the proximity to the Caucasus Mountains. Opportunities to ski in winter and hike in summer are found only two hours away by car in Gudauri, which



Aerial view of Tbilisi, Georgia

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offers a four-star hotel. The seaside of Batumi on the Black Sea is a drive of 6-7 hours.

Hotel accommodations are generally still of the Soviet style. Camping is possible throughout the country, even near the capital city.

Entertainment

Excellent operas, ballets, recitals, concerts, dramatic plays, pantomime, and marionette

theater are popular forms of entertainment during various seasons. Tickets are generally inexpensive. Quality movie theaters do not exist, but the Embassy shows movies on select Friday nights. Restaurants now in operation offer Italian, German, Chinese, Mexican and Georgian food. The Western standard, five-star Sheraton Metechi Palace Hotel offers a cafe, restaurant, piano bar, and discotheque. Nightclub entertainment is limited but small, informal, gatherings at home with friends from the active international and local communities occur often.

The International Women's Association offers numerous activities and opportunities for women from many nations to get acquainted. The Club meets once a month at the

Sakartvelo Restaurant and offers many social and volunteer activities. .

OTHER CITIES

The city of **BATUMI** is in the extreme southwestern corner of Georgia. Batumi's location on the Black Sea coast has led to its development as a major Georgian seaport and shipyard. The city is home to a major oil refinery, which receives oil via a pipeline from Baku, Azerbaijan. Several industries are located in Batumi. These industries produce furniture, machinery, and zinc-plating. Batumi is situated in a rich agricultural region where citrus fruits and tea are grown. Many popular resorts are located on the outskirts of the city. Batumi's major tourist attraction is the Batumi Botanical Gardens, which feature a wide array of flora and fauna. Batumi has an estimated population of 137,000.

KUTAISI is situated on the Rioni River in western Georgia. It is one of Georgia's largest industrial cities. Industries in Kutaisi manufacture furniture, textiles, clothing, processed foods, mining machinery, trucks, and consumer goods. Nota-

ble tourist attractions near Kutaisi include the remains of a first-century A.D. Bagrat church and fortress and the Sataplia Nature Reserve, which offers informative displays of dinosaur fossils and tours of several limestone caverns. With an estimated population of 240,000 in 1997, it is Georgia's second largest city.

The city of **RUSTAVI** is situated on the Kura River approximately 16 miles (26 km) southeast of Tbilisi. Rustavi is primarily an industrial center and is the home of large steel and iron works. Synthetic fibers and fertilizers are produced by a major chemical factory in the city. In 1995, Rustavi had an estimated population of 160,000.

SUKHUMI is a major resort city. Tourists from Georgia and other former Soviet republics flock to Sukhumi for its warm weather and sandy beaches. Several small industries are located in the city. These industries are involved in wine-making and canning the fruit grown near Sukhumi. The city has a population of approximately 122,000.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The Republic of Georgia is situated on the eastern bank of the Black Sea and bordered by the Caucasus Mountains to the north. Its neighbor to the east is Azerbaijan, and to the south are Turkey and Armenia. Georgia is at a crossroads of European and Asian commerce, culture, and religion.

Georgia is 69,900 sq. km., slightly larger than West Virginia. Starting in the east, Georgia's landscape is largely semi-desert. In the western portion lie the permanently snow-covered peaks and glaciers of the Caucasian Mountains, with summits as high as 5,000 meters. The

subtropical climate near the Black Sea coast nourishes citrus fruits. Numerous rivers, including the Kura and the Rioni, wind through Georgia's mountains and valleys. Many of these rivers are used for hydroelectric power generation.

Protected by the Black Sea and Caucasus Mountains, Georgia's climate is relatively mild. Seasonal temperatures range from winter daytime highs of 32°F - 35°F to summer daytime highs of 86°F - 93°F. Summers have relatively low humidity. Spring daytime highs average in the high 60°F to the mid 70°F.

Population

Georgia's population, according to the 1989 Soviet census, is 5.5 million, of which some two-thirds are ethnic Georgians. Over 80 other nationalities reside in Georgia, including Armenians, Russians, Azerbaijanis, Ossetians, Greeks, Abkhazians, Ukrainians, Jews and Kurds.

Within Georgia are two autonomous republics, Abkhazia and Adjara. During the Soviet period, the region settled by Ossetians was also granted autonomous status.

Georgian is a proto-Caucasian language of the Iberian-Caucasian family and is spoken throughout the country. Most urban Georgians speak Russian; it is somewhat less common in the country-side.

Christianity was spread throughout Georgia in the 4th century. Today, the majority of Georgians identify themselves as Georgian Orthodox, an autocephalous church (i.e. one with its own patriarch) similar to Greek and Russian orthodox churches. The unusual Georgian Orthodox cross, with its downward-bowed crosspiece, is ascribed to Saint Nino of Cappadocia, who introduced Christianity to Georgia. According to legend, upon entering Georgia she took two vine branches and, with strands of her own hair,

bound them together in the form of a cross.

Islam is practiced among sectors of the population of Tbilisi, in villages near the Azeri and north Caucasus borders, and in the autonomous republic of Adjara in the southwest. The Jewish population in Georgia dates back twenty-five centuries. Roman Catholicism is practiced by some Georgians, mostly in the west. Reflecting Georgia's religious diversity, one small area in Old Town Tbilisi has five different places of worship: a Georgian Orthodox Church, a Roman Catholic Church, a mosque, a synagogue, and an Armenian Orthodox Church. Hospitality is one of the most notable characteristics of the Georgian people. Georgians receive guests as a "gift from God." The hospitality is particularly well represented by the "Georgian Table." The table is stacked with many traditional dishes, such as Georgian flat bread; "khachapuri" (a cheese pie); lamb, pork or beef shishkebab; roast pig; chicken or turkey in a walnut sauce; and accompanying "tkemali," a spicy plum sauce. The traditional drink of Georgia is wine; grapes are grown throughout the country, especially in the region of Kakheti. "Churchkhela" is a special dessert made with walnuts or hazelnuts dipped into a paste made from boiled grape skins. A unique feature of the Georgian table is the "tamada," or toastmaster. Chosen by the male members of the table, the tamada offers a series of traditional toasts for the guests during the meal.

The family unit is important for Georgians. Many nuclear families live together with parents or grandchildren, often because of the housing shortage. Tradition has passed down a strong sense of obligation for family members to look after one another.

Public Institutions

Georgia became one of the fifteen republics of the Soviet Union in

1921. The Communist Party dominated the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic for over seventy years.

As the Soviet Union began to disintegrate, Georgia became one of the first republics to declare its independence. The first post-Soviet government, headed by Zviad Gamsakhurdia, was strongly nationalistic. Although democratically elected, Gamsakhurdia did not observe democratic norms. Following a coup, the Gamsakhurdia government was replaced in March 1992 by a State Council headed by former Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze. After an initial period of political turmoil, Georgia held elections for Parliament in October 1992. Mr. Shevardnadze was elected Head of Parliament and Head of State.

Georgia adopted a new constitution in August 1995. The constitution provides for three branches of government: the Executive (President), Legislative (Parliament), and Judicial (Supreme Court). In November of that year, Presidential and parliamentary elections were held. International monitors described them as "generally free and fair." Eduard Shevardnadze was elected to a 5 year term. The unicameral Parliament has four political parties: the Citizens' Union of Georgia which holds 110 seats and is the governing party; the Adjara-based Revival Union Party; the National Democratic Party; and the People's National Democratic Party.

Arts, Science, and Education

Georgians are proud of their centuries-long cultural and academic traditions, many of which continue to the present day. Georgians are particularly talented musicians. The Georgian folk song continues an age-old polyphonic style, and even singers who have never met each other can create complex harmo-

nies. A traditional dinner always includes Georgian folk songs.

In three handsome state theaters in Tbilisi, one can see opera, symphony concerts, ballet, and drama. Tbilisi's most famous theater company, the Rustaveli Theater, has performed throughout Europe and took its performance of *King Lear* to the 1996 Edinburgh Festival. There are also several other theaters, including a marionette and children's theater, where all performances are in Georgian.

Tbilisi is home to several of Georgia's finest history museums and art galleries.

The Fine Arts Museum contains remarkable examples of ancient textiles and jewelry, and the Ethnographic Museum is an unusual open air exhibit depicting life at various times in all the regions of Georgia. In Tbilisi and throughout the country, travelers encounter marvelous examples of Georgian ecclesiastical and secular architecture.

Georgia's educational system is currently faced with both pressures to reform to meet contemporary needs and with extremely difficult financial problems. Georgian students attend school from age six and continue through graduation from high school. Georgians are highly educated and place great value on education. Literacy rates approach 100%, with almost all Georgians bilingual in Georgian and Russian and many speaking a third and fourth language. English is increasingly widely spoken in Tbilisi, and Georgians are usually eager to practice English with Americans.

Commerce and Industry

The Georgian economy is primarily agricultural. Immediately after independence in 1991, the Georgian economy contracted dramatically, due in large part to the sudden requirement to obtain energy supplies at world prices. By 1994, eco-

nomics output stood at about one-third of its level in 1990 and hyperinflation raged. In late 1994, with the assistance of the IMF, the Government of Georgia introduced an economic reform program aimed at curtailing inflation and creating conditions for economic growth. This economic recovery continued in 1996. However, much of the country's Soviet-era industry is either closed or operating below capacity. The country needs substantial productive investment to modernize its industry and infrastructure.

Successful economic reform relies heavily on technical assistance and funding provided by the international community, including the United States. The character of assistance programs to Georgia has shifted from humanitarian food and medicines to longer-term support for economic restructuring, especially in the critical energy sector.

Georgia's international trade is increasing, albeit from a very low base. The current account deficit is financed by significant lending. Georgia is preparing its application to join the World Trade Organization and has chosen a relatively open trading regime. The government also welcomes foreign investment. A variety of mid-size joint ventures have sprung up that include U.S. and German partners, and Tbilisi receives frequent visits from investors interested in Georgia's business potential. Georgia's principal trading partners are Turkey, Russia, and Western Europe.

Small enterprises have now been almost completely privatized, as has housing. Georgia is engaging in the difficult task of privatizing large, residual state holdings and hopes to find foreign investors interested in some of these enterprises. Considering the distance the economy has come since introducing economic reforms in 1994, Georgia's economic

Transportation

Automobiles

Travelers should consider the following factors when selecting a vehicle for local use: the fuel quality is inconsistent, parts for non-Russian vehicles are largely unavailable, and vehicle servicing is well below Western standards. A few dealerships, such as Mitsubishi, operate in Tbilisi but do not stock spare or replacement parts. Roads inside and outside the capital are not well maintained. Some staff prefer four-wheel drive vehicles that allow more ground clearance. Russian-made and used German vehicles are available locally. Prices are competitive but quality is inconsistent. Cars and drivers can be privately rented for outings. Some long term visitors hire a personal car and driver at rates significantly lower than the cost of owning and operating a personal vehicle.

Local

In Tbilisi, an inexpensive underground metro system connects outlying districts to the city. However, power outages can strand metro riders between stops, hundreds of feet underground. Overcrowded buses and trolley buses serve the inner city, and taxis can be hailed throughout the city. The best mode of transportation is often by foot because Tbilisi is relatively small.

Regional

Two train stations provide service to other regions of the country and to the countries of the former Soviet Union. The trains do not meet Western standards, and schedules are not dependable.

Tbilisi opened a new airport in 1996. Commuter airplanes fly on an unpredictable schedule between Tbilisi and four of Georgia's main cities. International flights ferry passengers to cities outside of Georgia. The airlines serving Georgia which reflect Western standards are Turkish Air, British Airways, Austrian Air and Swissair. Aeroflot provides regular flights between Tbilisi

and other cities within the former Soviet Union.

Communications

Telephone

Most people in the city have private telephones. Service sometimes is problematic but costs are reasonable. Domestic telegraph, fax, and wireless services are available with reasonable prices. Cellular telephone service is also available in Tbilisi. Most public telephones in the city are not in working order.

Mail

Georgian international mail service is very slow. Federal Express and DHL are available in Tbilisi but can be very expensive.

Radio & TV

Cable television is available in Tbilisi for a reasonable monthly fee. English-speaking programming includes CNN, Cartoon Network, TNT, ESPN, SKYNEWS, and NBC SUPER CHANNEL. Spanish, Italian, French, German, and Russian programs are also available on cable. Georgia uses the PAL format for all television broadcasts.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

Medical facilities in Tbilisi are government operated and include specialized hospitals, medical institutes, and outpatient polyclinics. One of the largest hospitals, Republican Hospital, serves not only Tbilisi but also outlying areas of the country. None of the facilities practices Western standards. There is a shortage of medicines, but the situation is improving slowly with supplies coming in from Turkey and Germany.

Under the Soviet system, everyone was immunized. At present, however, a shortage of vaccines has caused epidemics of diphtheria, measles and mumps. Also due to the lack of vaccines for animals, rabies

has been on the increase. Last year there were over 25 human cases of rabies in Georgia.

Several private medical emergency/referral services are available which provide twenty-four hour ambulance service and direct referral to specialists.

In the past year, a private medical clinic, OMS, has opened. It is staffed by a western trained doctor and medic.

Community Health

The most common health problems encountered with Embassy personnel are the usual health problems found in the United States, mainly those causing upper respiratory distress. Those with allergies have increased problems during the spring when the trees are flowering.

The most common intestinal problems are giardia and food poisoning. Post provides water filters which attach to the water source in the kitchen and supply potable water. Many people also purchase Brita filters to filter out the large amount of sediment in the water. Care should be

taken in eating raw fruits and vegetables. As in most overseas posts, it is recommended that fruits and vegetables not peeled or cooked be washed and then soaked in a chlorine solution. Purchasing meat and dairy products in the open market can be risky in the summer due to lack of refrigeration. Meat should always be well cooked.

Preventive Measures

Update immunizations before coming and bring at least a three to six month supply of prescription and frequently used over-the-counter drugs. Limited emergency dental care is available but it is very important to get a dental checkup and complete all dental work before leaving the U.S.

Prescription glasses are not available locally so it is helpful to bring an extra pair or make arrangements

to have glasses sent if necessary. Bring a copy of your prescription with you.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan. 1	New Year's Day
Jan. 7	Christmas (Orthodox)
Jan. 19	Epiphany
Mar. 3	Mother's Day
Apr. 9	Memorial Day
Apr. 16	Recollection of Deceased
May 26	Independence Day
Aug. 15	Mariamoba (Assumption)
Aug. 24	Constitution Day
Aug. 28	Day of the Virgin
Oct. 14	Svetitskhovloba
Nov. 23	St. George of Iberia Day

*variable

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs & Duties

A passport and visa are required. U.S. citizens may receive a visa upon arrival at Tbilisi Airport, the Port of Poti, and the Red Bridge ("Tsiteli Khidi") crossing on Georgia's border with Azerbaijan. Americans intending to enter Georgia at other points-of-entry must obtain a visa beforehand at a Georgian embassy or consulate abroad. Armenian and Azerbaijani visas are no longer valid for transit through Georgia. Travelers to Georgia must fill out a customs declaration upon arrival that is to be presented to customs officials when departing the country. (Please see also the section on Georgian Customs regulations.) For further information, please contact the Embassy of Georgia at 1615 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W., Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20009, tel. (202) 387-2390, fax:

(202) 393-4537; Internet: <http://www.georgiaemb.org>.

Travelers to Georgia must fill out a customs declaration upon arrival that is to be presented to customs officials when departing the country. Travelers are advised to declare all items of value on the customs form. Failure to declare currency and items of value can result in fines or other penalties. If your customs form is lost or stolen, please report the loss to the police to obtain a certificate to show to customs officials when you depart the country.

Traveler's should be aware that Georgia's customs authorities may enforce strict regulations concerning the temporary importation into or export from Georgia of items such as alcohol, tobacco, jewelry, religious materials, art or artifacts, antiquities, and business equipment. Only personal medicines with a doctor's statement can be imported without the permission of the Georgian Department of Healthcare.

U.S. citizens living in or visiting Georgia are strongly encouraged to register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Tbilisi, where they may obtain updated information on travel and security within Georgia. The U.S. Embassy in Tbilisi is located at 25 Atoneli Street, tel. (995)(32)98-99-67 or (995)(32)98-99-68, fax: (995)(32)93-37-59. The Embassy web site address is located at: <http://www.georgia.net.ge/usembassy>

Complex visa requirements in Russia make it more desirable to fly to Tbilisi from Western Europe, usu-

ally from London, Zurich, Frankfurt, Vienna, or Istanbul.

Air travel connections to Tbilisi are difficult to arrange outside of Georgia. A number of charter flights serve Tbilisi each week, but it is difficult to get information on these flights outside of Georgia.

Pets

In compliance with the World Health Organization (WHO), Georgian authorities require that pets entering or departing Georgia must have a health certificate stating the pet is in good health, is free from infectious disease, and has had a rabies inoculation not less than 10 days and not more than 30 days before departure. The certificate must be validated by the appropriate medical authority in the country where travel begins.

U.S. airlines require that animals must be in a kennel and transported in the reserved animal area in the hold. Note that the few veterinarians in Tbilisi have a shortage of supplies and vaccines. Boarding kennels are unavailable. All pet vaccinations should be up-to-date. Pet owners should bring all pet supplies that may be required.

Firearms & Ammunition

U.S. citizens may not import firearms into Georgia; however, hunting weapons may be brought into the country for a two-week period based on valid Georgian hunting licenses. Membership in the Georgian Society for Hunting is also required.

Currency, Banking, and Weights and Measures

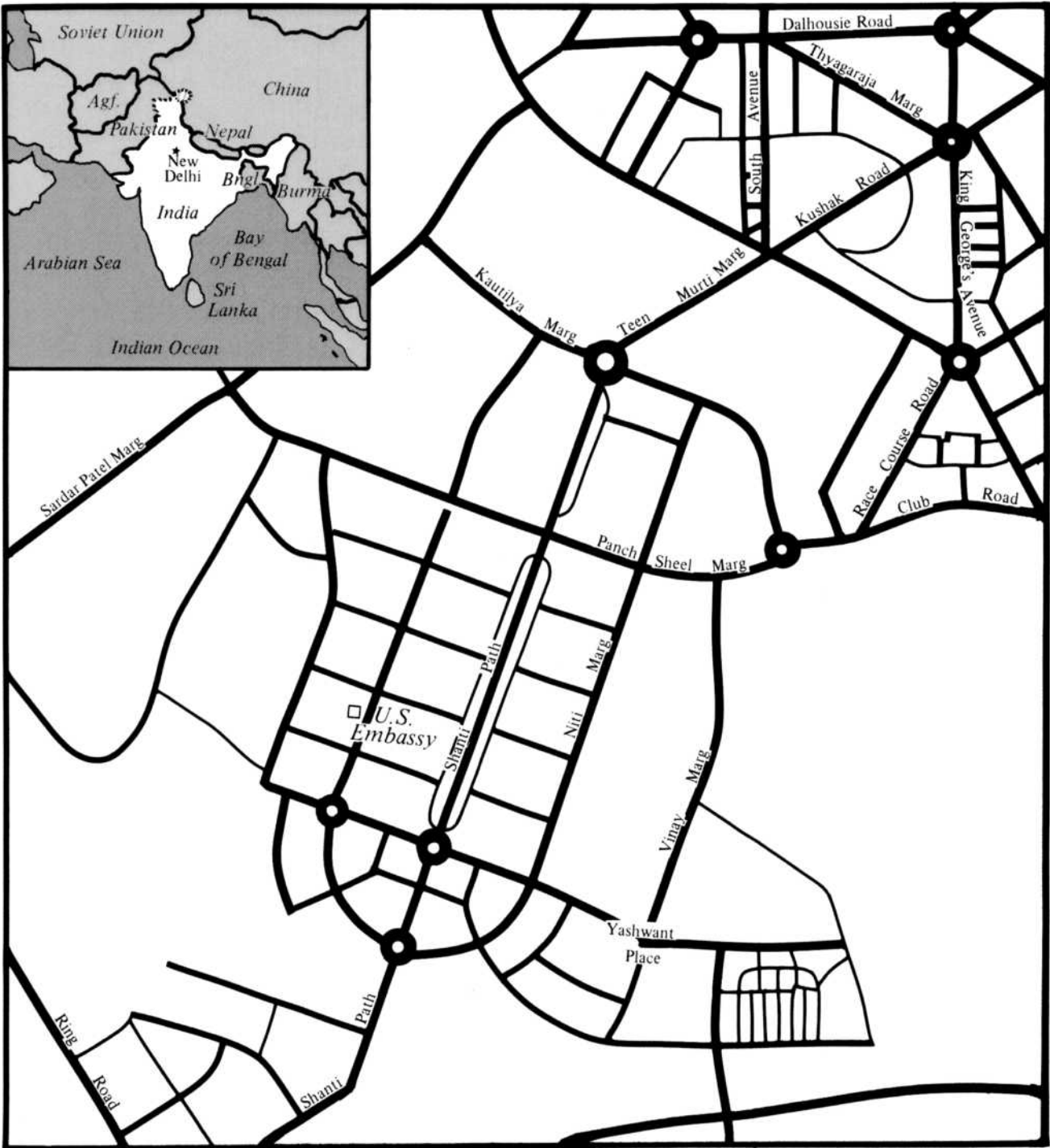
The Lari is Georgia's official currency. Only Lari-based transactions are legal. Georgia has several reliable banking facilities which can transfer currency into and out of Georgia.

The Sheraton Metechi Palace Hotel is the only business venture that accepts travelers checks and major credit cards for dining and lodging. The Guest House "Betsy" also accepts credit cards.

RECOMMENDED READING

These titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on Georgia.

- Allen, W.E.D. *A History of the Georgian People*. Barnes & Noble, 1971.
- Burney, Charles, and David Marshall Lang. *The Peoples of the Hills: Ancient Ararat and Caucasus*. Praeger, 1972.
- Dumas, Alexandre. *Adventures in Caucasia*. Chilton Books, 1962.
- Kazemzadeh, Firuz. *The Struggle for Transcaucasia, 1917 - 1921*. Philosophical Library, 1951.
- Rosen, Roger. *The Georgian Republic*. Guidebook Co. Ltd., 1991.
- Shevardnadze, Eduard. *The Future Belongs to Freedom*. The Free Press, 1991.
- Ulam, Adam. *Stalin: The Man and His Era*. Viking Press, 1973.



New Delhi, India

INDIA

Republic of India

Major Cities:

New Delhi, Calcutta, Chennai (Madras), Mumbai (Bombay)

Other Cities:

Agra, Ahmadabad, Bangalore, Baroda, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Coimbatore, Hyderabad, Indore, Jaipur, Kanpur, Lucknow, Madurai, Nagapur, Pune, Surat, Varanasi

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated January 1997. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

INDIA challenges and fascinates any newcomer. India is a land of contrasts—4,000 year old Indus Valley seals in the National Museum, Indian teens browsing among the latest Western fashions to the beat of rock music at Benetton's, elephants draped in red and gold plodding up music-filled driveways of five-star hotels amid lights and gyrating wedding guests, bazaars filled with ultra-soft pashmina shawls and silk saris edged in gold, cows dozing on the center divider of busy urban avenues, white-water rafting on the chilly Ganga (Ganges River), bookstores with Anglo-Indian literature and American novels, delicious makhani dal (red

bean dish) and masala dosa (South Indian crispy potato-filled pancake), graceful maharaja palaces offering tourist specials, bird sanctuaries with wintering flamingos and cranes from Siberia, more than a dozen recognized regional languages with English widely spoken from north to south, and one of the wonders of the world—the Taj Mahal in Agra.

India requires patience and flexibility. First-time travelers overseas—as well as veterans—can expect a certain amount of culture shock. The English language is used in ways which may perplex native speakers. Local customs concerning timeliness and sanitation are relaxed. Indians may give the answer they think a questioning foreigner wants to hear, rather than the truth. Gentle persistence on issues of importance to you yields dividends.

Schooling, support, and social activities are good and plentiful. “*Achcha*” (fine) or “*T.K.*” (o.k.), accompanied by a head bobble, is the most common reply to a question. So, “*Na-must-ay*” (hello) and “Welcome to India!”

MAJOR CITIES

New Delhi

New Delhi is located in north-central India beside the old city of Delhi on the Yamuna River. The capital of modern-day India traces its roots to King George V's triumphant tour of India in 1911. While encamped on the outskirts of Delhi, the King announced that the capital of British India would be shifted from Calcutta to a new city to be built beside the ancient city of Delhi.

Older residential areas feature broad, tree-lined streets and large bungalows with spacious yards. Houses in newer residential areas are more modern, but yard space is often at a premium and streets are congested. The commercial heart of New Delhi is Connaught Place, where state emporia sell local crafts. Jan Path, famous as the capital's souvenir center, has everything from cheap curios to exquisite pieces of art. Luxurious five-star hotels have good restaurants and shopping malls. An occasional cow meanders down avenues, reminding visitors that this is India.

The old city of Delhi is a vivid contrast to the spacious, orderliness of



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Tomb of Mughal Emperor Humayun in New Delhi

New Delhi. Jama Masjid and the majestic Red Fort lie amid narrow, crooked streets teeming with humanity, vehicles, produce, and animals. Chandni Chowk in the heart of Delhi is jammed with shoppers, vendors, conveyances, temples, mosques, and small shops selling everything from spices to expensive jewelry. Qutab Minar, a 13th-century minaret over 240 feet high, stands amid ruins outside the city limits. New Delhi is filled with massive forts, palaces, and grand tombs built over the centuries by Delhi's various rulers.

Food

Every neighborhood in New Delhi has at least one market that sells fresh fruit, vegetables, cut flowers, and dry goods, oils, eggs, some canned or bottled items, milk, soft drinks, lotion, shampoo. There are also chemists (pharmacy), bakery, and sometimes a meat shop with chicken and/or mutton. The most

popular markets among foreigners are Modern Bazaar, Khan Market, and INA Market.

Fresh fruits and vegetables are seasonal and the selection may not be as large as in U.S. supermarkets. The winter season is best for price and variety—many stock up by freezing or canning. Potatoes, onions, tomatoes, carrots, limes, lemons, cucumbers, eggplant, at least one variety of squash, coriander, bananas, orange or tangerine, apples (sometimes stored from last season), and coconuts are always available. Frozen peas are available year round. Seasonal varieties include peas, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, red and white radishes, kohlrabi, green peas, spinach, lettuce, string beans, parsley, varieties of squash, sweet potatoes, turnips, breadfruit, avocados, melons, many varieties of mangoes, limes, pomegranates, tangerines, oranges, grapes, papaya, grape-

fruit, pineapple and occasionally small peaches, short thin celery, and apricots. Dried fruits, cashews, walnuts, almonds, and pine nuts are usually available in the market.

Mutton, goat, pork, and chicken are available in several cuts. Buffalo undercut can be used as beef in recipes. Fresh sea fish and shellfish are available, but should be eaten only in the cooler months. Baby food in the local market is limited to powdered milk in tins and an occasional box of cereal mixed with dried fruit.

Clothing

In general, the adult Indian dresses more conservatively than Americans. Indians wear Western dress more and more as the years go by—especially the men. Men wear shirts and slacks, suits, bush or safari suits (the short or long-sleeved shirt is worn outside the same-color pants), or a kurta-pajama (long

tunic over draw-string pants). At home, a man might wear an under-shirt with lungi (3 yards of material tucked in at the waist).

The accepted national dress for women is the sari, which can be worn in a number of ways. Usually it is a combination of 6 meters of often elaborately bordered silk, cotton, or polyesters wrapped over a drawstring full-length petticoat and a form-fitting choli blouse which leaves the midriff exposed. The sari is worn for formal occasions, accompanied by quality jewelry of gold, silver, and precious stones. The other outfit Indian women wear frequently is the salwar kameez, a two-piece suit made up of decorative knee length tunic over drawstring pants, sometimes worn with a scarf (“dupatta”).

Although Indian women are not hesitant to show their mid-section—some even have open backs—they usually feel self-conscious in pants and a tucked-in blouse. Most would not wear shorts even in the privacy of their own homes. (See Special Information for more information on Indian sensitivities on dress.)

New Delhi’s climate alternates between extremely hot summers, humid monsoons, and surprisingly chilly winters. Lightweight, loose yet covering cotton clothing is suitable for eight months of the year. Sweaters, jackets, wool skirts, wool suits, sweat suits, hats, scarves, and even gloves will be welcome during the winter. Excursions to the north or to hill stations require warm clothing including heavy sweaters and coats. American-style underwear and sports socks are not available locally. Light raincoats or Windbreakers may come in handy. Umbrellas are needed in the monsoon season.

Washable fabrics are the most convenient for maintenance, but dry-cleaning services are also available. Cotton, silk, and wool are the most comfortable fabrics to wear. Quality woolen and knit fabrics are generally not available. India’s distinctive

cottons and silks, however, are among the bonuses of life here.

Local footwear consists mainly of sandals (“chappals”), which have straps over the instep and big toe. Ready made shoes often lack quality, comfort, and durability—and they can be expensive. Cobblers repair shoes at little cost. Shoes wear out more quickly in this climate. Bring several pair of comfortable walking shoes, good work shoes, and sport shoes for recreation and exercise.

Men: Lightweight suits are practical for most of the year, but warmer suits (wool) are needed in December and January. High-quality local silk ties are beautiful and inexpensive. Men occasionally wear locally tailored bush or safari suits for summer or winter wear. Local tailor-made shirts and suits vary greatly in quality and fit, and can be more expensive than ready made. Most Americans prefer to bring tennis shorts, knit shirts, golf clothes, and swim trunks. Shorts for at-home wear can be tailored locally, but may cost more than U.S. ready made shorts. Men’s sandals, available in many styles, are comfortable during the summer heat.

Women: Casual dresses, suits, and pants suits are suitable for most daytime occasions. Cotton dresses and cotton underwear are coolest in the hot weather. Women may want to bring pantyhose as comparable pantyhose are difficult to find on the local market, but it is acceptable to go without hose, particularly during the warm weather. Shorts and strapless tops are not worn on the public streets.

Children: At the American Embassy School in New Delhi students dress casually. Jeans, slacks, shorts, T-shirts, shirts, light jackets, tennis shoes, sweat suits, and sweaters are worn by both girls and boys. Teenage girls also wear the salwar kameez and dresses on occasion.

Sweaters and warm jackets are worn daily in December and Janu-

ary. Warm clothing will be needed for the middle school and high school sport conventions which take place in Pakistan, for school or family outings to the hill stations or up north, and for the winter months. Light colors are cooler in hot weather, but dark colored clothes are practical for active children—the red soil is difficult to wash out.

Sandals, worn by both girls and boys during summer, are widely available locally. Socks and tennis shoes tend to wear out quickly.

Teens can buy the latest fashions in jeans, sweaters, shirts, and cotton skirts from sidewalk vendors or in classy shops.

Supplies and Services

Local dry cleaning is available with varying results. Shoe repair is good, inexpensive, and available in the marketplace.

Tailoring services vary in quality and price. Copying existing clothing achieves the best results, but tailors will work from pictures, too.

A beauty shop and a barbershop are located on the enclave compound. Some of the hotels have complete health club facilities, including massage and sauna. For excellent private massages, specialists will come to the home on a regular basis. Prices are inexpensive for these services.

Religious Activities

A Jewish synagogue conducts services in Hebrew at the Judah-Hyam Hall.

Christianity in India dates back nearly 2000 years. Most Christian churches have services conducted in regional languages, as well as in English.

Catholic churches conducting Mass in New Delhi include the Carmel Convent School, the Holy See Embassy, St. Dominic’s, Sacred Heart Cathedral, and the Holy Family Hospital.

Protestant churches include the Bible Bhawan Bethany Assembly, the St. James Church of North India, Centenary United Methodist Church, Cathedral Church of the Redemption, New Delhi Christian Fellowship at the Taj Mahal Hotel, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, the Free Church, the Delhi Bible Fellowship at Triveni Auditorium, and the Green Park Free Church.

Moslems worship in Arabic in mosques ("Masjid") all over Delhi.

Sikh temples ("gurdwara") ring with readings in Punjabi.

International prayers are read in English and Hindi from the holy books of all religions meetings in the Baha'i House of Worship.

Hindu and Jain temples ("mandirs") abound; the language is Hindi.

Education

The American Embassy School (AES) is a private nonprofit, coeducational day school, conveniently located on a 12-acre site just behind in New Delhi. Instruction by American, Indian, and third-country national teachers follows the American educational system from pre-school through high school. AES is on a par with the best schools in the U.S. The school is divided into three sections: Elementary (ECEC-5), Middle School (6-8), and High School (9-12). The school year runs from early August through May. Students with U.S. citizenship may be admitted any time during this period.

About 35 percent of the 1000 students are American, the balance are 47 different nationalities. About 98 percent of AES graduates attend universities in the U.S. and in other countries. The school is a designated testing center for the College Entrance Examination Board, American College Testing Program, Secondary School Admission Test, and Graduate Management Admission Test and Graduate Record Examination. The school is accredited by the Middle States Associa-

tion of Secondary Schools and Colleges. Selected Advanced Placement courses are offered. Courses are also offered that satisfy the requirements of the International Baccalaureate diploma. Many extracurricular activities are offered including softball, soccer, swimming, hockey, basketball, baseball, tennis, camping, photography, dramatics, cheerleading and student publications. School-sponsored trips to places of interest outside Delhi are available to students in grades 6 to 12. AES provides daily school bus transportation to most neighborhoods in New Delhi, and a late bus is available for those engaging in after school activities.

Apply for admission to AES as early as possible. Write to the school at the following address:

Director
American Embassy School
Chandragupta Marg
Chanakyapuri
New Delhi - 110 021
India

Include a record of academic achievement (official transcript of high school credits or official elementary school report card) and health record. In some cases, interviews with school officials, appropriate testing, and physical examinations may be required. A child who is 3 years old on or before September 1 is eligible for admission to the Early Childhood Education Center (ECEC). However, AES does not ensure space in this program. To enter a child in this program, parents should write to the school as soon as their assignment is firm. A child who is 5 years old on or before September 1 is eligible for admission to kindergarten; a child who is 6 years old on or before September 1 is eligible for the first grade. For information regarding a child with a specific learning disability, contact the school prior to coming to post. AES offers remedial education classes, but only for the mildly learning disabled. They do not offer services for severely handicapped children. There are some ramps throughout the grounds, but

the school is not equipped to handle children who require special accommodations due to physical handicaps.

New Delhi has a range of pre-schools, both Montessori and traditional, which attract both Indian and foreign diplomats' children. They offer quality education at lower cost than the ECEC of AES. Some American children attend these schools, which provide contact with children in other communities.

Parent groups associated with the school include Home and School Association (HSA) and Parent Teacher Student Administrators (PTSA, pronounced "pizza"). All parents of children at AES automatically belong to HSA. All participants in the high school program are also eligible for PTSA family memberships for a small fee.

USIS has a large library at the American Center which is open to Americans and Indians alike. The USIS collection concentrates on all aspects of the U.S.

AWA operates a growing library near the Co-op, which is open 16 hours a week and has a good collection in fiction and nonfiction.

AES runs an elementary library and a high school library. Parents may also use the library.

Special Educational Opportunities

The Delhi School of Music offers private instruction in a full range of instruments of Western music, e.g. piano, violin, cello, and guitar.

Private instruction in Indian music, both instrumental and vocal, and in Indian dance are readily available at moderate cost. Piano teachers are also available. Those interested in art and handicrafts can take courses in painting, ceramics, batik, tie-dye, and fabric design.

The National Museum occasionally gives courses on the history of Indian art.



Susan Rock. Reproduced by permission.

Taj Mahal in Agra

Sports

Among the sports activities to be enjoyed in and around Delhi are golf, tennis, bowling, badminton, horseback riding, polo, swimming, fishing, and softball. Spectator sports include horse racing, polo, cricket, soccer, field hockey, and school sports.

The Delhi Gymkhana Club and the Chelmsford Club offer swimming, tennis, squash, and billiards. The Delhi Golf Club has a good 18-hole course and a small 9-hole course, complete with peacocks in the trees. Many golf clubs in Delhi offer pay and play—the Delhi Golf Club is the best (although hard to get into), but a new course in Noida across the Yamuna River is popular.

For horseback riding, the Delhi Riding Club gives instruction from beginning to advanced levels, and the Presidents Estate Polo Club offers both riding and polo playing.

Both single-glider rides and gliding instruction are available at the Delhi Gliding Club. Several major hotels offer memberships to their swimming and health clubs.

Within the community, one can also find the Delhi Football League (soccer) and Hash House Harriers (joggers). A vast wooded park area near the U.S. Embassy offers several running/jogging paths ranging in distance from 2.5 to 5 miles. Groups within the community get together for basketball, soccer, and volleyball.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Sightseeing opportunities range from those in immediate neighborhoods to extensive tours of other parts of India and neighboring countries. Costs may be higher than expected, especially when traveling with a family, and the quality of accommodations varies. Delhi has many historical monuments, reli-

gious buildings, and shrines open to visitors.

Excellent sight-seeing guides which are updated every year or two, include *India, a Travel Survival Kit*, *Fodor's India, Nepal and Sri Lanka*, and the *AWA Glimpses of India*.

Ancient and historic sites are everywhere. Once the home of viceroys and now the official residence of the President of India, Rashtrapati Bhawan overlooks a 2-mile long mall down Rajpath to India Gate.

There are many sites that one can visit: Qutab Minar and the nearby mosque constructed from demolished Hindu and Jain temples; the Mughal Gardens of Rashtrapati Bhawan, Parliament House and the Secretariat; the Red Fort with Shah Jahan's court, the Pearl Mosque, and the evening Sound and Light Show on its history; Raj Ghat, Mahatma Gandhi's cremation memorial grounds; Chandni Chawk

and the spice and silver bazaars; Hauz Khas village and Moslem ruins; Feroz Shah Kotla grounds with an Ashoka pillar on the Jamuna River bank; Humayun's tomb and gardens; Lodi Gardens with tombs and pathways; the huge 14th-century fortress city of Tughlakh; Suraj Kund, a pre-Islamic site; Purana Qila; the 1857 Mutiny Memorial on Delhi's Northern Ridge; the Jantar Mantar observatory; the Viceroy's Church; Safdarjang's Tomb; and Jama Masjid in old Delhi.

When visiting religious sites, remember to dress accordingly. Visitors may be asked to cover their heads, remove shoes, and/or wait until devotions are completed.

During the hot season, it is good to combine the out-of-doors touring with a trip to one of the many museums—National Museum, Crafts Museum and Village Complex, Mahatma Gandhi Museum, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, National Museum of Natural History, Indira Gandhi Memorial Museum, and National Gallery of Modern Art. State museums are closed on Mondays.

Children particularly enjoy the Delhi Zoo with Indian birds and animals, Apu Ghar Amusement Park, and Shankar's International Doll Museum. The Rail Transport Museum offers the opportunity to circle Delhi on a train in a couple of hours. During cool months, the city's parks and gardens are filled with all-seasonal flowers and offer pleasant picnic spots.

For out-of-town trips, transportation is available by car, train, tour bus, or plane. AWA Out-of-Town Tours frequently offers special trips throughout India and to neighboring Nepal and Thailand. Other popular trips are to Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

The first trip out, however, should be to see the Taj Mahal at Agra. Travel by train early in the morning—visit the Taj, the Agra Fort, and Fatipur Sikri—then return at



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Men drinking tea in New Delhi

night by train. Near Agra is the Bharatpur bird sanctuary.

Rajasthan has a number of palaces and fortresses cities on the tour map—the pink city of Jaipur is 180 miles away or 5 hours by car; and a trip to Udaipur's Lake Palace, Jodhpur, and Jaisalmer would make a week-long trip by car or train. The major pilgrimage site on the Ganges River, Varanasi (Banaras), is 450 miles from Delhi and is accessible by car, plane, or train.

White-water rafting on the Ganges River, north of Rishikesh, has become a popular 3–5 day family outing or school trip.

Two areas for skiing are Auli, Uttar Pradesh and Solang in Himachal Pradesh's Kulu Valley. With an incredibly beautiful panorama of India's major Himalayan peaks, Auli offers the basics. Accommodation is very cheap. Skis, poles, boots, and goggles cost \$4 to rent, and are in poor repair. No ski lift is available, and it takes 2 long days to get there. Solang has a ski lift—for those taking a course or who obtain permission from the Manali Mountaineering Institute, who owns the lift. Rental equipment is cheap. Accommodations include a nearby lodge, run by Himachal Pradesh

tourism, and guest houses in Manali. Kulu Valley also offers heliskiing. For \$1,000 for 4 days, a European-flown and maintained helicopter will lift skiers from a luxury hotel parking lot to 18,000-foot mountains where one can ski down deep powder slopes for hours without seeing a tree or another skier.

Visitors to Corbett National Park, 183 miles from Delhi, can see tigers, leopards, hyenas, deer, peafowl, and elephants. Hill stations offering relief from the summer heat are Mussoorie, 170 miles away, and Simla, 225 miles. There are many excellent game reserves and bird sanctuaries. Bring binoculars and a good camera. Fishing spots within driving distance of Delhi are available.

Photography is prohibited at airports, dams, bridges, and military installations. Still cameras, not video cameras, may be used to photograph certain historical monuments, but the rules may be changing. At the entrance to historical or tourist sites, a posted sign or guide will explain the current policy. In some cases, a fee is charged to carry in a camera. Obtain the consent of any local individuals to be photographed. If someone asks to be photographed in their ethnic outfit

or with their elephant or cobra, be prepared to pay a tip—this is their livelihood.

Entertainment

New Delhi has many auditoriums, concert halls, stadiums, and luxury hotels with grand ballrooms. Indian and Western music, drama, dance, exhibitions and lectures are plentiful, especially in the cooler season. Traditional Indian festivals are celebrated in Delhi, as well as all over the country. These festivals offer exceptional photo opportunities.

The All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society holds regular lecture meetings and exhibitions of contemporary Indian art. Many restaurants feature Indian musicians. In addition to Indian music, local hotels and auditoriums occasionally feature performances by foreign jazz groups, ballets, and Shakespearean plays. Cultural centers of various embassies regularly offer special programs. The Delhi Music Society sponsors an international concert season. The Delhi Diary, a small weekly magazine, carries a current listing of events in New Delhi.

Tickets are available for these annual events: Republic Day parade, Beating Retreat, Ram Lila (drama), Suraj Kund Mela (fair), and the melas staged by the AWA, the Canadians, and the Australians.

Amateur performers have wonderful opportunities here. The Delhi Symphony Orchestra performs regularly and is always looking for musicians. The Delhi Community Players, an international group of theatre lovers, presents one or two dramas or musicals each season. AES an active program of dramatic and musical presentations by students. The AES High School Chorus and the Delhi Christian Chorus always welcome new members.

Films are regularly shown at the British High Commission, the Max Mueller Bhavan (Goethe Institute), the Alliance Francaise, and the India International Centre. A few Indian theaters show English-language foreign films.

For those who enjoy dinner and dancing, most large hotels in New Delhi feature Western-style dance bands and discotheques.

Social Activities

Americans in New Delhi can lead an active social life. In addition to the Indian and international events, Americans generate many activities themselves. Most of these activities also attract Indian and international participation.

AWA offers opportunities for Americans to share activities in the American community and to explore and enjoy living in India.

Scouting in New Delhi has an active program for boys (age 7–18) and for girls (kindergarten through grade 6)—camping, white water rafting, hiking, exploring, crafts, drama, and community service projects. Scouts should bring their current records and equipment. Uniforms, packs, and sleeping bags may be ordered or locally tailored. Adult leaders, merit badge counselors, and helpers are always needed.

In addition to after school activities organized by AES (soccer, volleyball, swimming, basketball, and track), PTSA sponsors Saturday night Open Gym for high schoolers and a foreign film festival during Language Week.

The best opportunity to meet Indians is at receptions and dinner parties. India is a warm, open society. Indians invite Americans to their homes and readily accept American invitations. Older children of Indians and Americans are often included in invitations.

Sports clubs, churches, business associations, international organizations, and American groups offer occasions for meeting people outside the American community. The Rotary and Lions Clubs have local chapters.

Americans may apply for associate membership in the Canadian High Commission Recreation Association and for a 2-year courtesy card from

the Australian High Commission Social Club.

Delhi Network is an informal organization which invites women, especially foreigners new to Delhi, to a monthly coffee morning where information on life in Delhi is shared.

The Indo-American Chamber of Commerce welcomes Americans and Indians to their varied and interesting programs.

The Women International Club (WIC) and the Delhi Commonwealth Women Association (DCWA) have 50 percent Indian membership. WIC has a very active social and cultural program for members. The DCWA turns its energies to the funding and running of the DCWA Clinic and small school for the poor.

The Outreach Committee of the AWA operates a recycling program and has a listing of Indian organizations welcoming volunteer help.

Special Information

Indians dress modestly. To respect Indian sensitivities when in public, Western women should wear skirts below the knees or longer or relatively loose dark slacks, avoiding sleeveless blouses, tight pants, and shorts. Young women and teenage girls, especially those dressed in tight or short Western dress, may attract pinches and other undesirable attention. Western men should avoid going shirtless; trousers are preferable to shorts. These suggestions are especially important when visiting rural areas or tradition-bound urban areas.

Short-term visitors, especially those planning trips outside the major cities, should keep the weather in mind when arranging their travel.

Calcutta

By Indian standards, Calcutta is a new city. It was established by Job Charnock in 1690 as the trading center in Bengal for the East India Company. The site of the city was

occupied at that time by three villages, one of which had been developed by Portuguese traders as early as 1530. Development of the city has been shared not only by the English and the Indians, but also by Greeks, Portuguese, Dutch, French, Swedes, Jews, Armenians, and Persians—all of whom have contributed to its history.

Calcutta, once a trading center for the East India Company and the capital of British India from 1772 to 1912, is today India's second largest city with 13 million people. Capital of the state of West Bengal, Calcutta is situated in eastern India on the Hooghly River about 80 miles north of the Bay of Bengal. The city is built on marshland and experiences periodic flooding.

About half of Calcutta's inhabitants are Bengali Hindus and a significant percentage are Anglo-Indians, Moslems, and other communities (Sikhs, Parsees and Christians). The largest single element is from the U.K. and now numbers only 266 residents. The American community is estimated to be about 217. Principal languages of the city are Bengali, Hindi and English.

Overpopulation and associated problems—poverty, poor sanitation, and lack of housing—are evident everywhere. Despite facing problems of high unemployment, overcrowding and poor infrastructure, Calcutta, as a city, shows remarkable resilience. The friendliness of Indians of all classes provides many contacts and experiences that together can make a tour in Calcutta pleasant and memorable.

Food

In-season fruits and vegetables are plentiful. Bananas, oranges, and limes are always available. In winter, cauliflower, broccoli, red cabbage and squash are specialties. All fruits and vegetables must be washed and treated with a disinfectant solution.

Excellent and inexpensive beef and mutton is plentiful in the market.

Pork and poultry (poor by U.S. standards) are also available. Better cuts of these meats are usually purchased at higher prices from specialty shops or vendors who deliver.

Fresh fish is reasonably priced in season. Shrimp, crabs, and lobster are available seasonally at slightly high prices. Rice, eggs, sodas, and baked goods are available locally.

Locally available powdered milk is expensive.

Clothing

Men: During the warmest part of the year, short-sleeved shirts or locally made bush shirts are worn.

Wash-and-wear or other lightweight suits in cotton or blends are appropriate. Mohair, wool, or blend medium-weight suits are good for the cool season. Local dry cleaners are adequate, but the quality of service is irregular. Vacations in the hill stations call for a coat, raincoat, jacket, and/or sweater.

Calcutta has many country and sports clubs. Those interested in tennis, swimming, golf and riding should bring appropriate attire.

Women: Washable, inexpensive, and easy-care cotton dresses are worn for most daytime occasions during the 9 warm months of the year. During this time, evening wear is casual. During the cool months, cottons, lightweight wools, wool, synthetic fabrics, and silks are worn. A lightweight coat, sweaters, and knitwear are good for vacations in the hills.

Local tailors can make clothing from patterns or pictures with the local cottons, cotton-blends, and silks.

Bring lightweight, sturdy summer footwear. Flat, low-heeled shoes are necessary for the rough terrain. Relatively inexpensive sandals are available in small sizes only, others can be made to order, but quality is inconsistent. Cobblers can copy shoes that you own or work from pictures.

Children: Bring at least an initial clothing supply for children, especially underwear, swimsuit, tennis shoes, and school shoes. Bring a small supply of winter clothing for cool winter days or visits to hill stations. Children who attend boarding school in hill stations will need a full supply of winter clothing and warm blankets.

Local baby supplies are not up to U.S. standards; bring cotton or disposable diapers and rubber pants. Outerwear can be made locally with local fabrics.

Religious Activities

Calcutta's largest religious groups are the Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists.

The Jewish Synagogue is located near the Calcutta Cathedral.

Calcutta has several Anglican churches in addition to the Cathedral of St. Paul. Presbyterian services are held in St. Andrew's Church of Scotland. The largest of the Roman Catholic churches is St. Thomas' on Middleton Row. Other denominations represented are Methodist, Baptist, Seventh-Day Adventist, Christian Scientist, Assembly of God, and Quaker. Many church services are in English.

Education

Schooling in Calcutta above the lower elementary grades is poor by U.S. standards. Many American students to the Calcutta International School (CIS), which accepts students from nursery school through Grade 12. CIS follows the British curriculum but satisfies most American requirements. Grades 10–12 are geared to the British A-level equivalent, requiring American students to do additional coursework before entering most U.S. colleges and universities.

The Mongrace Montessori School, is excellent for preschoolers (age 3 and over).

The school calendar varies among the schools, but most continue throughout the year, with a 1-



Hand-pulled rickshaw in Calcutta

Cory Langley. Reproduced by permission.

month-long break in December to January and a 6-week break during the summer months of May and June.

Sports

Many sports are available—golf, tennis, swimming, horseback riding, rowing, squash, soccer, cricket, polo, horse racing, and field hockey. Squash is played on European-sized courts with imported English squash balls (softer than American balls). A swimming pool is at several private clubs.

Medium-quality tennis and squash rackets are available. Squash balls are difficult to obtain. Local tennis balls are of poor quality. Golfers may use either English- or American-sized golf balls.

Most Americans pay to join a private club for the social life and sports facilities. The Tollygunge Club, about 30 minutes from central Calcutta, has a swimming pool, golf, tennis, horseback riding, monthly movies, and a snack area.

The Saturday Club has tennis courts, a swimming pool, library, restaurant, and lawn. The Calcutta Swimming Club has a large outdoor swimming pool, dining room, and bar. Both clubs accept single women as members.

The Bengal Club offers its older, conservative membership a quiet atmosphere for business luncheons and dinner parties. The Calcutta Club is most prestigious among Bengalis. The South Club and International Club are popular with tennis players. The Rowing Club uses a small lake in south Calcutta, and the Royal Calcutta Golf Club is the oldest Golf Club outside the U.K.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

A drive on the Grand Trunk Road along the Hooghly River reveals glimpses of bygone splendor in Calcutta. Boat rides are available at Diamond Harbor and Kakdwip, a 2-hour drive from Calcutta.

The ocean resorts of Puri and palpur lie about 300 miles southwest on the Bay of Bengal and may be reached by overnight train. Hotel accommodations are moderate to poor. Visitors may swim and surf. Also on the Bay of Bengal and only 4 hours from Calcutta by road is Digha, which has limited accommodations.

The temples and caves of Bhubaneswar, Puri, Konarak, and other historic towns are 275 miles southwest of Calcutta in Orissa. The largest collection of Siberian tigers in the world is in the wildlife preserve

there. Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal, is about 700 miles northwest of Calcutta and is about 1 hour by air. The hill station town of Darjeeling is a hour's flight or an overnight train ride from Calcutta.

Permits are required to visit Sikkim, Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, and the scenic Andaman Islands, a 2-hour flight from Calcutta. Good snorkeling, scuba diving, moderately priced hotels, and tours are available. Some rental snorkeling and scuba gear is available. The peak holiday season is November through April.

Entertainment

Calcutta has good hotel restaurants with international cuisine and live dance bands. Americans also dine at several good Indian and Chinese restaurants.

Several movie theaters regularly feature European and American films, but facilities are poor.

Calcutta is known as the creative capital of India. Bengalis are lively, talkative, and outgoing people. During the cool season, Calcutta comes alive with Indian poetry, music, drama, painting, sculpture, and dance programs. The Calcutta School of Music presents occasional chamber music concerts. Visiting vocal, instrumental, and dance artists perform several times a year.

The Birla Planetarium has daily lectures and demonstrations, except on Mondays. The Zoological Gardens with its white tigers, and the Agri-Horticultural Society are located in Alipur. There are also the Botanical Gardens in Alipur.

Social Activities

Many clubs are available for membership. The Lions and Rotary Clubs welcome men of all nationalities. Many organizations welcome the participation of foreign women in their educational and charitable activities, including local orphanages and Mother Teresa's institutions.

Chennai (Madras)

Chennai (known as Madras until 1997), the capital of Tamil Nadu, lies on the shore of the Bay of Bengal, about 900 miles north of the Equator. With a population of 6.4 million, Chennai is the fourth largest city in India and the major industrial, business, and cultural center of South India. Founded by the British in the early 17th century as their first trading and military post in South Asia, Chennai has continued to grow with very little planning. Modern concrete buildings are often flanked by small shops, thatched huts, and vacant lots. Major streets bustle with bicycles, scooters, handcarts, oxcarts, buses, and long-distance trucks. The general pace of life is slower than in Bombay or Calcutta. Chennai, however, experiences poor sanitation and overcrowding. About 80 percent of the people in South India are still engaged in agriculture, but engineering and consumer industries are beginning to attract more activity.

Chennai is one of India's more pleasant major cities and is spread out over 50 kilometers.

The population is mostly Hindu, with large Muslim and Christian minorities. The traditional jibba, veshti and lungi are worn by many men; professional and businessmen wear Western dress. South Indian women typically wear saris, although the north Indian tunic sets are gaining popularity. South India is famous for Carnatic music and classical dance in the Bharatanatyam, Kathakali, and Kuchipudi styles.

English is spoken by about 5 percent of the people in South India. Tamil is the primary language in Chennai.

Food

Many fruits and vegetables are available—corn, eggplant, beans, carrots, potatoes, cabbage, squash, avocados, mushrooms, artichokes, yams, manes, bananas, peaches, pears, apples, grapes, oranges

(sweet limes), guavas, limes, tangerines, and pineapples. Cashews, peanuts, walnuts, and coconuts are also available.

Beef, chicken, mutton, lamb, pork and, occasionally, veal are available. The cost of all meats, except lamb and chicken, is less than in the U.S. Turkey is also available, but the quality is poor.

Fresh seafood (fish, lobster, crab, shrimp) is available and reasonably priced. Eggs are plentiful and their quality is good. UHT Long-Life milk or powdered milk is used by many foreigners for both drinking and cooking. Good quality cream is available locally. Fresh milk, cream, and powdered milk are available locally, but the supply is undependable. Fresh milk should always be boiled. Baby food and formula are also available locally, but the quality is questionable.

Clothing

American men usually wear short-sleeved dress shirts or bush shirts and slacks in the office, although a sports coat or suit may be necessary for an important appointment or official function. American women's office dress is similar to that worn in U.S. offices during the summer.

Materials for women's summer clothing are excellent, inexpensive and easily available in Chennai, although elastic, thread and zippers are not of the highest quality. Several changes of dress may be necessary daily. Frequent laundering, tropical sunlight, and perspiration combine to shorten the life of clothing. Since there is little seasonal change, cottons are worn year around. Indian dress (two-piece pajama outfits and saris) is popular for casual as well as formal wear. Chennai is a center for a great variety of export-quality handloom silks and cotton textiles. Many women bring a good supply of summer dresses from the U.S. and add locally-made garments to their wardrobes. Also, there are excellent local tailors who can copy almost anything, though these tailors have

trouble with designing or copying from pictures.

Bring several swimsuits and other sport clothes, including shoes for tennis and jogging and riding. Shoes with Western styling and quality are difficult to find, though both inexpensive dress and casual sandals are available locally. A good supply of undergarments is also recommended as local versions are not designed or sized to American tastes. Keep in mind that cotton is the most comfortable for the Chennai climate.

Supplies and Services

Most medicines and drugs are available, although the brand names differ and quality control is inadequate. Travelers are advised to bring their own supply. Most medicines cost less than those in the U.S. Vitamins are available, though not in combination supplements. Chennai water supply does not have fluoride added. Vitamins with fluoride added are recommended for children.

Hairdressers and barbers are adequate and inexpensive. Dry cleaning facilities exist but are of low quality.

Education

The American International School in Chennai (AIM) opened in August of 1995. Designed to enhance the educational and social experiences of expatriate children in Chennai (formerly Madras), AIM is independently operated under the auspices of the U.S. Consulate, Chennai, with the permission of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs. It is governed by a Board of Directors drawn from the parents of the children attending AIM.

AIM follows an American international curriculum taught by expatriate and Indian teachers.

Some elementary-age children have attended KFI - The School. Established with the intention of exploring the educational implications of the teaching of philosopher J. Krishnamurti, KFI - The School is run by

the Krishnamurti Foundation and accepts students from nursery school age through U.S. 10th grade. Its student body is 90 percent Indian; its curriculum is religious based. Parents find this alternative very agreeable, but admissions are difficult to obtain particularly for foreign children. Applications are taken once a year in April for June. Class size is limited to 25 per grade level.

By American standards, other schooling options in Chennai are inadequate. Other schooling options are available in the city however enrollment is restricted and entrance standards are very rigid. Facilities lack resources, with outdated textbooks, class rooms and buildings badly in need of repair. Although the curriculum is in English, many of the students have only marginal English speaking skills.

A preschool has recently opened in conjunction with the American International School. Other American preschoolers attend local Montessori schools. Maria Montessori visited Chennai many times during her professional career and left her marks in the city. Traditional Montessori methods are very popular in many local pre schools.

Special Educational Opportunities

Private instruction is available in classical south Indian dancing, instrumental music, philosophy, and yoga. Several famous yoga instructors reside in Chennai.

In Chennai, colleges are affiliated with the University of Chennai. Few admissions are granted to foreigners.

The Government College of Arts and Crafts offers instruction in painting, sculpture, and handicrafts. Interested persons may arrange private lessons from staff members.

Sports

Americans occasionally join the Madras Club, the Cosmopolitan

Club, or the Madras Gymkhana Club. All have swimming pools and tennis courts where whites are customarily worn. The Cosmopolitan Club and Madras Gymkhana have marginal golf courses.

Bring sports equipment, such as golf clubs, tennis rackets, and balls. Good equipment for volleyball, hockey, badminton, and soccer is available locally.

Laws in the southern states make the sport of hunting almost impossible. Do not import weapons into India.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

The ancient rock carvings at Mamallapuram (also called Mahabalipuram) and the temple cities of Kanchipuram are worth a visit. Facilities for sight-seeing are improving yearly. Adequate overnight accommodations exist in hotels, clubs, guesthouses of business concerns, or government-run tourist bungalows.

The beach in Chennai is not considered usable for health reasons. Many Americans use a resort area 35 kilometers south of the city for swimming and sunbathing. You can rent a beach house for weekends and holidays. However, be aware of the powerful undertow, and avoid leaving the beach line. Individuals who plan to use the beach should bring a sufficient supply of sunscreen.

Entertainment

On weekends a group of expats might organize pick up, softball and volleyball games. The Chennai Hash House Harriers organize biweekly runs around the city for individuals and families.

The Government Arts Gallery has a small collection of contemporary art; exhibits by individual artists are displayed periodically. The Government Museum exhibits a world-famous collection of early and medieval temple sculpture and an outstanding collection of bronze art.

There are a number of good restaurants in Chennai—in private clubs, deluxe hotels, and a few Chinese and Indian restaurants.

Social Activities

Several informal groups meet regularly for bridge, mahjong, snooker, Scottish Dancing etc. There are two women's groups which are popular with the expatriate community. The Overseas Women's Club (OWC) is open to foreign passport holders and concentrates on fund-raising to support local charities but also provides some support and orientation to newcomers. The OWC has recently published a book called "At home in Madras, a Handbook" which is an excellent resource for persons setting up residence in Chennai (formerly Madras). The International Women's Association (IWA) is an Indian/International organization which provides a social network. Activities and programs are centered around cross cultural exchanges, friendship and goodwill between India and the expatriate community in Chennai. Monthly programs include topics on philosophy/religion, health/ecology, current events, tours/travel, cooking swapshop, book discussions and arts/handicrafts.

Social life is centered in the home for Indians and Westerners alike. Consumption and importation of alcohol is tightly controlled. Certain clubs, restaurants, and hotel permit rooms may serve Indian liquor and wines.

South Indians are hospitable, easy-going, and pleasant. Entertaining at home consists of dinner parties and buffet suppers, occasional cocktail parties, and large receptions. Many Indians do not serve alcohol.

Third-country nationals in Chennai are largely members of the consular corps and business community from the U.K., Japan, Germany, Russia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Sri Lanka. About 20 honorary consuls reside in Chennai. The Consulate General of France is located in Pondicherry, a former French territory.



Gateway of India, arch in Bombay, India

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Special Information

British Airlines and Lufthansa have direct flights from Europe to Chennai. For long flights, a midpoint layover is recommended. Other major international airlines fly into India through Bombay and New Delhi. Transiting Bombay is not recommended.

Mumbai

Government of Maharashtra changed the name of the city of Bombay to Mumbai in December, 1995.

With a population of more than 16 million, greater Mumbai now outranks Calcutta as the largest urban area in India. Mumbai is India's most western city, and yet the most representative of India's diverse populations.

Mumbai occupies two islands on the west coast of India in Maharashtra state. The eastern side looks out over a great natural harbor, unri-

valed elsewhere on the subcontinent, that provides 75 square miles of sheltered, deep water.

At the southern end of the city lies the sweeping, 3-mile curve of Back Bay, fringed by a boulevard whose lights—brightly gleaming at night—are known locally as the Queen's Necklace.

The downtown business area is flanked to the north by a belt of thriving markets or bazaars that sell everything from essential foodstuffs to luxury items. Beyond the bazaars, Mumbai is a hodgepodge of densely crowded tenements, slum areas, factories, cotton mills, railway lines, and crowded streets.

Mumbai provides about one-third of India's income tax revenue and two-fifths of the country's total revenue from air and seaborne trade. It has the country's busiest stock exchange and the largest concentration of industries. More U.S. banks and manufacturing companies are

located in Mumbai than in any other city in India. By far India's busiest port, Mumbai handles twice the tonnage of Calcutta and Cochin. The Indian film industry, whose capital is Mumbai, produces more movies than any other place in the world.

Nearly 70 percent of Mumbai residents are Hindu. Muslims account for another 15 percent. The remainder is composed of Christians (mainly Catholics), Buddhists, Jains, Jews, Parsees and Sikhs—often influential minorities, though few in number. Most of the estimated 5,000 Americans in the Mumbai consular district are of Indian ancestry.

Americans have few language problems in Mumbai. English is widely used in government and business circles. Service personnel often have a poor understanding of English, speaking instead Marathi or Gujarati. Most domestic employees

speak some English and Goan or Konkani.

Food

Most basic food items are available locally. Beef has become increasingly scarce since the ascension to Maharashtra state power of a Hindu nationalist party, the BJP, in 1994. Mutton, pork, ham, and chicken are readily available. A broad variety of fresh seafood is available in the dry seasons, including many kinds of fish, prawns, lobster, and crab. A good variety of vegetables is found in plentiful supply year round—tomatoes, green peppers, potatoes, cabbage, cucumbers, beets, beans, onions, carrots, cauliflower, spinach, and okra. Lettuce and celery are available. Many wonderful fruits are available at different times of the year—papaya, mangoes, pineapples, oranges, tangerines, grapes, peaches, pears, plums, apples, and strawberries. Prices of fruits and vegetables can be as much as 80 percent less than the would cost in the U.S.

Many canned and dry goods can be found on the local market. White flour, whole-wheat flour, sugar (very coarse), confectioners sugar, tea, coffee (ground or beans), juices, jellies, gelatins, crackers, potato chips, excellent nuts, dried beans and lentils, and locally bottled soft drinks such as Pepsi, Coca-Cola, 7-Up, orange soda, club soda, and tonic water are all available. Local dairy products such as fresh milk, cream, yogurt, ice cream, and cheese are available. However, the fresh milk and cream are generally not considered safe unless they are boiled before use. It is safer to use long-life milk, which is available locally. Specialty items such as pate, cheese, and olive oil can be found, as can many American products (Tang and Hershey's Chocolate Syrup), but the prices are high.

Clothing

Because of the heat and humidity in Mumbai, lightweight, washable clothing is a must. There are very few air-conditioned buildings. Even in the coolest months, polyester blends are uncomfortably warm.

Clothing, including underwear, made of 100 percent cotton is best. Bring clothing for cooler climates for travel to the mountain and desert areas of India and for planned or unexpected trips to Europe, the U.S., or other parts of the globe in winter.

Sports attire is informal in Mumbai, but whites are generally used on tennis courts.

Men: Cotton dress shirts and sports shirts are available in Mumbai, but the quality is not quite the same as in the U.S. Bring a supply of ties, socks, cotton underwear, and shoes. Good sandals and slippers are sold locally, but dress shoes are not satisfactory. Bring athletic shoes, bathing suits, and clothing for sports activities (tennis, volleyball, squash). Some better quality men's clothing can be purchased in Benetton. Good quality athletic shoes are not available locally. Casual waterproof shoes are helpful to have to wear during the monsoon.

Women: For other times, inexpensive, lightweight cotton dresses, blouses, skirts, shorts, and slacks are available locally. On Fashion Street, an open fair-market dealing in seconds, dresses and skirts are sold for \$2-\$3. Better quality clothing can be found at shops like Benetton.

Ready-made Indian suits (salwar kameez) and saris in beautiful design may be worn for casual and formal occasions. Silk saris can be tailored into dresses and suits. Accessories such as belts, scarves, and costume jewelry are inexpensive. Shoes and sandals are available, but the quality is not as good as in the U.S. Leather purses in a multitude of colors and styles are sold at reasonable prices.

Children: Children's clothing should be lightweight and washable. Bring a supply of cotton underwear, bathing suits (and other swimming necessities), and shoes. Cotton T-shirts and shorts are available, but bring a supply. Also, bring rubber boots and umbrellas. Infant

supplies are sold locally, but are not up to Western standards.

Supplies and Services

Shopping in Mumbai is interesting. The city has many handicraft shops that specialize in crafts from many parts of India, especially Kashmir and Gujarat—gemstones, embroidery, leather goods, antiques, carved screens, brass, gold items, and carpets.

Gasoline is about \$3.60 a gallon for 93 octane. Eighty-seven octane, as well as unleaded gasoline is also available. Gasoline quality is good but not as good as in the U.S.

Beauty salons and barbershops are adequate and inexpensive.

Dry cleaners exist, but quality is questionable. If you must have something cleaned, make arrangements through one of the five-star hotels.

Tailors and dressmakers are inexpensive. They can easily copy already existing items (rather than sewing from pictures or patterns). Tailors are not as speedy as in Hong Kong or Bangkok, nor is the finished product as skillfully made, but one can usually find a tailor who does adequate work. Good-quality fabrics are available here, but notions (thread, buttons, fasteners, etc.) are below American standards.

Religious Activities

Mumbai has Hindu temples, Moslem mosques, Christian churches, and Jewish synagogues. Among Christian denominations represented are Roman Catholic, Methodist, Church of Christ, and Episcopalian (Church of England). Services are conducted in English, Hindi, Gujarati, and Marathi.

Education

The American School of Mumbai (ASB) offers classes from pre-kindergarten through grade 12. ASB is an American-sponsored school and receives grants from the Department of State. It is the only one of the many English-medium schools to use the American system. The

school year runs from mid-August to late May.

The school staff numbers about 30, including a principal, full-time teachers, special staff, and several aides. The student body is composed of about 200 students, 30% American and the remainder other foreign residents of Mumbai. The elementary school is located across the street from the consulate; the middle and high schools are approximately one block from the consulate. The school is currently in the process of purchasing property, and will soon start building a new school. The new school is expected to be ready for occupancy and classes in the fall of 1999.

ASB's high school program is operated as an independent course of study with the University of Nebraska correspondence program. ASB modifies the University of Nebraska program by scheduling the students into as normal a school program as possible.

Most parents send their children to ASB at least through grade 8.

Other English-medium schools in Mumbai operate under the British system. Mumbai International School, Cathedral School, and John Cannon are well known. The schools are competitive and children are under great pressure to perform well. Admission is difficult, particularly in the lower grades. Few American-type extracurricular activities are available. The school year begins in early June and ends in early April.

Sunflower School and Casa Bambino are two nursery schools located in the residential areas near the U.S. Consulate General. Both accept children sooner than ASB does. Though classes are crowded, in recent years American children have been attending Casa Bambino.

Special Educational Opportunities

Teachers of Hindi are available. Classes are available locally in pottery, Indian cooking, weaving, art,

computers, fabric painting, and many other subjects are also available. Coaches are available for tennis and golf.

Sports

Basketball teams play weekly, and tennis is popular. Most sports activities in Mumbai are centered around various private clubs.

Breach Candy Swimming Bath Trust, has two saltwater pools, a lap pool that is partially covered, and an outdoor pool in the shape of pre-partition India. Applicants must have a European sponsor to join. Fees for two years for a family of two total about \$925. The children's park and playground may be used at Breach Candy free of charge. Visitors may use the pool area for \$3.00 per person.

The Willingdon Sports Club is Mumbai's most prestigious private club. Foreign businessmen and diplomats must have a sponsor, but are admitted under special provisions. Fees for two years total about \$6,300 in 1996. The only club with a golf course in Mumbai, it also has tennis, badminton, and squash courts, a swimming pool, a library, several restaurants, and gardens often used for large parties.

Mumbai Gymkhana is located in the downtown area near USIS and offers tennis, swimming, badminton, and squash. The total cost for belonging to this club for two years, irrespective of family size, is about \$9,125 in 1996. Married women cannot be members, but can use the facilities as their husbands' dependents. This club is very popular with Mumbai's young professional crowd.

The Royal Mumbai Yacht Club, located near the Taj Mahal Hotel and the Gateway of India, has sailboats for members to use during the October-May sailing season. Members of Washington, D.C.'s Army Navy Club are allowed to use the club and the sailboats at no cost. The Colaba Sailing Club also has sailboats and is less expensive.

Amateur Riders' Club is adjacent to the race course and has riding facilities. It is especially nice for young people who wish to take riding lessons.

Rotary Clubs, Lions Clubs, and Masonic Lodges are active in Mumbai.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

There are fascinating sights in and around Mumbai. Newcomers can begin by taking one of the several half-day or full-day city tours arranged by the Government of India Tourist Office. A tour of Victorian architecture of the city and a boat ride from the Gateway of India to Elephanta Caves is worthwhile. There are also many Hindu, Jain, and Moslem shrines to see.

Other daytime outings include trips to the Buddhist temple caves on a jungle-covered hillside at Kanheri, the Portuguese fort city of Bassein, and the Kanala bird sanctuary with a fort perched atop a jungle-covered hill.

The three hill stations of Lonavala, Matheran, and Mahabaleshwar make pleasant weekend excursions. Lonavala has the Karla and Bija Buddhist temple caves and two interesting old hill forts. Matheran has pleasant views, walks, and bridle trails. Mahabaleshwar is the coolest of all, with attractive views and walks.

Goa, about a 45-minute flight from Mumbai (about \$100.00 round-trip), has clean beaches, luxury resort hotels, and historic Portuguese towns. Reservations usually must be made well in advance. Aurangabad, 30 minutes from Mumbai by plane, has the temple caves of Ajunta and Ellora and an old fort at Dalalabad. And a trip to the Taj Mahal at Agra is a must for anyone stationed in India.

Entertainment

Mumbai is a cosmopolitan city and dining out in the many Chinese, French, Italian, and Indian restaurants is a popular activity. Hotels

often have discotheques and dance bands in their restaurants. Many new nightclubs have opened throughout Mumbai.

Mumbai is a center for Indian and western classical music. Well-known Indian and international artists perform in Mumbai's concert halls.

Art and archeology exhibits can be found at the Jehangir Art Gallery and the Prince of Wales Museum. The Museum Society sponsors slide lectures by international and Indian scholars. The Mumbai Natural History Society organizes weekend bird-watching trips and publishes magazines, bird guides, and books on flowering trees. English-language plays by professionals and vintage American and English films can be seen. American action-style films are frequently shown in local theaters.

The USIS and British Council libraries, Alliance Francaise, and Max Mueller museum are open to everyone. Inexpensive paperback books published in India, U.S., and U.K. are available in the several nearby, moderately well-stocked book stores.

Social Activities

A small, active American Women's Club holds monthly meetings.

An active social life with international contacts is possible in Mumbai. Indians are hospitable people and friendships develop rapidly. Americans are welcome to join the American Alumni Association and the Indo-American Society. Both offer opportunities for contact with Indians interested in the U.S. Indus International is a popular women's organization that features study groups and trips to interesting parts of India. Many business people join the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce.

The Hash House Harriers, an international running group, sponsors a run the last Sunday of each month, an occasional weekend trip to Goa

or a hill station, and the Hash Bash (party) every fall.

OTHER CITIES

AGRA is situated on the right bank of the Yamuna River, 125 miles southeast of New Delhi. An important commercial center and rail junction, this city of over 1.2 million is known for its glass products, shoes, carpets, and handicrafts. The present city was established by Akbar, who built a stone fort here in 1564; it was a Mogul capital until 1658. The city frequently changed rulers during the decline of the Mogul empire until it was annexed by the British in 1803. It served as capital of the North-West Provinces from 1835–62. Agra has many magnificent forts and castles and is home of Agra University, but its main attraction is the Taj Mahal. When the fifth Mogul emperor, Shah Jahan, learned of the death of his wife, Queen Mumtaz, he ordered the Taj Mahal to be built in her memory. Often called a monument of love, its polished white marble walls are decorated with millions of inlaid precious and semi-precious stones. Construction began in 1632 and took 22 years and over 20,000 workers to complete.

AHMADABAD (or Ahmedabad) is one of India's most beautiful cities, and is known best as the site of the beginning of Mahatma Gandhi's efforts in the country's independence movement. It was here that Gandhi was arrested in 1933. Ahmadabad, with a population of more than 4.2 million, is an important rail terminal, as well as an industrial center known for its cotton mills. It is located on the Sabarmati River, nearly 300 miles north of Bombay. Ahmadabad is the capital and cultural center of Gujarat State. It has many magnificent tombs and mosques, and is sacred to the Jains, who have over a hundred temples here. Ahmadabad is also the home of Gujarat University, founded in 1950.

BANGALORE is 180 miles west of Chennai. It is the home of a university, of the National Aeronautical Research Institute, and of the University of Agricultural Sciences. It once had a large British civil and military post. Bangalore is the capital city of Karnataka State, and has a population of approximately 5.6 million. Founded in 1537, Bangalore today is one of South India's major transportation hubs and industrial centers. There are aircraft and electronics industries and textile mills; coffee is traded. Known as a retirement city, Bangalore has wide streets and numerous parks. Kolar Gold Fields, with a population of 144,400, is 35 miles east of Bangalore. It is known for its gold mines.

The city of **BARODA** lies on the Viswamitn River between Bombay to the south and Ahmadabad to the north. Situated in a fertile area, Baroda is a major marketing hub for millet, cotton, and tobacco. Hand-loomed cloth interwoven with silver is made here. It is also a prominent rail center. Formerly the capital of the princely state of Baroda, the city became part of the Indian Union in 1947; merged with Bombay State in 1948; and became part of the new state of Gujarat in 1960. Historic landmarks include a palace dating back to 1721. Medieval Indian sculptures and paintings may be seen at the Museum and Picture Gallery. There is a medical college and an university, founded in 1949 here. A well-planned city with wide avenues and beautiful parks and buildings, Baroda's population is over 750,000.

The city of **BHOPAL** is situated in central India in an agricultural region surrounded by rolling hills and dense forests. Founded in 1728, this industrial city of about 1.4 million people is 466 miles south of New Delhi. Items produced in Bhopal include electrical goods, jewelry, and cotton cloth. Bhopal is best known, however, for the tragedy that occurred in December 1984. The deadly gas, methyl isocyanate, escaped from the Union Carbide pesticide plant on the outskirts of the city. It passed over the towns of

Jaiprakash and Chhola and drifted toward Bhopal. It was the worst industrial disaster ever, killing more than 2,500 people.

The capital of Orissa State, **BHUBANESWAR** is situated 140 miles southwest of Calcutta, in eastern India. The city boasts numerous shrines, built between the sixth and 12th centuries, that are examples of the finest of Hindu architecture in the country. At one time, there were 700 temples in Bhubaneswar; today, 500 still stand. The Great Temple, built to the sun god in the seventh century, is decorated with detailed carvings. Today, the city is a developing administrative center, with a population of over 225,000. Utkal University, founded in 1943, and Orissa University of Agriculture and Technology, founded in 1962, are located in Bhubaneswar.

Situated on the Noyil River at an altitude of 1,400 feet, **COIMBATORE** is the third largest city in Madras State in southwestern India. In 1866, Coimbatore was made a municipality and the headquarters of its district. It is a major commercial and industrial hub based on the hydroelectric complex on the Pykora River. Coimbatore is the largest cotton-milling center south of Bombay. A majority of its residents are Hindu and speak Tamil. The renowned Hindu-Dravidian-style Temple of Perur is located here. The Nilgiri Hills, known for their tea and coffee, are nearby. A railway connects the city with Madurai and Tuticorin, and air service links it with Cochin, Bangalore, and Chennai. The population in Coimbatore exceeds 1.4 million.

HYDERABAD, a city of 5.4 million inhabitants, is located in Andhra Pradesh State. Once part of the Mogul Empire, the area is known as Nizam's Dominions, after the sovereigns who ruled the region for many centuries. Hyderabad lies on the Musi River, about 300 miles north-northwest of Chennai, and is a city of paper factories, pottery works, sugar refineries, and carpet and textile mills. The University of Hyderabad was founded in 1918. Some of

its ancient structures include Char Minar, built in 1591, and the Old Bridge, built in 1593. Warangal is 90 miles northeast of Hyderabad. The 12th-century capital of Telugu Kingdom, Warangal is known for its carpets, silk, and textiles, and has a population of 336,000.

INDORE is located in northwestern India, about 320 miles northeast of Bombay. The city, on the Bombay-Agra Road, is the center of the Malwa Region, which offers a pleasant climate, fertile land, and consistent rainfall. Indore has cotton mills and several other light industries; cotton, peanuts, millet, wheat, and barley are grown in the region. Indore's educational facilities include a medical college, a technical institute, and a plant experimentation station; Daly College, once exclusively for royal princes, now offers open enrollment. Two palaces and the old British Residency still stand here. The city has a population of approximately 1.6 million.

JAIPUR, the capital of Rajasthan, is situated in northwest India, about 150 miles southwest of New Delhi. Founded in 1727, the city was the capital of the former Indian state of Jaipur. It is a commercial center, known for its ivory and enamel work, and for glassware and marble carvings. The name is sometimes seen spelled Jeypore. Among the city's many tourist attractions is a fabulous maharajah's palace, which occupies one-seventh of the municipal area. Currently, Jaipur has over 2 million residents, and is known as the pink city, from the color of its houses. The city of Ajmer is 85 miles to the southwest of Jaipur. Founded in 145, Ajmer today is a trade center with cotton mills and nearby marble quarries. This city of almost one million has a Jain temple, the tomb of a Muslim saint, and a palace among its historic sites.

KANPUR (Cawnpore) is a rail junction, and the most important industrial center of the Uttar Pradesh State in northern India. Situated on the right bank of the Ganges River,

about 250 miles southeast of New Delhi, Kanpur is known for the massacre of British soldiers and European families during the 1857 Sepoy Mutiny. It now is a city with a population of 2.6 million. A technological institute is located in Kanpur. The city of Allahabad is located farther south on the Ganges River at the junction of the Yamuna. A holy city long sacred to Hindu pilgrims, Allahabad today is an administrative, transportation, and legal center that trades in sugar and cotton. Historic sites in this city of 1.5 million include Jama Masjid (Great Mosque). There is also a university, founded in 1887.

The commercial and cultural center of the middle Ganges Valley, **LUCKNOW** is the capital of Uttar Pradesh State. It lies 48 miles northeast of Kanpur and 270 miles southeast of New Delhi, on the Gumti River. Lucknow is a major wholesaling center, handling food products. There are also financial and banking opportunities here. Lucknow once served as the capital of the princes of Oudh. A number of interesting mosques, palaces, and other buildings are reminders of their reign. The most fascinating is the white marble Great Imambara, built in the late 1700s. The city is known for its zoological gardens, parks, and National Botanical Gardens. The city is the site of Lucknow University, several government research centers, and a variety of colleges. The majority of Lucknow's approximately 2.2 million inhabitants are Hindus; there is also a small Muslim community.

Situated near the Vaigai River, **MADURAI** (formerly called Madura) is in southern India, about 280 miles southwest of Chennai. In the middle of a cotton-growing region, the city's industries concentrate on cotton spinning and textile weaving. An old city, Madurai was the headquarters of the Pandya Dynasty from about the third century B.C. until the A.D. 10th century. Madurai was controlled by Great Britain from 1801 to 1947. Of the outstanding shrines, temples, and palaces located here, the Great

Temple is one of the largest Hindu temple complexes. It is visited daily by thousands of pilgrims; parts of the complex are open to non-Hindus as well. The population here is estimated at 1,187,000.

NAGAPUR, a transportation hub and industrial center, is located on the Nag River in central India, about 425 miles northeast of Bombay. Founded in the 18th century, Nagapur passed to the Marathas after 1743 and to the British in 1853. Today, it is a city of more than 2 million whose industries include flour milling, fruit canning, printing, and dyeing. Nagapur also manufactures pottery, glass, brassware, textiles, and iron and leather goods. Amravati is a city of 261,400 situated 85 miles southwest of Nagapur on a branch of the Purna River. An important cotton center, Amravati is the site of the Great Stupa, dating to the second century A.D. Andhra Dynasty.

PUNE (also called Poona) is situated on the Bima River, 75 miles east-southeast of Bombay. It is a rail and road junction, as well as a city of beautiful public gardens and numerous palaces and temples. There are extensive military headquarters here and in its suburbs. Pune has 3.7 million residents.

SURAT, with a population exceeding 2 million, is 150 miles north of Bombay, near the mouth of the Tapti River. During the 18th century, this ancient city was the largest in the country. It was the site of serious conflict between Portuguese, Dutch, and British traders while it was the principal European trading port. Surat is no longer a prominent port, but it is a major commercial city for trading, cotton and silk milling, handloom weaving, and a variety of crafts.

Situated on the Ganges River, **VARANASI** (formerly called Benares and Banaras) is 375 miles northwest of Calcutta in northeastern India. To Hindus, this city is the most sacred place on earth. They believe dying here guarantees a Hindu release from endless

rebirths; and by worshipping at the river, a Hindu acquires special merits during the present life. Over one million pilgrims visit Varanasi's 1,500 temples every year. Most of the temples have been built in the past 200 years due to the earlier destruction of the ancient complexes. Noted shrines include the Great Mosque of Aurangzeb, the most prominent structure situated on the highest ground; the Golden Temple, dedicated to Biseswar (Shiva); and the Durga Temple, favored by tourists for its swarms of monkeys. Industries in Varanasi include the manufacture of brocade, silk, and brassware. The city has a population of approximately 1.2 million.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

India—"Bharat" to most Indians—is the seventh largest country in the world, with an area approximately one-third the size of the U.S. India is bordered by China, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar (Burma) and Sri Lanka. To the west, south, and east, India is surrounded by the sea—respectively, the Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the Bay of Bengal. The Lakshadweep Islands off the southwest coast and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, 750 miles off the southeast coast in the Bay of Bengal, belong to India.

India stretches more than 2,000 miles from Jammu and Kashmir in the north to the southern tip of Tamil Nadu. It is 1,800 miles from Gujarat in the west to Arunachal Pradesh in the east. The topography is dominated in the far north by the majestic Himalayas, which include the world's highest peaks. From the Himalayan foothills to the Vindhya Range in central India spreads the vast, fertile, heavily populated Gangetic Plain. The sacred Ganges (Ganga) and the

Yamuna rivers dissect the Plain. South of the Vindhya Range lies the Deccan Plateau. The Western and Eastern Ghats lie along the southern coastlines.

The climate in India ranges from Arctic-like conditions in the high Himalayas, to blast furnace heat in many parts of the country during the summer, and heavy monsoon downpours during the rainy season. At other times, the weather can be mild and delightfully pleasant. New Delhi is at an altitude of 700 feet above sea level in north central India. The weather in the capital is most pleasant during the temperate months of October–November and February–March, periods characterized by cool nights and warm days. While the winter months of December and January are usually fairly temperate too, the temperature can become surprisingly cold at night. From April through mid-July daytime temperatures often top 100°F. The nights cool off somewhat, but are still hot. From mid-July to September, the occasional monsoon rains create high humidity and high temperatures.

Throughout the year severe air pollution is a problem in New Delhi. During the monsoon season, mosquitos breed in standing water, spreading malaria, Japanese B encephalitis, and dengue fever. Mold, dust, and bacterial infections are common. Cockroaches, termites, moths, and flies are common pests.

Mumbai (formerly known as Bombay), India's financial capital, is a port on the Arabian Sea in the western state of Maharashtra. On a map, Mumbai appears as a peninsula (actually two islands) off the west coast of India. A great natural harbor provides 75 square miles of sheltered deep water.

Mumbai has a tropical climate with three distinct seasons. The heat and high humidity of April, May, and October make life quite uncomfortable. The monsoon season, June to September, brings a welcome relief although the humidity remains high. An average of 77 inches of rain

falls during the monsoon. Late November through February is cooler, although the days are still hot and sunny.

Calcutta, the capital of the state of West Bengal, is situated on the Hooghly River about 80 miles north of the Bay of Bengal. Because the city is built on near sea-level marshland, Calcutta and its suburbs suffer from poor drainage and periodic flooding, especially during the monsoon, June to October. From November through February, temperatures are pleasant, however the city suffers from considerable air pollution during these months. The heat begins in March, and occasional “nor’westers” bring welcome cool winds and rain from the Himalayas through May. Then the overcast sky of the monsoon brings relief from the glare of the sun, even though the temperature remains high.

Chennai, the capital of Tamil Nadu, lies on the shore of the Bay of Bengal, about 900 miles north of the Equator. Until 1997, the city was known as Madras. Chennai has a medium-sized artificial harbor and a wide sandy beach that extends for several hundred miles along the coast. The surrounding countryside is a largely flat, coastal plain devoted to rice cultivation. It is green and fertile during part of the year but dry and dusty during the rainless spring and early summer months.

The climate is tropical throughout the year. December and January are relatively cool months. The weather heats up drastically from March through June. Unfortunately, as the temperature rises, so does the humidity. Chennai is unique among the consular cities—it experiences a late monsoon from August through November. Pre-monsoon rains bring slight relief in July, and the temperatures decrease slowly until the cooler season returns in November. During the hottest months, sea breezes occasionally lessen the discomfort.

Chennai averages 48 inches of rain annually, although droughts occur

when the monsoon fails. Most rain falls from October through December, but frequent showers can occur from May to September. Occasionally, cyclones strike the coast. Mildew damage occurs throughout the year. All U.S. Government houses have air conditioners in every room to help combat this fungus, as well as for comfort.

Population

India is the world’s second most populous country with an approximate population of 1,017,650,000. If current population growth trends continue, India’s population will likely surpass China’s in the next 20 to 30 years. The U.S. Embassy and Consulates are located in the following cities (with rough population estimates from 2000): Delhi (including New Delhi), 12.4 million; greater Mumbai, 18 million; greater Calcutta, 12.9 million; and Chennai, 6.6 million.

India is a predominantly rural country; more than three-fourths of the people live in villages. Nevertheless, India’s cities are huge and continue to expand with the annual migration of hundreds of thousands of rural residents. The strain on the cities to provide basic services to these burgeoning populations is outstripping their resources. The result is predictable—the quality and reliability of the water, power, transportation, and communications infrastructure have deteriorated in many urban centers.

India is a cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and religious mosaic unequalled in the world. The nation’s 25 states and several union territories are largely established on ethnic and linguistic lines. Hindi has been designated as the national language; it is in widespread use throughout the north and is increasingly understood in other parts of the nation, especially in large urban centers. English also continues as a language link between educated people from different parts of the country. Shopping and getting around in any of the urban areas can be easily done in English. Communication in

rural areas can also be pursued in English, but some understanding of Hindi or the local language is a definite advantage.

Although largely a Hindu nation (nearly 80% of the population), India has a huge Muslim population (approximately 12%)—the world’s second largest, after Indonesia. Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Jains and others make up the balance. Religion in India often provides identity and defines a way of life. Marriage, clothing, diet, employment, and location of housing can be dictated by religious considerations. Most women and some men dress in their traditional clothing, though modern fashions tend to blur ethnic lines in cities.

Most Indians have dietary restrictions; many are vegetarian, and some avoid eggs and dairy products. Many fast on a particular day of the week. Among those who do eat meat, Hindus do not eat beef and Muslims avoid pork. In cities, Indians generally eat late, often as late as 10 or 11 p.m.

Caste identification remains strong today, even among some non-Hindus. Having evolved over thousands of years, castes or family clans now number in the hundreds and are roughly divided by the Government of India into the *Forward Castes* (priestly, princely, and business), *Backward Castes* (agrarian and tradesmen), and *Scheduled Castes and Tribes* (formerly untouchables). Despite long-standing government affirmative action programs, most members of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes remain at the bottom of India’s social and economic ladder. Socially, an Indian is expected to marry within his own caste.

Dating and public display of affection between males and females are rarely seen. Arranged marriages are the norm, though there are exceptions, especially among the urban middle class. The traditional joint family is common, and a bride typically moves into her in-laws’ home. Traditionally, an Indian family is not considered complete until

there is a male heir to care for his parents in their old age and to light their funeral pyres.

Public Institutions

India is a democratic republic made up of 25 states and 7 union territories. Its 1950 constitution is mainly derived from the British parliamentary system. The constitutional head of State is the President, although his duties are mainly ceremonial. He resides in *Rashtrapati Bhavan* in New Delhi, formerly the residence of the British Viceroy. Executive power is held by the Prime Minister and his appointed Council of Ministers (the Cabinet) from the majority party or a coalition in Parliament.

Legislative power is vested in the bicameral Parliament, which is made up of the *Rajya Sabha* with, up to 250 appointed and indirectly elected members, and the *Lok Sabha*, with up to 550 directly elected members.

The judicial system is headed by a Supreme Court appointed by the President.

The political structure of the state governments is similar. The Governor, who is appointed by the President, is ceremonial head of the government, while the Chief Minister and his cabinet, who come from the majority party or coalition in the State Assembly (Legislature), exercise executive authority.

National political parties include the Congress (I) Party, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Janata Dal, Communist Party of India (CPI), and Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPM). In addition, there are several important regionally-based political parties, including *Telugu Desam*, *All India Anna Dravida Munetra Kazhagam*, *Dravida Munetra Kazhagam*, *Akali Dal*, and *Samajwadi Janta Dal*.

Many philanthropic organizations exist in India. The Rotary and Lions Clubs, the Red Cross, the YWCA and YMCA, the Boy Scouts and Girl

Guides—to name a few. The National Cadet Corps selects young men and women from all over the country to train at a military camp in New Delhi each year.

Arts, Science, and Education

The cultural heritage of India is one of the richest and most ancient in the world. India absorbed immigrants and invaders with their varied cultures. Although as a nation, India is less than 50 years old (1947); it has an ancient civilization spanning more than 4,000 years.

Indian architecture and sculpture have served primarily religious functions, mainly in temple carvings and tombs (Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam). The pinnacle of Moslem Mughal architecture was reached in the 17th century when Shah Jahan built the Taj Mahal at Agra as a tomb for his favorite wife.

Beginning with the sacred Vedas, Sanskrit literature developed over 2,500 years and is now alive in the epics *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*, originally handed down orally. Indian philosophy, which analyzes the soul, *karma* (action or duty) and salvation, is divided into many schools of thought (e.g., Schools of *Yoga*).

Indian music comprises a wide variety of instrumental and vocal traditions, among which are classical, religious, popular, theatrical and modern. The internationally famous Ravi Shankar still performs on his sitar, accompanied by tabla drummers.

The classical traditions of Indian dance are at least 2,000 years old and have evolved into dance dramas which dramatize Hindu religious stories through stylized gestures which are highly symbolic and emotionally suggestive.

Education is primarily the responsibility of the state governments. Although free in most states for

children between the ages of 6 and 14, education is not compulsory. Secondary schools offer instruction in Hindi, English and the appropriate regional language. Higher education is provided in colleges, universities and technical institutes. Social education programs promote adult literacy. In the nearly 50 years since independence, India has built a university education system which is second in size only to that of the U.S., with 200 universities and more than 6,300 colleges.

Commerce and Industry

With a population growth rate of over 2.1 percent per year and a real gross national product (GNP) growth rate since the early 1950s averaging below 4 percent, India has made modest progress in improving the standard of living for most of its population. Per capita income is U.S.\$2,200.

Agriculture accounts for 27% of India's GDP, involving 62% of the work force. The services sector, which includes trade, hotels, banking, transport and communications, now accounts for 52% of GDP and is the largest and the fastest growing sector of the economy.

India has traditionally found it difficult to export sufficient goods to offset import needs. India's leading exports include textiles and garments, leather products, gems and cut diamonds and, in recent years, manufactured goods. Principal imports include petroleum, capital goods, iron and steel, chemicals, fertilizers and edible oils. With over \$5.2 billion in two-way trade, the U.S. is India's largest trading partner followed by Russia, the European Community, and Japan. The U.S. is the largest foreign investor and the largest source of joint ventures in India.

Jute and cotton textiles remain the most important industrial sectors, but steel, heavy industry, and chemicals have gained in importance. India now manufactures a variety of

finished products, including consumer durables such as TVs, washers, stereos, electronics equipment, computer software, and automobiles for domestic use and export. Mineral resources (coal, iron ore, bauxite, manganese) are substantial but have been only partially tapped. Despite industrial development, chronic problems of unemployment and underemployment remain.

Transportation

Fuel

Diesel fuel and 93 octane petrol (gasoline) are readily available throughout the country. Diesel costs one-third as much as petrol. Lead free petrol is available on the open market in New Delhi and other large metropolitan cities. It is not readily available throughout India.

Rental Cars

When one rents an automobile for travel in India, it usually includes a driver. Air-conditioning costs more. Using rental services through a hotel more than doubles the cost, but this insures an English-speaking driver. One can also rent a car without a driver through Budget and Hertz.

New Delhi

New Delhi is probably the easiest Indian city in which to drive with its wide boulevards and flower-filled traffic circles.

Mumbai

Public transportation is available. Taxis are inexpensive (about 50 cent one-way between home and work) and readily available during daytime hours though often not late in the night. However, they are small and uncomfortable. Local buses and trains are extremely crowded and unclean.

Calcutta

The road conditions are poor. During the monsoons, streets flood and can stay flooded for 2 or 3 days.

Local transportation includes the subway, buses, taxis, three-wheelers, and rickshaws. Buses are over-

crowded and service is irregular. Metered taxis are available at all major hotels and shopping areas. The rates are low; however, most taxi drivers prefer to negotiate a flat rate. Tipping is optional. The city subway provides service that is comfortable, safe, and uninterrupted by traffic congestion.

Rental vehicles are available, but it is very difficult to get an English-speaking driver.

Local

Public transportation in Indian cities includes trains, buses, taxis, auto rickshaws (three-wheeled scooters), and cycle rickshaws. Horse-drawn Tongas are still seen in some cities and towns. Taxis and auto rickshaws, usually yellow and black, are not air-conditioned, but are inexpensive. Meters are often not set at the current rate, but drivers will produce a current rate card if asked to substantiate the higher rate. Taxis charge higher rates late at night.

VIP automobiles are given more leeway on the roads than are emergency vehicles. They usually come equipped with flashing lights, sirens, and are often accompanied by hand and gun-waving security vehicles. (There are also VVIPs and VVVIPs.) Ambulances may have a small flashing light, but not a siren. Police vehicles (jeeps, motor scooters, buses) are marked POLICE in English or Hindi. Fire engines have sirens.

Public transportation between cities is done by bus, train, or plane. India has an extensive rail system. State corporations run the bus companies which network throughout the country. Luxury tour buses can be rented.

Regional

India's highway system extends to most parts of the country. During the monsoon, roadways can become flooded due to sudden downpours. Traffic is diverted, potholes and sinkholes appear, and power and telephone service goes out. If one plans to do a lot of traveling in India

by personally owned vehicle, a 4-wheel drive utility vehicle with right-hand drive would be very useful.

Cars are driven on the left and most vehicles are right-hand drive. Operating a left-hand drive vehicle outside city limits can be dangerous. The driver will need someone in the passenger seat to tell when to pass or when another vehicle or animal is coming head-on in the left lane.

Driving is a challenge when sharing the road with the vehicles of varied speeds and sizes—trucks, buses, auto rickshaws, Indian-made Marutis, bullock carts, bicycles, handcarts, bicycle rickshaws, motor cycles, wandering livestock, taxis, pedestrians, and the occasional elephant or camel. Accidents are frequent and can be very serious, especially to unprotected passengers and pedestrians. Emergency medical services for road accident victims are usually poor or nonexistent.

The road conditions throughout the country differ from state to state. India has installed a new system of traffic signs, listing destinations and distances in English, Hindi, and local language on one sign. Bypasses are being installed around major cities. Petrol pumps are readily available throughout the country with 93 octane petrol and diesel fuel.

No matter how challenging the new ways of the road may seem, Indian drivers are tolerant of unusual behavior on the roadways. The key to driving in India is patience and flexibility.

Regional Air

India has separate domestic and international terminals at the major airports. To enter the airport, one must have a current airplane ticket or an official airport pass. Check-in procedures take 1-2 hours for domestic flights, and 2-3 hours for international flights. Most international flights arrive and depart in the middle of the night. Arriving passengers can expect to spend 15

minutes to 2 hours to get their baggage.

United Airlines currently offers daily round-the-world service from New Delhi, with flights in both directions to and from London and Hong Kong. Delta flies into Mumbai from Frankfurt seven times a week.

Direct flight connections link various Indian cities with Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan. Indian Airlines, Vayudoot Airlines, and new private air carriers offer service throughout India. Domestic travel by air is expensive. A round trip from Delhi to Goa, a distance of 500 miles, costs \$360.

No American carriers operate in and out of Calcutta. The city is served by a few foreign carriers, and their services are limited. Over-nighting in Bangkok or Singapore is unavoidable. Calcutta is connected with major Indian cities by Indian Airlines.

The international airport departure tax is Rs. 300 a person; and to neighboring countries the tax is Rs. 150.

Regional Railroads

India has one of the largest railway systems in the world. Although train stations can be a challenge, train travel is very enjoyable and probably the best way to see the country. Reservations should be made well in advance. And trains are no longer the bargain they once were. Indian rail offers 1st and 2nd class, sleepers, chair car, compartments, vegetarian and non-vegetarian meals, and air conditioning. Passengers carry their own toilet paper and drinking water.

Rail and air travel in India require a lot of planning, patience, and flexibility. Occasionally a train, plane or bus will be delayed or pre-poned (an Indian-English word meaning earlier than scheduled).

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

Local and international telephone service is available in India. Service is often disrupted, especially during monsoons and a heavy workload can delay repairs and installations. In general, the phone system functions adequately but requires patience, persistence, and low expectations.

Telephone numbers in India currently may be 6-digit or 7-digit numbers. Most homes have only one extension, usually placed by the front door or in the kitchen.

USA-Direct is now available in India for collect and credit card calls. Many Embassy employees have an AT&T credit card for international use. However, having the long-distance phone call originate in the U.S. incurs the least expense. Commercial telegraph, public FAX, and international telex services are available in India, but are, often unreliable.

Radio and TV

Electronic media in India is controlled by the Government of India. All India Radio (AIR) broadcasts mainly in various Indian languages, with occasional Western music and news programs in English. A good shortwave radio is necessary to receive Voice of America (VOA) and British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC).

Doordarshan, the local government-run TV, telecasts in color on the PAL system. One or two channels can be seen in major cities. Limited daily news is supplemented by a world news roundup on Friday nights. Classical Indian music, melodramatic Hindi movies/serials, political debates, and educational instruction are interspersed with cricket matches, edited coverage of Parliament, and old English-language movies.

CNN came to India in 1991 during the Gulf War. In 1992 the satellite broadcast Star Network (BBC news, sports, MTV, movies and entertainment in English and other Asian

languages) was introduced. The availability vary considerably from neighborhood to neighborhood.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

India has wonderful bookstores and a lot to read in English. Besides the local language newspapers, many nationally circulated English language dailies are sold in the major cities. *The Times of India*, *The Indian Express*, *The Hindustan Times* and *The Hindu* are only the tip of the iceberg. *The International Herald Tribune*, the *Asian Wall Street Journal* and *USA Today*, all printed in Singapore, are available 1 day after publication. A few other foreign newspapers are available. Asian editions of *Time* and *Newsweek*, as well as the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, are available within a few days of publication. *India Today*, *Business India*, *Delhi Diary* (tourism), *Femina*, and many other magazines are of high quality and address a variety of subjects.

A variety of fiction and nonfiction books are sold in local bookstores, especially mysteries, science fiction, current best-sellers, and books on India by American, British, and Indian authors. Locally published paperbacks are inexpensive; imported ones are the same cost as in the U.S. or England. Hardbacks may be more expensive than expected. The American Women's Association in New Delhi has an excellent lending library located on the housing compound adjacent to the U.S. Embassy.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities (New Delhi)

Many name-brand prescription medications manufactured by U.S. and other multinational pharmaceutical companies are available locally, often at a cost far less than in the U.S.

(Mumbai)

Local dental care is satisfactory, and orthodontic treatment is available.

(Calcutta)

Prescription glasses are available locally. Local dentists offer good, general services at reasonable prices, but have specialized dental work done in the U.S. if possible.

Calcutta's humidity and pollution have a drying effect on hair and contribute to a variety of skin rashes.

Services in India

Qualified English-speaking specialists, many trained in the U.S. and Europe, are available in India for consultation and patient care.

Routine prenatal care is available, but all pregnant women are strongly encouraged to return to the U.S. to deliver. Basic dental services are available in India and are less expensive than in the U.S. Dental services in Calcutta are somewhat limited. Root canals, crown and bridgework, and orthodontic care in New Delhi are of high quality and inexpensive. High-quality, low-cost optical services are available throughout India.

Community Health

In most of India, public sanitation falls far below Western standards. Open sewers abound. Insect control programs have been under-funded. Tap water is considered unsafe throughout India and adequacy of water fluoridation varies with locality and other factors. Fresh produce is considered contaminated. Regulation of food handling and preparation in restaurants is nonexistent. Intestinal parasites, bacillary dysentery, malaria, hepatitis, dengue fever, meningitis, Japanese B encephalitis, tuberculosis, typhoid fever, and rabies are important health concerns. Automobile accidents can be catastrophic due to inadequacies in the medical care delivery system. AIDS is a growing public health problem. Air pollution is an acute problem in many urban areas.

Preventive Measures

Adjusting to a new living and work situation, a new school system, and a tropical environment creates

stresses as well as rewards. Culture shock can cause insomnia, headaches, irritability, and a variety of other symptoms. A program of proper rest, exercise and nutrition can be very helpful in managing these conditions and in making your overseas tour an enjoyable one.

Respiratory illnesses and allergies are common due to dust and heavy pollution. Conditions here aggravate respiratory ailments and allergies. Adults or children prone to these illnesses may want to consult with a physician before considering this assignment.

Caution must be exercised concerning food and water. Commercially bottled beverages, including beer, soft drinks, and mineral water can be considered safe. Otherwise, water must be made safe for drinking by boiling or chemicals. Commercially bottled mineral water is available at restaurants and in the local market.

Meat (chicken, beef, and pork) should be well cooked. Fish should be cooked, not eaten raw. All fruits and vegetables that are eaten raw must be thoroughly cleaned and soaked for 15 minutes in disinfectant solution.

Malaria is endemic in India, and chloroquine-resistant malaria is found in New Delhi and other urban centers. Detailed recommendations for malaria prevention are available 24 hours daily by calling the CDC Malaria hotline at (404) 332-4555.

Tuberculosis is still a common problem in India. Children and adults should have a TB skin test annually.

AIDS is a health risk in India. Use of condoms and avoidance of high-risk behaviors are encouraged. Specific information may be obtained by calling (800) 342-AIDS.

Up-to-date immunizations are a must. Routine childhood immunizations should be up to date, including Diphtheria, Pertussis and Tetanus (DPT); Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR); Polio (either OPV

or IPV), and Hemophilus b Conjugate Vaccine (HbCV). In addition, the following immunizations are recommended:

- Hepatitis A Vaccine is recommended for those traveling to India.
- Oral typhoid vaccine is recommended.
- Hepatitis B Vaccine is recommended for travelers who expect to stay longer than 60 days, or who may be at a high risk.
- Rabies vaccine is recommended in India for those who spend a lot of time outdoors, joggers, bicyclists, and frequent travelers to rural areas.
- Japanese B Encephalitis (JBE) vaccine is recommended.
- Dengue fever, a viral disease transmitted by mosquitoes, is present throughout India. No specific treatment and no vaccines are available.
- Those arriving in India from Africa should have a valid yellow fever vaccination. The WHO-approved facility at Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi can give this vaccination to those who need it.

Last, but perhaps the most important, while driving or riding in an automobile in India, buckle the seat belt.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

All American citizens require a passport and visa for entry into and exit from India for any purpose. All visitors, including those on official U.S. government business, must obtain visas at an Indian embassy or consulate abroad prior to entering the country. There are no provisions for visas upon arrival. Those arriving in India without a visa bearing the correct validity dates

and number of entries are subject to immediate deportation on the return flight. The U.S. Embassy and consulates in India are unable to assist when U.S. citizens arrive without visas. For further information on entry requirements, please contact the Embassy of India at 2536 Massachusetts Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008, telephone (202) 939-9849 or 939-9806 or the Indian consulates in Chicago, New York, San Francisco, or Houston. The Internet address of the Embassy of India is <http://www.indianembassy.org/>. Outside the United States, inquiries should be made at the nearest Indian embassy or consulate.

Permission from the Indian Government (from Indian diplomatic missions abroad or in some cases from the Ministry of Home Affairs) is required to visit the states of Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, parts of Kulu district and Spiti district of Himachal Pradesh, border areas of Jammu and Kashmir, some areas of Uttar Pradesh, the area west of National Highway No. 15 running from Ganganagar to Sanchar in Rajasthan, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and the Union Territory of the Laccadive Islands.

Indian customs authorities enforce strict regulations concerning temporary importation into or export from India of items such as firearms, antiquities, electronic equipment, currency, ivory, gold objects, and other prohibited materials. It is advisable to contact the Embassy of India in Washington, D.C. or one of India's consulates in the United States for specific information regarding customs requirements.

Americans living in or visiting India are encouraged to register at the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi or at one of the U.S. consulates in India. They may also obtain updated information on travel and security in India and request a copy of the booklet, "Guidelines for American travelers in India."

-- The U.S. Embassy in New Delhi is located at Shantipath, Chanakypuri 110021; telephone (91) (11) 419-8000; fax (91) (11) 419-0017. The Embassy's Internet home page address is <http://usembassy.state.gov/delhi.html>.

-- The U.S. Consulate General in Mumbai (Bombay) is located at Lincoln House, 78 Bhulabhai Desai Road, 400026, telephone (91) (22) 363-3611; fax (91)(22)363-0350. Internet home page address is <http://usembassy.state.gov/posts/in3/wwwhmain.html>.

-- The U.S. Consulate General in Calcutta (now often called Kolkata) is at 5/1 Ho Chi Minh Sarani, 700071; telephone (91) (033) 282-3611 through 282-3615; fax(91)(033)(282-2335). The Internet home page address is <http://usembassy.state.gov/posts/in4/wwwhmain.html>.

-- The U.S. Consulate General in Chennai (Madras) is at Mount Road, 600006, telephone (91) (044)811-2000; fax (91)(044)811-2020. The Internet home page address is <http://usembassy.state.gov/chennai/>.

Pets

No quarantine of pets exists in India. Whether accompanying the owner or being shipped unaccompanied, the following documents must be available at the time of arrival:

- A current health certificate with the pet's name, breed and sex, stating that the animal is in good health, fully vaccinated, and free from contagious diseases (including for a dog: Aujosky's disease, distemper, rabies, leishmaniasis, and leptospirosis; for a cat: rabies and distemper).

- A rabies vaccination certificate which must be either: (a) a nerve tissue vaccine taken more than 30 days but not more than 12 months before arrival of the pet in India, or, (b) a chicken-embryo vaccine taken more than 30 days but not more than 36 months before the arrival of the pet in India.

- A distemper vaccination certificate.

- A parrot should have a certificate stating negative results from a compliment fixation test for Psittacosis within 30 days prior to arrival.

Hotels in India do not allow pets. Occasionally, a hotel will grant an exception to those with a small pet. Some kenneling facilities are available in India, but at present are inadequate for the health and care of the animal.

Bring an adequate supply of flea collars, heartworm pills, and any required medication.

Dog licenses are required and can be obtained from the local municipality for a nominal fee. Dogs can be registered with the Kennel Club of India through its northern India branch.

Secretary
Northern India Kennel Club
H-9, Green Park Extension
New Delhi
Telephone: 667-692

Veterinarian services in India are marginal. One or two excellent veterinarians practice in New Delhi, but in general they tend to administer multiple medicines without adequate examination.

When deciding whether to ship a pet to India, consider the heat, humidity, and availability of living space. Pets here seem to develop a variety of skin rashes. Shipping an animal into India during the peak summer months can be hard on it.

Currency

The official currency is the rupee which is divided into 100 paise. Rupee notes come in the following denominations: 10, 50, 100, and 500. Coins come in the following denominations: 10, 25 and 50 paise, and 1, 2, and 5 rupee.

The rate of exchange is Rs. 48.98=US\$1 (May 2002). The exchange rate is free floating, changing daily.

All currency and travelers checks in excess of \$10,000 carried into India must be declared at Customs upon arrival. An unlimited amount of other currencies, drafts, travelers checks, or letters of credit may be brought in. Foreigners must usually pay hotel bills and domestic air fares in hard currency.

India uses the metric system of weights and measures. Mileage markers are in kilometers, and frequently in miles also. Smaller distances are gauged in meters. Weights are in kilograms (kilos) and grams. Liters are used to measure liquid amounts. One inch equals 2.54 centimeters or 25.4 millimeters.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan. 1	New Year's Day
Jan. 26	Republic Day
Mar	Holi/Doljatra*
Mar/April	Good Friday*
Mar/April	Easter*
Aug. 15	Indian Independence Day
Oct. 2	Mahatma Gandhi's Birthday
Nov. 14	Children's Day
Dec. 25	Christmas
.	Id al-Zuha*
.	Muharram*
.	Mahavir Jayanti*
.	Baisakhi*
.	Buddha Purnima*
.	Khaddad Sal*
.	Janmashtami*
.	Onam*
.	Dussehra and Durga Puja*
.	Guru Nanak Jayanti*
.	Ramadan*
.	Id al-Fitr*
.	Bakri-Id*
.	Diwali*

*variable

RECOMMENDED READING

These titles are provided as a general indication of the material published in and about India. Some of the following books are published and sold only in India. However, they can be mail ordered from: Prof. Jerry Barrier, South Asia Books, Box 502, Columbia, MO 65205, Tel. (314) 474-0116.

Periodicals

India Today. Published in India, available in New York.

Newspaper

Express India. An Asian Weekly from the Nation's Capital, Washington, D.C. (1500 Mass Ave NW, Suite 400, Room C, Washington, D.C. 20005.)

General

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Khushwant Singh. *Sangam City Guide*.

Nicholson, Louise. *India Companion: A Practical Guide for the Discerning Traveler*.

Williams, L.F. Rushbrook, ed. *A Handbook for Travellers in India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka (Ceylon)*. 22nd ed. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1982.

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INDONESIA

Republic of Indonesia

Major Cities:

Jakarta, Surabaya, Medan

Other Cities:

Ambon, Bandung, Kupang, Palembang, Semarang, Surakarta, Ujung Pandang, Yogyakarta

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report 2001 for Indonesia. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

Man has woven a rich brocade of cultures among the far-flung islands of the world's largest archipelago. Most of Indonesia's inhabitants trace their descent from Malay seafarers who left the Asian mainland long before the time of Christ. Chinese pearl fishermen and Indian holy men brought their influences—Hinduism survives on Bali, a storied setting of temples and rice paddies where an endless pageantry of festivals and dances placates attentive spirits. Arab mariners introduced Islam. The Dutch monopolized the rich spice trade of the Moluccas and with them brought Christianity.

Indonesia's 3,000 islands stretch almost 5,000 km (3,100 miles) into the Pacific Ocean. Richly endowed with natural resources and hosting a phenomenal array of distinct cultures, for centuries they have been a magnet to Chinese and Indian traders, European colonizers, wayward adventurers, and intrepid travelers.

It is generally believed that the earliest inhabitants of the Indonesian archipelago originated in India or Burma. In 1890, fossils of Java Man (*homo erectus*), some 500,000 years old, were found in east Java.

Later migrants ("Malays") came from southern China and Indochina, and they began populating the archipelago around 3000 BC.

By the 15th century, a strong Moslem empire had developed with its center at Melaka (Malacca) on the Malay Peninsula. Its influence was shortlived, and it fell to the Portuguese in 1511. The Dutch East India Company, based in Jakarta, took control of Java by the mid-18th century. The Dutch took control in the early 19th century, and by the early 20th century, the entire archipelago was under their control.

Burgeoning nationalism and the Japanese occupation in World War II weakened Dutch resolve. Indone-

sia declared independence in 1945, which the Dutch recognized in 1949.

Today, Indonesia is a vibrant, multi-ethnic nation comprised of more than 300 ethnic groups in the midst of an enormous democratic transformation after years of authoritarian government.

MAJOR CITIES

Jakarta

Jakarta—the capital, chief port, and commercial center of Indonesia—and its suburbs cover some 350 square miles. Over 11 million people live within this area. As seat of the central government, Jakarta is the center of political life, with the Presidential Palace, national government offices, Parliament, and the Supreme Court all located in the city center.

The main ethnic groups in Jakarta are Sundanese, who predominate in the surrounding province of West Java, and Javanese. However, the city is a melange of all main groups from throughout the archipelago, including a substantial Chinese population and tens of thousands of expatriates.

In the 16th century, Jakarta, called Sunda Kelapa, was the chief port for the Sundanese (West Javanese) kingdom of Pajajaran. Later, the Sultan of Bantam changed the name to Jayakarta, "Glorious Fortress" in the Sundanese language. At the end of the 16th century, Dutch and Portuguese traders struggled for a foothold on Java. Since it was difficult for foreigners to pronounce Jayakarta, the name was changed to Jakarta. Eventually, the Dutch won possession of Java and established a fortified trading post at Jakarta, which they renamed Batavia. For three-and-a-half centuries after the Dutch arrival, Batavia was the focal point of a rich, sprawling commercial empire called the Netherlands East Indies. In older sections, Dutch-style gabled houses with diamond-paned windows and swinging shutters are still found. The canals, narrow downtown streets, and old drawbridges will remind you of the city's Dutch heritage and early settlers.

Eventually, more modern sections of the city were built some 8 miles inland. Indonesia became a sovereign State on December 27, 1949; the next day Batavia was renamed Jakarta. The city has grown rapidly in population from about 600,000 in 1940 to over 11 million. Physically, Jakarta has changed much in the last decade. A modern center with hotels, restaurants, and tall office buildings now has grown up amidst the crowded "kampungs" often with banana groves and rice paddies reminiscent of rural Java. Infrastructure, roads, electric power, and water supply are vastly improved, and new housing and apartments have gone up. With Jakarta's expanding boundaries, most Americans and other foreigners live in newer suburbs, such as Kebayoran, 5 miles from downtown. Air pollution and traffic congestion are increasing problems.

Like most Asian commercial cities, Jakarta has a large population of Chinese origin, many of whom have Indonesian citizenship. They constitute the country's largest non-Indo-

nesian ethnic group. Many have lived in Indonesia for generations and no longer speak Chinese, but most maintain Chinese traditions and family ties. Most Chinese in Jakarta operate businesses. Their district, Kota (or Glodok), has a distinctly Chinese flavor.

Over 25,000 foreigners live in the Jakarta area. Over 60 nations now maintain diplomatic or consular missions. The U.S., Russia, Germany, The Netherlands, Japan, and Australia operate the largest. Over 6,000 Americans reside in Jakarta—members of U.S. Government agencies, the U.N. and private, nongovernmental agencies, business representatives, and missionaries. Jakarta is the main stop for an increasing number of U.S. business visitors and many American, European, and Australian tourists visit Jakarta each year, usually on their way to tourist areas such as Bali or Yogyakarta.

Jakarta's average temperature ranges from 72°F to 87°F. It seldom varies more than a few degrees all year. The average humidity, 82 percent, rises to 83 percent or 84 percent during the wet season. It rains about 125 days a year for an average of 70 inches. Although heavy rains occur during the wet season (November through March), they do not compare to the heavy, monsoon downpours that characterize the rainy season in other tropical countries. Although monotonous and enervating, the heat will not oppress you as do the summers in Tokyo and Washington, D.C.

Western-style clothes predominate in Jakarta, but many still wear Indonesian attire. English is understood by many higher level Indonesian officials, business representatives, and professionals, particularly the younger generation. However, some knowledge of Bahasa Indonesia, the national language, is needed by foreigners for everyday communication. The older, Dutch-educated Indonesians can speak Dutch, especially those who grew up under The Netherlands colonial rule.

Food

Most food can be purchased in Jakarta. There is a good variety of fresh fruits and vegetables (locally-produced and imported), beef, pork, chicken and fish available in local markets and grocery stores. An increasing amount of western convenience foods and snack items are available in local stores, albeit at prices higher than in the U.S. Imported brands of toiletries are expensive but available here. Otherwise, with a little initiative, you will be able to find everything you need in Jakarta.

Clothing

General: Men, women, and children wear cotton and other lightweight clothing year round. Due to frequent, hard washing, clothing does not last as long as in the U.S. Launderers generally do satisfactory ironing and pressing. Adequate drycleaning costs considerably less than in a major U.S. city. Shoes wear out sooner than in U.S. due to the dampness and rough terrain. Locally made men's and women's shoes are adequate to good, but large sizes are sometimes difficult to find. There is a very wide range of price and quality available locally. Imported shoes for both men and women are available at many shops and department stores, but larger sizes are rare even in imported shoes. Several places in Jakarta sell moderately priced made-to-order shoes. Athletic shoes are more readily available in larger sizes, especially at outlets for the many name brands that are manufactured locally. For children and young teens, sandals, cloth shoes, and tennis shoes are available.

Imported fabrics are available locally but are expensive. Indonesian batik, with its distinctive patterns, is popular for dresses and sportswear. Prices for batik vary widely depending on the quality and intricacy of design. Take advantage of inexpensive tailoring to have clothing made. Tailors and seamstresses do not work from patterns, but can copy based on a picture or a sample item. Bring some warm

clothing for travel to Tokyo, Hong Kong, or the U.S. in winter months.

Men: Many men wear batik shirts (long and short sleeves) for social affairs. Indonesians consider long-sleeved batik shirts formal attire. Batik shirts can be purchased ready-made or tailor made. American sport shirts are usually worn only for casual affairs and at private parties. Bring an adequate supply of shoes. Only a few exclusive, expensive shops sell Western styles and sizes. Some have found sandals, desirable for informal wear. Bring your own golf shoes or buy them in Tokyo, Hong Kong, or Singapore for better quality and more reasonable prices. For evenings in the mountains, men will need a light jacket or sweater. Bring sports clothes, including tennis or golf shorts and swimming trunks.

Women: Office wear for women is similar to that in Washington, D.C., during summer. Since offices, cars, and most indoor places are completely air-conditioned, most lightweight summer fabrics, including knits, are suitable. Some women wear nylon hose. Casual dresses or long pants are suitable for nearly all daytime occasions. Evening wear is usually casual. Special occasions are dressy or formal. Both long and short casual dresses are appropriate for informal events.

A wide variety of fabrics, both local and imported, is available locally. Women who wear smaller sizes will not have trouble finding attractive and affordable clothing locally, but larger sizes are rare. Bring some shorts and sleeveless shirts. Shorts are worn primarily for golf and tennis. Also bring swimsuits, tennis and golf clothes, and sports clothing.

You can often use a wool sweater and slacks during the cool mountain evenings. Ready-made maternity clothes are not available. Most women bring an ample supply of underwear. Women rarely wear hats and gloves; they are not required in churches or for calling. Bring plenty of shoes and sandals. Some prefer closed (canvas-type)

shoes for shopping and sightseeing during the rainy season. Bring your regular size if you know your feet don't swell in hot weather.

Children: At JIS, all children in grades 7 thru 9 must wear uniforms (available for purchase at the school) and tennis shoes for physical education classes. Most children wear shorts at home and at the pool. Local shops sell children's shoes, but a proper fit may be difficult to obtain. Western-style clothes are popular with young people in Jakarta. Jeans and denims are sold everywhere.

Supplies and Services

Most basic toiletries are available locally, but if you rely on a particular U.S. brand, you should pack a supply. Bring special medicines or vitamins and reorder them by mail.

Drycleaning is generally deemed adequate. Shoe repair facilities are fair. Prices are less than in the U.S. A few beauty shops are recommended; some are small and simple, others are more luxurious. They offer the usual services at low, reasonable prices. Color rinses, perm; and dyes are available but expensive. You provide your own perm and dye supplies. Major hotels and shopping areas have barbershops. The usual services are reasonable.

Generally, radio, TV, and household appliance repairs do not meet U.S. standards. However, several shops perform adequate repair services; parts are usually imported and expensive. Good quality batik floor cushions and draperies can be custom made at reasonable prices. Picture framing is inexpensive and quality and selection varies.

Jakarta has many dressmakers, but prices and competence vary greatly. Some will visit your home for fittings. Establish a dressmaker's competence before providing an expensive piece of fabric. Tailors are available and, again, their competence and prices vary greatly. They make shirts, shorts, and suits.

Domestic Help

As in most of Asia, household help is not a luxury, but a necessity—not to provide a life of ease, but to help a family live a normal life and maintain a good level of security. You must take extra precautions when preparing food and must thoroughly scrub and peel vegetables before cooking, or soak them in disinfectant and rewash them in bottled water if you eat them raw. Marketing can be time consuming, although the preponderance of Western-style supermarkets makes shopping easier, albeit at a higher price. In many households, the cook shops for food in local markets at a considerable savings to the family. Domestic staff cannot shop in the commissary.

Aside from being practical, household help is customary in this part of the world. Even Indonesians of moderate circumstances have them.

The number of household help needed and their salaries differ according to individual households, with varying emphasis on their responsibility and ability. Below are examples of staff responsibilities. Salaries are paid in Rupiah and are considered quite affordable by western standards.

Cook: Plans the meals with you; informs you of what is on the market and does shopping; keeps a kitchen account book, which you should check; cleans the kitchen; and does the dishes.

Maid/Houseboy: Serves at table, mixes drinks, and cleans living and dining rooms; may also prepare meals on the cook's day off or if she or he is the only servant in a small household.

Nanny: Takes care of children, cleans their room, mends their clothing, and sees that it comes back from the launderer in good condition. May help with general housework if the family is small.

Driver: Acts as chauffeur, purchases gas and oil, and keeps your car in good operating condition.

Gardener: Tends the lawn, shrubs, flowers, etc. Most common is a combination gardener/watchman who watches the house during the day while he tends the yard.

Night Watchman: Guards your house.

Many families employ one or more “all in one” helpers who combine the functions of cook, maid/houseboy, and nanny. Domestic staff in Indonesia depend on their employers. The employer customarily provides uniforms and/or clothing, a Lebaran or Christmas bonus (1 month's salary if the employee has worked at least a year, prorated for shorter periods), and some employers provide uniforms and/or clothing as well as some basic food stuffs and some medical expenses. Additionally, employers must provide a bed (including the mattress), sheets, pillows, and towels for each employee that lives in. A bed, mattress, and pillow (at minimum) purchased locally costs between \$25 and \$35. Sheets and towels are very expensive on the local market.

All household staff should have a preemployment physical examination and annual stool tests and chest x-rays. As of February 2000, the range in cost for full physicals was \$8-\$20; x-rays were \$15. Domestic employees who are dismissed by you for any reason other than wrongdoing should be given severance pay at the rate of 1 month's salary for each full year worked and a prorated portion of a month's salary for employment periods of less than full years. If the employee resigns, you are not obliged to give severance pay but may want to give “service pay,” something like a thank-you bonus. Prevailing practice in business is to give one-half a month's salary after 5 years of employment. But should you choose to give “service pay,” the amount is at your discretion. Some staff require constant supervision, especially on cleanliness, market prices, storage and use of food supplies, and personal effects.

Religious Activities

In Jakarta, churches of several denominations hold regular services in English: Roman Catholic, Anglican, Baptist, interdenominational Protestant, Lutheran, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. There are also two active Christian youth groups: Friday Night Live for teens and pre-teens and International Christian Youth for high school students. There is an informal Jewish network that plans observations of high holidays and holds some social events.

Education

American children from kindergarten (prep-1) through grade 12 living in Jakarta generally attend Jakarta International School (JIS). Enrollment for the 2000-2001 school year was 2,526. Currently more than half of the 227-member teaching staff is American. The high school is fully accredited by the Association of Western Schools and Colleges and the European Council of International Schools. All instruction is in English.

JIS has three campuses, two of which are elementary schools, in two locations. For elementary level students, campus assignment is based primarily on area of residence.

Pattimura is located in Kebayoran Baru and houses prep-1 through grade 5. Completely reconstructed in 1986, Pattimura now consists of 23 classrooms, a library with more than 20,000 volumes, a computer lab, a theater, a gymnasium and special rooms for art, music, ESOL and reading. All indoor facilities are air-conditioned.

Pondok Indah Elementary (PIE) is located in Cilandak, behind but not connected to the Middle and High School campus. PIE houses prep-1 through grade 5. Located on 9 acres, it includes 47 classrooms, a library with more than 30,000 volumes, two computer labs, a science lab, gymnasium, theater, cafeteria, covered play area, swimming pool and expansive fields for outdoor recre-

ation. All buildings are air-conditioned.

Cilandak houses the Middle (grades 6-8) and High School (grades 9-12), in addition to the administrative offices. The 23-acre campus includes 115 classrooms, two libraries totaling more than 37,000 volumes, nine computer labs, two theaters, two gymnasiums, tennis courts, sports fields, a swimming pool and cafeteria.

The JIS elementary curriculum gives students a solid foundation in basic skills. The school offers up-to-date programs in math and science, using discovery and inquiry methods, and places a strong emphasis on language arts. Students have specialist teachers for music, art, computers, library and physical education. In grades 3, 4, and 5, students also have specialist teachers for Indonesian language and culture.

The Middle School curriculum includes a balanced emphasis on basic skill development and content. A variety of teaching methods is employed. The school's program of studies and daily schedule provide a gradual transition from the largely self-contained school structure of the elementary school to the departmental organization found in the high school. Students receive instruction in English/language arts, mathematics, history/social studies, science, and physical education. There is also a variety of exploratory and elective options in the areas of visual and performing arts, computer education, practical arts and modern languages. Each 7-8th grade student also must complete required courses in computer applications, Indonesian language and health.

The High School curriculum offers a modified American curriculum as well as the International Baccalaureate (IB), fulfilling admission requirements for American universities as well as those of other countries. Normally, six subjects are taken each year, including a sequential progression of courses in

English, mathematics, science and social studies. The following foreign languages are offered: French, Spanish, German, Dutch, Japanese, Korean and Indonesian. One semester of Indonesian language and geography is required for JIS High School graduation. Electives include music, drama, fine arts, practical arts, business, computer studies, physical education, year-book, and journalism. Advanced courses are offered in selected areas in order to prepare students for Advanced Placement (AP) exams and the IB diploma.

To supplement the academic program, JIS provides a variety of extracurricular activities designed to encourage physical well-being, intellectual interchange and participation in social activities. Boys and girls can participate in a varied after school sports program. There are also special interest clubs such as photography, chess, handicrafts, etc. Community leagues in soccer, basketball, baseball and competitive swimming are available.

At the high school level, JIS participates in the Interscholastic Association of Southeast Asia Schools (IASAS), a regional organization that offers competition in sports, as well as cultural events. Club activities are available at all levels, as well as Boy and Girl Scout Programs.

The school year begins in mid-August and ends early in June. There is a three-week vacation between semesters and a one-week break during second semester. The school observes Indonesian holidays. School hours are:

- Prekindergarten(Prep Junior):
7:30 a.m.–noon
- Kindergarten (Prep Senior):
7:30 a.m.–noon
- (1st semester) 7:30 a.m.-1:45 p.m.
- (2nd semester) Grades 1–5: 7:30 a.m.–1:45 p.m. Grades 6–12: 7:30 a.m.–2:40 p.m.

A catering service sells sandwiches and hot lunches on campus. Ice



Street scene in Sumatra

© Wolfgang Kaehler. Reproduced by permission.

cream, bottled drinks, and various snacks are also available at the student stores on campus.

School uniforms are worn only for physical education; however, clothing should be clean, neat and comfortable. Shoes must be worn at all times for health reasons.

JIS does not have the facilities to deal with children who have serious learning, emotional or physical disabilities. Parents of prospective students are advised that the school is able to serve only those mildly learning disabled students who are able to function in the regular program with minimal support. If a child is receiving special services, such as LD instruction, remedial teaching, speech/language therapy or seeing any educational specialist outside the regular classroom, parents are advised to contact the school and discuss the child's situation before making a decision to come to Jakarta.

There are several other schools in Jakarta, including schools following the British, French, and Australian educational curricula, as well as a Montessori school. The Australian International School (AIS) is a smaller, relatively new school in southern Jakarta that offers special

needs programs. Children with special needs are mainstreamed, with full-time Indonesian classroom assistants assigned as necessary. A special needs coordinator works with the children individually several times per week. Speech therapy is sometimes available, though not guaranteed. School facilities are basic, but class sizes tend to be small. The school offers classes from preschool through grade 12, operating on the Australian school calendar which means that the school year goes from January-December. For more information, contact the school at AIS@bitnet.id, or phone 6221-780-5152.

Students wishing to enroll in prep I (kindergarten) at JIS must reach their 5th birthdays prior to October 31 of the current school year.

Preschools: There are several good English-language preschools at post. Many families of young children take advantage of part- or full-time preschools, including Bambino, Tutor Time, Discovery Center and Jakarta Montessori School. JIS has a preschool program for 3- and 4-year-olds; however, most Embassy families find the JIS program to be too expensive.



Skyline of Jakarta, Indonesia

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Special Educational Opportunities

Indonesian language training is available through a number of local resources, including the Lembaga Indonesia-Amerika (Yayasan LIA) and ICAC. The Indonesian Heritage Society offers various opportunities to study Indonesian culture in depth through its study groups, lecture series, and museum volunteer program. Although several Indonesian colleges and universities exist, all instruction is in Indonesian.

Sports

Jakarta hosts a variety of recreational and sports facilities, from fitness clubs to golf driving ranges to tennis courts to riding stables.

AERA provides a variety of activities to enhance the morale of American families. Facilities include dining areas, a Western-style bar with large-screen TV, a pool table, video games, NTSC video rental, a satellite dish, tennis courts, swimming pool, a fitness center, and multipurpose rooms used for fitness and children's classes and available for special-purpose rental.

The club conducts a summer camp for elementary school-aged children, organizes activities for adults and children, and hosts programs for American holidays and other special occasions. It also provides catering services for members. Membership fees include a reason-

able initiation fee and monthly dues. Charges for food, video rentals, etc., are payable on a monthly basis.

There are several other clubs that expatriates join, including the Jakarta American Club (not affiliated with the Embassy or the AERA Club) and the Mercantile Athletic Club. Several large hotels make their facilities available on a daily or membership basis. In addition, the Mission housing pool includes some apartment complexes and housing complexes that have swimming pools, tennis courts, and other amenities.

Golf. Golf enthusiasts can choose from 18- and 9-hole golf courses and driving ranges. Some are open to casual players, but others require memberships. Membership and green fees are moderate. Courses are generally well maintained and are open from sunrise to sunset. Most have pro shops, snack or meal service, locker room facilities, and instruction. Golf equipment is available locally but is more expensive than in the U.S.

Tennis: Most clubs have tennis courts, including the AERA Club, the Hilton, the Senayan Sports Complex, and JIS. Several housing compounds also have tennis facilities. Although tennis equipment and balls are available locally, prices are generally higher than in the U.S.

Swimming: In Jakarta, most clubs, hotels, and apartment or townhouse complexes have swimming pools. Many hotels charge daily fees for use of the pool. Ancol and Pondok Indah offer public swimming and water park facilities. These tend to be crowded on weekends and public holidays. Saltwater bathing is available at beach resorts and nearby islands. Beach lovers should note, however, that the closest beach is some 3-1/2 hours by car from Jakarta. Pelabuhan Ratu (Samudra Beach) on the Indian Ocean, south of Jakarta, is about 4 1/2 hours by car, and Anyer, Carita, and Sombola, on the Sunda Straits west of

Jakarta, are about 3-1/2 hours by car. Pulau Seribu or Thousand Islands is a system of small islands in the sea north of Jakarta. There are several basic but pleasant resorts that offer scuba, snorkeling, swimming, and various sports.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Snorkeling and scuba diving: Snorkeling and scuba diving are available both near and far from Jakarta. Several islands of the Thousand Islands area have popular sites for viewing coral, highly colored tropical fish, and other sea life. Some are reachable by boat in several hours. Pulau Putri and other islands have beaches and full tourist facilities, including cottages for rent. Scuba courses are available, and informal groups organize trips to the islands. For travel further afield, several other islands and resorts offer both activities, including Sulawesi, Sumatra, Lombok, Bali, Kalimantan, Maluku and Papua. Most dive shops / tour operators rent tanks and weights. Most also sell equipment, but it is expensive compared to U.S. prices. It is advisable to bring your own regulator and BCD.

Horseback Riding: Several high-quality English-style equestrian facilities offer regular lessons for all levels, including jumping and polo; costs of lessons are cheaper than the equivalent in the U.S. Horses can be leased long term, which is the best arrangement if you plan to ride more than a couple of times a week.

Photography: Picturesque villages, colorful native dress, street scenes, mountains, and beaches provide a variety of photo opportunities. Film and slides, mostly Japanese and U.S. brands, are available locally at reasonable prices. Local processing of color film is good and reasonably priced.

Sightseeing In and around Jakarta: There are several museums, including the National Museum, which houses a large collection of Indonesian antiques, cultural displays, and one of the

world's finest Asian porcelain collections; the Museum of the Armed Forces; Museum Wayang, which houses a collection of puppets representing various regions and eras in Indonesia; Museum-Tekstil, containing a collection of Indonesian textiles; the Adam Malik Museum, containing some of the late statesman's collection; the Ceramic Museum; and the Jakarta Historical Museum.

Taman Mini, located about 13 miles southeast of Jakarta, has several theme museums, exhibits of traditional houses of the 27 regions in the country, amusement rides, an orchid garden, and various other attractions. Taman Impian Jaya Ancol is located in the north of Jakarta and has a water park, an amusement park, an art and handicraft market, and Seaworld. Many consider visiting the various market areas as a sightseeing trip in itself. Jakarta also has a zoo and planetarium. Newcomers often enjoy city tours arranged by major hotels and travel agencies. The Indonesian Heritage Society has an Explorers Club that organizes regular tours to a wide variety of local landmarks and historic areas. It is an interesting way to see the city and meet new friends.

To learn about Indonesian culture, take trips outside the city. The Puncak Hills and the nearby town of Bogor offer a pleasant climate and scenery change. In Bogor, the famous Botanical Gardens feature a 275-acre park with a zoological museum, scientific library, and laboratory. The orchid collection is a special attraction. Puncak Pass, on the road to Bandung, is 5,000 feet high. Jakarta residents often rent cottages in the Puncak on weekends. A Safari Park, where you can drive through and view wild animals, is located here. There is also a children's zoo on the premises.

Bandung, a 4-hour drive from Jakarta or a pleasant train ride, offers good hotel accommodations and pleasant mountain views. Several modern artists live and work in Bandung; one of Indonesia's art

schools is here. About 15 miles north of Bandung is the Tangkuban Prahua Volcano.

Yogyakarta and Solo are interesting cities on Java. Yogyakarta is of historical and cultural interest—here are some of Indonesia's best-preserved Hindu and Buddhist monuments and temples, among them the famous Borobudur Temple. At the magnificent Prambanan Temple, between Yogyakarta and Solo, a Javanese dance-drama is performed twice a month at full moon during the dry season. Both Solo and Yogyakarta are Javanese cultural centers and offer a variety of events and shopping opportunities. Good hotels are available.

The Island of Bali is one of the most popular vacation spots for tourists. It has beautiful beaches and striking volcanic scenery. Accommodations range from four-star hotels to simple guest houses and bungalows. Balinese culture is particularly interesting. As Islam swept through Indonesia, many Hindus fled to Bali, where Hindu and Indonesian culture and customs mix in an interesting fashion. The island abounds in cultural activities and performances and shopping opportunities. Bali is about 1 hour and 20 minutes by air from Jakarta.

Although rioting in January of 2000 caused some damage to the tourist industry, the Island of Lombok continues to be popular. Considered similar to Bali of 30 years ago, this still-unspoiled island has lovely beaches and is famous for its weaving and pottery. There are flights from Jakarta, via either Bali or Yogyakarta.

The Island of Sumatra offers Lake Toba, a beautiful volcanic lake in the north; Padang, central Sumatra's largest city and center of the Minangkabau people (a matriarchal society); Palembang, site of a refinery and large oil installations; and an elephant training center near Lampung in southern Sumatra. Visiting many of these places requires a car, but travelers must be wary of poor road condi-

tions and hazardous local driving. Some travel agents and hotels offer packages that include tours onsite with a rented vehicle and driver.

Entertainment

Jakarta offers a large variety of restaurants ranging from international-standard restaurants, generally housed in major hotels, to moderately priced, family-style restaurants, to most popular American fast-food restaurants. A 10% government tax and 11% service charge is included in the bill at nicer restaurants.

The city offers a variety of nightlife, including clubs both in major hotels and as independent establishments. There are several discotheques that offer both live and recorded music.

Expatriates frequent several Jakarta cinemas; they are air-conditioned, clean, and wide screened. American films are shown in their original English language version with Indonesian subtitles. Admission is usually about \$2.50. American movies shown here tend to be several months old and are subject to government censorship.

Americans occasionally attend Indonesian dances, music performances, and puppet shows. Local artists frequently hold exhibits throughout the city. Several amateur theater groups present English language plays and musicals. There are classical music evenings and an occasional ballet. Stage plays are rare, but the number of rock concerts is increasing.

Taman Ismail Marzuki (TIM), the Jakarta Cultural Center, has an enclosed theater, an open-air theater, a cinema, exhibition rooms for art shows, and a planetarium.

There are no real public libraries here, and although popular English-language books are available in several bookstores, prices can be double what they are in the U.S. The British Council, ICAC, and AWA operate small lending libraries, and parents of JIS students can use the high school library. The AERA Club

operates small, informal used book exchanges. Many families order books from Internet bookstore sites.

Social Activities

Most social life centers around private homes and includes cocktail parties, buffets, dinners, and card parties. Heavy traffic patterns frequently determine the timing and frequency of such entertaining.

AWA organizes social and charitable activities for women and their families. Monthly meetings are held with guest speakers or other activities. Twice a year, AWA sponsors major craft bazaars, which are very popular. It publishes *Introducing Indonesia*, an excellent guide to expatriate living in Indonesia, as well as the *Jakarta Shoppers Guide* and other useful books. It also maintains a center that houses a thrift shop, a used book section, a lending library, and a servants registry. The organization also organizes group tours within and outside of Indonesia.

The American Chamber of Commerce in Indonesia, commonly known as AMCHAM, is an association of businesspeople abroad and is concerned with U.S. trade, investment, and community services. AMCHAM holds monthly luncheons with guest speakers and sponsors some social activities.

With a large international community, social activities include Indonesians, Americans, and other expatriates of many nationalities. A great deal of entertaining occurs among international representatives and Indonesians. The Women's International Club (WIC) has members from many nationalities. It was organized in 1950 to promote friendship and understanding among different nationalities. It sponsors social activities and classes and is active in social welfare programs. It sponsors an annual Christmas Bazaar that is very popular with both expatriates and Indonesians.

ICAC is a nonprofit organization that provides workshops, activities, professional counseling services, a

lending library, a small craft shop, and a newcomers resource center. It conducts orientation programs quarterly and smaller luncheons and discussion groups to help newcomers meet each other and begin their adjustment to Jakarta.

The International Allied Medical Association (IAMA) is an informal group of English-speaking health professionals interested in keeping up with current developments in the medical field. Monthly meetings with guest speakers are held.

The Indonesian Heritage Society is an organization of volunteers interested in learning about the history, art, and culture of Indonesia. Volunteers assist in the museums of Jakarta and sponsor a public lecture series and smaller study groups.

A multinational community chorus, the PPIA choir, presents concerts twice a year and is open to all. In addition to these groups, there are many other organizations based on specific interests and needs, such as Rotary and Lions Clubs.

Surabaya

Surabaya, with a population of about 2.7 million, is Indonesia's second largest city and provincial capital of East Java. Surabaya is on the northeastern coast of Java opposite the nearby Island of Madura. The city itself is thickly settled along the Brantas River Estuary. The area around the city to the west and south is marshy, coastal plain. In recent years, the abundant rice cultivation in the south has given way to steady development of industrial sites. The southern plain gradually rises to a range of volcanic mountains, the nearest of note is about 31 miles south of the city.

Surabaya's climate is very hot and humid with an average humidity of 75 percent, rainfall of 60 inches, and an average temperature of 81°F. The rainy season begins in November and ends around April. The rest of the year, particularly June through October is drier. The periods when

the monsoons change direction (usually March–April and November–December) are characterized by harsh rains and often result in some flooding in East Java and in greater Surabaya. The months of July and August are the most comfortable of the year.

At the turn of the century, Surabaya was the leading port of the Dutch Indies. The city exported rubber, tobacco, teak, kapok, sugar, and fibers. Despite the impact of World Wars, the 1930s depression, the 1945–49 resolution, and subsequent periods of civil turbulence, Surabaya remains a major agricultural-industrial center and is Indonesia's second largest port. Since 1968 Surabaya has progressed rapidly. It is the commercial hub for the second largest market in the country, and the province of East Java has one of the best development records in Indonesia.

The city's present population is almost entirely indigenous Indonesian (primarily Javanese and Madurese), with a small but visible ethnic Chinese minority, an ethnic Indian community of perhaps a thousand, and a few hundred other foreigners, including Japanese, Koreans, Europeans, and Americans. About 180 Americans live in the greater Surabaya area, primarily engaged in business. The Indonesian-American friendship association (PPIA) sponsors English language courses, college counseling, and cultural programs. The number of American tourists visiting Surabaya is rising, but most tourists visit Bali and Yogyakarta.

Food

An increasing number of Western-style supermarkets ease the grocery shopping experience in Surabaya. And though you can generally get everything on your list (from olive oil to Swiss Miss instant cocoa), you may have to visit two or more stores and/or wait a matter of weeks for that hard to find item to turn up again on the shelves. A wide variety of local seafood, chicken, beef (often tough and dry), pork (including bacon) and mutton are available. In

addition, sausages, lamb and a better quality beef are imported from neighboring New Zealand and Australia but are more expensive. Most dairy products are also imported: cheddar, mozzarella, Edam, Gouda, Parmesan, Camembert, Brie, and feta cheeses are available.

Entertainment

Surabaya offers a wide variety of restaurants, including Western, Indonesian, and other Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, etc.) cuisine. Surabaya also has several nightclubs and discos. Film is available locally. Local printing and developing service is inexpensive and satisfactory. Surabaya has several air-conditioned theater complexes that show subtitled American films, including first-run movies. The video system in this country is PAL, and the format in Surabaya is primarily VCD, followed by DVD. VHS choices are extremely limited. Surabaya has a small museum and a large zoo with Komodo dragons, a nocturnal animal exhibit, outstanding bird and ape collections, and an excellent aquarium of tropical fish. The Taman Remaja Amusement Park, open daily, has several rides and games for small children.

Social Activities

Social life in Surabaya is centered around the home and generally informal. Dinner parties at home and at hotel restaurants are the most common forms of entertainment. Several local firms provide catering services for private parties. Two international organizations, the Expatriate Women's Association of Surabaya (EWAS) and the Women's International Club (WIC), meet regularly.

Medan

Medan was formerly the capital of the Island of Sumatra, Indonesia's second largest island. It is now capital of only North Sumatra Province, which borders the Straits of Malacca. In 1910, this relatively new city moved to its present location, a few miles inland from the

city of Belawan-Deli. The Medan municipality still includes the port of Belawan, where rubber, palm oil, coffee, and tea are exported, and consumer and industrial goods are imported. It is Indonesia's largest port in value of exports.

The city is set on a lush green plain, surrounded by rice paddies and palm trees. The Bukit Barisan mountain range, which runs the length of Sumatra, can be seen to the south. Only 82 feet above sea level, just north of the equator, Medan has a climate which is generally hot and humid. The heaviest rains fall from September through December most years. The Medan community has grown from 77,000 in 1940 to some 1.8 million (2000 est.). These figures include about 250,000 Chinese, 15,000 Indians, 200 Europeans, and 60 Americans. The Western community recently has been decreasing in size due to Indonesianization of expatriate positions in the petroleum industry and a relocation of some of the remaining workers outside Medan. Medan today is the largest banking and commercial community in Indonesia, next to Jakarta.

Medan is a sprawling city of *kampung*s, (native Indonesian villages), with a crowded Chinese sector and an Indian (Tamil) district. Some areas with elegant old government office buildings, parks, and peaked tile-roofed houses reflect the early Dutch colonial heritage. A few tall buildings and new houses with modern curved roofs are springing up. Traffic is chaotic, with swarms of fume-spewing motorized *becaks* (pedicabs), motorcycles, bicycles, cars, buses, trucks, and jaywalking pedestrians. A one-way street system has helped traffic, but it makes the city a puzzle for the newcomer.

Education

The Medan International School has classes from pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. Founded in 1969, this coeducational school has instruction in English, and the school uses American textbooks. Information about Medan International may be obtained by writing

them at P.O. Box 191, Medan, Sumatra, Indonesia.

Secondary-age students must be educated away from the city. Most American children attend the Medan International School through the eighth grade, then transfer to Jakarta International School or the Singapore American School, although both schools offer grades one through 12. Neither school offers boarding facilities, and arrangements must be made with a private family or a private hotel. The address of the Singapore American School is 60 King's Road, Singapore 1026, Republic of Singapore. Jakarta International School's address is J1. Terogong Raya 33, Jakarta 12430, Indonesia.

Recreation

In the mountains, about 105 miles southwest of Medan, is lovely Lake Toba. It is 55 miles long and 18 miles wide, and is dominated by the Island of Samosir. The elevation at the water's edge is almost 3,000 feet, and mountain peaks rise along the shore. Sight-seeing tours to Samosir Island and the Batak villages can be made by boat. There are several hotels in the tiny town of Prapat that offer reasonable food and lodging.

About one-and-a-half hours southwest of Medan, through tropical forests and up a series of hairpin curves, is the highland area of Brastagi. At an altitude of 5,000 feet, the weather is even cooler than at Lake Toba. Live volcanoes afford striking scenery. Golf, horseback riding, and hiking are possible.

Roads are slowly improving in northern Sumatra, but travel to more remote areas usually requires a four-wheel-drive vehicle.

Tennis, swimming, softball, cricket, squash, golf, badminton, bowling, and horseback riding are possible in Medan, but some facilities are not up to U.S. standards.

Several health clubs and fitness centers of varying size and equipment are available. The Medan

Club has three tennis courts and a squash court for use by members. The Deli Golf Club, about 40 minutes from downtown, has an 18-hole course.

The playing field areas in Medan have little playground equipment, and are used primarily for soccer by the Indonesians. On occasion, expatriate community members organize a Sunday softball game on one of these fields. There are no picnic areas or beaches in the city's vicinity. The nearest beach is at Pantai Cermin, some 31 miles away, but it is shallow, muddy, and made even less attractive by poisonous sea snakes. Sailing is not common; good skin diving areas are far from Medan.

Entertainment

Entertainment is limited in the Medan area. The city's movie theaters rarely offer English-language films but few Americans patronize them. Chinese, Kung Fu movies and Indian films are standard local fare.

Color broadcasts are shown on local television; most programming comes from Jakarta. Programs are generally limited to news, sports, Indonesian cultural shows, some children's cartoons, or dated English films. The broadcast system is PAL. There are no English-language radio programs, so it is necessary to have a shortwave radio in order to keep up with U.S. and world news.

The United States Information Service (USIS)-sponsored library has English-language books, primarily classics, references, or textbooks, and shows weekly U.S. news summaries on videotape. The British Council has a library with 6,000 books for leisure reading, as well. All local newspapers are in Indonesian, although the English-language *Singapore Straits Times* and the *Jakarta Times* or the *Jakarta Post* can be home-delivered. Asian editions of *Time* and *Newsweek* are available in local book shops.

Medan has a new cultural center complex, but presentations are infrequent.

Chinese restaurants are the most popular of the few dining establishments in Medan. One of the international class hotels, the Tiara, offers reasonably good European food, but Indonesian and Indian restaurants do not serve good-quality meats. Prices vary from moderate to expensive for non-Indonesian food.

Several nightclubs are open, but Americans and Europeans rarely patronize them.

OTHER CITIES

AMBON, with a population of 313,000, is the capital of Maluku Province on the Banda Sea in eastern Indonesia. This important seaport was founded by the Portuguese in 1574. Early in the 17th century, the Dutch and English settled in the area, and fought over it for 200 years. The "massacre of Amboina" took place in 1623 and involved the killing of many English settlers by the Dutch. Japanese forces held the city during World War II from 1942 until 1945. A few examples of Dutch colonial architecture remain today. Fort Victoria, still an active military post, and the former Dutch governor's home, both stand in the heart of Ambon. The Museum Siwalima is in the eastern suburb of Karang Panjang. It houses a number of artifacts, including Chinese ceramics, objects of magic, and skulls.

BANDUNG, is a city of 2.4 million, and the fourth largest municipality in the country. Located at a rail junction 75 miles southeast of Jakarta, it is a bustling city, with many factories, hospitals, government departments, and schools. A well-known textile center, Bandung is the center of Indonesia's quinine industry, using the cinchona grown in the nearby plantations. Founded in 1810, it is the center of Sudanese cultural life. Bandung was the site of a World War II Japanese prison camp. Surrounded by mountains

and volcanoes, Bandung is a tourist resort known for its cool and healthy climate. Bandung is also an educational and cultural center. A textile institute, a technological institute, a state university, two private universities, and a nuclear research center are located here. The city was the site of the Bandung Conference in 1955, a meeting between 29 Asian and African nations to promote cultural and economic cooperation. Bandung Alliance School, featuring a U.S. curriculum for grades one through six, and Bandung International School, featuring a combined curriculum for pre-kindergarten through grade eight, are located here.

KUPANG is the capital of East Nusa Tenggara Province. It is situated on Kupang Bay at the tip of Timor Island. It was settled by the Dutch early in the 17th century. Kupang has a population over 400,000.

PALEMBANG, situated about 300 miles northwest of Jakarta in South Sumatra, is Indonesia's richest city. Large oil refineries and a petrochemical complex employ many of the provincial capital's 1.4 million residents (2000 est.). Other industries are shipbuilding and iron and rubber production. Long a trade center, Palembang lies on the Musi River, which links it to principal Asian ports. The area was the capital of a Hindu Kingdom in the seventh century; the Dutch and British came a thousand years later. Landmarks here include the Great Mosque, built in 1740; the provincial parliament building; and the Rumah Bari Museum. Statuary, sculptures, weapons, and crafts are on display in the museum. A university was founded in Palembang in 1960.

SEMARANG, the capital of Central Java Province, is a seaport city and one of the major commercial centers in Indonesia. It is located on the north coast, 225 miles east of Jakarta. The manufacture of textiles and machinery and shipbuilding and fishing are the economic mainstays here; exports include



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The Great Mosque in Sumatra

sugar, coffee, and rubber. It came under Dutch control as early as 1748, and was occupied by the Japanese during World War II from February 1942 until September 1945. Many steamship companies maintain offices in this city of approximately 787,000 residents (2000 est.). Depongoro University, founded in 1957, is located here, along with Semarang International School, which features a U.S. curriculum for nursery school through sixth grade. The student body numbers forty-one. Semarang International is located at Jl. Raung 16, Candi, Semarang, 50232, Jateng, Indonesia.

SURAKARTA (also known as Solo) is located in central Java Province

50 miles southeast of Semarang, and is connected to Jakarta and Surabaya by rail. This city of approximately 516,500 residents (1995 est.) is the trade center for the surrounding region that produces sugar, tobacco, and rice. Surakarta is particularly known for its handicrafts, which include gold work and batik cloth; it also manufactures textiles, furniture, machinery, metal products, leather work, and cigarettes. In addition, Surakarta is a cultural center recognized for its gamelan music and for its shadow plays called wayang. Landmarks in the city include a Dutch fort, built in 1799 to resemble a Dutch town; and the walled palace of the sultan that is almost a city in itself. There is a private university in Surakarta, as

well as an extension facility of the Islamic University of Indonesia that has a library and a museum.

UJUNG PANDANG (formerly called Makassar) is the business center of Sulawesi, situated 900 miles east of Jakarta on the Makassar Straits. Improvements in the city's harbor have expanded the export trade which includes gums, resins, coffee, and rattan. In the center of town is the grave of the national hero, Prince Diponegoro of Yogyakarta (1785–1855). He was a Javanese leader in the war against the Dutch in the late 1820s. The dungeon where the Dutch held him for 27 years is still standing; Indonesians make pilgrimages to both sites. Ujung Pandang was a principal port for the Goa Kingdom when the Portuguese arrived in the 16th century, followed by the Dutch. The fall of the kingdom in 1667 came with the conquest of the old *benteng*, or fort, which was rebuilt as Amsterdam Castle. This now is considered an excellent example of 17th-century Dutch fortress construction. The Ujung Pandang Provincial Museum has several displays in the fort, including costumes, coins, and musical instruments. The city's population is an estimated 1.1 million (2000 est.).

YOGYAKARTA (also spelled Jogjakarta) is located in central Java Province, 175 miles southwest of Surabaya. Situated at the foot of Mount Merapi, Yogyakarta was founded in 1749 and was once the capital of a sultanate. It was also the site of a revolt against the Dutch in the early 19th century, and played an important role in the Indonesian independence movement from 1946 to 1950. Today, Yogyakarta is Java's cultural center known for drama and dance festivals, as well as for its handicraft industry. The city is an important tourist center and has beautifully preserved Hindu temples and monuments. The Borobudur Temple (26 miles to the northwest) is one of the finest Buddhist monuments in central Java, dating from about the ninth century. The shrine was left to crumble in the jungle rot and peri-

odic earthquakes of the area for over a thousand years until it was rediscovered in the 19th century and restored under a \$23 million U.N.-sponsored beautification project. The walled palace of the sultan of Yogyakarta served as Indonesia's provisional capital in 1949–1950, and now houses Gadjah Mada University. Islamic University of Indonesia and several colleges are also located here. Yogyakarta's population is over 500,000.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography And Climate

The Republic of Indonesia encompasses the world's longest archipelago. From the tiny island of Sabang in the northwest to Papua (formerly Irian Jaya or West Irian) in the east, over 17,000 islands, stretch some 3,400 miles along the Equator. The total land area covers about 736,000 square miles. The main islands, in terms of population and importance, are Java, Sumatra, Bali, Kalimantan (Borneo), Sulawesi (Celebes), Papua, and the Maluku. The landscape is highly varied with mountain peaks and volcanoes, some rising to over 15,000 feet. In central Papua, snow covers some peaks all year.

The tropical climate varies with location, season, and altitude. Jakarta lies in the lowlands. The climate is monotonous and enervating with heavy rainfalls, low winds, high temperatures, and high humidity. Spanning the Equator, Indonesia experiences no real seasons. However, a wet season begins in November and lasts until March, followed by a dry season from April to October. Days and nights each last 12 hours.

The tropical climate and rich soil support abundant flora and fauna. Mangrove swamps and marshes flourish along the coast; tropical rain forests cover most of the ter-

rain up to 3,000 feet; and abundant subtropical vegetation, such as oak, pine, and hardwoods, thrives at higher altitudes. The abundant forest cover and favorable climate have stimulated a diverse animal life.

Many endangered and unique animals, such as single-horn rhinoceroses, orangutans, saltwater crocodiles, Komodo "dragons," Sumatran tigers, giant monitor lizards, and anoa, the pygmy buffalo of Celebes, still find a home in Indonesia. Many species of snakes, insects, and birds abound.

Population

Indonesia's 219 million people (2000 estimate), make it the fifth most populous—as well as the most populous Moslem-country in the world. Some 63% live on overcrowded Java and the adjacent islands of Madura and Bali. Some 65% are under age 25; about 85% live in rural areas. Indonesia has over 300 ethnic groups. Roughly 45% of the population are Javanese. Other large ethnic groups include the Sundanese (West Java), Madurese, Balinese, Bataks (North Sumatra), Minangkabau (West Sumatra), coastal Malays, Dayaks (Kalimantan), Ambonese (Maluku), Makasarese-Buginese (Sulawesi), and Chinese.

Indonesian (Bahasa Indonesia), a form of Malay, is the official language. Many Indonesian leaders speak English. Some 87% of the population are Moslem. Islam originally came to Indonesia via Persia and India. It is less austere than the Middle Eastern variety and in some areas encompasses Hindu and pre-Islamic Indonesian customs and beliefs.

European and American Christian missionaries have been influential in certain parts of Indonesia, especially in northern Sulawesi, the Moluccas or "Spice Islands," North Sumatra, the lesser Sundas (Flores, Timor, Sumba), and Papua. Currently both Catholic and Protestant minorities exist. Many ethnic Chinese are Catholic. The island of Bali is predominantly Hindu. The

annual population growth rate is 1.6%. To reduce the growth rate, the government sponsors family planning. About 50% of eligible couples on crowded Java and Bali have enrolled.

Public Institutions

Indonesia is a unitary republic, divided administratively into 32 provinces. (The former province of East Timor gained independence following a referendum in August 1999.) The provinces are further subdivided into regencies, subdistricts, and municipalities. Since the collapse of Soeharto's authoritarian "new order" regime in May 1998, the country has embarked on the road to democratization and decentralization. Under the transitional presidency of B.J. Habibie, freedom of expression was restored and political laws were rewritten paving the way for the June 1999 parliamentary elections, the first free and fair elections held in more than 40 years. Out of the 48 parties that contested the election, the largest 6 vote winners were the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) with 34%, GOLKAR with 22%, the National Awakening Party (PKB) with 13%, the Unity and Development Party (PPP) with 11%, the National Mandate Party (PAN) with 7%, and the Crescent and Star Party (PBB) with 2% of the vote. Several smaller parties won seats in the current Parliament (DPR), but, under law, will be required to merge in order to contest the next election in 2004.

In October 1999, the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), the constitutionally highest governmental body, elected Abdurrahman Wahid (a.k.a. "Gus Dur") to a 5-year term as the country's fourth president. "Professionalizing" the military, which played important political, economic, and social roles under past governments, is a current goal, and so are justice sector reform and a fight against corruption. Both the MPR and DPR have become very active, with the MPR addressing constitutional reform and the DPR exerting considerable

influence on government policy and the budget.

The government is implementing new laws on regional autonomy aimed at devolving political and economic control to the regions. Success in this effort is seen as crucial in addressing grievances that have helped spawn separatist movements in some provinces including Aceh and Papua (formerly Irian Jaya). Most internationally known commercial, social, and philanthropic organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, Red Cross, Rotary, Lions Club, and Scouts are represented.

Arts, Science, and Education

The arts in Indonesia reflect the perception and creativity of a people surrounded by great natural beauty and a rich cultural heritage. Art, like religion, is woven into patterns of daily life. It is an integral accompaniment to celebrations and religious rites, as well as a principal source of leisure time enjoyment. Various Indonesian art forms are based on folklore but others were developed in the courts of former kingdoms or, as in Bali, are part of religious tradition.

The famous dance dramas of Java and Bali derive from Hindu mythology and often feature fragments from the Ramayana and Mahabharata Hindu epics. These highly stylized dances with elaborate costumes are accompanied by full "gamelan" orchestras comprising instruments similar to the xylophone as well as drums, gongs, and occasionally, stringed instruments and flutes.

One of the most fascinating types of Indonesian performing arts is the "wayang," art puppet performance, accompanied by gamelan. Two main types of wayang exist: The "wayang kulit" features flat leather shadow puppets, and the "wayang golek" uses wooden hand puppets. In both forms, the puppets are used to narrate a story usually based on one of

the Hindu epics, but they frequently offer veiled comments on contemporary political figures and events.

Transportation

Automobiles

Personal cars for work, shopping, social occasions, and trips to the mountains or seashore add a great deal of convenience and independence to life here. Please consider the following before deciding to ship or purchase vehicle locally.

Only sedans and station wagon-type vehicles may be imported, but the government has allowed the import of some smaller SUV's, like the RAV 4, and occasionally small engine Jeeps or other SUV type vehicles and minivans on a case-by-case basis. Buses, vans, sports cars, and luxury vehicles (4,000cc engine capacity and those above the highest priced Indonesian vehicle) are generally not allowed for import.

The most commonly imported and locally available automobiles are Toyotas and other Japanese models, and to a lesser extent European and Australian models; few American models are imported due to high prices (the Indonesian Government considers most luxury vehicles), limited parts, and lack of repair facilities. Automobile resale values vary and are less favorable for large U.S. models. Smaller cars are easier to handle, as streets and highways are narrow and traffic is heavily congested.

As of February 2000, a locally assembled Toyota Corolla SE with automatic transmission and air-conditioning costs \$18,918.

Importing a car into Indonesia requires two separate permits and approvals from the Government of Indonesia: (1) Preliminary approval (PPI) before your car is shipped/ordered/or purchased; (2) Customs approval (PP-8) when the car arrives.

Auto insurance is available locally. You might also consider U.S. insur-

ance coverage available through various companies before deciding. By law, you must have third-party coverage in an amount equal to Rp 1,000,000. Full comprehensive coverage is recommended. Collision insurance is strongly recommended, as most Indonesians are financially unable to pay for damages.

Driving in Indonesia, traffic moves on the left. Right-hand drive is recommended but not required. A left-hand-drive car is less hazardous in Jakarta than on the busy, narrow two-lane (or one and one-half lane) roads leading from Jakarta to mountain and beach resorts. Driving in Indonesia requires care and vigilance to avoid accidents. Many long term visitors hire a full-time or part-time driver.

Travelers can drive in Indonesia using either an Indonesian drivers license, obtainable on presentation of a valid U.S., foreign, or international license, or an international drivers license validated by the Government of Indonesia. Keep in mind this license must be renewed annually. If you do not have a valid license, you must take written and driving tests for a fee.

The state-owned Pertamina Company sells gasoline and diesel fuel through its outlets throughout the country. Unleaded fuel (called Super TT) is Rps 1,400 a liter. Higher octane leaded is Rps 1,300; lower octane leaded is Rps 1,000; and diesel fuel costs Rps 600 a liter. A few stations sell unleaded gasoline. However, unleaded fuel is now available in some major cities and on the toll road to Bogor and Puncak.

Adequate asphalt roads connect major cities in central and east Java. A standard shift is preferable, and air-conditioning is necessary. Heavy-duty springs and shock absorbers, undercoating, and rust-proofing are recommended. If your car has tubeless tires, bring at least one spare with a tube for emergencies.

Local

By Western standards, public transportation in Jakarta is overburdened and inadequate. Buses in particular are not maintained properly and are considered so unsafe, Embassy personnel rarely use them. Several taxicab companies operate fleets from the major hotels in Jakarta, in the suburb of Kebayoran (which houses many Embassy employees), and have reliable reservation services. Use metered taxis to avoid haggling over fares and overcharging. "Bajajs" (motor-driven, three-wheeled vehicles) also operate and can be used for short distances. However, Bajaj and taxi drivers speak little English and often know only the names of major streets.

Surabaya. "Becaks" (pedicabs) are the most commonly used means of local public transportation for short trips. Various types of three- and four-wheeled vehicles supplement the city bus system, but Consulate General personnel rarely use any of these motorized public vehicles. Metered taxi service is available.

Regional

The rainy season often causes the generally poor roads to become impassable. Otherwise, trucks, buses, animal carts, becaks, and pedestrians congest the roads. Depending on the season and local road conditions, you can possibly drive from Jakarta to the eastern tip of Java (about 800 miles) in 2 or 3 days. From there your car can be ferried across to Bali. The Indonesian State railway system serves major cities in Java. Accommodations, standards, and service vary from air-conditioned comfort to steerage. Limited rail and road networks on Sumatra make traveling difficult.

Garuda Indonesian Airways, Bouraq, Merpati, and several other local airlines provide air service to major cities and outlying islands in Indonesia, including Denpasar on the island of Bali. Garuda also flies to major Asian, European, and Australian cities. Numerous daily flights to and from Singapore, 1

hour and 20 minutes from Jakarta, exist. The international airport is some 20 miles from downtown Jakarta. Several daily flights from Medan serve Jakarta and Singapore. One flight a day goes to Penang, Malaysia. Several weekly flights within Sumatra service Padang, Banda Aceh, and Pekanbaru. An almost hourly shuttle service connects Jakarta and Surabaya.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

A 24-hour satellite-telephone service connects Indonesia with the U.S. Reception on international calls is usually good, but local phone service is only fair. Cables and central exchange equipment are often saturated and sometimes inadequately maintained. In-country direct dialing is available throughout Indonesia.

If you have a telephone charge card from a U.S. company, use it during your stay for cheaper rates on calls to the U.S. Many long-distance companies provide reduced rates upon request for calls made with their calling cards.

Radio and TV

Commercial television was allowed by the government to begin operations in 1989, after many years of government television only. Indonesian broadcast television is in the PAL (European) format. Programming varies greatly, from locally produced dramas and game shows to U.S. sitcoms and dramatic series with Indonesian subtitles. There is daily English news on Televisi Republik Indonesia (TVRI), the government network. The local cable and satellite television services offer CNN, BBC, CNBC, Star News, and Australian news programs to subscribers, as well as HBO, Cinemax, ESPN, Discovery, National Geographic, C-Span, Worldnet, and Star TV, and other educational and entertainment channels. Subscribers can receive up to 50 channels, in various Asian and European languages as well as

English. Rates are comparable to those in the U.S. Jakarta has abundant TV, radio, and stereo equipment sales and repair services, although prices on new equipment can be high.

Vendors sell or rent DVDs, VCDs, laser disks, and PAL videotapes. Locally sold or rented videotapes are censored. Local power is 220v, 50-cycle, AC but fluctuates widely. A voltage regulator, available locally, is recommended to protect audio and video equipment. U.S.-standard NTSC videotapes are rented by the AERA Club, so U.S.-standard televisions and VCRs are useful to view these videos.

Radio keeps most of the population informed and entertained. In addition to hundreds of small commercial stations throughout the country, Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI), the government radio network, broadcasts nationwide via relay stations. RRI Jakarta broadcasts news and commentary in English for about an hour in the early mornings and evenings. Dozens of AM and FM stations broadcast in Jakarta, including several with English programming and Western popular music. Most are stereo. Since all newscasts come from RRI and all stations relay it, the top of the hour begins with the same voices on all radio stations at once. Some personnel might also want to have a shortwave radio receiver for VOA, BBC, and Radio Australia. Shortwave reception is generally good.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

The British Council, the Women's International Club, and the Indonesia-America Friendship Society (PPIA) operate lending libraries with minimal membership requirements and collections of approximately 20,000 books. The library facilities of the Jakarta International School (JIS) are available to students and their parents. Anyone in the international community may use the library's facilities on the school premises, but only families with students attending JIS

may borrow books. Each elementary school library contains more than 20,000 books, and the high school library has almost 40,000.

English-language sources of news in Jakarta are readily available. Three English-language dailies are published in Jakarta. The most widely read is the Jakarta Post, followed by the Indonesian Observer and the Indonesia Times. The International Herald Tribune, the Asian Wall Street Journal, and USA Today are sold in many major hotels. The Tribune is available for home delivery. A wide variety of international magazines in English are available commercially.

Many hotels and bookstores have a selection of English-language books at prices some 50% higher than those in the U.S. The American Women's Association (AWA), the International Community Activity Center (ICAC), AERA, and the commissary all operate small bookshelves recycling used books. Bring basic reference works, particularly for children, and leisure reading material.

Surabaya. The Jakarta English-language newspapers and many international newspapers and magazines are also available commercially. PPIA offers free memberships for a small English-language lending library.

Internet. A wide variety of home connections to the internet, including through high-speed digital lines, TV cable, and dialup services, are available at reasonable monthly prices. Cable modems are available for rent at less than \$10/month. Additionally, there are large numbers of internet cafes throughout all major urban centers where customers can connect for nominal fees.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

If you take chronic medication, bring your own. This includes birth control pills, vitamins, blood pres-

sure medication, and thyroid or estrogen hormones. Local pharmacies carry a range of products of variable quality, availability, and cost. Some chronic medications may be bought here, but make that decision after you arrive. Establish a supply source before coming.

Local medical facilities are used selectively for specialty consultation and emergency hospitalization. Elective surgery is not recommended in Jakarta. Patients with problems that cannot be handled in Jakarta are evacuated to Singapore. The hospital used (whether local or regional) depends on the condition and urgency of the problem.

Indonesian facilities to handle high-risk obstetrics and neonatal care are very limited.

Dental care, such as cleaning, repairs of dental cavities, and root canal and bridge work, can be performed in Jakarta. Complicated dental problems can be referred to specialists in Singapore. There are orthodontists who work in Jakarta, though the quality of their work is quite inconsistent.

Jakarta has optometrists and selected ophthalmologists of reasonable quality. Lens work is satisfactory, but bring an extra pair of glasses with you.

Local physicians are used selectively, with variable satisfaction. No American or European doctors currently practice in the city. Hospitals are generally of a significantly lower standard than in Jakarta. Surabaya is not equipped to support significant ongoing medical problems, and persons posted in Surabaya must be aware of this. Concerns and plans regarding dental and optometry care and chronic medications should be considered and resolved prior to arrival. Local pharmacies carry a range of products of variable quality, availability, and cost.

Community Health

Community sanitation and public health programs are inadequate

throughout Indonesia and subject to frequent breakdowns. Water and air pollution and traffic congestion have rapidly increased

with the growth of major cities. Almost all maladies of the developing world are found here. Residents are subject to water- and food-borne illnesses such as typhoid, hepatitis, cholera, worms, amebiasis, and bacterial dysentery. Mosquito-borne dengue fever exists throughout Indonesia. Malaria is endemic in metropolitan Jakarta, Medan, the Puncak, Surabaya, and southern Bali and in a few other locations. Respiratory difficulties are common and are exacerbated by the high pollution levels. Asthma problems are generally worse during a tour here, as are any other respiratory or skin allergies.

Preventive Measures

Recommended immunizations for children include all of the standard pediatric immunizations of diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, and hemophilus B, plus hepatitis B, hepatitis A, typhoid, and preexposure rabies for toddlers. Adults should be current on all recommended immunizations. Malaria prophylaxis is recommended for travel to endemic areas outside major cities. Additionally, use of screens, clothes that cover the body, and insect repellent for children and adults is important to decrease exposure not only to mosquitoes carrying malaria but also to those carrying dengue fever, a disease that is present in both urban and rural areas.

Because of evidence of hydrocarbon and other chemical contamination in Jakarta. All water used for consumption should be bottled. Bottled water is also supplied in Surabaya. Factory-bottled soft drinks and juices are generally safe. Milk sold in sealed containers is generally safe. Standard recommendations for preparing fresh fruits, vegetables, and meats apply here. Washing, soaking, and peeling and/or thoroughly cooking are mandatory to minimize insecticide residue and

bacterial and parasitic contamination. A wide variety of foods are available in local markets and supermarkets, and it is possible to eat a well-balanced diet.

Car accidents are the primary causes of severe injury to foreigners living in Indonesia. Defensive driving and use of seatbelts are encouraged, and use of motorcycles is strongly discouraged. The U.S. maintains a list of available blood donors, but Rh negative blood may be difficult to obtain in an area with very few Westerners. Therefore, it is important to know your blood type and recognize that this may be a problem.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan. 1	New Year's Day
Feb.	Chinese New Year*
April.	Nyepi*
Mar/Apr.	Good Friday*
Mar/Apr.	Easter*
May/June.	Ascension of Christ*
July 23	Children's Day
Aug. 17.	Independence Day
Dec. 25	Christmas Day
.	Muharran*
.	Id al-Fitr*
.	Waisak*
.	Id al-Adha*
.	Mawlid an Nabi*
.	Galungan**
.	Kuningan**

*variable

**Galungan & Kuningan are Hindu Balinese Holidays. Balinese use Caka Year, which is 210 days per year, not 365. Therefore, these holidays are celebrated twice in one Gregorian year.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs & Duties

The usually traveled route to Indonesia from the U.S. is by air via

the Pacific. This route in particular is advantageous to families traveling with children or pets since it eliminates the forced stop overnight in Singapore. Since the trip from the U.S. to Jakarta is so long and tiresome, you may wish to make a rest stop along the way.

A passport valid for six months beyond the intended date of departure from Indonesia is required. A visa is not required for tourist stays up to two months. As of November 2000 the Government of Indonesia has been discussing implementing visa requirements for foreign travelers. Travelers should reconfirm entry requirements before traveling. For additional information about entry requirements for Indonesia, travelers may contact the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia, 2020 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036, telephone (202) 775-5200, fax (202) 775-5365.

U.S. citizens are encouraged to carry a copy of their U.S. passports with them at all times, so that, if questioned by local officials, proof of identity and U.S. citizenship are readily available. When U.S. citizens are arrested or detained, formal notification of the arrest is normally provided to the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta in writing, a process that can take several weeks. If detained, U.S. citizens are encouraged to attempt to telephone the nearest U.S. consular office.

Americans living in or visiting Indonesia are encouraged to register at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate where they may obtain updated information on travel and security within the country.

The U.S. Embassy is located in Jakarta at Medan Merdeka Selatan 5; telephone:(62)(21)3435-9000; fax (62)(21)3435-9922. The Embassy's web site is located at <http://www.usembassyjakarta.org>. The consular section can be reached by e-mail at jakconsul@state.gov.

The U.S. Consulate General is in Surabaya at Jalan Raya Dr.,

Sutomo 33; telephone: (62)(31) 567-2287/8; fax (62)(31)567-4492; e-mail consularsuraba@state.gov.

There is a Consular Agency in Bali at Jalan Hayam Wuruk 188, Denpasar, Bali; telephone: (62)(361)233-605; fax (62)(31) 222-426; e-mail amcobali@indo.net.id.

Pets

Except for a prohibition against importing birds, pets are admissible into Indonesia. All animals must have a certificate of health issued by a veterinarian. Owners must produce evidence that within 6 months to 30 days before arrival the pets were inoculated against rabies. No quarantine is required. There are two ways to bring pets to Jakarta. The first method is as accompanied baggage (excess baggage) since the pet travels with you on the same flights. Your pet can be immediately cleared through Customs if all documentation is in hand and is valid. The airline determines the excess baggage costs and these are a personal, non-reimbursable expense.

The second and often most expensive method of shipping a pet is as airfreight.

In the freight system, the pet is transported unaccompanied by the owner. Animals are loaded into pressurized holds along with other cargo. Fees for this type of shipment vary according to your country of origin, the number of pets, and the airline handling the transport. You can find airfreight forwarders through your local yellow pages, the worldwide web or through your veterinarian. Some airlines limit pet transport to only certain portions of the year due to high temperatures. Upon arrival in Jakarta it will take about 3 hours to clear your pet through Indonesian Customs.

Do not route your pet (alone or accompanied) via Australia, where it will be confiscated and destroyed. Persons bringing pets through Hong Kong or Singapore must have prior authorization from those governments to do so. This authoriza-

tion is required regardless of the carrying airline and must be obtained directly from the governments of those countries. Instructions for applying for this authorization can be obtained at any British (for Hong Kong) or Singaporean embassy. The desired transit time must be stated on the authorization. If pets arrive without the authorization (even if only in transit), they will be quarantined at your expense or destroyed.

Firearms and Ammunition

Personal weapons in Indonesia present a problem due to the difficulty of obtaining import licenses and certificates of registration.

Currency, Banking, and Weights and Measures

The monetary unit is the rupiah. The rate of exchange changes constantly (as of February 2001, Rp 9,440 = US\$1). The international metric system of weights and measures is used in Indonesia. Gasoline and other liquids are sold by the liter (1.0567 liquid quarts); cloth, by the meter (39 inches); and food and other weighted items, by the kilogram (2.2 pounds). Distance is measured by the kilometer (0.625 miles); speed, in kilometers per hour (40 kph = 25 mph).

Taxes, Exchange, and Sale of Property Restrictions

Direct consumer taxes and service charges, such as those imposed on hotel and restaurant bills, gasoline purchases, and airport departure, are paid.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES: U.S. citizens involved in commercial or property matters should be aware that the business environment is complex. In many cases, trade complaints are difficult to resolve.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS: Indonesia is located in an area of high seismic activity. Although the probability of a major earthquake occurring during an individual trip is remote, earthquakes can and will continue to happen. General infor-

mation about natural disaster preparedness is available via the Internet from the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) at <http://www.fema.gov/>.

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IRAN

Islamic Republic of Iran

Major Cities:

Tehrān, Esfahān, Shirāz

Other Cities:

Ābādān, Bakhtaran, Bandar Abbas, Hamadān, Kerman, Mashhad, Qom, Tabriz, Yazd, Zāhedān

INTRODUCTION

The Middle Eastern nation of **IRAN** is located at a strategic crossroads between the Western and Eastern worlds. Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Iran has isolated itself from most of the world in an attempt to protect itself from non-Muslim values and influences. The country's support of international terrorism and its desire to export the Islamic Revolution to its more moderate Middle Eastern neighbors has made Iran an international outcast. Since the death of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution, in 1989, Iran has made tentative attempts to establish new ties with the West. Years of isolation and a devastating war with Iraq during the 1980s decimated Iran's economy. The moderate, pragmatic government of Ali Hashemic Rafsanjani recognized the need for Western technology and financial assistance to rebuild the economy, but it had to move cautiously in order not to offend Iran's powerful Islamic clergy. In 1997, a moderate candidate, Mohammed Khatami, was elected president. Since Iran's constitution limits the president's powers, the election did not change Iran's foreign policy.

MAJOR CITIES

Tehrān

Tehrān, the capital of Iran, is located at the foot of the Elburz Mountains (Reshteh-ye Alborz). The city, whose origins date back to the fourth century A.D., has served as Iran's capital since 1788 and has developed over the years into a modern transportation, cultural, and industrial center. Tehrān is linked by road with other major Iranian cities and is accessible by air to cities in Asia, Europe, and the Persian Gulf region. The city is home to many of Iran's major educational institutions, including the University of Tehrān, the Arya Mehr University of Technology, and the National University of Iran. Tehrān is a primary industrial center. Industries in Tehrān produce a wide variety of products, including automobiles, cement, textiles, pharmaceuticals, sugar, electrical equipment, and pottery. Rapid industrialization during the late 20th century has led to a dramatic increase in air pollution. Tehrān enjoys a favorable climate, with cool winters and warm summers. In 1995, Tehrān had an estimated population of 6.8 million.

Recreation and Entertainment

Western-style entertainment, such as movies or nightclubs, are virtually nonexistent in Tehrān. However, the city has many museums and mosques that are of interest to visitors. The Ethnological Museum offers visitors an informative look at Iranian life during the 19th and early 20th century. The museum contains excellent displays featuring articles used by average Iranian villagers, including jewelry and amulets, household dishes, and tools. The Ethnological Museum also offers a display of a 19th century Iranian village, with mannequins adorned in native dress.

For those interested in history, Tehrān's Archeological Museum contains art, sculpture, and artifacts from every century and dynasty in Iranian history. Among the exquisite articles in the museum are porcelain vases and bowls, armaments, bone tools, bronze and brass jewelry and perfume-burners, and beautiful rugs.

One of Tehrān's most interesting mosques is the Sepahsalar Mosque. This mosque has eight minarets which offer excellent views of Tehrān. The interior of Sepahsalar Mosque is adorned with beautiful tile work and contains a large

library filled with many ancient manuscripts.

Tehrān has over 19 parks, gardens, and squares which offer visitors a welcome respite from the hectic pace of the city. Tehrān's parks and gardens are often filled with Iranians playing badminton and soccer, or picnicking with family members.

Although some hotels and restaurants were closed or destroyed during the Islamic Revolution, several remain which serve Western cuisine. Many Iranian dishes are also quite good and are reasonably priced. The main staple of Iranian dishes is rice, although vegetables, yogurt, meat, cheese, and bread are also used.

The streets of Tehrān have many shops which offer many items of interest to tourists. Persian carpets, which are among the finest in the world, are popular souvenirs.

Esfahān

The city of Esfahān (also spelled Isfahan) is located in west central Iran approximately 210 miles (340 kilometers) south of Tehrān. From the 16th to 18th century, Esfahān served as the capital of Iran. Today Esfahān is one of Iran's largest and most important cities. The city has developed into a major industrial center for textiles, rugs, and tiles. Most heavy industry in Esfahān is centered around petroleum refining and steel making. During the spring and summer, the city receives cool breezes from the north which help to moderate temperatures. Esfahān had a population of 2.6 million in 2000.

Recreation and Entertainment

Esfahān is one of Iran's most beautiful cities and offers many sight-seeing opportunities. The city has many mosques, mausoleums, and minarets that are open to visitors.

Esfahān's largest mosque is the Friday Mosque (Masjid-i-Jami). Begun in the 11th century, construction of



Street in Shiraz, Iran.

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the Friday Mosque continued for several centuries. Because the mosque was constructed over several centuries, it offers visitors a glimpse of architectural styles from various centuries of Persian culture. The Friday Mosque is considered one of Iran's most beautiful structures. Located about 500 yards from the Friday Mosque is the Ali Mosque (Masjid-i-Ali). The Ali Mosque has a facade that is covered with exquisite decorations. A notable feature of the Ali Mosque is a group of arches topped with a cupola. The cupola is inscribed with a poem honoring one of Iran's Shahs as well as 13 verses from the Koran. The Shaikh-Lutfallah Mosque, with its intricately patterned dome and gorgeous mosaics, is another beautiful example of Persian architecture.

The city has several mausoleums which are of interest to visitors. The Mausoleum of Darb-i-Imam has a large cupola covered with beautiful mosaics. The mausoleum is easily recognizable by a stone lion with a human face which resides in a courtyard in front of the mausoleum. The Mausoleum of Baba Qasem was completed in 1340 as the final resting place of a theologian from the Sunni Sect of Islam. In 1928, Baba Qasem's body was removed from the tomb because he

was considered a heretic by Iran's Shi'ite majority. The mausoleum is a beautiful structure and is adorned with white mosaic tiles on a blue background. The Mausoleum of Baba Rokn-ed-din is another popular site for sightseers. This mausoleum was constructed in 1629 and presented as a gift to the citizens of Esfahān by Shah Abbas. The Mausoleum of Babau Rokn-ed-din is noteworthy because of its unusual pentagonal shape.

Esfahān's beautiful minarets (prayer towers) are also worth a visit. The Sareban Minaret is one of the most attractive minarets in Esfahān. It is 144 feet high and divided into three sections, with each section beautifully decorated with inscriptions, brickwork, or stalactites. North of the Sareban Minaret is the Minaret of the 40 Daughters. This minaret is a brick structure adorned with intricate geometric patterns. The Minaret of the 40 Daughters is somewhat smaller than the Sareban Minaret.

In addition to sight-seeing, Esfahān offers wonderful shopping opportunities. The city's bazaar allows visitors to watch carpet weavers, silversmiths, and coppersmiths practicing their crafts. The silver, brass, and copper jewelry, hand-

printed cloth, pottery, and Persian rugs sold at the bazaar make excellent souvenirs.

Many visitors also enjoy strolling through the city's spacious central square, with its lovely trees and manicured gardens.

Shirāz

Shirāz, located in south central Iran, is an industrial and commercial center. Several manufacturing industries are located in Shirāz. These industries produce textiles, fertilizers, sugar, and cement. The city is famous for its wine and Persian rugs. Shirāz is considered Iran's literary capital and is the birthplace of Sa'di and Hafez, two of the country's greatest poets. The city has a favorable climate, with mild winters and pleasant temperatures from March to October. In 2000, Shirāz had a population of approximately 1,113,000.

Recreation and Entertainment

Like many other Iranian cities, Shirāz is quite old. As a result, there are many historic mosques and mausoleums that are worth a visit. One of the oldest mosques in Shirāz is the Old Friday Mosque (Masjid-e-Jame). This mosque was begun in 894 A.D. but was added onto throughout the centuries. Beautiful mosaics adorn the structure. One of the unique aspects of the Old Friday Mosque is the miniature temple which graces the mosque's courtyard. This temple, known as the *Khoda Khanen* (The Lord's House), was constructed in the 14th century and contains a copy of the Koran. No other mosque in Iran has a temple of this kind. Another mosque, the New Friday Mosque, is the largest in Iran with an area of 215,000 square feet. Constructed in the 13th century, it is easily recognizable by its gilded cupola.

The mausoleums of the Persian poets Hafez and Sa'di are located in Shirāz and are open to visitors. The Hafez Mausoleum is situated in a

lovely garden filled with orange trees and cypresses. The tomb of Hafez is covered with rosettes and verses from his poems. Another collection of Hafez's poems is inscribed on an alabaster tablet located near the tomb. The Sa'di Mausoleum, with its turquoise dome and high portico, is a beautiful structure. An artificial pond near the tomb offers a spot for peaceful contemplation. Another mausoleum, the Mausoleum of Shah Cheragh, is a pilgrimage center for Shi'ites. Therefore, it is not open to non-Muslim visitors. The mausoleum has many beautiful mirrors and has a distinctive pear-shaped dome.

Shirāz has many bazaars which offer wonderful shopping opportunities. Souvenir hunters can purchase authentic Persian carpets, tablecloths, gold and silver jewelry, glass and ceramic wear, and wood carvings.

OTHER CITIES

ĀBĀDĀN is situated in extreme southwestern Iran near the border with Iraq. Founded in the eighth century, Ābādān's location near the Persian Gulf led to its development as a trading center. The discovery of oil near Ābādān in the early 20th century brought new wealth to the city. Oil refineries, pipelines, and port facilities were quickly constructed. Ābādān was attacked by Iraq in 1980 during the early stages of the Iran-Iraq War. The city was bombed repeatedly throughout the conflict. Most of the city, particularly its oil refineries and port facilities were destroyed. Some of the facilities have been repaired and oil refining has resumed, although at vastly reduced levels. Current population figures are unavailable.

The city of **BAKHTARAN**, located in western Iran, is nestled in the midst of a fertile agricultural region. Formerly known as Kermanshah, the city has served as a trading center for the barley, corn, wheat, oilseeds, rice, and vegetables grown nearby. Bakhtaran is home to

several industries, which produce sugar, textiles, carpets, tools, and electrical equipment. Bakhtaran has a population over 540,000.

BANDAR ABBAS is located on the Strait of Hormuz at the entrance of the Persian Gulf. The city is an important port for Iranian exports such as petroleum and agricultural products. The climate in Bandar Abbas is extremely hot and humid during the summer, but cooler in winter. The city has an estimated population over 210,000.

Situated at the foot of Mount Alvand in west-central Iran, **HAMADĀN** is an important trading center for fruits and grains grown near the city. The city is famous for its production of Persian rugs and leather goods. Hamadān is an ancient city and some vestiges of its historical past remain, including the mausoleum of Esther and Mordecai and a stone lion constructed during the reign of Alexander the Great. Avicenna, an Arab philosopher, was born and buried in Hamadān. The city has an estimated population over 272,000.

KERMĀN is located on a sandy plain in southeastern Iran. Founded in the second century, the city is an industrial center noted for the production and distribution of beautiful carpets. Other industries in Kermān produce textiles and cement. The city has several mosques that are of interest to visitors. Kermān's climate is generally cool and it is not unusual for the city to experience sandstorms during the spring and autumn. Current population figures are unavailable.

The city of **MASHHAD** (also spelled Meshed) is the site of two important Muslim shrines, the Shrine of Imam Ali ar Rida and the Shrine of Caliph Harun ar Rashid, which are visited by nearly four million pilgrims annually. Mashhad is situated on an ancient trading route between Iran and the silk markets of China. Today, the city is northeastern Iran's largest export center for carpets and agricultural products. The city has attractive parks, court-

yards, avenues, mosques, and libraries which are of interest to visitors. In 2000, Mashhad had a population of approximately 2,378,000.

Located only 92 miles (147 kilometers) south of Tehrān is the holy city of **QOM**. Qom, with its numerous shrines and tombs of Islamic saints, is the destination of many Shi'ite pilgrimages. The most notable shrine in Qom is the Shrine of Fatimah, which was erected in honor of the sister of an Islamic leader. The city is home to the largest theological college in Iran. Qom has also developed into an industrial center for the production of textiles, cement, pottery, brick, and petrochemicals. A large oil refinery is also located near the city. Qom is situated in a rich agricultural region and is a distribution center for the cotton, wheat, fruits, barley, and vegetables grown near the city. The city is linked by road and railway with Tehrān and other Iranian cities. Qom has a population of approximately 650,000.

TABRIZ is located in extreme northwestern Iran near the country's border with Russia. With a population of approximately 1,624,000 (2000 est.), Tabriz is Iran's fourth largest city. The city has a well-developed industrial sector. Industries in Tabriz produce a wide variety of products, including agricultural machinery, textiles, carpets, motorcycles, dried fruits and nuts, soap, and leather goods. Rail, air, and bus transportation connects Tabriz with Tehrān. Tabriz is a modern city with beautiful tree-lined avenues and lush public gardens. The city has several mosques, most notably the blue-tiled Blue Mosque. Tabriz is prone to severe earthquakes and has received damaging shocks over the centuries. In February 1997 a devastating earthquake rocked northwest Iran, killing over 500 and leaving more than 35,000 homeless.

The city of **YAZD** is located in Iran's arid central region. Yazd, founded in the fifth century A.D., is an ancient city and has many mosques and mausoleums that are of interest to

visitors. One mosque in particular, the Friday Mosque (Masjed-e Jom'eh), has the tallest minarets of any mosque in Iran. Many of Yazd's mosques are beautifully decorated with intricate designs and inscriptions. The city is located in the heart of a fertile agricultural area which produces fruit, barley, wheat, almonds, and cotton. Yazd is most noted for its silk weaving and carpet manufacturing. The area surrounding Yazd is rich in minerals, which has led to the development of a substantial mining industry. Yazd is a transportation hub and is connected by road and rail with Tehrān and other major Iranian cities. Yazd has a population of over 223,000.

ZĀHEDĀN, a city of approximately 220,000 residents, is situated in southeastern Iran. The city serves as a point of departure for trips to many of the smaller towns in the region. Industrial capacity in Zāhedān is rudimentary, at best. Factories in the city produce mostly bricks, ceramics, processed food, or local handicrafts. Current population figures are unavailable.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The Islamic Republic of Iran is located in the highlands of southwestern Asia. It comprises an area of approximately 636,293 square miles, slightly larger than Alaska. Iran is bordered on the north by Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and the Caspian Sea, on the east by Afghanistan and Pakistan, on the west by Iraq and Turkey, and on the south by the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman. The topography of Iran consists mainly of desert and mountains. The central, eastern, and southern parts of the country contain great salt flats (*kavir*) and desert. These areas are virtually uninhabitable. Most of Iran's population lives in the northern and northwestern areas of Iran. Two

mountain chains dominate the landscape. The Zagros Mountains originate in northwestern Iran, extend southward to the Persian Gulf coast, and skirt eastward along the Gulf of Oman. The second range, the Elburz Range, extends along the southern coast of the Caspian Sea.

Most of Iran exhibits a desert climate, although areas along the Caspian seacoast are more temperate. Summers are usually long, hot and dry. High humidity is prevalent along the Caspian Sea and Persian Gulf coasts. Spring and fall are usually of short duration. Winter, especially in mountainous northern regions, is harsh with extremely cold temperatures.

Iran suffers from chronic water shortages. Eastern and southern portions of Iran receive negligible precipitation. Northern and western parts of the country receive annual rainfall of only eight to ten inches.

Population

As of 2000, Iran had an estimated population of 65,870,000. A number of ethnic groups are represented in Iran. The majority of Iranians are Persians (51 percent). Approximately 25 percent are Azerbaijani. Small minorities of Arabs and Kurds also reside in Iran. Iran's official language is Farsi, spoken by 58 percent of the population. About 26 percent speak Turkic languages, especially people in northwestern and northeastern parts of the country. Kurdish and Luri are spoken in western parts of Iran and Baluchi in the southeast. Arabic, English and French are also spoken.

Approximately 89 percent of the population are Shi'ite Muslims. Another 10 percent belong to the Sunni Muslim sect of Islam. Small non-Muslim minorities exist in Iran. These include Zoroastrians, Jews, Christians, and Baha'is.

Life expectancy at birth 68 years for males and 71 years for females (2001 est.).

History

Iran, known as Persia until 1935, has a history that dates back to the pre-Christian era. In 549 B.C., Cyrus the Great united Persians and Medes into one Persian empire. Under Cyrus, the Persians created a wealthy and powerful empire. They conquered Babylonia in 538 B.C. and established a dominant position in the Middle East. However, in 333 B.C., the Persian Empire was attacked and conquered by Alexander the Great. The Persians regained their independence under the Sassanians in 226 A.D.

For several centuries, Persia was invaded and occupied by numerous foreign powers. In the seventh century A.D., the Arabs conquered Persia, bringing with them their Muslim faith. Turks and Mongols overran and occupied Persia at various intervals between the 11th and 16th centuries. In 1502, a group known as the Safavids established control of Persia. Under the leadership of Shah Abbas, Persia enjoyed an era of unparalleled peace and prosperity. In 1795, the Safavids were succeeded by the Qajars. The Qajars ruled Persia until 1925.

The early 20th century in Persia was marked by a series of uprisings against the Qajar Dynasty. In 1906, Shah Muzaffer-ud-Din granted the first constitution in Persian history. This constitution gave people a voice in the political process for the first time. This concession, and others, were not enough to calm the anger of the people. In 1925, the Qajar's were overthrown during a coup attempt. A young Persian army officer, Reza Khan, seized power. He named himself king and took the title Reza Shah Pahlavi. During his reign, Reza Shah sought to modernize the country and develop its oil industry. During World War II, Nazi Germany had established a strong commercial presence in Iran. The United States and Great Britain demanded that the Germans be expelled from Iranian soil. When these demands were not met, they invaded Iran in 1941. Reza Shah was forced to abdi-

cate the throne in favor of his son, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. In 1942, Iran, Great Britain and the U.S.S.R. signed a treaty in which the British and Soviets agreed to respect Iran's territorial integrity and defend the country against foreign aggression. In return, the Iranians agreed to allow Great Britain and the U.S.S.R. to deploy troops in the country. At the end of World War II, the Soviets reneged on the agreement and refused to withdraw its troops. However, after intense American pressure, the Soviets pulled their troops out of Iran in 1946. This marked the beginning of a close relationship between the Pahlavi Dynasty and the United States.

In 1951, the Shah was ousted from power and a new government formed. It was led by Dr. Mohammad Mossadigh, a longtime opponent of the Shah. Mossadigh sought to end all foreign influence in Iranian domestic affairs. The United States and Western European nations strongly urged that Shah Reza Pahlavi be returned to power. In 1953, Mossadigh was overthrown and arrested by the Shah's army. Reza Pahlavi was returned to the throne. In 1961, the Shah launched an ambitious program to modernize Iran. He instituted land reforms and encouraged massive amounts of foreign investment. These reforms, coupled with money from Iran's vast oil reserves, began a period of unprecedented period of modernization and growth.

Despite the prosperity, a growing undercurrent of political turmoil emerged. Many groups within Iran resented the Shah's authoritarian rule, which was enforced by his brutal secret police force. In particular, Reza Pahlavi angered Iran's powerful religious leaders. They charged that the Shah's modernization program was a rejection of Islamic values and traditions. Reza Pahlavi responded to the criticism with even harsher political repression. One of the Shah's most vocal critics, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, was arrested by secret police agents and imprisoned. In 1964, Khomeini was

forced to leave Iran and eventually settled in France.

In 1978 domestic violence, led by religious clerics, exploded throughout Iran. Iran's cities were the scene of violent demonstrations and riots against the Shah's programs and Western influence in Iran's internal affairs. Bloody battles were waged between Iranian civilians and troops loyal to the Shah. In an attempt to end the violence, Pahlavi declared martial law in 12 major cities. This decision only made the Iranian people angrier. By early 1979, it became clear that Reza Pahlavi's days in power were numbered. On January 16, 1979, the Shah left Iran for exile in Egypt. Before his departure, Reza Pahlavi created an interim government led by prime minister Shahpour Bakhtiar.

Ayatollah Khomeini returned triumphantly from France on January 31, 1979. He declared that Bakhtiar's government was invalid and named his own provisional government. On February 11, 1979, the Shah's best troops, the Imperial Guard, were defeated. Many officials and secret police agents from the Shah's government were hunted down, imprisoned or executed.

The Islamic Republic of Iran was proclaimed on April 1, 1979. The government was dominated by religious clerics and all domestic policies were based on strict Islamic principles and traditions. The foreign policy of the Islamic Republic was extremely anti-American and dedicated to spreading the Islamic Revolution to the rest of the Middle East. On November 4, 1979 Iranian militants seized the American embassy and took hostages. The militants demanded the return of the Shah from exile and intended to put him on trial. However, on July 27, 1980, the Shah died in Egypt after undergoing treatment for cancer. Despite American and international pressure, the hostages remained captive. After a series of frustrating and fruitless negotiations, President Carter authorized a military attempt to rescue the hostages. The mission was a complete



Cory Langley. Reproduced by permission.

Mosque and other buildings in Tehrān

failure and resulted in the deaths of several U.S. servicemen. After months of intense negotiations, an agreement was reached. The hostages were freed on January 21, 1981.

On September 22, 1980, Iraq invaded Iran in a dispute over the Shatt-al-Arab waterway. For nine years, the two countries fought a long and savage war. Both sides suffered heavy casualties and severe damage to their oil producing facilities. In August 1988, Iran and Iraq agreed to a UN-sponsored ceasefire. Peace talks began shortly after. In 1990, a peace agreement was signed, Iraqi troops were withdrawn from Iranian soil, and prisoners of war exchanged.

In 1989, Ayatollah Khomeini offered a one million dollar reward for the killing of Salman Rushdie. Rushdie wrote a book, *The Satanic Verses*, that Khomeini and others deemed blasphemous to Islam. Rushdie was forced to go into hiding. Although Khomeini died on June 4, 1989, the threats against Rushdie's life continue.

Relations between the United States and Iran remain extremely tense. The United States has accused Iran's government of con-

tinued state sponsorship of terrorism. Since Khomeini's death, Iran is slowly emerging from years of self-imposed isolation and seeking new contacts with the rest of the world.

In 1997, a moderate candidate, Mohammed Khatami, was elected president. In April 1998, the mayor of Tehrān, Gholamhossein Karabashi (a political ally of President Khatami), was denounced by political conservatives and arrested on corruption charges. Protesters demonstrated against the arrest, which revealed the growing division between the moderates who won elections in 1997 and the conservatives who have controlled the country since 1979.

Government

Religious clerics wield unrivaled political power in Iran. The government of the Islamic Republic is headed by a Spiritual Leader of the Islamic Revolution. This position is held by a cleric who is highly regarded by the Iranian people. Ayatollah Khomeini served in this capacity until his death in 1989. He was succeeded by Ayatollah Ali Hoseini-Khamenei.

The Spiritual Leader selects six clerics to serve as a Council of

Guardians. These men serve as commanders of the armed forces, appoint judges, and determine the competency of presidential candidates.

Iran's Islamic constitution provides for the appointment of a president and prime minister. The president is elected to a four-year term and controls the executive branch of government. The president, in turn, nominates a candidate for prime minister. The prime minister is responsible for coordinating government decisions. The candidate for prime minister is subject to approval by the National Assembly. The National Assembly, or Majlis, is composed of 270 members elected to a four-year term. All legislation approved by the Assembly can be vetoed by the Council of Guardians. Elections for the Majlis were last held in April 1996. The results of the election indicated that moderate candidates favoring better relations with the West won a majority of the seats. The election results were viewed as a setback for Iran's hard-line Islamic militants.

All judicial matters are the province of the Supreme Court and a four-member High Council of the Judiciary. These men are entrusted with the enforcement of all laws and for establishing judicial and legal policies.

In 1982, an Assembly of Experts was created. This body consists of 83 members who are elected to eight-year terms. The Assembly of Experts is responsible for choosing the Spiritual Leader and interpreting the constitution. All candidates for election to the Assembly of Experts are subject to approval by the Council of Guardians.

The flag of the Islamic Republic of Iran consists of three equal horizontal bands of green (top), white, and red; the national emblem (a stylized representation of the word "Allah") in red is centered in the white band. "Allah Akbar" (God is Great) in white Arabic script is repeated 11 times along the bottom of the green

band and 11 times along the top edge of the red band.

Arts, Science, Education

Since 1943, primary education is mandatory for all children for five years. The great majority of primary and secondary schools are run by the state. Tuition and textbooks for elementary students are provided at government expense for the first four years. Small fees are charged at state-run secondary schools.

Iran has about 44 universities with 15 located in the capital, Tehrān. Many of Iran's universities were sites of violent unrest during the Islamic Revolution. Many universities were closed in 1980, but have been gradually re-opened since 1983. A new university, The Free Islamic University, was opened in April 1983. In recent years, college education in Iran has stressed vocational and agricultural programs.

In 1997 about 9.2 million primary school students and nearly 8.8 million secondary level students.

In 1994, an estimated 72 percent (male 78%, female 64%) of Iranians, age 15 and over, could read and write.

Commerce and Industry

Under the Pahlavi dynasty, Iran experienced tremendous industrial and economic growth. Much of this growth was disrupted by the 1979 Revolution. Also, massive corruption, mismanagement, and ideological rigidities have created product shortages and high inflation. Iran's main industry is oil production. However, the large oil refineries at Ābādān and Bandar Khomeini and the main tanker terminal at Kharg Island were destroyed or severely damaged during the 1980–88 war with Iraq. These facilities are slowly being repaired. In addition to oil, Iranian industries produce petro-

chemicals, textiles, vegetable oil and other food products, carpets, cement and other building materials, and fertilizer.

Iran has abundant agricultural resources. Her principal crops are wheat, rice, barley, nuts, cotton, sugar beets, and fruits. Wool is also an important product.

Petroleum accounts for 90 percent of Iran's exports. Other exports include carpets, fruits, nuts, and hides. Iran's primary imports are foodstuffs, military supplies, machinery, metal works, pharmaceuticals, and technical services. Japan, Germany, France, Italy, Turkey, Britain, Spain, and the Netherlands are Iran's primary trading partners.

The unit of currency is the *rial*.

Transportation

In 1995, Iran had approximately 87,000 miles (140,100 kilometers) of roadway. An estimated 26,500 miles (42,700 kilometers) were paved highways. Approximately 1.56 million cars and 589,000 commercial vehicles were in use in 1995. Conditions of secondary roads vary from good to poor.

Iran had an estimated 4,500 miles (7,300 kilometers) of railroads in 1996. The main line links Tehrān to the Caspian Sea and Persian Gulf.

There are several flights between Iran and Asia, the Middle East and Europe.

Public transport is frequent, reliable and relatively safe. Bus services offer competitive, inexpensive rates. Trains are efficient and inexpensive as well.

The Shatt-al-Arab was one of Iran's principal waterways. However, it was heavily damaged in the 1980s during the Iran-Iraq War. The Shatt-al-Arab contains two of Iran's principal ports, Ābādān and Khorramshahr. Both ports were virtually destroyed during the fighting. Iran's other ports are located along the

Gulf of Oman and Persian Gulf coasts. These include Bandar Abbas, Bandar Beheshti, Bandar Bushehr, and Bandar Khomeyni.

Iran's main international airport, Mehrabad Airport, is located just west of Tehrān. Shirāz International Airport is located only nine miles (15 kilometers) from Tehrān. A new airport opened near the city of Isfahan in July 1984 and began receiving international flights in March 1986.

The national airline is Iran Air (Airline of the Islamic Republic of Iran). International flights are available to the Persian Gulf area, Tokyo, London, Paris, Athens, Beijing, Kuala Lumpur, Karachi, Rome, Vienna, Lagos, Bombay, Istanbul, Frankfurt and Geneva.

Communications

There were an estimated 14.3 million radios and 3.9 million televisions in use in 1995. Iran's main radio station is the Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Regional broadcasts can be heard in Farsi, Arabic, Assyrian, Dari, Kurdish, Bandari, Baluchi, Turkish and Urdu. Foreign broadcasts are available on shortwave frequencies in English, French, Spanish, German, Russian, Farsi, Armenian, Urdu, Kurdish, Arabic and Turkish.

Television broadcasts are aired on the Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Programs are produced in Tehrān and transmitted to 28 stations across the country.

Iran's press is tightly controlled by the government. Strong criticism of the government, senior religious clerics, or public morality is forbidden. Many of the newspapers and periodicals published during the Shah's rule have been banned.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

A passport and visa are required. The Iranian Interests Section of the Embassy of Pakistan is located at 2209 Wisconsin Ave. N.W, Washington, DC. 20007; tel 202-965-4990, 91, 92, 93, 94, 99, fax 202-965-1073, 202-965-4990 (Automated Fax-On-Demand after office hours). Their Internet web site is <http://www.daftar.org> (click on "English"). U.S. passports are valid for travel to Iran. However, the authorities have often confiscated the U.S. passports of U.S.-Iranian dual nationals upon arrival. U.S.-Iranian dual nationals have been denied permission to depart Iran documented as U.S. citizens. To prevent the confiscation of U.S. passports, the Department of State suggests that dual nationals leave their U.S. passports at the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate overseas for safekeeping before entering Iran, and use their Iranian passports to enter the country. To facilitate their travel if their U.S. passports are confiscated, dual nationals may, prior to entering Iran, obtain in their Iranian passports the necessary visas for the country which they will transit on their return to the United States, where they may apply for a new U.S. passport.

Alternately, dual nationals whose U.S. passports are confiscated may obtain a "Confirmation of Nationality" from the U.S. Interests Section of the Embassy of Switzerland, which is the U.S. protecting power. This statement, addressed to the relevant foreign embassies in Tehran, enables the travelers to apply for third-country visas in Tehran. Dual nationals finding themselves in this situation should note in advance that the Swiss Embassy would issue this statement only after the traveler's U.S. nationality is confirmed and after some processing delay. Dual nationals must enter and leave the United States on U.S. passports.

Iranian authorities may permit travelers to bring in or to take certain goods out of Iran. However, U.S. travelers should refer to the section of this Consular Information Sheet regarding U.S. Government economic sanctions and the importation and exportation of restricted items in order to avoid any violation of the Iranian transactions regulations.

All luggage is searched upon traveling into and departing from Iran. Tourists can bring in and take out the following non-commercial goods, if they are recorded on the tourist's goods slip upon arrival at customs: personal jewelry, one camera, an amateur video camera, one pair of binoculars, a portable tape recorder, a personal portable computer, first aid box, and a camping tent with its equipment. Iranian authorities allow the departing passenger to take an unlimited amount of Iranian goods and foreign goods up to \$160 (US), and their personal non-commercial equipment. Air passengers may also take one carpet up to 6 square meters from Iran. The U.S. government only allows the importation of up to \$100 worth of Iranian-origin goods, except there are no sanction restrictions on the quantity of Iranian-origin carpets and foodstuff. Iranian authorities prohibit the export of antique carpets and carpets portraying women not wearing the proper Islamic covering, antiques, original works of art, calligraphic pieces, miniature paintings, different kinds of coins, and precious stones. They likewise prohibit the export and import of alcoholic beverages, weapons, ammunitions, swords and sheaths, military devices, drugs and illegal goods. It is advisable to contact the Iranian Interests Section in Washington, DC for specific information regarding customs requirements.

On May 6, 1995, President Clinton signed Executive Order 12959, 60 Federal Register 24757 (May 9, 1995), which generally prohibits exporting goods or services to Iran, re-exporting certain goods to Iran, making new investments in Iran and dealing in property owned or

controlled by the government of Iran. Except for carpets and foodstuffs, the importation of Iranian-origin goods or services into the United States has been prohibited since October 19, 1987. The Office of Foreign Assets Control, Department of Treasury, provides guidance to the public on the interpretation of the above. For additional information, please consult the Licensing Division, Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), U.S. Department of Treasury, tel. 202-622-2480 or check the OFAC home page on the Internet at <http://www.treas.gov/ofac> or via OFAC's info-by fax at 202-622-0077. For information regarding banking compliance, please contact OFAC's Compliance Programs Division at tel. 202-622-2490.

There is no U.S. embassy or consulate in Iran. The Embassy of Switzerland serves as the protecting power of U.S. interests in Iran. The U.S. Interests Section at the Swiss Embassy is located at Africa Avenue, West Farzan Street, no. 59, Tehran. The local telephone numbers are 878-2964 and 879-2364, fax 877-3265. The workweek is Sunday through Thursday. Public service hours are 8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. The Interests Section does not issue U.S. visas or accept visa applications. The limited consular services provided to U.S. citizens in Tehran, Iran include:

- (a) registering U.S. citizens;
- (b) answering inquiries concerning the welfare and whereabouts of U.S. citizens in Iran;
- (c) rendering assistance in times of distress or physical danger;
- (d) providing U.S. citizens with passport and Social Security card applications and other citizenship forms for approval at the U.S. Embassy in Bern, Switzerland;
- (e) performing notarial services on the basis of accommodation; and
- (f) taking provisional custody of the personal effects of deceased U.S. citizens.

Currency

In addition to the U.S. Government economic sanctions on trade and investment restrictions, travelers should be aware that most hotels and restaurants do not accept credit cards. Cash-dollars (not traveler checks) are accepted as payment. In general, hotel bills must be paid with cash-dollars. ATM machines are not available. Foreign currency must be declared at customs upon entry into the country, and the amount is entered in the passport. This amount can then be changed at the bank.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

- Feb. 11. Victory Day
- Mar. 20 Oil Nationalization Day
- Mar. 21-24. No Ruz (First Day of Spring & New Year)
- Apr. 1. Islamic Republic Day
- Apr. 2. Revolution Day
- Ashura*
- Birthday of Imam Husayn*
- Ramadan*
- Id al Fitr (end of Ramadan)*
- Twelfth Imam's Birthday*
- Martyrdom of Imam Ali*
- Death of Imam Ja'afar Sadiq*
- Birthday of Imam Reza*
- Martyrdom of Imam Husayn*
- Mawlid an Nabi (birth of the prophet)*
- Birthday of Imam 'Ali*
- Lailat al Miraj*

*variable, based on the Islamic calendar

RECOMMENDED READING

The following titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country:

Alaolmolki, Nozar. *Struggle for Dominance in the Persian Gulf: Past, Present & Future Prospects*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1991.

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Hunter, Shireen T. *Iran after Khomeini*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1992.

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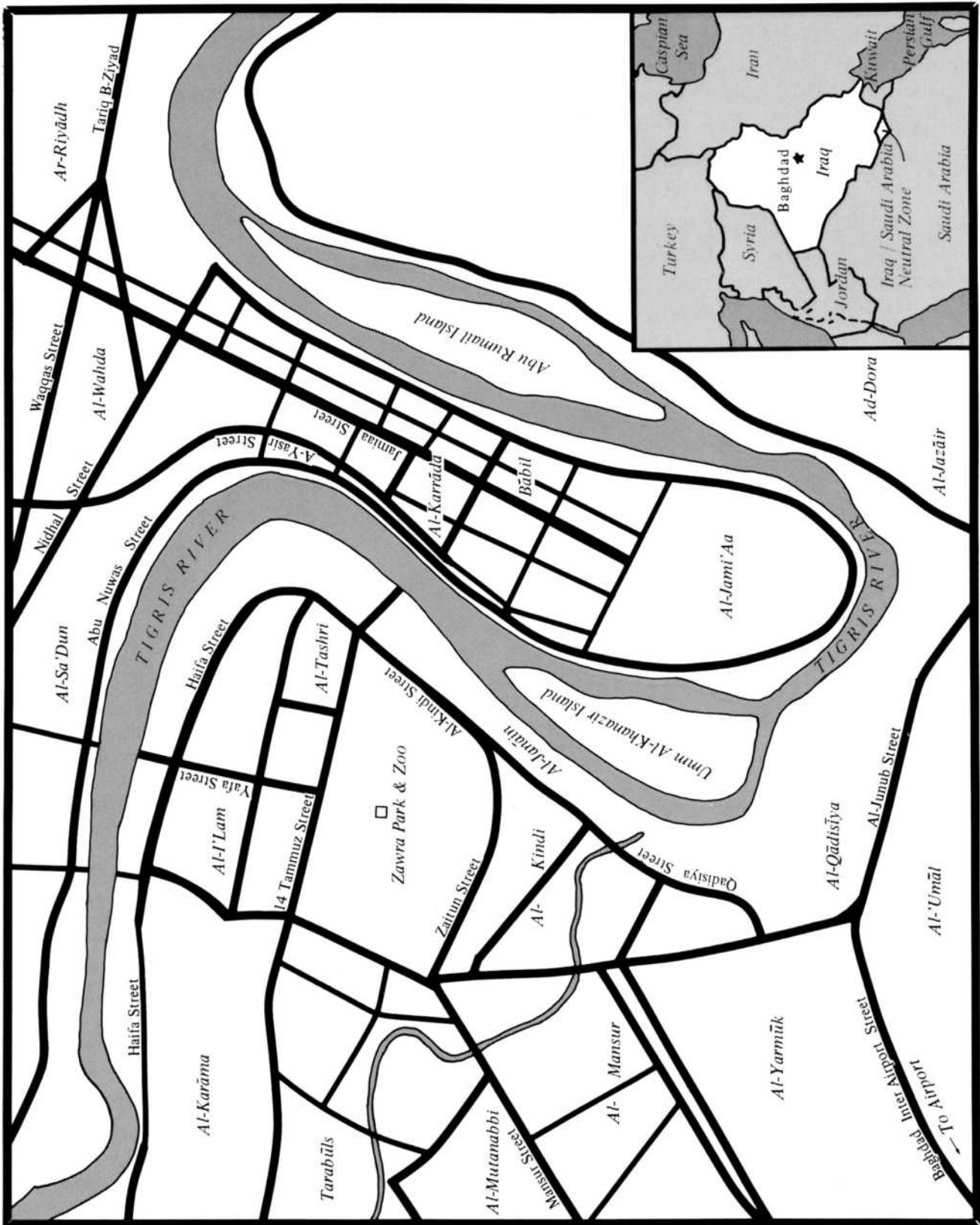
Sackville-West, Vita. *Passenger to Teheran*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1992.

Sanders, Renfield. *Iran*. New York: Chelsea House, 1990.

Tames, Richard. *Take a Trip to Iran*. New York: Franklin Watts, 1989.

Turner, Stansfield. *Terrorism and Democracy*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1991.

Zonis, Marvin. *Majestic Failure: The Fall of the Shah*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.



Baghdād, Iraq

IRAQ

Republic of Iraq

Major Cities:

Baghdād, Al Baṣrah, Al Mawṣil

Other Cities:

An Najaf, Arbil, Kirkūk, Ar Ramādi, Nimrud, Nineveh

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report for Iraq. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

IRAQ is the cradle of civilization, the country of the *Thousand and One Nights*, and the land of the two great rivers of history, the Tigris and the Euphrates. Known to the ancient Greeks as Mesopotamia ("in the midst of the rivers"), Iraq was enlarged after World War I to include the northern mountainous district of Kurdistan.

Modern Mesopotamia is still a fascinating juxtaposition of the old and the new. While signs of progress are visible everywhere, so are the manifestations of past glories. Excavated sites of vanished empires—Sumerian, Akkadian, Babylonian, Assyrian, Chaldean, Persian, Greek, Parthian, Ottoman, and Islamic—

remind every visitor of the incredible heritage of which modern Iraq is a part.

Editor's Note: Most of the city and country profile information contained in this entry reflects the conditions in Iraq prior to the outbreak of hostilities from the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the subsequent withdrawal of Iraqi troops as a result of the multi-national military attack that ended on February 27, 1991, and the continued economic sanctions imposed by the United Nations.

MAJOR CITIES

Baghdād

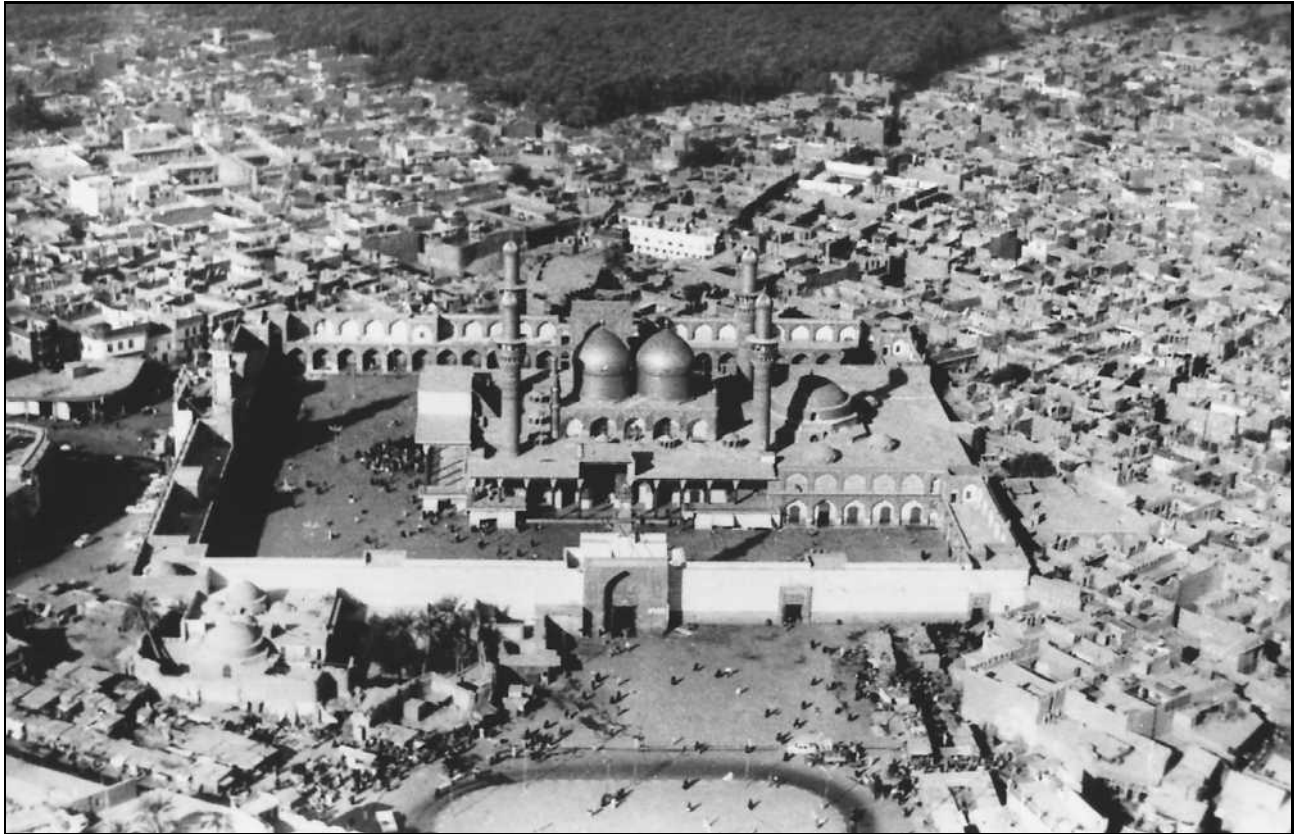
The history of Baghdād begins in the eighth century. It was founded by Caliph Mansur, and was known as the City of Peace. During the time of Charlemagne, it flourished under the Abbassid Caliph Harun al-Rashid, after whom its present-day main street was named. The old walled city, with a diameter of 3,000 yards, was completely destroyed, first by the Mongols, later by Hulagu Khan in 1258, and again by Tamerlane in 1400. Baghdād became a frontier outpost of the Ottoman Empire from 1638 to

1917, finally emerging as the capital of the Kingdom of Iraq in 1921. The city was the scene of the 1958 coup that overthrew the monarchy and established the Iraqi republic.

Baghdād of the 19th century can best be observed in the *souks* or bazaars, which have changed little in the last 100 years, except for the goods they offer the shopper. Among the things that can be found are silver and gold jewelry, copper and brass trays and coffee pots, Persian carpets, Kuwaiti chests, and hordes of people.

Baghdād is a sprawling city of about 4.9 million people (2000 est.). It bustles with vehicular traffic like all other capitals of oil-producing states. Yet, residential areas are still quiet with some remnants of mud villages interspersed with modern villas. The villas themselves are surrounded by high walls within which grow pleasant gardens with fruit trees, grass, and flowers.

Baghdād is rich in archaeological remains, and several museums are located in the city. There are three universities in Baghdād; the largest is the University of Baghdād, founded in 1958. Baghdād International Airport is 12 miles from the city.



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Aerial view of Baghdād

Clothing

Only two types of clothing are required in Baghdād: an extensive summer wardrobe and warm winter clothing for the chilly November to March season. Bring garment bags to protect clothing from dust and insects.

Sports attire varies. White is required for tennis at the local clubs. Bathing suits deteriorate rapidly, so several should be brought to Iraq.

Raincoats and boots or rubbers are needed for the whole family, especially children, during the very muddy, wet winter months. Boots can be bought locally.

In general, most imported clothing items are restricted in availability and selection, and are expensive; locally made clothing is of poor quality.

Men need cool, lightweight suits, and many shirts. Suits and ties are worn throughout the year in the office. In summer, it is often necessary to change shirts during the day. Sports shirts and slacks are worn during the leisure hours; shorts should be worn only at home.

Women require a wardrobe of lightweight suits; cool, washable dresses; slacks; shirts; and blouses. Inexpensive cottons are advisable due to frequent laundering. There is no taboo against wearing reasonably low-cut dresses. Dry cleaning is satisfactory. Stockings usually are not worn during summer. In winter, wool suits, dresses, slacks, sweaters, and warm bathrobes are essential. Coats, stoles, and warm wraps are required for winter evenings; light wraps are necessary for spring and fall.

Women's shoes are available locally but quality is poor and they are expensive. Low-heeled sandals,

flats, and sneakers are used for ordinary day wear, depending on the season, with emphasis on sturdiness.

Children's clothing should be washable. Warm clothing is needed for winter in unheated rooms with cold tile floors. In summer, most children wear cotton clothing. Because much time is spent at swimming pools, several bathing suits are needed for each child. Children's tennis shoes, sandals, and flip-flops are available at a reasonable price.

Supplies and Services

Toilet articles, cosmetics, over-the-counter medications, household items and other related items are scarce or unavailable.

The better tailors and dressmakers in Baghdād can usually follow a pattern with desired results, but they are not designers and are very expensive.

Simple shoe repairs are possible, but repair work on women's shoes is unsatisfactory. Dry cleaning is available and is of acceptable quality. Several beauty shops in Baghdad have experienced stylists at reasonable prices. Barbershops are less satisfactory, but are adequate.

Education

Baghdad International School offers an international education in English to children of foreign diplomats and expatriates from pre-kindergarten through grade 12. Founded in 1969, the coeducational, day, proprietary school is governed by an independent board of directors that includes both appointed and elected members.

The school is chartered by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia under an agreement with the government of Iraq. It is not accredited and there are no facilities for special education, learning disabilities, or gifted. If the child receives supplementary work at home, the school curriculum is considered adequate for the early elementary grades. A variety of extracurricular activities centering around sports and dance may be chosen. Enrollment currently totals over 50 representing many different countries. The school year runs from September to early June.

Baghdad International School is located six miles west of the city on an 11-acre campus. The air-conditioned school has a media center, auditorium, cafeteria, science laboratories, athletic fields, and a 16,000-volume library. The school's mailing address is P.O. Box 571, Baghdad, Iraq.

Other schools in Baghdad provide education in other languages.

Recreation

The flat desert terrain of Baghdad and vicinity is aesthetically unappealing, but some relief is afforded by drives to nearby places of interest. Many foreigners combine picnicking with archaeological exploration on weekends and holi-

days. Extensive travel within Iraq is limited by the desert, the summer heat, the lack of good roads (except between major cities), and, above all, travel restrictions.

A new road has been under construction from the Kuwaiti border to Baghdad and then west to Jordan. Driving time from Baghdad to Al Basrah is about six hours; to Al Mawşil about four hours. Truck traffic on the existing roads is often heavy. All diplomatic personnel must obtain government permission for most travel outside Baghdad. Difficulties encountered in travel contribute to the isolation of Baghdad.

Picnic excursions outside Baghdad in cool weather may include visits to the ruins of Babylon (45 miles, long-time capital of the Babylonian Empire), Ctesiphon (18 miles, vaulted banqueting hall of the Sasanian Kings), and Samarra (87 miles, short-lived ninth-century capital of the Abbassid Caliphate). Visits to the Shia holy places of An Najaf and Kerbala are an easy one-day excursion. The upper Euphrates River, with its unique water wheels, is worth a weekend trip.

The sites of Hatra, Nineveh, Nimrud, and Khorsabad are also of archaeological and historical interest. When travel to northern Iraq is permitted, visits to Christian and Yazidi villages there are also rewarding, as are visits to the mountains of the Kurdish areas.

The northern resort areas of Iraq have been rebuilt and expanded. The higher elevations and colorful local culture in the Kurdish region combine to make this area one of prime tourist interest. Security restrictions may prevent foreigners from visiting this area.

The cities of Amman (Jordan), Istanbul (Turkey), and Kuwait City (Kuwait) offer a welcome change, but air travel is expensive and auto travel is time-consuming. However, good roads do exist to these points, and the journeys, if time allows, are rewarding.

The bazaars of Baghdad should be explored and visits to the city's monuments and museums are rewarding.

Tennis, softball, cricket, bowling, swimming, and squash are available in and around Baghdad. Several of the city's luxury hotels offer memberships entitling one to use their athletic facilities which usually include swimming, tennis, squash bowling, weight rooms, and sauna. Hunting is forbidden and guns may not be imported. Boating, water-skiing, and windsurfing are possible at several Iraqi lakes but these destinations require travel permission.

Many foreigners belong to the Alwiyah Club. Members of the foreign community informally organize activities which include running, drama, music appreciation and bridge. Social life is restricted to home entertainment among members of the diplomatic and business communities. Home entertainment equipment such as stereos, record collections, and videotape equipment can be brought to Iraq. Videotaped movies are available in Kuwait for both the VHS and BETA systems.

Baghdad, as an entertainment center, is undistinguished. Opera, ballet, and the legitimate theater do not exist, but some English-language films are shown in the local cinemas. Nightclubs, although in operation, do not have a wide selection of entertainment. Some local restaurants are frequented by foreigners in Baghdad. The Iraqi Symphony Orchestra gives a few concerts during the winter season.

Iraq's national tourist agency, the General Establishment for Travel and Tourism Services, is located at Al-Kodwa Square, Khalid bin Al-Waleed Street, Baghdad.

Al Basrah

Iraq's only port is Al Basrah (also spelled Basra, Bassora, Bussora, and Busra, and known in the *Arabian Nights* as Bassorah), located in

the southeastern section of the country on the Shatt-al-Arab waterway, 300 miles south of Baghdād. Al Baṣrah has become a prosperous city due to its location near the oil fields and 75 miles from the Arabian Gulf; it was the site of a great deal of Gulf War fighting. Petroleum products, grains, dates, and wool are exported from Al Baṣrah. Many oil refineries have been constructed in the city since 1948.

Founded by the Caliph Umar I in 636, Al Baṣrah was a cultural center under Harun ar-Rashid, but declined with the decay of the Abbassid caliphate. For many years, the Persians and the Turks fought for possession of Al Baṣrah. The construction of a rail line linking Al Baṣrah and Baghdād and the building of a modern harbor restored the city's importance after World War I. Occupied by the British in World War II, it was an important transshipment point for supplies to Turkey and the former U.S.S.R.

A branch of the University of Baghdād is located in Al Baṣrah. The population of Al Baṣrah is over 700,000.

Al Mawṣil

Al Mawṣil, with a population of about 1,034,000 (2000 est.), is located on the Tigris River in northern Iraq, opposite the ruins of Nineveh, and 225 miles north of Baghdād. The largest city in northern Iraq and the country's third largest city, Al Mawṣil is important for its trade in agricultural goods and exploitation of oil. Most of the city's inhabitants are Arabs, although the surrounding area is mostly populated by Kurds.

Historically, Al Mawṣil was the chief city in northern Mesopotamia for 500 years before being devastated by the Mongols. During its occupation by the Persians in 1508, and by the Turks from 1534 to 1918, the city remained extremely poor. Under British occupation from 1918 to 1932, Al Mawṣil again became the chief city of the region. Turkey disputed its possession by Iraq in

1923–1925, but it was confirmed by the League of Nations in 1926. The city's oil wells were seized during the Arab revolt of April 1941, but were soon retaken by the British.

A trading center for grain, hides, wool, livestock, and fruit, Al Mawṣil produces cement, sugar, nylon, and bitumen. The city has numerous mosques, shrines, and churches; its university was founded in 1967. Nearby are the ancient ruins of Nineveh and the partially excavated cities of Tepe Gawra, Calah, and Dur Sharrukin.

OTHER CITIES

The holy city of **AN NAJAF** is located in south-central Iraq on a lake near the Euphrates River, about 100 miles south of Baghdād. With a population over 130,000, An Najaf is the site of the tomb of Ali, the son-in-law of Muhammad the Prophet. An object of pilgrimage by the Shi'ite Muslims, the tomb is a starting point for the pilgrimage to Mecca. The city is also called Mashad Ali in honor of Ali.

ARBIL (also spelled Irbil) is a commercial and administrative center in northern Iraq, between the Great and Little Zab Rivers, about 200 miles north of Baghdād in a rich agricultural region. The ancient Sumerian city of Urbillum, or Arbela, formerly occupied this site; it eventually became one of the great Assyrian towns. As the capital of its province, Arbil today is a major grain producer. The railroad that ends in Arbil connects the city with Kirkūk and Baghdād. Arbil is currently built on an artificial mound on top of an old Turkish fort. The population was estimated at 2,368,000 in 2000.

Iraq's oil industry is centered in the city of **KIRKŪK**, located in the northeast part of the country about 150 miles north of Baghdād. The city, with a population of approximately 535,000, is connected by pipelines to ports on the Mediterranean Sea. Kirkūk is also the market

for the region's produce, including cereals, olives, cotton, and fruits. The city is also home to a small textile industry. The surrounding agricultural region also raises sheep. Present-day Kirkūk is situated on a mound that contains the remains of a settlement that dates back to 3000 B.C. Most of the residents of Kirkūk are Kurds. Kirkūk is the terminus of a railroad from Baghdād.

AR RAMĀDI (also called Rumadiya; in Arabic, Ramadi) lies on the right bank of Euphrates River, 60 miles west of Baghdād. It is the starting point of a highway that crosses the desert to Mediterranean towns. Ar Ramādi was the scene of battle during World War I in which the British, under the rule of Maude, defeated the Turks. The population was estimated well over 80,000.

The ruins of the ancient city of **NIMRUD** lie about 37 km southeast of the city of Mosul, south of Nineveh. In the time of the Assyrian empire it was known as Kalhu, or Calah, as it is mentioned in Genesis of the Old Testament. It served as the capital of Assyria under Assurbanipal II in 879BC and was destroyed by the Medes of Northern Persia at about 612BC. Archeological excavations have uncovered many of the walls and several artifacts from the king's palace, called the Northwest Palace. A site museum is now located there. On the southeastern side of the city lie the remains of the royal arsenal, Fort Shalmanesar.

The ancient city site of **NINEVEH** is located on the Tigris River, just opposite of Mosul. Today, however, the name refers to the larger administrative district for the area, which has a population of about 1.6 million (1991 est.). The ancient city served as the capital of the Assyrian Empire from about 704-681BC and was somewhat known as the hub of the civilized ancient world. It was taken over by the Medes of Northern Persia at about 612BC. As capital, the city of Nineveh was the site for the magnificent palaces of Sennacherib and Assurbanipal. Recent

archeological excavations have uncovered a great deal of the ancient city, including a section of wall about 7.5 miles long and sculptures from the palaces. The original city's protection wall contained 15 gates, each named for an Assyrian god. At least two of these gates, Shamash and Nergal, have been reconstructed. One of the most incredible finds was the Assurbanipal library, which includes over 20,000 cuneiform tablets. The Iraq Department of Antiquities has roofed the sites and has established the Sennacherib Palace Site Museum for visitors.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The Republic of Iraq is situated on the Asian Continent, northeast of the Arabian Peninsula. It lies between 38° and 29°30' north latitude, and 38° 30' and 51°30' east longitude, from its northwestern tip to its southeastern extremity. Iraq is bounded on the north by Turkey, on the east by Iran, on the south by Kuwait and the Arabian Gulf, on the southwest by Saudi Arabia and Jordan, and on the northwest by Syria.

Iraq's 171,554 square miles are divided into four major geographical areas. The main one, having almost 75 percent of the population, is the alluvial plain or delta lowlands. Stretching from north of Baghdād, the capital, past Al Baṣrah to the Gulf, this area is watered by the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers which rise in the Armenian Mountains of eastern Turkey. The rivers approach to within 40 miles of each other near Baghdād, diverge before joining to form the Shatt al-Arab north of Al Baṣrah, and then flow together with the Karun into the Gulf. An estimated 25 billion cubic feet of silt a year is carried downstream by these rivers to add to the delta.

As well as being the legendary locale of the Garden of Eden, the region contains the ruins of Ur, Babylon, and countless other ancient cities. The plain is quite flat—average altitude is 75 feet—and encompasses about 7,500 square miles of marshland to the north of Al Baṣrah. In spite of the fertility of the area irrigated by the rivers, over three-fourths of it is arid desert.

The second area is the western plateau, an extension of the Arabian Peninsula, which marks the region to the west and south of the Euphrates, extending into Jordan and Syria. Comprising more than half of Iraq's total area, it is home to only one percent of the population. The land here is not sandy; it is primarily dust and gravel. Sand dunes exist, but they are not dominant. The average altitude is about 400 feet. Irrigation is limited to sparsely scattered wells. The most heavily populated part of the area is in a depression in the plateau west of the Euphrates between Hit and Najaf, running in a southerly direction from Ar Ramādi to Kerbala. The depression is divided into two basins, Habbaniya in the north and Abu Dibbis in the south.

The third geographical area is the Jazīra, or island, formed by the upper reaches of the Tigris and Euphrates and their tributaries. Both undulating plains and flat country are found in the region, as well as a basalt chain—50 miles long and 4,800 feet high—west of Al Mawṣil.

The fourth area consists of the mountains to the east of the Tigris in the north of Iraq, which rise from 700 feet near the river bank to nearly 12,000 feet on the Iraq-Turkey-Iran border. This is an extension of the Alpine system which runs southeast through the Balkans, the Taurus Mountains of southern Turkey, northern Iraq and Iran, and into Afghanistan, finally ending in the Himalayas. East of Kirkūk and Arbil, the land is very rocky until the Plains of Sulaimaniya are reached.

Baghdād is located almost in the geographical center of Iraq. Just north of the city, the alluvial plain begins, extending southward through the marshlands to the Gulf. Climatically, the Baghdād area is comparable to the extreme southwestern United States and northern Mexico, with hot, dry summers, cold (but rarely freezing) winters, and pleasant spring and fall seasons. Maximum daytime temperatures in summer (May through September) occasionally reach as high as 130°F, but are generally between 115° and 120°F. The low humidity (5–25%) and 20°F drop in temperature at night result in more comfortable weather than that found in tropical humid regions.

Population

About 75 to 80 percent of the approximately 23.2 million Iraqis are of Arab stock. The largest ethnic minority are the Kurds, who comprise 15 to 20 percent of the population. Although the Kurds are mostly Muslims, they differ from their Arab neighbors in language, dress, and customs. Other distinctive ethnic communities include Assyrians, Turkmans, Chaldeans, and Armenians.

About 97 percent of the population is Muslim; Iraq is the only Arab country in which most Muslims are members of the Shi'ite sect. There are also small communities of Christians, Jews, Mandaean, and Yazidis.

Arabic is most commonly spoken and is the country's official language; English is the most commonly used Western language.

Government

Iraq's role in the Middle East has undergone several significant changes since World War II. The July Revolution of 1958 ended Hashemite rule in Iraq, the country's participation in the Baghdād pact (now called CENTO), and its traditional ties with the West.

Foreign policy, which followed a neutralist line under Qasim from 1958 to 1963, was identified with the cause of Arab unity after the Ba'ath (Renaissance) Party came to permanent power in 1968. Iraq entered into a treaty of friendship with the Soviet Union in 1972, and the Ba'ath and Communist parties formed a Nominal coalition with a Kurdish party. In 1979, the Communist Party was removed from the coalition.

Iraq is governed by the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), consisting of nine of civilian and military members and chaired by the President. The RCC enacts legislation, which is then ratified by the National Assembly. The RCC's President (chief of state and supreme commander of the armed forces) is elected by a two-thirds majority of the RCC. The current president is Saddam Hussein, who took office in July 1979. A 29-member Council of Ministers (Cabinet), appointed by the RCC, has administrative and some legislative responsibilities. A 250-member National Assembly was elected on June 20, 1980, in the first elections since the end of the monarchy; the last election was held in March 1996 (only candidates loyal to Saddam Hussein were allowed to run). No real opposition party exists. A new constitution was drafted in 1990 but not adopted. Iraq is divided into 18 provinces, each headed by a governor with extensive administrative powers.

Iraq's judicial system is based on the French model, which was introduced during Ottoman rule. It does not serve as an independent branch of government as in the United States. There are three different courts: civil, religious, and special. The Court of Cassation is the last court for appeals. National security cases are handled by the special courts. Iraq is essentially a one-party state and the press is limited to a few newspapers published by and expressing the views of the government.

After years of precarious relations with Iran over control of the Shatt-al-Arab Waterway that divides the two countries, war erupted in September 1980 when Iraqi planes bombed Iranian airfields and Iran retaliated. Ground fighting began and Iraqi troops crossed the border but were driven back in May 1982. In 1984, both countries attacked tankers in the Persian Gulf, including an Iraqi attack of the *U.S.S. Stark* which killed 37 U.S. Navy personnel. Warfare ended in August 1988 when a United Nations cease-fire resolution was accepted. In August 1990, Iraq attacked and invaded neighboring Kuwait; declared it a province and precipitated an international crisis. The United Nations called for economic sanctions in Iraq. When Iraq did not withdraw its troops from Kuwait by the U.N. deadline of January 16, 1991, a multi-national force (including the United States) launched an attack on Iraq. In February after cease-fire attempts were rejected by both sides as unacceptable, the multi-national coalition began a ground offensive with the aim of liberating Kuwait. Iraqi troops offered little resistance and were quickly defeated. On March 3, Iraq accepted defeat and agreed to ceasefire terms.

After the war, internal revolts against Saddam Hussein's government by the Shi'ites in southern Iraq and Kurds in the northern provinces were suppressed by Iraqi armed forces. One to two million Kurds fearing for their safety fled across the border into Iran and Turkey. To help solve this refugee crisis, other countries stepped in to establish "safe havens" for Kurdish population within Iraq and many Kurds returned.

After the war, the United Nations imposed economic sanctions on Iraq and mandated the dismantling of certain Iraqi weapons and missile programs. In 1996, the United Nations brokered a deal with Iraq that would allow it to sell a limited quantity of oil to pay for critical civilian needs. In late 1997, Saddam Hussein expelled ten Americans

who were working as weapons inspectors for the United Nations, thus obstructing the disarmament process. The United States sent 30,000 troops to the Persian Gulf to prompt Iraq into submitting to the United Nations' resolutions. Tensions mounted and a military confrontation seemed imminent. In February 1998, United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan went to Iraq and persuaded the Iraqi government to cooperate.

The flag of Iraq is made up of red, white, and black horizontal bands. In the central white band are three green stars arranged horizontally. The words *Allah Akhbar* ("God is Great") in green Arabic script were added between the stars during the Persian Gulf War in 1991.

Arts, Science, Education

Iraq's cultural life is centered in Baghdād, arguably the second most important Arab capital after Cairo. Once confined to a small group of the more Westernized and well-to-do Iraqis, cultural participation by ordinary citizens and official patronage has increased. The most vigorous activity is in fine arts. The Iraq Museum of Modern Art has organized an extensive permanent collection of the work of Iraqi artists. In Western classical music, the government-subsidized Iraq National Symphony and its chamber ensemble offer about eight different programs during the winter months. A number of special presentations are sponsored by foreign embassies and cultural institutions. Occasional Arabic language dramatic productions are given at the National Theater and at the Mansour Theater.

In keeping with Iraq's ambitious national development program, the government before the Gulf War awarded thousands of scholarships to many U.S. and other foreign universities, with heavy emphasis on engineering and the sciences. Iraqis are proud of their rich scientific heritage from Islamic and pre-Islamic



Street in downtown Baghdad, Iraq

AP/Wide World Photos, Inc. Reproduced by permission.

times, and the government wanted to increase modern manifestations of this heritage. Six years of primary school is compulsory and there are plans to extend it to nine years. Secondary education is available for six years. Public education is free; private schools were abolished in 1970s. Adult literacy is currently estimated to be 58% (1995 est.).

Archaeology attracts the interest of many members of the foreign community. A number of archaeological digs are in progress, and the Iraq Department of Antiquities has undertaken major restorations of some principal sites. Iraq's superlative collections of Mesopotamian antiquities are on display at the excellent Iraq Museum.

Commerce and Industry

The long war with Iran (1980–1988) resulted in considerable debt and

post-war reconstruction funds were needed to repair industrial and oil installations, as well as, damage to the physical infrastructure around the southern city of Al Başrah. Economics, especially the shortage of hard currency, was the driving force behind Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait. However, the war over Kuwait resulted in severe economic damage to Iraq—considerably more than the years of war. The loss of trade, investment, economic assistance, and the many foreign workers who left the country because of the war resulted in economic problems that have persisted for many years.

Iraq has a state-controlled economy with a small private sector. The economy is heavily dependent on oil and refined products; 95% of export earnings come from this source. Iraq has the second largest oil reserves in the world and was the second largest Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries

(OPEC) producer after Saudi Arabia. Since 1972, the government has gradually nationalized all the oil fields in the country, in keeping with the policy that the country's resources, particularly oil, should not be under foreign control. Since 1999, Iraq was authorized to export unlimited quantities of oil to finance humanitarian needs including food, medicine, and infrastructure repair parts. Oil exports fluctuate as the regime alternately starts and stops exports, but, in general, oil exports have now reached three-quarters of their pre-Gulf War levels. Per capita output and living standards remain well below pre-Gulf War levels.

Manufacturing and agriculture play much smaller roles in the economy despite their great potential. All heavy industry is government-owned and includes iron, steel, cement, pharmaceuticals, and fertilizers. There is a trend to allow private ownership of light industrial concerns such as food processing

and textiles. Iraq has a large, skilled work force. Much fertile, irrigated land is available for agricultural purposes and 30% of the work force is involved in agriculture. Iraq is one of the world's largest producer of dates; barley and wheat are the other major agricultural products.

Iraq's gross domestic product (GDP) is approximately \$57 billion, or \$2,500 per capita (2000 est.). The United Nations trade embargo established in August 1990 and the war has blocked or disrupted Iraq's trade with other nations.

The address of the Baghdad Chamber of Commerce is Mustansir Street, Baghdad, Iraq.

Transportation

During the Gulf War, many roads, railways, bridges, and ports were destroyed or damaged. Immediately after the war the only surface link to other countries was through Amman, Jordan. The Iraqi government has given the repair of roads and bridges a high priority. Baghdad is served by a limited number of international airlines as well as Iraqi Airways, the national carrier.

Iraq has intercountry rail transportation. Rail lines connect Baghdad with major cities such as Al Baṣrah, Arbil, and to Al Mawṣil, where Istanbul (Turkey) and Europe can be reached via Aleppo (Syria). The Oriental Express travels to and from Baghdad via Turkey and Syria.

Local transportation includes taxis and buses. Americans seldom use either. Taxis, operated by both companies and private individuals, are usually available, but are difficult to find after 8 p.m. Taxis may be hired for trips out of Baghdad. Many taxis are American-made and many are not equipped with meters. Fares must be negotiated, but is easily managed once the recognized standard rates are known. Even for taxis with meters, fares should be agreed on in advance. Tipping is not expected. Some established foreign-

ers without cars make contact with a taxi company in their vicinity and use it exclusively, paying their bills by the month. This can become quite expensive for more than a short-term arrangement.

The bus system operates on most of the main streets; however, most buses are in poor condition.

A car is essential in Baghdad, especially for a foreigner living in an outlying residential district. Markets for food and household goods are far apart, and distances between home, office, and friends can be great. Certain car colors are prohibited (black, olive, beige, tan), as are all cars with diesel engines.

An international or U.S. driver's license will expedite issuance of an Iraqi license. International driver's licenses must specifically list Iraq in order to be valid here. Third-party insurance is compulsory. Major roads have international traffic signs; driving is on the right-hand side of the road.

Communications

Iraq has a dial telephone system. Long-distance service, although poor, is normally available within the country and to nearby capitals. Satellite connections to overseas countries are usually satisfactory, although delays can be encountered in placing a call. At times, as a war-related economic move, Iraq has discontinued long distance, direct-dial service. Long distance calls must then be placed through operators and usually only placed for phone numbers on an approved list.

International airmail letters to or from the U.S. usually take eight to 12 days, although if selected for review by the censors, letters can be delayed as much as three weeks. Air Mail is more reliable than surface mail. Telex is available at the major hotels and telegrams may be sent from the telegram office in Baghdad.

Radio reception is fair. Domestic service is available in Arabic, Kurdish, and several minority languages, while external service is available in many languages. It is possible to tune in to Voice of America (VOA), British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Monte Carlo (Monaco), and other shortwave programs. A good shortwave set capable of worldwide reception is worthwhile. There are 16 medium-wave and 30 short-wave transmitters in the country. Baghdad has two TV stations, both government-operated. With the exception of a few English-language serials and films, its limited programs are in Arabic only (usually about eight/nine hours a day).

The state-sponsored *Baghdad Observer* is the only English-language paper readily available. Few Western publications are available. Occasional copies of *Time* and *Newsweek*, censored, are seen at local vendors. A subscription to European versions of these magazines, although expensive, is much more dependable. The *International Herald Tribune*, printed in Paris, can also be subscribed to via international mail. The delay on these publications is about five days.

Only a limited supply of books and technical journals is available. The British Council library, however, has a wide selection of fiction and nonfiction, and the International Children's Center (ICC) has a library, although not extensive, of children's books. The U.S. Interests Section maintains an informal lending library.

Health and Medicine

Baghdad has several small private hospitals where Westerners may be hospitalized in emergencies. These hospitals, however, do not offer the comprehensive medical, surgical, or diagnostic care of a large American medical center; most foreigners use medical facilities abroad.

Many well-trained and qualified doctors in nearly all the medical and surgical specialties practice in Baghdad. However, these doctors are severely overworked and are limited by the lack of development of hospitals, money in a war situation, laboratories, and well-trained nursing staffs.

Although adequate routine dental care is available, complex dental problems are usually hard to solve locally. Children requiring orthodontia should have the process initiated prior to arrival. Satisfactory follow-up care for orthodontia can be obtained in Baghdad.

No adequate diagnostic facilities exist for allergies. Those with severe or disturbing allergies should have diagnostic sensitivity procedures performed prior to arrival. Iraq's climate could severely aggravate allergies. If therapeutic allergy serum for desensitization is necessary, an adequate supply should be kept on hand.

If you require special or unusual medicines, bring your own supply. Medications are scarce and hard to find; U.S. brands are unavailable.

Sanitation is below U.S. standards; there are indiscriminate dumpings of waste and garbage. One city garbage collection per week services residential areas.

Baghdad's central water system provides adequate potable water, which is filtered in the home for drinking. The water is obtained from the Tigris River. The city water in Al Mawşil, Al Başrah, and Kirkük is also safe to drink. It is unsafe, however, to drink untreated water in the villages.

Periodic fumigation with DDT or equivalent spray helps eliminate insect pests. The Baghdad city and health authorities have several large trucks which irregularly spray major portions of the city to reduce the number of flies and mosquitoes.

The foreign community is commonly subject to gastro-intestinal upsets. Respiratory infections and colds also are common, and often severe. They are frequently of prolonged duration and may progress to bronchitis, pneumonia, or pleurisy. These complications should be promptly and adequately treated. Children are subject to the usual childhood diseases, but generally do well in Baghdad. Hepatitis and sand fly fever are local hazards.

Skin and eye infections prevalent among the local population must be guarded against by proper habits of personal hygiene. Parasitic diseases such as hydatid cyst, amoebic and bacillary dysentery, and worms are prevalent. Bilharzia may be prevented by avoiding bathing, washing, or wading in irrigation ditches and slow-moving streams. Malaria and Baghdad boil (Cutaneous Leishmaniasis) are relatively uncommon now.

The dust-laden air may severely aggravate sinus and other respiratory tract complaints, and may cause acute irritative conjunctivitis. Baghdad also experiences smog, due mainly to brick factories and oil refineries built close to the city.

The long, hot summer can be debilitating. Since the dryness evaporates perspiration rapidly, fluid loss can be extensive. Salt tablets are helpful to those who perspire profusely. Insect bites, heat rash, and temperature extremes may be discomforting to some. Insect repellents are advised.

Like other desert areas, Iraq is an entomologist's paradise. Many varieties of insects are found year round. Sand flies are a particular nuisance during the late summer and early fall, and houseflies are plentiful throughout the year. Precautions must be taken against cockroaches, ants, and termites. The insect population of homes is kept to a minimum by small, harmless lizards which keep mainly to the upper walls and seldom bother humans. In the Middle East, they

are regarded as bringing good fortune to the home.

U.S. health authorities recommend immunization against cholera (except for infants under six months), typhoid, tetanus, polio, and gamma globulin. The usual pediatric immunizations also should be updated.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan.1	New Year's Day
Jan.6	Army Day
Mar. 21.	Spring Day
July 14.	Republic Day (1958 Revolution)
July 17.	Ba'ath Revolution Day (1968 Revolution)
Aug. 8.	Peace Day
.	Hijra New Year*
.	Ashura*
.	Mawlid al Nabi*
.	Id al-Fitr*
.	Id al-Adha*
.	Muharram*
.	Lailat al Miraj*

*variable

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs and Duties

No American air carriers serve Baghdad, other airlines, including Iraqi Air, Air France, Lufthansa, and Swissair offer frequent direct flights from several European capitals. Iraqi Air prohibits hand baggage (including brief cases) on most flights.

Passports and visas are required. On February 8, 1991, U.S. passports ceased to be valid for travel to, in or through Iraq and may not be used for that purpose unless a special validation has been obtained. Please see paragraphs on Passport Validation and U.S. Government Economic Sanctions. For visa infor-

mation, please contact the Iraqi Interests Section of the Algerian Embassy, 1801 P Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036, telephone 202-483-7500, fax 202-462-5066.

Without the requisite validation, use of a U.S. passport for travel to, in or through Iraq may constitute a violation of 18 U.S.C. 1544, and may be punishable by a fine and/or imprisonment. An exemption to the above restriction is granted to Americans residing in Iraq as of February 8, 1991 who continue to reside there and to American professional reporters or journalists on assignment there.

Iraq has strict customs regulations. Upon arrival, a traveler must declare any foreign currency, audio-visual equipment, satellite and cell telephones, personal computers and especially modems. There may be difficulty in obtaining a permit to take these items out when leaving Iraq. The Iraqi authorities may request the surrender of such equipment for depositing at the border (there might be difficulties in reclaiming it when leaving Iraq). Videotapes may be confiscated. Carrying firearms and pornography is forbidden. Any news publications may be regarded as hostile propaganda and confiscated. Charges of disseminating propaganda detrimental to Iraq might follow. So-called "friendly" requests for foreign periodicals and newspapers should be flatly refused. Usually cars are very thoroughly checked. Offering gifts to inspectors may result in charges of bribery, which could lead to serious consequences. Generally, export of gold, foreign currency, valuable equipment, antiquities and expensive carpets is forbidden.

All foreigners (except diplomats) are requested to take an AIDs or HIV test at the border. Sanitary conditions at the Ministry of Health border stations are questionable. You may wish to bring your own needle or try to postpone the check until your arrival in Baghdad. You may wish to have the test done ahead and carry a valid certificate.

The U.S. does not have diplomatic relations with Iraq, and there is no U.S. Embassy in Iraq. The Embassy of Poland represents U.S. interests in Iraq; however, its ability to assist American citizens is limited.

Pets

A veterinarian's certified statement of good health and a rabies inoculation is necessary for all pets brought into Iraq. Import licenses are obtained after entry. Pets are most easily brought into the country when they accompany the owner. Adequate veterinary care is available locally but animal medicines are in short supply. Commercially prepared pet food is not available and other pet supplies are very scarce.

St. George's Anglican Church in Baghdad holds services in English, and is open to all members of Protestant denominations. There is no resident minister, and activities are limited to the weekly services. There are several Catholic churches, and English-language masses are offered at St. Raphael's. English-language services are also offered at a Seventh-Day Adventist Church.

Currency, Banking and Weights and Measures

The monetary unit of Iraq is the *dinar* (ID), which is divided into 1,000 *fiils*. All private foreign exchange transactions are government-controlled through the Central Bank of Iraq. Travelers checks and foreign currency are not limited, provided they are declared upon entry. Rafidian Bank, Iraq's sole commercial bank, is the only one authorized to accept foreign currency or travelers checks.

Comprehensive U.N. sanctions on Iraq, imposed following Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait, prohibit all economic and financial transactions with the Government of Iraq, persons or entities in Iraq unless specifically authorized by the U.N. Since 1998, foreigners traveling in Iraq may legally exchange foreign currency in money exchange kiosks

or bureaus (run privately or state banks). Payments for hotel, renting a taxi, etc. must be paid in foreign currency. No ATM machines exist.

The metric system of weights and measures is used in Iraq. The use of any other system is legally prohibited.

The time in Iraq is Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) plus three hours.

RECOMMENDED READING

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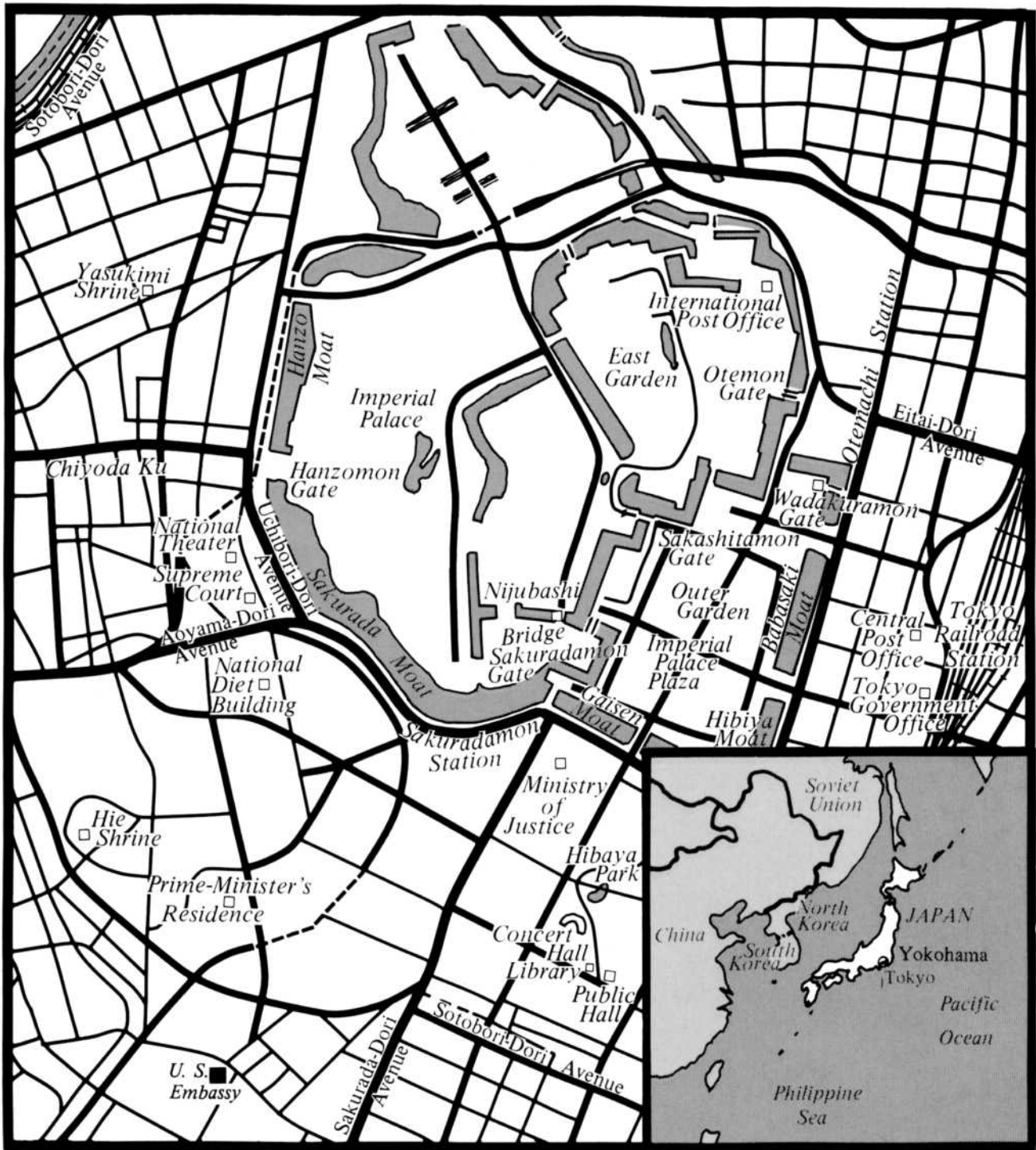
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Tokyo, Japan

JAPAN

(including Okinawa)

Major Cities:

Tokyo, Yokohama, Ōsaka, Kōbe, Kyōto, Nagoya, Hiroshima, Fukuoka, Sapporo, Nagasaki

Other Cities:

Chiba, Gifu, Hamamatsu, Himeji, Kagoshima, Kanazawa, Kawasaki, Kita-kyūshū, Kumagaya, Kumamoto, Kurashiki, Miyazaki, Niigata, Nishinomiya, Okayama, Sakai, Sendai, Utsunomiya, Yokosuka

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report 2001 for Japan. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

For a country that lived in self-imposed isolation until 150 years ago, Japan has not hesitated to make up for lost time.

It is a place of ancient gods and customs but is also the cutting edge of cool modernity. High-speed trains whisk you from one end of the country to another with frightening punctuality. You can catch sight of a farmer tending his paddy field, then turn the corner and find yourself next to a neon-festooned electronic games parlor in the suburb of a sprawling metropolis.

Few other countries have, in the space of mere generations, experienced so much or made such an

impact. Industrialized at lightning speed, Japan shed its feudal trappings to become the most powerful country in Asia in a matter of decades. After defeat in World War II, it transformed itself to a wonder economy, the envy of the globe.

In the cities you will first be struck by the mass of people. In this mountainous country, the vast majority of the 126 million population live on the crowded coastal plains of the main island of Honshu. The three other main islands, running north to south, are Hokkaido, Shikoku, and Kyushu, and all are linked to Honshu by bridges and tunnels that are part of one of Japan's modern wonders—its efficient transport network of trains and highways.

Outside the cities, there is a vast range of options from the wide open spaces and deep volcanic lakes of Hokkaido, blanketed by snow every winter, to the balmy subtropical islands of Okinawa. You will seldom have to travel far to catch sight of a lofty castle, ancient temple or shrine, or locals celebrating at a colorful street festival. The Japanese are inveterate travelers within their own country and there is hardly a town or village, no matter how small or plain, that does not boast some unique attraction.

Rampant development and sometimes appalling pollution is difficult to square with a country also renowned for cleanliness and appreciation of nature. Part of the problem is that natural cataclysms, such as earthquakes and typhoons, regularly hit Japan, so few people expect things to last for long.

And yet, time and again, Japan redeems itself with unexpectedly beautiful landscapes, charmingly courteous people, and its tangible sense of history and cherished traditions. Most intriguing of all is the opaqueness at the heart of this mysterious hidden culture that stems from a blurring of traditional boundaries between East and West. Japan is neither wholly one nor the other.

MAJOR CITIES

Tokyo

Tokyo, the capital of Japan and one of the world's largest cities in terms of area, is at the head of Tokyo Bay on the Kanto Plain, the largest level area in the country. The city proper covers 221 square miles and has a population of 8.5 million. The 796-square-mile metropolitan area occupies sea-level stretches along

the bay and rivers, as well as hilly areas farther inland which include suburban cities and towns, and several small villages; total population of this area is now more than 14 million.

Tokyo developed originally around a feudal castle built during the 16th century. Toward the end of that century, a great feudal lord named Tokugawa Ieyasu ruled this castle and the surrounding area. In 1603, after a series of civil wars, he established himself as *shogun*, or military dictator, of all Japan, and administered his rule from Edo, which later was called Tokyo. Under succeeding rulers of the Tokugawa dynasty, the city grew in importance and became the leading commercial center of the area.

Tokyo has been, for all practical purposes, the capital of Japan since 1603, although the imperial court in the ancient capital of Kyōto maintained nominal authority until 1868. The court moved to Tokyo, and a Western-style government was established in the late 1860s.

Besides being the seat of government, Tokyo is the industrial, commercial, financial, communications, and educational center of Japan. It has over 7,900 factories or plants with 30 or more employees, 102 four-year colleges and universities, and 28 daily newspapers. It is Japan's most international city, with more than 122,500 foreign residents, of whom over 14,000 are Americans. Most foreign companies doing business in Japan have their headquarters here.

Tokyo is a vital metropolis of striking contrasts—of confusion and calm. Business and residential properties are side by side, giving the city a patchwork-quilt impression. It has lovely parks and shrines, broad thoroughfares, modern office buildings and hotels, expressways, and department stores similar to those in other large international cities. Beyond all this, however, lies another world of narrow streets, markets, theaters, restaurants, and Japanese-style

houses that make Tokyo a unique city.

Utilities

Electricity in Tokyo is single phase 100 or 200 volts, 50 cycles (HZ) electric current. Most U.S.-manufactured appliances will operate satisfactorily as long as they will tolerate 50 cycle electric current. Electric timing devices and clocks that are designed for standard U. S. 60-cycle electric current may not operate properly on 50-cycle electricity. Most appliances manufactured for Tokyo use require 100 volt, 50 cycle electric current.

Food

Most food items available in the U.S. can be obtained on the local market at higher prices.

The New Sanno Hotel also has a small shoppette. Throughout the city one can conveniently locate greengrocers, convenience-type stores, and large modern supermarkets.

Clothing

General: Bring a four-season wardrobe for all family members. Winter clothing is advised for the cold and damp winter months. Summer in Tokyo can be very hot and humid. Raincoats and umbrellas are essential.

Local department and specialty stores carry a variety of Western-style clothes and imported items from the design centers of the world for both men and women but are generally available in sizes unique to the Japanese physique and are very expensive. Excellent quality silks, woolens, and various synthetics are available.

Shoes for men, women and children are available locally but it is difficult, and sometimes impossible, to find the proper size. Shoe sizes are shorter and wider than in the U.S.

If you need special sizes or particular brands in clothing and shoes in order to be properly fitted, bring them with you. Office dress as well as sports and casual attire follow

Washington or U.S. standards. Social functions are not extremely dressy. Simple good taste is the best criterion.

Men: The accepted attire for dinner parties, unless otherwise stated, is a business suit.

Women: An afternoon dress, a simple long dress, or long skirt and top are suitable for the frequent cocktail parties, receptions, and buffet dinners. Formal attire is a floor-length dress. Bring at least one full skirt (either long or short) that would be appropriate for dining in Japanese restaurants or homes where guests sit on tatami mats on the floor.

Children: A variety of children's clothing is available; sizes are not a big problem but prices are high.

Supplies and Services

The following items are available at higher prices: toiletries for men and women, cosmetics, feminine personal supplies, tobacco items, home medicines and drugs; common household items, including minor repair materials; and entertainment supplies such as candles, nappies.

All basic services—laundry, drycleaning, barber and beauty shops, shoe, and automobile repair—are available.

Domestic Help

The number and type of domestics varies with the obligations and living pattern of the employee. The hourly rate for part-time domestics is approximately Y1,000. Salaries for full-time domestics vary but generally you can expect to pay \$1,000-\$1,500 per month.

Domestics are covered by Japanese national health insurance but are not covered by unemployment insurance. Many employers assume partial obligation for doctors' bills and for the placement of a domestic in another position when they leave Japan. Those who sponsor non-Japanese domestics are responsible for assuring their departure from



Asakusa/Sensoji Temple Gate in Tokyo

Susan Rock. Reproduced by permission.

Japan if not placed with a qualified sponsor.

Part-time maids are available as babysitters when those services are needed. Teenagers charge from Y500 per hour depending on age and experience while part-time maids charge Y1,000 per hour.

Religious Activities

English-language services are available in the Tokyo and Yokohama areas for members of most denominations. Religions represented include Roman Catholic, Baptist, Seventh-day Adventist, Episcopal, Mormon, Christian Scientist, Lutheran, Interdenominational, Jewish, and Interdenominational Charismatic. The churches offer a variety of fellowship for all age groups and combined programs to provide services for the benefit of the foreign community in the area.

Education

Tokyo has a wide selection of excellent schools that provide education

comparable to that available in the best schools in the U.S. and elsewhere. The school styles range from open classroom to more structured approaches; sports, music, drama, and other outside activities are provided in varying degrees. Graduates from the schools in the area have no difficulty being accepted by the best U.S. colleges and universities. To accommodate the requirements of children with special needs, parents should be certain to communicate directly with the schools regarding individual educational needs and programs available. The school year is from September to June. It is essential to communicate with the schools as early as possible since competition for spaces is keen. Most schools begin accepting applications for the upcoming school year in November of the current year. Most of the private schools maintain waiting lists. Upon acceptance, many schools require an early commitment on the part of the family and may require a non-refundable deposit. The schools in the Tokyo

area most frequently used are listed below. Each is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

A physical examination is required by most of the schools.

The American School in Japan (ASIJ) (1-1, Nomizu 1-comme, Chofushi, Tokyo 182-0031, tel: 0422-34-5300, fax: 0422-34-5308; web address: www.asij.ac.jp; e-mail: enroll@asij.ac.jp) is an independent elementary and secondary school accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. It is an overseas member of the National Association of Independent Schools of the United States and is affiliated with the International Schools Service. Of the 1,400 students, 67% are American, 15% are Japanese and the rest third-country nationals. The curriculum is similar to that of the best U.S. college preparatory schools. In addition, Japanese language and area studies are offered in all grades. The facilities include

an indoor swimming pool, two gymnasiums, theater, laboratories, libraries, and cafeteria. The emphasis is on individualized instruction through the modular schedule in the secondary schools and through employment of team teaching as a means of greater flexibility in the elementary school. The number of graduates who enter colleges is about 98%.

The school is at Chofu in Tokyo's western suburbs. The school provides bus service from all areas of Tokyo including a stop at the apartment compound, with commuting time running slightly under an hour each way. Train service to within 10 minutes walking distance from the school is also available.

American School in Japan Nursery-Kindergarten (3-5 age group) (15-5, Aobadai 2-chome, Meguro-ku, Tokyo 153-0042; e-mail: nk@asij.ac.jp). In addition to the kindergarten on the Chofu campus, ASIJ operates a nursery kindergarten Meguro that is about 20 minutes from the housing compound. It accommodates 115 students of several nationalities. The normal school day includes teacher-directed work and activities (music, library, films), rest periods, snack, and outdoor play.

International School of Sacred Heart (3-1, Hiroo 4-chome, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 150-0012; fax: (3) 3400-3496; tel: (3) 3400-3951; web address: www.iac.co.jp/~issh3/; e-mail: issh@gol.com) is an elementary and secondary institution with a student body of about 588 students directed by the Catholic Sisters of the Society of the Sacred Heart. Accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, it is a school for girls; however, boys are accepted for kindergarten. Around 50 different nationalities are represented in the student body and about 40-50 graduates are admitted to U.S. and Japanese colleges and universities each year. The school plant includes laboratories, gymnasium, and library; sports facilities also are provided. The



Courtesy of Motoko Huthwaite

Buddhist cemetery adjacent to high rise buildings in Tokyo

school is on the Sacred Heart University campus in central Tokyo.

Nishimachi International School (14-7, Moto Azabu 2-chome, Minato-ku, Tokyo 106-0046; tel: (3) 3451-5520; fax: (3) 3456-0197; web address: www.nishimachi.ac.jp; e-mail: info@-nishimahi.ac.jp) offers instruction from kindergarten through grade 9. It is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. Enrollment is about 400 with an international student body. The curriculum allows easy progression into the international high schools in the Tokyo area. Centrally located in Tokyo, the school has a gym (but no field), a large library, plus a strong Japanese language and active cultural activities programs. It generally requires early application for admission since there is usually a waiting list, particularly in the lower grades.

Seisen International School for Girls (12-15, Yoga 1-chome, Setagaya-ku, Tokyo 158-0097; fax: (3) 3701-1033; tel: (3) 3704-2661; web address: www.scisen.com; e-mail: sisnfo@jap.com) is a girls' elementary and secondary school accredited by the Western Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges and operated by the Catholic order, the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of

Jesus. Boys are accepted for kindergarten. Enrollment is around 645, representing 60 nationalities. The emphasis in the secondary school is college preparatory with an extracurricular program of arts, drama, journalism, music, and sports. Some 94% of graduates enter college. The school is in Tokyo, convenient to public buses, subways, and trains.

St. Mary's International School (6-19, Seta 1-chome, Setagaya-ku, Tokyo 158-8668; fax: (3) 3707-1950; tel: (3) 3709-3411; web address: www.smistokyo.com; e-mail: jutra@twics.com) is sponsored by the Catholic order, Brothers of Christian Instruction. It is an elementary and secondary boy's school accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges with an enrollment of 900, representing some 70 nationalities. The school has a preschool (5 years), but there is a waiting list. The secondary school curriculum is college preparatory, and participation in sports and extracurricular activities including music, arts, drama, and journalism is emphasized. The international Baccalaureate program is offered in the high school. The facilities include a gymnasium, indoor pool, laboratories, library, and cafeteria. Almost all graduates enter American colleges. Bus ser-

vice is provided by the school. In addition, train, subway, and public bus service to the school is excellent.

Tokyo International Learning Community (6-3-50 Osawa, Mitaka-shi, Tokyo 181-0015, Tel: 0422-31-9611; fax: 0422-31-9648; web address: www.tilc.org; e-mail: tilc@gol.com) Established in 1987, Tokyo International Learning Community was set up by concerned parents and professionals in Tokyo's English-speaking community to support the education of students with special needs.

Its staff now consists of four full-time teachers and over 10 other staff members, including an occupational therapist, a physical therapist, a speech pathologist, and a psychologist. Based in a seven-room school building in Mitaka, Tokyo International Learning Community has an Early Childhood program for children from newborn to 5 years old with developmental disabilities or difficulties, and their families, as well as an Upper School Program for elementary, middle- and high-school students.

There is a support group for parents of children with special needs. A program for students enrolled in other international schools who are diagnosed as having a learning disability is also available. Services are offered in central Tokyo as well as the Mitaka campus.

Special Educational Opportunities

Exceptional opportunities exist in Tokyo for higher education and for training in Japanese arts and crafts. Each institution has its own admission requirements; courses can be followed as part of a degree program or for enrichment.

Sophia University, a Jesuit institution, has an international division that offers accredited courses in English and comparative cultures, leading to bachelor's and master's degrees. Both part-time and full-time study is possible, and all courses are in late afternoon or evening.

Temple University Japan, established in the early 1980s, is a branch of Temple University of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In the fall of 1987, the school moved into a new building in Shinjuku, which include such facilities as classrooms, a library, a language laboratory, and an auditorium. Temple offers bachelors degrees in the liberal arts and masters degrees in teaching English as a second language and business administration. Classes take place days and evenings.

International Christian University is about 20 miles from the center of Tokyo. It is an interdenominational school offering courses in English in all of its divisions-humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and languages. The Bachelor of Arts degree requires competency in Japanese, which can be acquired at the university by taking an intensive program. Night courses are not offered.

The University of Maryland, in cooperation with the Armed Forces, offers night courses at the undergraduate and some graduate levels. Although these courses are offered primarily to military personnel, Embassy staff members also are eligible. Courses currently are given at Camp Zama and Yokota Air Force Base. The commuting distance is from 1 to 1-1/2 hours from Tokyo by train.

Many opportunities exist for participation in adult classes in painting, sumie painting, ikebana (flower arrangement), woodcarving, doll making, pottery, and other Japanese crafts. Lessons in Japanese and Chinese cooking, music, and dancing can also be taken.

Sports

The Japanese are sports lovers and participate in virtually every sport popular in the West in addition to their own. The foreigner is welcomed, either as an active participant or as a spectator, and sports are effective avenues for establishing social and informal contacts with the Japanese people.

The most popular spectator sport of Western origin in Japan is baseball; the Tokyo pro teams play to sellout crowds nearly every day in season, and the annual Japan World Series championship team often gives visiting American teams stiff competition. Ranking in spectator popularity is the traditional Japanese wrestling or sumo. Fans include foreigners and Japanese alike, and tickets to the major tournaments held throughout the year are hard to find. Local television broadcasts both baseball and sumo events. Other popular spectator sports include soccer, rugby, gymnastics, swimming and diving competitions, and the Japanese martial arts exhibitions and matches. In addition to judo and karate, the arts include kendo (fencing with bamboo swords), Aikido (self-defense emphasizing physical conditioning and mind over matter), and Japanese longbow archery. You can study any of the martial arts in Tokyo under the most famous instructors. Judo instructions are available to Mission employees on the compound.

Golf is very popular in Japan. The courses are excellent and playable year round. Public courses are relatively few, and membership in the private Japanese clubs is prohibitively expensive. The military has three 18-hole golf courses at Tama, Zama, and Atsugi, all from 1 to 1-1/2 hours' drive from downtown Tokyo. Membership is open to all Mission employees and their families, and dues are reasonable. Non-members can play by paying a nominal greens fee.

Golfers bringing a letter certifying their handicap at a previous golf club will be considered by the handicap committee for an "in-Japan" handicap.

The city has few public tennis and badminton courts. Private clubs have long waiting lists and are expensive.

Many Japanese recreational centers and clubs feature table tennis.

The major hotels have swimming pools and clubs; memberships are available but costs are relatively high. In the complex of the Olympic sports facilities are two Olympic-sized pools and a high diving area open to the public. The New Sanno Hotel has an outdoor pool.

Beaches and water in the Tokyo area are polluted. However, nice but crowded beaches are located along the coast south of Tokyo near Kamakura on the Miura Peninsula, on the picturesque Izu Peninsula about 80 miles from Tokyo, and the eastern coast of the Chiba Peninsula about 60 miles from Tokyo. These areas abound in picturesque fishing villages and dramatic scenery.

The Tokyo YMCA has a basketball court, swimming pool, and facilities for volleyball and gymnastics. Also, Tokyo's Olympic Gymnasium facilities for these sports are open on a limited basis to the public. Bowling is popular in Japan, and Tokyo has many centers.

Several indoor ice skating rinks in the city are open year round and outdoor skating is popular on lakes and rinks outside Tokyo during winter.

The mountain resort areas of Nikko and Hakone have facilities for sailing and water-skiing. Commercial marinas, like Enoshima on Sagami Bay, rent sailboats. Skiing is excellent in Japan. Many ski areas are to the north and northwest of Tokyo (3-6 hours by train), with areas for beginners and experts. Accommodations range from luxurious lodges to skier dormitories. Equipment can be rented, but large ski boots are difficult to find.

Mountain climbing is also popular; you can join several hiking clubs. Good hiking over mountain trails is within 2 hours by train from Tokyo.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Japan's rugged and beautiful terrain offers a great deal to outdoor enthusiasts. Most scenic areas,

including nearby Nikko and Mt. Fuji, have been incorporated into an extensive national park system. Hiking trails and good camping facilities abound. Hundreds of low-priced hostels exist, many in isolated places. The hostels are open to people of all ages, single or married.

Much of Japan is easily accessible from Tokyo on Japan's excellent rail transportation system. The historic Kyoto-Nara area, with its hundreds of shrines and their typical Japanese gardens, can be reached by Shinkansen (super express trains) in about 3 hours. Shinkansen to Kyushu, southern Japan, takes about 7 hours. Northern Japan is a day's journey by train. Domestic airlines will take you to most major cities in Honshu, Shikoku, Hokkaido, and Kyushu or Okinawa within a few hours. Travel by air, rail and car tends to be expensive.

Within hours by car or rail from Tokyo are the many hot-spring mountain resorts of the Hakone Range near Mt. Fuji, beautiful Nikko National Park with its famous shrines of the Tokugawa Shoguns; and northwest of Tokyo, Nagano Prefecture, popular winter sports center. These resort areas offer excellent recreational facilities and fine Western and Japanese-style hotels.

Shimoda, at the tip of the Izu Peninsula (about 3 hours from Tokyo by express train), is of historic interest as the site of the first American Consulate in Japan, opened by Townsend Harris in 1856.

Nearby Tokyo is Kamakura, which is also of great historical interest with its many 12th- and 13th-century shrines and temples and the famed Great Buddha. Added incentives to travel are the many colorful festivals that take place throughout Japan, especially during the summer. Timing a trip to coincide with a festival or witnessing some of the many festivals held in Tokyo can add greatly to your experience.

In all the major cities and many of the others are Western-style hotels

with facilities ranging from acceptable to adequate. A stay in a Japanese-style inn or Ryokan can be most interesting. Ryokans are usually more expensive than firstclass Western-style hotels, but the attentive service given guests is almost unequaled anywhere in the world. The guest must be prepared, however, to sleep on tatami mats and eat Japanese food.

Entertainment

Tokyo is one of the entertainment capitals of the world. It offers an infinite variety of nightlife from the most deluxe and expensive clubs and spectacular music hall revues to jazz coffeehouses and working-class restaurants. Restaurants are everywhere. Hardly a street in the city does not have at least one Japanese restaurant specializing in tempura (shrimp, fish, and various vegetables deep fried in oil), sushi (raw fish or shrimp in a small rice mold wrapped in a special kind of seaweed), and sukiyaki, perhaps the best known Japanese food among foreigners. Many nice restaurants feature international cuisine or regional specialties (Chinese, French, American, Russian, Italian, Korean, or Spanish). Tokyo also has a variety of fast-food chains, both Japanese and such American favorites as McDonald's, Wendy's, Burger King, Shakey's, Kentucky Fried Chicken, and Pizza Hut. Recent casual restaurant additions include Outback Steakhouse and TGI Friday's. Prices in the restaurants range from moderate to extremely expensive. One of the best ways to sample the restaurants in Tokyo is at lunchtime when a meal costs half as much when served in the evening.

Tokyo is the center of the Kabuki and Noh theaters. Two major theaters in Tokyo present Kabuki, and usually at least two productions are playing at any one time. Several productions of Noh and the classical Japanese comedy, Kyogen, are shown every week. The famous Bunraku Puppet Theater of Osaka visits Tokyo regularly.

Tokyo has nine symphony orchestras that perform year round, several ballet and opera companies, and many chamber groups and individual artists. With these choices, and with the constant stream of visiting foreign orchestras, ballet and opera companies, and individual artists, it has become one of the world's music centers. However, ticket prices are expensive.

Tokyo Weekender and Tokyo Classified, periodic publications especially for foreign residents or tourists in the city, present useful information on what is happening in music and the theater in Tokyo and describes various events going on throughout Japan.

Tokyo is also the center of Japan's contemporary art life. Several museums have fine collections of Japanese and Western arts, and innumerable small galleries present showings of Japanese and foreign artists. The major department stores often sponsor art exhibitions. The Tokyo Museum of Modern Art each year has several large foreign exhibitions of international significance.

The Western Theater in Tokyo attracts much interest and activity. Most foreign plays are translated and presented in Japanese. The Tokyo International Players, an international English-language amateur group, produces several plays and readings during their October-May season. American and other foreign movies, shown with Japanese subtitles, are quite popular in Tokyo. They are, however, expensive. The English-language press carries detailed schedules. American movies are shown on Sunday afternoons and evenings at the New Sanno Hotel.

Photography is a popular hobby for both still and video enthusiasts. The Japanese are avid picture takers, and most foreigners follow suit. Excellent Japanese cameras and accessories are sold at the exchanges at reasonable prices. American film is sold locally and at

the exchanges, although Japanese film is also of high quality.

Social Activities

The Tokyo American Club is a large, long-established club to which many in the business community belong. It has a restaurant and swimming pool. Fees are prohibitive.

The New Sanno Hotel, open to US Government civilian employees, has three restaurants and a snack bar, a cocktail lounge, a swimming pool, and offers dancing, night-club shows, special events, and movies.

Social life is comparable to the social life enjoyed in most large U.S. cities. Acquaintances and friends are developed through contacts in the office, at clubs, churches, and through friends.

Although opportunities are numerous for making Japanese friends in Tokyo, it does require a positive effort in most cases. This is partly explained by the size of the city, the language barrier, and differences in cultural background and personality between Westerners and Japanese. Although the Japanese are not surprised when Westerners remain aloof in the foreign colony, they are delighted when a foreigner makes an effort to learn about their way of life, e.g., by studying their various art forms, by traveling Japanese-style, etc. One good way to make daily contact with the Japanese more meaningful is to learn some of the language and customs. In addition, a great number of organizations and activities bring people together for both business and pleasure, such as the American Chamber of Commerce, the Japan-America Society, the Royal Asiatic Society, the International House, international friendship clubs, and the Japanese alumni associations of many American colleges and universities. Many organizations directed either toward community welfare or cultural exchange provide excellent opportunities to meet both Japanese women and women of other nationalities, i.e., the College Women's Association of Japan,

the Japan-American Women's Club, the International Ladies Benevolent Society, the International Social Service, and the Tokyo - Washington Women's Club. The latter club meets several times a year and offers monthly or biweekly meetings of various small interest groups such as golf, bridge, chorus, ink painting, flower arranging, and doll making.

Classes in Japanese arts and crafts are also readily available throughout the city and serve both to broaden your circle of friends and your knowledge of the culture of Japan. These classes are not offered solely for foreigners, since the formal study of various aspects of Japanese culture has traditionally been popular for Japanese as well.

An excellent way to make Japanese friends is to offer classes in English conversation. These classes are not difficult to arrange. Another way to make Japanese friends is to participate in the American Orientation Program sponsored by the Fulbright Commission for Japanese scholarship students going to the U.S. to study.

Yokohama

Yokohama is Japan's second largest city, with a population of 3.3 million, and is part of the Kanto metropolitan area centered near Tokyo. Yokohama was one of the first Japanese ports to open to Western trade, and today is one of the world's busiest shipping ports, with a cosmopolitan flavor and a large international population. Despite being a large, industrial city, Yokohama retains a pleasant atmosphere and is relatively close to a number of sightseeing and recreation areas, such as the ancient capital of Kamakura, the hot spring resorts at Hakone, and Mount Fuji.

Yokohama's climate is essentially the same as Tokyo's, with hot, humid summers and mild winters.

The United States Foreign Service Institute has a field school in Yokohama, established to provide lan-



Susan Rock. Reproduced by permission

City street in Kyoto

guage and area-studies training. The center is in a converted residence (the former American Consulate) on the Bluff, a ridge overlooking the harbor and the city, about a five-minute walk from Harbor View Park and the Foreign Cemetery.

The school's neighborhood, called Yamate. It features several parks and historic sites related to the opening of the port to foreign trade and the early foreign community in Yokohama. This neighborhood hosts a commercial center with a wide variety of stores, restaurants and entertainment.

Japanese Language and Area Training Center

FSI Yokohama is an overseas field school of the State Department's Foreign Service Institute, offering intensive, full-time language instruction to U.S. Government

civilian and military officials, their spouses, and in some cases diplomats from third countries.

FSI Yokohama's excellent teaching staff is small but highly experienced. The faculty has created many texts and reference materials in-house, and continues to innovate in both teaching methods and course content. In recent years, the school has adopted a number of computer-based interactive teaching materials. Instructors can help students in finding opportunities to use Japanese outside the classroom as well, through local sport or hobby groups, travel and language exchanges. The school has a library of language texts and reference works, books in English about Japan, Japanese literature in the original and in translation, and videotapes in Japanese.

Taking advantage of its location in country, the school arranges frequent field trips to places of interest to students for their ultimate assignments in Japan. These may include government offices, political party conventions, newspapers and TV stations, Japan Self-Defense Force facilities, factories or museums. The class may take overnight field trips out of town to experience some of the variety of Japanese society, particularly the more traditional culture found in rural areas. Many students also do a week-long practicum, working on a volunteer basis in a Japanese business or institution to gain experience in practical use of the language and in social interaction. A series of guest lectures, in both English and Japanese, offers further insights into Japan's politics, economy and society.

Other, optional events, such as attending a sumo match or traditional Japanese theater, are open to students' families as well.

Food

Local grocery stores, however, are more convenient and have a better selection of fresh foods such as produce, meat, fish, and baked goods. Local stores also carry premium imported items such as cheeses and wines, but at high prices.

The Honmoku area offers a number of Japanese- and Western-style restaurants, including several family restaurants. Farther afield, you can find restaurants serving just about any kind of cuisine in and around downtown Yokohama.

Clothing

Japanese clothing prices vary from near U.S. prices to much higher, depending on the item and outlet, and larger sizes may be hard to find.

Supplies and Services

Most things are usually found nearby, although it sometimes takes more of a search than in the U. S., and prices may be higher. Yokohama has a growing number of large U.S. specialty retailers (e.g., Toys R Us, Sports Authority) within a 30-minute drive from student housing, although the selection of goods differs somewhat from the same stores in the US.

Services such as drycleaning, hair styling, and photo developing available.

Phone service is good but expensive. Pre-paid phone cards, however, offer calls to the U.S. for as little as 15¢ per minute. Home e-mail and Internet service is available at a cost, and quality is comparable to that in the U.S. In Japan, however, even local calls are metered, so extended Internet use will result in a high phone bill. Cell phones are available locally at reasonable rates.

Religious Activities

In addition to numerous Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines, the

neighborhoods are home to several Catholic and Protestant churches. Most of the churches serve international congregations and offer services in English.

Education

Children in kindergarten through sixth grade usually attend the R. E. Byrd DODDS Elementary School at the Negishi Housing Area (PSC 472 Box 12, FPO AP 96348-0005). It is a small school, less than 200 students total, in a modern facility on a quiet residential street.

Middle and high school students usually attend St. Maur International School (83 Yamate-cho, Naka-ku, Yokohama 231-8654 Japan, www.stmaur.ac.jp) or Yokohama International School (258 Yamate-cho, Naka-ku, Yokohama 2310862 Japan, www.yis.ac.jp). Both are coeducational day schools, and both are about a 30-minute walk from the student housing area. St. Maur is operated by the Sisters of the Infant Jesus, a Catholic order, and is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. YIS is an independent nonsectarian school, and is accredited by the New England Association of Colleges and Schools.

Both the international schools include kindergarten and elementary grades as well. There are several pre-kindergarten options, but most are fairly expensive. The Byrd School offers one year of pre-kindergarten, but class size is limited and space might not be available for children of non-DOD families. The two international schools offer pre-school classes, and some families have sent children to local Japanese pre-schools.

The Yokohama area offers a wealth of opportunities for instruction in both traditional Japanese and Western arts, crafts, music, drama, and sports. Many of these classes can be found within walking distance of student housing. Extension programs of U.S. universities are offered on the larger military bases, but long commutes make participa-

tion difficult for those living in Yokohama.

Recreation and Social Life

The Yamate neighborhood offers good routes for walking, jogging, or bicycling. Neighborhood playgrounds are within a block or two of all student housing. A municipal sports center has a weight room, basketball and volleyball courts, and classes for martial arts and other sports, usually for a small per-visit fee. A public park has an outdoor pool open in summer with a reasonable entry fee.

A commercial sports club offers year-round swimming as well as a weight room, aerobics classes and other facilities. Rates are around ¥6,000 to ¥10,000 per month, depending on the hours and days of use. The Yokohama Country and Athletic Club offers more extensive indoor and outdoor sports facilities, but membership fees are high.

The Negishi housing area has a library which has a large selection of English-language books for children and adults. Yokohama boasts a wide variety of museums, concert halls, theaters, and cinemas. Cinemas are much more expensive than in the U.S., but video rentals are close to American prices. American movies are often available in English with Japanese subtitles.

Yokohama in general and the area around FSI in particular have a large international population, and local Japanese residents tend to be very open to foreigners. Most students and family members, even those who speak little or no Japanese, have few problems making friends.

Ōsaka & Kōbe

One of the world's greatest commercial cities, Osaka sits at the center of the Kansai region, Japan's traditional heartland and its second largest economic center. It is Japan's third largest city with a population of nearly 3 million. From the 3rd century A.D., Osaka (then called



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Waterfront of Kobe, Japan

Naniwa), with its bay and magnificent river system, has been the hub of inland traffic for the Kansai region and the center of Japanese trade. Over the past 3 decades, Osaka has lost its position as Japan's premier commercial and industrial city to Tokyo. But Osaka and the Kansai region still rank as one of the most important economic regions in the world, and its economic output exceeds that of most European countries and equals that of Canada. Osaka is home to many of Japan's most famous companies, including Matsushita (Panasonic), Sharp, Sanyo, Suntory and Minolta. The approximately 85,000 manufacturing enterprises in Osaka prefecture alone employ nearly 1 million people and produce over \$220 billion worth of good annually.

Thirty minutes to the west of Osaka is the cosmopolitan port city of **Kobe**, noted for its foreign influence. Another major city Hiroshima, site of the first atomic bombing and the headquarters of the Japanese

car maker, Mazda, now one-third owned by Ford Motor Company.

Kōbe lies on a narrow strip of land along the famous Inland Sea. It faces an excellent harbor on the south and is bordered by the steep, pine-clad Rokko Mountains on the north. The altitude ranges from sea level to some 600 feet within Kōbe proper, and rises abruptly to 3,000 feet in the mountains behind the city. In the bay is Port Island, the world's largest man-made island.

An industrial city and one of the busiest ports in the world, Kōbe is a cosmopolitan city noted for its foreign influence. In recent years, coastal reclamation has enlarged the industrial and port areas. Manufacturing centers around shipbuilding, steel, textiles, and electronics.

One of the first seaports to be opened to foreign settlement more than a century ago (1868), Kōbe remains a highly cosmopolitan city.

The population of 1.4 million includes an international community of Koreans, Chinese, Indians, French, British, Germans, and Americans. Over 1,000 Americans live in Kōbe, many of whom commute to work in Ōsaka.

Western-style hotels, modern trade shows on Port Island, restaurants serving international cuisine, and colorful festivals add to the city's unique atmosphere. Parks and gardens accentuate the natural beauty of Kōbe, particularly during azalea time in May and the blooming of the chrysanthemums in late autumn. Some of the Western-style houses built more than a century ago in Kitano, the old foreign district, are open for walking tours.

Between Kōbe and Ōsaka is Takarazuka. It is the site of a popular hot-spring resort and family amusement park.

Utilities

No shortages of or problems with electricity, gas, or water occur in Japan, absent an event like the Kobe Earthquake in January 1995. Telephone service is excellent, and direct dialing is available for international calls. Electricity in the Osaka area is 100 volts/60 cycles.

Typical Japanese outlets accommodate a plug with two, equally-sized flat prongs.

Food

The local market is filled with fresh fruit, vegetables, eggs, breads, meats, fish, and dairy products, and its use requires no more sanitary caution than one would apply in the U.S. All of these items are expensive. Many stores in Kobe also carry foreign-brand foodstuffs, albeit at higher prices than in the U.S. or the country of origin. A local buyer's club also permits the purchase of international foods.

Osaka is known as a "kuidaore" (food-loving) city. Both Western-style and Japanese restaurants are abundant.

These range from affordable shops and sushi bars to exclusive, members-only establishments.

There is the opportunity to experience a broad range of the dining spectrum.

Clothing

Fashion tastes in Japan increasingly are influenced by American trends, but Japanese—particularly in this area—tend to be fashion-conscious in a conservative way. Americans who dress similarly will be well received. Clothing and shoes purchased locally are expensive, and size also presents a problem.

Supplies and Services

Almost everything is available in Japan, but prices range from high to exorbitant. If you favor certain brands or need special medicines or a regular supply of some item (e.g., contact lens cleaner, toiletries, or hot cooking sauce), it may be better

and cheaper to ship them from the U.S.

Laundry and drycleaning services are excellent, as are barber and beauty shops. Women's hair coloring may not match colors available in the U.S., so bringing samples may help. Repair facilities for American-made appliances and automobiles are often inadequate; repairs for Japanese products are adequate and easily available but expensive.

Domestic Help

Domestic help is hard to find, and wages are high. Day help can be obtained from an agency, but at nearly \$300 per day. Live-in cook/servants charge about \$1,800 a month, plus a month's bonus twice a year. Employees must also provide plane fare to the home country once per year.

Religious Activities

English-language services for followers of the Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish faiths are held in Kobe. Catholic and Anglican/Episcopal Churches, with Japanese-language services, are 10 minutes away in Nishinomiya.

Education

English-speaking students have a choice of four schools in the Osaka and Kobe areas.

Canadian Academy, a coeducational facility founded in 1913, teaches kindergarten through high school and also offers boarding facilities for boys and girls grades 7-12. The curriculum is based on the typical college preparatory system in the U.S. The school has an extensive array of extracurricular activities. The language of instruction in all subjects is English. Address: Koyo-cho Naka 4chome, Higashinada-ku, Kobe, 658-0032, Telephone +81 (78) 857-0100, Fax +81 (78) 857-3250.

Osaka International School, founded in 1992, also offers a wide curricula and a number of extracurricular activities with a college preparatory emphasis. A school bus for all ages can be taken from near the housing compound. Address: 4-16,

Onohara Nishi 4-chome, Mino-shi, Osaka 562-0032, Telephone +81 (727) 27-5050, Fax +81 (727) 27-5055.

Marist Brothers International School, for boys and girls from kindergarten through grade 12, was founded in 1951 and is located in western Kobe. The curriculum is based on the U.S. college preparatory system. The language of instruction in all subjects is English. Children can go from Nishinomiya (east of Kobe) to Marist by public transportation: Address: 2-1, Chimori-cho 1-chome, Suma-ku, Kobe 654-0072, Telephone +81 (78) 732-6266, Fax +81 (78) 7326268.

St. Michael's International School, a primary school for boys and girls, is an Episcopal school for children of all nationalities and faiths. It is built on the site of the old English Mission School in the center of Kobe. A school bus stop is available about 2 kilometers away from the compound. Address: 17-2 Nakayamate dori 3-chome, Chuoku, Kobe 650-0004, Telephone +81 (78) 2318885, Fax +81 (78) 231-8899.

A number of Japanese nursery schools accept foreign children. In Kyoto, the Kyoto International School, for boys and girls in grades 1 through 8, serves a diverse foreign community of a number of nationalities. Most of the parents are teachers, research scholars, artists, or missionaries. Address: 317 Kitatawara-cho, Naka-dachiuri Sagaru, Yoshiyamachi-dori, Kamigyoku, Kyoto 602-8247, Telephone +81 (75) 451-1022, Fax +81 (75) 451-1023.

Special Educational Opportunities

Many Americans here enjoy classes and tutoring in traditional Japanese art forms such as flower arranging, cooking, dancing, pottery making, music, brush painting, and calligraphy, as well as in Japanese sports such as judo, kendo, karate, and aikido. Prices for lessons, however, are typically high.

Sports

Sports facilities are available, but are more crowded and expensive than in the U.S.

A number of pools, tennis courts, and health clubs in the area are open on either a membership or a pay-as-you-go basis. Typical costs are a one-time membership fee of about \$100, and about \$100 a month thereafter.

Public golf courses and driving ranges are crowded and rather expensive. Private golf clubs are numerous but beyond the financial reach of most U.S. visitors. However, occasionally invitations are sent to play in golf tournaments organized by the Japan-America societies and other American-affiliated groups.

Excellent beaches are a few hours' drive or a ferry ride away from Kobe. The Osaka-Kobe area has numerous bowling alleys and roller and ice skating rinks. Winter skiing areas are located a 2-hour train ride or 3-hour car ride away. The Rokko Mountain National Park in Kobe has extensive hiking trails, and a smaller mountain hiking area is a 10-minute walk from the Nishinomiya compound.

Zoos, aquariums, amusement parks, and museums of all types are available for family outings.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Local festivals are held in the consular district throughout the year. Public and private museums regularly feature special exhibits. Department stores also sponsor fairs showcasing food items and crafts from different Japanese prefectures. Kyoto is an international cultural treasure and a popular touring destination. Shops in Kyoto and elsewhere are well-stocked with wood block prints, china, porcelain, scrolls, screens, etc. Its centuries-old festivals and innumerable temples and shrines bring visitors back again and again.

Nearby Nara was founded in A.D. 710 and contains some of the oldest

and most famous art treasures in Japan, including the Great Buddha of the Todaiji Temple, housed in the world's largest wooden building. Hundreds of tame deer freely roam Nara Park and are very popular with children.

To the west of Kobe is Himeji, site of the most spectacular castle in Japan. It has been the site of many Japanese samurai movies, including the American TV program, "Shogun." To the west and south lies the Inland Sea, whose quiet shores and scenic islands are within easy reach of the compound by bridge and ferry.

Two of Japan's most famous scenic spots are in the consular district: Amanohashidate on the Japan Sea and Miyajima Shrine near Hiroshima. Also in Hiroshima is the Peace Park and Museum. See also Tokyo, Touring and Outdoor Activities.

Entertainment

Movie houses throughout Osaka and Kobe show first-run American and foreign films, while at prices two to three times higher than in the U.S. Auditoriums in Kobe and Osaka offer concerts by world-famous classical and popular artists as well as symphony orchestras, ballet, and opera. Osaka is also the home of Bunraku, the famous traditional Japanese puppet theater, and Kabuki and Noh performances are also presented. The spring tournament of sumo, the historical sport popular among foreigners and Japanese alike, is held annually in Osaka. A unique all-girl troupe in Takarazuka, a 30-minute train ride from the compound, performs Western-style musicals on a constantly changing bill.

Social Activities

Most Americans entertain in their homes. Kobe and Osaka have many nightclubs and restaurants suitable for entertainment in a variety of price ranges. The Kansai Chapter of the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ACCJ) maintains an office in Osaka and meets periodically for luncheons and dinners in Osaka and Kobe. The George Wash-

ington Society, a gathering of American residents in the Kansai, celebrates George Washington's birthday with a formal ball and the Fourth of July with a picnic.

Japanese enjoy Western entertainment and accept invitations to American homes. Both formal and informal contacts between Americans and Japanese are extensive. The Japan-America Societies in Osaka, Kobe, Kyoto, and Hiroshima sponsor a variety of lectures, luncheons, and parties that offer an excellent opportunity to establish friendships. The Japan-America Women of the Kansai (JAWK) meets bimonthly and organizes a number of programs to increase friendship and understanding between women of the two countries as well as to raise money for charitable organizations. Rotary International, Lions International, and the Jaycees have chapters in almost every city and like to meet with official Americans. Japanese-American sister city affiliation committees promote a number of exchanges. The Kobe Women's Club meets weekly from September to May for art programs, excursions, bridge, and other activities. Twenty-three official and 45 honorary consulates general and consulates are in the Osaka-Kobe area, as are foreign business representatives of all nationalities.

Kyōto

Kyōto is about an hour's drive from Osaka over an excellent highway, and is one of the world's most famous and beautiful cities. It was the capital of Japan from 794 (when it was called Hei-an-kyo) until 1868 and, although it was superseded as the administrative seat of government for brief periods during those years, it remained the ceremonial capital. And since Kyōto was spared the bombs of World War II, it is the city richest in historical remains and cultural assets in Japan.

Modeled after the ancient Chinese capital Ch'an An, and surrounded on three sides by forested mountains, Kyōto has long inspired scholars and artists. Its centu-

ries-old festivals and innumerable temples and shrines bring visitors back again and again. Nijo Castle, the residence of the first Tokugawa *shogun*; Kinkaku-ji, the Temple of the Golden Pavilion; the Shinto shrine with its lovely cherry-blossom gardens; and Gosho, the ancient imperial palace, are but a few of Kyōto's treasures. Japan's history is still very much alive in Kyōto today, but the charm of the cultural heritage is only one aspect of the city.

The visitor is aware of the old and new, which initially seem to contradict one another, but soon he realizes that ancient shrines and temples and quiet gardens and traditional handicrafts blend with the modern life of Kyōto in beautiful harmony. All of these contribute to the unique atmosphere of the city.

Many English books are available at local stores as a help to guide visitors through this fascinating city. Since Kyōto has been thriving primarily on the tourist industry, other industries are less important, except for electronics and silk-weaving.

Kyōto's population is 1.5 million.

Education

Kyōto International School, for boys and girls in pre-kindergarten through grade eight, serves a diverse foreign community of at least eight nationalities. Most of the parents are teachers, research scholars, artists, or missionaries. An American/British curriculum is followed.

Recreation

Sports facilities are available but very crowded and expensive.

Public golf courses in the Ōsaka-Kōbe district are crowded and expensive, and private clubs are even more costly. Tennis, health clubs, and swimming are available, as are playing fields for soccer, rugby, and field hockey. Social clubs have been organized by members of the foreign community, but membership fees are quite high.

Excellent, but crowded, beaches are only a few hours away. Boating and water-skiing enthusiasts find many opportunities to enjoy their sports. The area has numerous bowling alleys and roller and ice skating rinks. In the winter, skiing areas are two hours away by train. Also, there are limitless hiking trails in the Rokko Mountain National Park.

Zoos, an aquarium, amusement parks, and many different types of museums are found in this area.

In the district is Nara, center of the nation's spiritual heritage and the ancient capital of the earliest known Japanese dynasty. Founded in the year 710, it contains some of the oldest and most famous art treasures in the country, including the Great Buddha of the Todaiji Temple, housed in the world's largest wooden building. The massive five-story pagoda of Kofuku-ji and some beautiful Buddhist shrines and statues can also be visited. Hundreds of tame deer freely roam Nara Park.

Two of Japan's most famous scenic spots are also in this area: Amanohashidate on the Japan Sea and Miyajima near Hiroshima.

Souvenir and curio hunting is a popular diversion, and shops in these three cities are well stocked with woodblock prints, china, porcelain, scrolls, screens, and the like.

Many movie houses show first-run American and foreign films. Fine auditoriums offer concerts and recitals by world-famous artists; the Ōsaka music festivals are held three weeks annually in a splendid 3,000-seat auditorium. Ōsaka is also the home of *Bunraku*, the traditional Japanese puppet theater. Legitimate stage productions in English are few, but a unique all-girl troupe in Takarazuka performs Western-style musicals on a constantly changing bill. Theatergoers enjoy *Kabuki* and *Noh* plays as well as other forms of traditional Japanese theater. A *sumo* (Japanese wrestling) tournament is held every spring.

Since nightclubs are quite expensive, most Americans in the area entertain in their homes. The Japanese happily accept such invitations.

Rotary, Lions International, and the Jaycees have chapters in almost every city in Japan, and are active in the Ōsaka-Kōbe area. Also represented are Japan-America societies, the Japan-America Women of the Kansai, the YMCA and YWCA, the Kōbe Women's Club, and the Japan League of Women Voters.

Nagoya

Nagoya City is the capital of Aichi Prefecture and center of commerce, industry, and culture in central Japan (the Chubu Region). The city has over 2 million people, ranking fourth in population among Japan's cities. It is located between Tokyo and Osaka and sits astride Japan's major east-west highway and railway systems.

Nagoya and the surrounding region make up an industrial powerhouse. Economic activity in this region is such that even if separated from the rest of Japan, it would still have one of the world's largest economies. This is the center of Japan's automobile and auto parts industries. The country's largest carmaker, Toyota Motor Corporation, has its headquarters and virtually all of its Japan operations in Aichi and other car and truck manufacturers are either headquartered or have plant facilities in the region. Mitsubishi Heavy Industries and Kawasaki Heavy Industries, along with other aerospace companies, are located in or near Nagoya.

Other industries, ranging from machine tools to fine ceramics, are located here and form part of the Chubu Region's vast economic base. Some of this manufacturing output is exported out of the Port of Nagoya, the busiest in export volume of all of the country's ports. Nagoya Bay is large enough to accommodate some of the world's largest ships; every year, about 38,000 ships enter the bay to dock at

Nagoya's port. In 1999, foreign trade volume in and out of all of the regional air and maritime ports was almost \$142 billion.

Nagoya and its residents have long been associated with commerce and merchandising. Located along the historical transportation routes between eastern and western Japan (e.g., between Edo, or Tokyo, and Osaka), the town prospered from its trade with both regions. Among the important early regional industries were textiles, steel-making, and ceramics, traditional economic activities whose imprint is still evident today. The first of Japan's Tokugawa shoguns, Tokugawa Ieyasu (who was from the area of Nagoya), recognized the town's strategic importance in the early 17th century and built an imposing castle in its center. Ruled over first by one of his sons and then by other Tokugawa successors, Nagoya grew both in economic and political importance during the long, and virtually warfare-free, Tokugawa era. Over time, the city and the surrounding area became the commercial and industrial hub that it remains today. The castle built by the shogun, leveled along with the rest of the city during World War II, was rebuilt and remains the premier landmark in and symbol of the city.

Regional civic and business leaders are pushing ahead with several large scale 21st century projects in and around Nagoya. Already in place is a giant new commercial development, JR Central Towers, which opened in downtown Nagoya over the city's main train terminal in March 2000. The year 2005 looms large both as the deadline for completion of the new Central Japan International Airport and as the year the region will host the 2005 World Exposition. The airport is a \$7.2 billion project to be built on landfill in Ise Bay about 35 kilometers south of Nagoya. Plans for the World Exposition (EXPO 2005) have been scaled back from the original conception but the project is still an enormous undertaking with a projected investment of about \$1.4 bil-

lion by the Japanese government, local governments, and the private sector. The estimated number of visitors to the March through September EXPO is upwards of 18 million. The EXPO, which will have an environment based theme, will be held on existing parkland near a forested area adjacent to Nagoya. There are also several huge highway and railway construction projects planned for the region. The most heavily trafficked highways between Nagoya and Tokyo (the "Tomei") and between Nagoya and Osaka (the "Meishin") both have new partner routes planned for construction early in this century. In addition, Nagoya-based Central Japan Railways is going ahead with development of the "Linear Chuo Shinkansen," a futuristic "maglev" (magnetic levitation) train that could run at speeds as high as 500 kilometers per hour, connecting Tokyo and Nagoya in 40 minutes.

Utilities

Electricity in Nagoya is 100v, 60 cycles, so many U.S.-made electric appliances can be used without adjustment. However, televisions, radios, VCRs, and clocks intended for use in the U.S. will not work well in this area because of frequency and/or timing problems. A VCR, for instance, might work for playback only but not record well because the timing would be askew. Electric sockets are compatible with regular two-prong, U.S. plugs, but three-prong sockets with grounding are rare.

Food and Clothing

Shopping for groceries and other goods in Japan follows a simple rule of thumb: you can get most anything you want if you are willing to pay for it.

Nagoya, like all large Japanese cities, has world-class department stores, specialty food shops selling an ample selection of imported goods, wine and liquor stores, and fashionable boutiques. Those are all predictably expensive. But Nagoya also offers less costly shops that may be in less convenient locations or provide a somewhat lower stan-

dard of packaging or presentation but still offer high-quality goods. Also, large, lower-cost, high-volume retailers, American stores among them, are increasingly in evidence in the Nagoya area and these firms are adding to the variety of goods sold and increasing price competition.

Recreation & Entertainment

Nagoya provides an especially strong encounter with the Japanese and their way of life. Contacts in and around Nagoya are less likely to speak English, so Japanese language skills are going to be tested every day. Local and regional news, whether on television or radio or in the regional newspaper, is going to be in Japanese, further testing language skills.

Among the best features of life in Nagoya are the city's own cultural attractions, its location in the midst of some of Japan's greatest historic sites, and its natural setting with both seacoast and mountains nearby. Few of the ancient temples and shrines that once dotted the city exist any longer but those that do, such as Atsuta Shrine, are well worth a visit.

Tokugawa Ieyasu, who had such an important role in the city's history and his descendants are featured in the Tokugawa Museum, a splendid collection of weapons, armor, artworks, and other artifacts from that era in Japanese history. Tokugawa's castle, restored in the 1950s, is a great structure that visitors can enter and explore inside. The Nagoya Boston Museum has an impressive collection of treasures from ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome along with more modern works of art on display; the works are on long-term loan from the Boston Museum.

The new Aichi Performing Arts Center is a huge complex with a concert hall, theaters, and museum space. The city also has numerous parks, among which is Higashiyama Koen, with a beautiful Japanese garden as well as a great zoo.



Fountain in Nagasaki's Peace Park

Susan Rock. Reproduced by permission.

Using Nagoya as a base, some of Japan's greatest historic sites are within easy reach. Kyoto, for instance, is about an hour and a half away by car and 45 minutes away by train, a fairly easy day trip. Ise Shrine in Mie Prefecture, among the best-known and most beautiful of Japan's shrines, can also be reached in less than 2 hours. Takayama in Gifu Prefecture, where an ancient part of city remains intact and where traditional Japanese craft-making is still preserved, is probably too far for a day trip but can easily be visited in a weekend. There are also old post towns set in the mountains that are around Nagoya to the north and west. The mountains are an attraction themselves; some of Japan's tallest peaks are not far from Nagoya, making hiking and skiing easy to do for those posted here. If you want to ski, bring your boots, clothes, and other equipment; there

are plenty of ski slopes in the nearby mountains.

Nagoya has a well-deserved reputation for being very hot and humid in the summer. Winters are cool to cold, but are milder with each passing year. These days it snows only rarely, perhaps one snowfall in Nagoya itself each winter.

Education

Nagoya's only English-speaking school is the Nagoya International School (NIS), which offers a U.S.-based education program. The school has over 300 students in kindergarten through grade 12 college preparatory curriculum. The post educational allowance covers tuition and some other educational expenses. NIS is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. A large proportion

of the faculty has advanced degrees. Facilities dating back from the later 60s and early 70s are well-maintained. A new gymnasium and arts center was dedicated in 1999. The school's location is about 30 minutes from the eastern part of the city where the principal officer lives and about 45 minutes from the more central area where the two other American officers have their homes. Both areas are served by buses operated by the school. The principal officer serves as a member of the Board of Trustees.

Special Information

Nagoya has a number of quality hospitals with English-speaking personnel. There are a number of U.S.-trained doctors and dentists who are well-acquainted with the Consulate and its staff and are very helpful. There are also English speaking druggists.

Hiroshima

Hiroshima is in the center of the National Park Inland Sea of Seto and is the largest city of West Honshū. As the target of the first atomic bomb on August 6, 1945, Hiroshima is known throughout the world. Ninety percent of the city was destroyed that day, and the estimated loss of life is as high as 200,000.

Hiroshima was rebuilt in the post-war years. Peace Memorial Park, with the Cenotaph, Atomic Dome, and Peace Memorial Museum, draws thousands of visitors annually; the park was created in a section of the city which had been gutted by the atomic explosion. Itsukushima Shrine on Miyajima Island, one of the three most scenic views in Japan, is 14 miles west of Hiroshima.

Prominent among local enterprises are the automotive industry, represented by Toyo Kogyo K.K., Japan's third largest car manufacturer; and the shipbuilding companies of Mitsubishi Heavy Industry, Ltd., and Hitachi Engineering Co., Ltd.

The current population of Hiroshima is over one million.

Education

Hiroshima International School, located in a suburban/rural area, offers coeducational classes for kindergarten through grade eight. The school was organized in 1962 by business people, missionaries, and families attached to the Hiroshima Radiation Effects Research Foundation (U.S.-sponsored).

International's curriculum is based on U.S. and British educational systems; all students receive instruction in Japanese, and other languages are also taught (including English as a foreign language).

Fukuoka

Fukuoka City, capital of Fukuoka Prefecture, is the cultural, economic, and educational center of Kyushu Island with a population of

1.3 million people. The city is the heart of the region's \$410 billion economy, which is larger than that of Australia and almost equal that of South Korea. The Island encompasses 10% of Japan's GNP and the region represents Japan's fourth economic center behind the Tokyo, Osaka, and Nagoya region. In addition, the region boasts an economic growth rate above the national average and increasing integration into the regional Asian economy. Already known as Japan's "Silicon Island" because of the semiconductor industry that accounts for over 30% of Japan's total chip output, Kyushu is also developing into a major car-manufacturing center. It will soon produce 10% of Japan's car output, based on roboticized state-of-the-art auto technology.

Fukuoka City also is the heart of the Island's dynamic hi-tech research and development, which is noted as a leading world center for research in advanced computer chips, nuclear fusion, and robotics. With its long tradition of openness to the outside world and receptivity to foreign ideas and products, Fukuoka City has developed into Japan's test market for fashion design and new products.

Culturally and politically, Fukuoka has led Kyushu's advancement in promoting some of the nation's most active sister-city programs and Japan-America Society activities. Fukuoka City's universities are highly active in expanding student and cultural exchanges, particularly with Asia. In addition, Fukuoka City's leading officials are exploring ways in which the City, region, and people may play a more constructive role in the development of the Asian-Pacific Region.

In this context, the Kyushu region is known as the "Gateway to Asia," maintaining close economic, cultural, and political ties with Japan's Asian neighbors. Fukuoka City has established the Asian Cultural Awards to honor contributions to the understanding of Asian culture and thought by both Western and Asian scholars. It has also initiated

an Asian-Pacific Mayors summit to encourage networking by local leaders in order to work cooperatively in developing solutions to common problems. The City has also established regular meetings with counterparts in Korea to promote understanding and cooperation. Reflecting Fukuoka City's increasing prominence in Asia, Asia Week, a weekly magazine published in Hong Kong named Fukuoka City the "Most Livable City in Asia" for the second time in 1999. Fukuoka also hosted the G-8 Finance ministers meeting in July 8, 2000, prior to the Kyushu-Okinawa Summit of G-8 meeting in Okinawa on July 21-23. The city hopes to become an important international economic, cultural, and political center in the future.

Few regions in Japan can match Kyushu's historic consciousness, and fewer yet have the deep sense of self identity and pride seen in the people of Kyushu. According to tradition, it is here that the Sun Goddess Amaterasu descended from heaven to establish the nation of Japan, and it is here where Japan's first emperor was born. Kyushu led Japan out of feudalism in 1868, and its local heroes have played major roles in shaping modern Japan.

The consular district-which contains over 15 million people comprises the seven prefectures of Kyushu Island and Yamaguchi Prefecture on the main island of Honshu. Other major cities in the district include Kitakyushu, Nagasaki, Kumamoto, Oita, and Kagoshima.

Two key US. military facilities, Sasebo Naval Base and the Marine Corps Air Station at Iwakuni, are located in the consular district. The foreign missions are also established in Fukuoka and the Kyushu region.

Utilities and Equipment

Electricity in Fukuoka is 100v, 60 cycles; AC (different from Tokyo's 50 cycles), so most U.S.-made electric appliances can generally be used without difficulty. Overseas calling

services are available, and are considerably cheaper than the Japanese long-distance carrier.

There are a number of FM radio stations in Fukuoka. These stations broadcast at a different frequency than those in the U.S., however, so a radio capable of receiving the Japanese FM band is required. Similarly, regional television channels broadcast at a different frequency.

Newer televisions allow automatic programming of channels. English on the sub-channel, including news programs. Cable TV is available at commercial rates at post. Video rental stores (VHS) are common in Fukuoka, but selection varies.

Food

American-type foods are available locally, and health and food product safety standards are comparable to those in the U.S. Fresh meat, seafood, fruits, and vegetables, as well as staples, packaged foods, and coffee are sold in Japanese markets, although at higher prices than in the U.S. Beef prices are exceptionally high by American standards.

Baby food is available but difficult to find on the local economy. Good quality milk, butter, and margarine are available locally. A selection of cheeses from Europe, the U.S. and New Zealand are sold at Japanese outlets at higher than U.S. prices. Fruits and vegetables are more expensive than those in the U.S.; however, they are also fresher.

Clothing

As with other major cities in Japan, current American and European fashions are available at the larger department stores but at higher prices (for name labels, two to three times the U.S. price is the norm). Also, finding U.S. sizes is often a problem. Military exchanges offer some relief, but stocks are limited and trips to the bases are expensive and time consuming. Mail-order catalogs are a commonly used source of clothing.

Fukuoka's winters are usually mild (it usually snows one or two days

per year) although the proximity to the Korean Peninsula occasionally results in a sudden cold snap. Summers in Fukuoka are similar to those in Washington, hot and humid. Bring a four-season wardrobe. As with the rest of Japan, residents of Fukuoka dress conservatively.

Supplies and Services

Toiletries, cosmetics, tobacco products, commonly used home medical supplies, and virtually all household supplies can be found in Japanese shops but at high prices. Cribs, playpens, strollers, diapers, and other products for babies are available but, again, are expensive locally.

Local shoe repair, dry cleaning, laundry, barbers and beauty shops are more expensive than in the US. Dealers representing the major U.S. automobile manufacturers have offices in Fukuoka. Nevertheless, parts for American and other foreign autos are expensive and harder to find. In terms of servicing and size, most employees choose to purchase a used Japanese car, which can be purchased at post.

Domestic Help

Cost of a full-time servant, including food and transportation, is about Y175,000 per month. Part-time domestic help costs Y10,000 daily, including transportation. It is also customary to pay semi-annual bonuses (June and December), that usually amount to a month's pay each time.

Religious Activities

Roman Catholic, Latter-day Saints, and Protestant churches (including Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, and Episcopal) in the city hold services in Japanese to which Americans are welcome. English-language Protestant and Roman Catholic services are also available. Fukuoka does not have a Jewish congregation.

Education

Founded in 1972, the Fukuoka International School (FIS) is a pri-

vate, coeducational day and boarding school that offers an educational program from pre-kindergarten through grade 12 for English-speaking students of all nationalities. The school year comprises two semesters extending approximately from September 1 to June 18.

A Board of Directors and Board of Trustees govern the school. The school is a member of the Japan Council of Overseas Schools and the East Asia Regional Council of Overseas Schools. A basic college preparatory U.S. curriculum is updated regularly to keep it current with trends in the U.S. as well as in other international schools in Japan. The curriculum includes English as a Second Language (ESL) program, Japanese-language classes, and computer classes. FIS is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. The 2000-2001 school year consists of 1 headmaster, 18 full-time and 9 part-time staff members, including 11 American citizens, 8 host-country nationals, and 5 third-country nationals. Enrollment at the beginning of the 2000-2001 school year was 173 students. Korean, American, and Japanese are the largest nationalities represented at the international school, but British, Australian, Canadian and other nationals also are part of a very culturally diverse student community.

A new two-story physical plant with a gymnasium was constructed in 1990/91. A dormitory was built in the 1994/95 school year. The current facility consists of 11 classrooms, a science lab, a music room, a language laboratory, physics, science and computer rooms, an art room, an office, principal's room, a kitchen, a student lounge, and a 5,100 volume library. The dormitory provides rooms for 24 live-in students.

In the 2000-2001 school year, nearly all of the school's income was derived from regular day school tuition and registration fees. Annual tuition rates were as follows: pre-kindergarten: \$8,341; kindergarten-grade 6: \$9,082; grades 7-

8: \$9,916; and grades 9-12: \$10,658. There is a one-time registration fee of \$1,853 and annual facility fee, \$463. Unless special arrangements are made with the school's treasurer, tuition is payable at the beginning of each semester. (All fees are quoted in U.S. dollars-107/¥1.) Local business and government support for the Fukuoka International School is strong.

Fukuoka International School 18-50, Momochi 3-comme, Sawara-ku, Fukuoka, Japan 814-0006 Tel: 81-92-841-7601. Fax: 81-92-841-7602

Sports

For the avid jogger/runner there is Ohori Park, modeled after China's famed West Lake in Hangzhou. Ohori Park has a specially paved two-kilometer jogging path along with bicycle and walking paths along the scenic lake. Rowboats are available for rental on the lake from spring to autumn. There are numerous road races and marathons held year around in Fukuoka and Kyushu. The October Fukuoka City Marathon attracts a large number of participants of all ages from the region.

Bowling is popular in Fukuoka along with ice and in-line skating. Swimming is also a popular pastime, with numerous facilities around the city. Swimming lessons for children and adults are offered year around at reasonable prices at facilities. There is also a man-made beach facing Hakata Harbor. Hikers enjoy the trails at the Citizen's Forest.

A full range of sports activities is offered in Fukuoka, particularly in the martial arts. The "budokan," or sports center, offers kendo, judo, laido, karate, and other types of Asian martial arts courses.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Kyushu is noted as Japan's leading center for porcelain and ceramic production. Imari and Arita, in nearby Saga Prefecture, are home to Japan's most famous porcelain makers Imaemon and Kakiemon.

There are numerous pottery areas and antique shops in and around Fukuoka City. The region also is noted for its historic and scenic spots. Fukuoka City has numerous excavation sites such as Korokan, an ancient site underscoring Fukuoka's historic importance as a major trading center for the region. Nagasaki City is a well-known tourist destination, noted for its historic setting and tragic wartime experience. Kyushu is also famous for its "onsen," or hot spring. Yufuin and Beppu in neighboring Oita Prefecture, as well as Kumamoto and Kagoshima, are popular destinations. Hiking is another popular activity in the region.

The Fukuoka Dome, Japan's largest retractable sports stadium, hosts international concerts, sports programs, and trade promotional events. The Daiei Hawks professional baseball team plays at the Dome. Fukuoka City is the center for the arts as well as shopping, Nagasaki hosts the Huis Ten Bosch Dutch theme park, Miyazaki has the world's largest indoor swimming complex, and Kitakyushu has the Space - World Amusement Park. All locations are accessible by train or car.

Entertainment

Fukuoka City hosts the spectacular annual Dontaku (May) and Yamakasa (July) festivals, which attract national attention. "Yatai" or outdoor food vendors, are also popular, serving a variety of local cuisine, including "Hakata ramen" noodles.

Current American films in English with Japanese subtitles attract large audiences. In April 1996, AMC opened a 13-theater complex in the new Canal City Hakata mall complex in downtown Fukuoka. Fukuoka is now a major stopping area for internationally known performers, since the opening of several large entertainment facilities. Jazz, country and western, western, and Japanese classical music concerts are popular in Fukuoka. Kumamoto hosts a major Country and Western music concert each October, "Coun-

try Gold," which attracts famous performers from the U.S. and Japan. In Fukuoka, there are also restaurants such as the Blue Note which feature live jazz and popular music. The November Sumo wrestling tournament also adds to Fukuoka's visibility and appeal.

Fukuoka has a wide range of excellent Japanese and Western restaurants. Although more expensive than those restaurants in the U.S., the quality is high.

Social Activities

Opportunities for meeting Japanese from all walks of life are virtually unlimited. Fukuoka's residents are noted in Japan as being friendly and hospitable to guests. Although growing, the foreign community is small, and a minimal knowledge of Japanese is essential.

Sapporo

Sapporo is a modern city of 1.8 million people and the capital of Hokkaido, the northernmost major island of Japan. The city is the governmental and commercial center of Hokkaido, which is the size of Austria and has a population a bit larger than that of Finland or Denmark (5.7 million).

Sapporo is renowned for its winter events and sports facilities. The city has hosted the Winter Olympics (1972), many other world-class skiing events, and holds the world's largest Snow Festival each year in February.

Within easy driving of the city are breathtaking volcanic lakes and gorges, white water rivers, mountains dressed with cedar, pine, birch, and aspen, and spectacular views of both the Pacific Ocean and the Sea of Japan.

Sapporo is located in a snow belt and has a "subarctic" climate. But, despite over 20 feet of snow each year, winter temperatures are moderate, seldom dropping below 20° at night and staying just below freezing during the day. Spring is short

but pleasant and summer is delightful, with temperatures in the 70s-15 to 20 degrees cooler than in Tokyo or Osaka.

The special attachment the people of Hokkaido have for Americans is unique. In the early 1870s when the Japanese Government began a crash program to develop Hokkaido, Japanese officials called on President Grant for advice. Grant responded by recommending his own Secretary of Agriculture, Horace Capron, as a candidate to organize a group of American and foreign experts to assist in the opening Hokkaido. After accepting the Japanese offer, Capron left his post in the U.S. and worked for the Government of Japan for 5 years as a senior advisor in charge of developing Hokkaido. The American educators, engineers, and agricultural experts who joined Capron are remembered fondly in Hokkaido even today; and are honored with statues and museums in and around Sapporo.

Utilities

The electric current in Sapporo is 100v, 50-cycle, AC. Except for appliances with synchronous motors, such as electric clocks, phonographs, and tape recorders, standard American electrical appliances run well. Cable and satellite television are available for a reasonable monthly fee.

Food

You can get most foods, including delicious Hokkaido crab and other seafood delicacies, on the open market. Department stores, supermarkets, and specialty food shops sell a variety of foodstuffs; however, most food prices in the local markets are considerably higher than they are in Washington, D.C.

Clothing

Bring an adequate supply of clothing. Though department stores carry a variety of clothing and shoes, sizes are limited, and prices are very high. Local tailors and dressmakers are good but extremely expensive. Fashion for men is fairly

conservative, i.e., dark suits for business.

In the long winters here, lined, knee-high snow boots, warm gloves, caps and warm winter clothing, including snow suits for children, are necessities. If you plan to ski, snowboard, or skate, bringing the necessary equipment from the U.S. could cut costs by more than 50%.

Supplies and Services

Sapporo has nearly every kind of specialty shop and repair facility. Barbers and beauticians are adequate. Drycleaning is available though somewhat more expensive than in the U.S. Local auto mechanics are competent, but parts for foreign-made cars must be specially ordered and are expensive.

Domestic Help

Live-in domestic help is almost impossible to find and very expensive. Hourly maid services are available. A cook and a maid staff the consul general's home.

Religious Activities

Sapporo has Catholic and Protestant churches and Baha'i and Islamic communities. Some services and activities are conducted in English. There is no synagogue, but a small group of Jewish residents gather to celebrate Passover and other observances.

Education

The Hokkaido International School is the only English-language school in Sapporo and offers courses from kindergarten through grade 12, with a student population of about 170 children. Though small, the school has improved considerably since moving into an impressive new building built with the aid of the Hokkaido Government in 1995. HIS is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. Recent graduates have been accepted by such universities as Cornell and the University of Virginia.

Sports

Hokkaido is a sports fan's paradise. In the winter one can ski, ice skate, and cross-country ski; in the summer one can play golf (very expensive compared to the U.S.) and tennis, hike, camp, boat, and swim (both in summer and in winter at indoor public pools near the Consulate General and at various resorts). Hunting for bear, deer, pheasant, duck, and rabbit is available. However, obtaining a hunting license is a difficult and complicated procedure.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Jozankei, a hot-spring resort, lies on the banks of a swiftly flowing stream in a beautiful valley, 17 miles southwest of Sapporo. Jozankei has many large hotels, some with Western-style accommodations. Noboribetsu hot springs is about 80 miles southeast of Sapporo. Its outstanding feature is a valley filled with sulfur pools known as the Valley of Hell.

The Ainu Village at Shiraoi, about 1 hour south of Noboribetsu, is one of the few places in Hokkaido where you can see an exhibition of Ainu customs and culture.

Lake Toya and Lake Shikotsu were formed by ancient volcanic eruptions. Both offer pleasant mountain scenery and opportunities for hiking and boating. They are 2-3 hours' drive from Sapporo. For a long weekend or holiday, Akan National Park in the eastern part of the island offers the famous lakes of Akan, Kutcharo, and Mashu as well as pleasant drives through beautiful mountain and forest scenery. Sounkyo Gorge, about a 5-hour drive from Sapporo, is also famous for its scenery.

Entertainment

Sapporo is a modern city with excellent restaurants, first-class hotels serving international cuisine, modern theaters featuring American movies in English with Japanese subtitles, a zoo, a municipal symphony orchestra, a modern art

museum, and well-stocked department stores.

Social Activities

Hokkaido has a small but growing American business community. There is an American missionary community and the number of American English teachers in Hokkaido is increasing. Aside from these groups, social activities among Americans are limited.

Social and recreational opportunities here for a foreigner not willing to plunge into the Japanese culture and language are much more limited than in cosmopolitan cities with larger foreign communities.

Only a limited number of Sapporo citizens can carry on a conversation in English, but many people are eager to befriend foreigners. A basic speaking knowledge of Japanese is essential in broadening friendships.

Nagasaki

Nagasaki, capital of the eponymous and westernmost prefecture of the Japanese archipelago, faces China across the China Sea. One of Japan's most prosperous commercial cities, it also is the site of early Christianity in the country. The Jesuit, St. Francis Xavier, arrived in Nagasaki in 1549 bearing Christianity.

Nagasaki was insignificant until 1571, when Portuguese traders first arrived, and thereafter became a port of call not only for Portuguese ships, but for Spanish and Dutch as well. The city was the only port of contact kept open to the outside world between the mid-17th and mid-19th centuries, the long interval when Japan enforced its isolationist policy.

Chinese temples and Western structures are among the many historical sites in Nagasaki. On Dejima (Deshima), an artificial island, is a scale model of the quarters where representatives of the Dutch East India Company once lived. In the

central city is the authentically reconstructed Urugami Cathedral, built by a French missionary with help from Japanese Christians—it was totally destroyed in the second atomic bombing of August 9, 1945, which leveled one-third of the city and killed an estimated 40,000 people; nearly as many more were critically injured. Peace Park and the Statue of Peace, at the core site of the bombing, are memorials to that devastation.

Nagasaki today is a center of shipbuilding, fishing, and coal mining industries, as well as the heart of a large agricultural area. It has grown considerably as a tourist attraction, and boasts Japan's first seaborne airport, built in 1975. The city was used as a setting for the novel by John Luther Long which later became the Puccini opera, *Madame Butterfly*.

The current population of Nagasaki is approximately 442,000.

OTHER CITIES

CHIBA, the seat of Chiba Prefecture, is situated on the eastern shore of Tokyo Bay. Once a poor fishing village, it is now a prosperous commercial city of 887,000 residents. Large-scale industry and the opening of major railway lines have contributed heavily toward the development of the city, which is now the 13th largest in Japan. Chiba dates to 1126; it evolved around a castle built by a local warlord but, when the castle burned two centuries later, the clan collapsed and the community was all but deserted. It was only after the Meiji Restoration of the mid-19th century that Chiba again began to achieve significance.

The city of **GIFU** is located 19 miles north of Nagoya in central Honshū. It lies on the edge of the Nobi Plain at the foot of the Japan Alps. Situated in a region that once had 516 earthquakes in one year, not many of this ancient city's old buildings survived the 1891 earthquake. The

fertile farmland on the Nobi Plain enables residents to grow rice and vegetables. Gifu is noted for its paper products which include fans, umbrellas, and lanterns. It also manufactures cutlery and textiles. Tourists in Gifu enjoy boating on the Nagara River in the evening to see the cormorant (aquatic birds) fishing. The use of tame cormorants to catch fish is an old technique called *ukai*. The population of Gifu is 407,000.

HAMAMATSU, with a current population of 582,000, is situated in southern Honshū, about 56 miles southeast of Nagoya and 145 miles southwest of Tokyo. Historically an old castle town, Hamamatsu today is an industrial city whose chief products include musical instruments, motorcycles, compact automobiles, tea, and textiles. Allied forces bombed the city in May and June 1945.

HIMEJI is located on Honshū Island, 50 miles west of Ōsaka. It is a commercial city whose old craft industries produce leather, toys, and dolls. Since World War II, Himeji has acquired new integrated iron and steel works, a large petrochemical complex, and heavy engineering plants. The city, whose population exceeds 453,000 is one of the many towns built by Japan's feudal lords. Japan's most spectacular castle is located here; it commands a view of the city from a hill. Completed in the early 17th century, it is called "Egret Castle" because of its resemblance to the white bird and has been the site of many Japanese samurai movies.

KAGOSHIMA is a seaport city situated in a well-protected harbor on the southern coast of Kyūshū. Historically important as a castle town, Kagoshima was the site where the first Christian missionary, St. Francis Xavier, landed in 1549. The city was bombarded by British warships in 1863, destroyed by fire in 1877, damaged by a volcano eruption in 1914, and severely bombed by Allied forces during World War II from June through August 1945. Today, Kagoshima is an important port,

the site of a naval yard, and since 1961, the home of a major Japanese rocket base. The center for the manufacture of Satsuma porcelain ware, Kagoshima also produces silk and cotton clothing, wood products, and tinware. There are two universities in Kagoshima; the city has a current population of 552,000.

KANAZAWA is situated near the coast of west-central Honshū, about 80 miles north of Gifu. A historic city, Kanazawa became an industrial and cultural headquarters after 1580. Its power deteriorated with the decline of feudal political units in 1871 and the growth of modern industry on the opposite coast of Honshū. Kanazawa is best known for manufacturing Kutani porcelain and Kaga silk. Recently added products include textiles and textile machinery. The present city, with a population of about 428,000, was built around the Maeda Castle, which was destroyed in 1881 by fire. Kanazawa is home to the country's renowned landscape garden, Kenrokuen. The sacred Hakusan Mountain of five peaks can be seen and easily reached from here.

KAWASAKI, with a population of 1.2 million, is one of the nation's 10 largest cities. Lying on the west coast of Tokyo Bay, it is a major industrial center surrounded by an extensive farming area. The city was severely damaged during World War II. Kawasaki is the site of a renowned temple called Kawasaki Daishi, and of an exhibit garden of typical Japanese folk houses—both spots are widely visited by tourists.

KITA-KYŪSHŪ is another city with more than one million residents. It was formed in 1963 by the amalgamation of the five northern Kyūshū cities in Fukuoka Prefecture. It is the center of the prefecture's production, and is one of the cities which has grown dramatically with Japan's development as a major industrial nation. Among Kita-kyūshū's many and diverse industries are shipbuilding; coal shipping; iron, steel, glass, and chemical factories; fishing; and the production of specialized textiles. A

well-known technical institute is located here. International School Kita-kyūshū, coeducational day school, was founded in 1990. Serving students pre-kindergarten through grade eight, the enrollment is 13. A U.S. curriculum is followed; both English and Japanese are used for instruction. The address is Yahata Higashi-ku Takami 2-chome Shinnittetsu Shijo Kaikan, Kita-kyūshū.

KUMAGAYA, with a population over 150,000, lies on the Ara River, about 40 miles northwest of Tokyo in central Japan. Many of its residents work in Tokyo even though Kumagaya is a commercially vibrant city. While silk reeling was the traditional industry, heavy industries have been established here today.

An important 17th-century castle town, **KUMAMOTO** today is a market center for the surrounding agricultural region. It is situated on the west coast of Kyūshū on an extensive plain near the Shira River. The city was founded in the 16th century at the site where a magnificent castle was built, and became a stronghold during feudal times. Although it was partially destroyed in 1877, the remains of the castle are still visited by tourists. Pilgrims are attracted to Kumamoto's Buddhist temple as well as the city's several shrines. Industries in the city include food processing, textiles, and chemicals. Kumamoto has two universities and a current population of 662,000.

KURASHIKI, with 417,000 residents, is located 10 miles west of Okayama—so close that the two cities blend into one population center. Kurashiki was a rice-trading center in the Edo period (1603–1867), and many of the warehouses used then for storage line the streets of the modern city. Textile manufacturing is the main industry today. Among Kurashiki's cultural facilities are Ohara Museum, with a fine collection of Western art; a folk-craft museum, built from old rice warehouses, and containing exhibits of pottery, woodwork, Japanese

papers, and rush mats; and archaeological and historical museums.

MIYAZAKI, with a population of 287,000, is located on the Hyuga Sea in southeast Kyūshū, 150 miles southeast of Fukuoka. The Oyodo River traverses the city, and the nearby volcano, Sakurajima, occasionally spews its ash. Inhabited for nearly 8,000 years, the city has managed to retain some of the elements from its past. There is virtually no heavy industry in Miyazaki; the resultant clean air, along with secluded parks, tree-lined boulevards, and an accessible riverfront have made the city a popular tourist and resort center. Miyazaki is the site of the great Shinto shrine—Miyazaki-jingu—dedicated to Japan's first emperor, Jimmu; the shrine also houses an archaeological museum. Ageless Japanese traditions may be found throughout the city. At the Miyazaki Cultural Center, the fine arts of calligraphy, koto music, tea preparation, and flower arrangement are taught by masters. Several summer festivals are held each year in Miyazaki. The city accessible by all forms of transportation. A runway expansion at Miyazaki Airport is expected to handle some diversions from the Tokyo and Ōsaka airports. A university was founded here in 1949.

Situated in west-central Honshū, the major seaport of **NIIGATA** lies on the estuary of the Shinano River, about 30 miles north of Nagaoka. Divided into two sections by the river, the city has an industrial side and a residential side which features shopping areas and Niigata University. Niigata was established by the Nagaoka clan as an outpost in 1616. It became the capital of Niigata Prefecture in 1870. The city has a population of over 500,000.

Located on the island of Honshū, **NISHINOMIYA** has a population of approximately 413,500. It is situated between Kōbe and Amagasaki on Ōsaka Bay. The city is known for its manufacture of saki, an alcoholic beverage of fermented rice usually served hot. Kōbe Women's College is located here.

OKAYAMA is a seaport city of 627,000 and capital of Okayama Prefecture on western Honshū. It developed from a *jokamachi*, or castle town, founded in 1573, and is now a market hub in an area that is devoted to large-scale mechanized farming. One of Japan's most beautiful parks, Okayama Korakuen, lies nearby on an island in the Asahikawa River. The park, and a popular youth festival held at the Saidaiji Temple in the city each February, are major attractions in Okayama.

SAKAI is a satellite city on Ōsaka Bay in west-central Honshū. It developed mainly after World War II, and now stands 14th on the list of Japan's large cities, with a population exceeding 800,000. It is a center of industrial importance, producing machinery, automobile parts, and chemicals. In the 16th century, Sakai was a leading port, or *minatomachi*.

SENDAI, the *Mori-no-miyako*, or city of trees, is located in Mayagi Prefecture of northern Honshū, about 180 miles north of Tokyo. It is a center for branch offices of many government agencies and major corporations. The largest city in the Tohoku district, it has a population over 1 million, and is the site of Tohoku University; several technical schools also are located here. The Japanese National Railways and other rail lines converge in the city. Sendai is known for Sendaihira silk, and also for the production of beautiful Sendai cabinets and other wood products. The famous Tanabata festival is held here in early August. Close to the city is a hot-spring resort called Aiku Spa.

UTSUNOMIYA is the capital of Tochigi Prefecture, situated about 60 miles north of Tokyo. Previously, it was called Ikebenogo; once the road leading to northeastern Japan was opened, it was also known as Otabashi Station. About 1059 it was named Utsunomiya. A processing center for the grain and tobacco grown in the region, Utsunomiya also manufactures knit goods, wood products, and paper. The ruins of

Utsunomiya Castle may be seen on the south side of the city. Utsunomiya has a population of over 425,000 and is home to Utsunomiya University.

Located in Kanagawa Prefecture, on Honshū Island, at the southwest end of Tokyo Bay, **YOKOSUKA** is about 20 miles south of Yokohama and 40 miles south of the capital. In 1868 the city became an important naval base. Its only major industry is shipbuilding. Yokosuka developed into a city by 1907 and slowly expanded into the nearby towns and villages. Japan's first modern lighthouse is located at Cape Kannon, which is east of the naval base. There are a few small fishing villages along the nearby coast. The city has a population of more than 450,000.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Japan, a country of islands, extends along the eastern or Pacific coast of Asia. The main islands, running from north to south, are Hokkaido, Honshu or the mainland Shikoku, Kyushu, and Okinawa, which is about 380 miles southwest of Kyushu. About 3,000 smaller islands are included in the archipelago. In total land area, Japan is slightly smaller than California.

About 71% of the country is mountainous, with a chain running through each of the main islands. Japan's highest mountain is world famous Mt. Fuji (12,385 feet). Since so little flat area exists, many hills and mountainsides are cultivated all the way to the top. Situated as it is in a volcanic zone along the Pacific deeps, frequent low intensity earth tremors and occasional volcanic activity are felt throughout the islands. Hot springs are numerous; some have been developed as resorts.

Temperature extremes are fewer than in the U.S. since no part of the interior is more than 100 miles from the coast. At the same time, because the islands run almost directly north-south, the climate varies. Sapporo, on the northern island, has warm summers and long, cold winters with heavy snowfall. Tokyo, Nagoya, Kyoto, Osaka, and Kobe, on the southern part of the largest island of Honshu, experience relatively mild winters with little or no snowfall and hot, humid summers. Fukuoka, on the island of Kyushu, has a climate similar to that of Washington, D.C. with mild winters and short summers. Okinawa is subtropical.

Spring, with its profusion of cherry blossoms and other flowering trees and shrubs, and autumn, with its gold and flaming red trees and lovely fall flowers, are the most pleasant seasons. The hot, humid summers are difficult in the cities, but the sandy beaches along the coast and the many fine mountain resorts provide pleasant relief. The rather mild and dry winters are not as severe as the U.S. East Coast; it rarely snows or rains in the Tokyo area at this time of year. The climate causes no more of a problem with mildew, mold, moths, mosquitoes, or other pests than is experienced in Washington, D.C.

Population

Japan's population, currently some 125 million, has experienced a phenomenal growth rate during the past 100 years as a result of scientific, industrial, and sociological changes. High sanitary and health standards produce a life expectancy exceeding that of the U.S.

The Japanese are a Mongoloid people, closely related to the major groups of East Asia. However, some evidence of a mixture with Malayan and Caucasoid strains is present. The latter is still represented in pure form by a very small group of Ainu in Hokkaido, the remains of the Caucasoid people who inhabited Japan in prehistoric times, and who perhaps formed a portion of a cir-

cumpolar culture extending across Siberia to European Russia.

The Japanese usually are described as group-oriented rather than individually oriented. Geography is the main reason for this group orientation. Many people confined in a small land area poorly endowed with natural resources traditionally work together for the good of the whole.

In premodern Japan the extended family or clan system provided security for the component families. Industrialization and urbanization broke up this type of family system, but the paternalistic tradition has continued through government social welfare agencies and, to a greater degree, through large companies that provide more fringe benefits than their Western counterparts.

The Japanese are always conscious of their uniqueness as a people. They are proud of their country, its great natural beauty, distinct culture, and the important role it plays in the modern world. Because the Japanese are polite and cautious in approaching social situations, they often impress foreigners as being shy and reserved, but beneath this they are always interested and curious to learn about foreign ideas and attitudes.

Japan's communication with the rest of the world, from commerce to the arts, has been hampered by a language barrier. Japanese is a difficult language with a complicated writing system. Relatively few non-Japanese are completely bilingual. Although English has been for many years the international language of Japan, and the study of English is compulsory in Japanese junior and senior high schools, the Japanese have as difficult a time with English as non-Japanese speakers do with Japanese. The average person can speak only a few words, and business representatives and government officials are constantly trying to improve their command of the language. Instruction in English conversation is in

great demand, and it is a common experience for an American to be stopped on the street by someone who just wants to practice a few sentences of English.

Japan is an urban society with only about 7% of the labor force engaged in agriculture. Many farmers supplement their income with part-time jobs in nearby towns and cities. About 80 million of the urban population are heavily concentrated on the Pacific shore of Honshu and in northern Kyushu. Metropolitan Tokyo with approximately 14 million, Osaka 2.6, Nagoya 2.1, Kyoto 1.5, Sapporo 1.6, Kobe 1.4, and Kitakyushu, Kawasaki, and Fukuoka with 1.2 million each account for part of this population. Japan faces the same problems that confront urban industrialized societies throughout the world: overcrowded cities, congested highways, air pollution, and rising juvenile delinquency.

Shintoism and Buddhism are Japan's two principal religions. Buddhism first came to Japan in the 6th century and for the next 10 centuries exerted profound influence on its intellectual, artistic, social, and political life. Although still important, it is a relatively inactive religious form today. Monasteries and temples, large and small, dot the landscape but usually play only subdued background role in the life of the community. Most funerals are conducted by Buddhist priests, and burial grounds attached to temples are used by both faiths.

Shintoism is founded on myths and legends emanating from the early animistic worship of natural phenomena. Since it was unconcerned with problems of afterlife that dominated Buddhist thought, and since Buddhism easily accommodated itself to local faiths, the two religions comfortably coexisted, and Shinto shrines and Buddhist monasteries often became administratively linked. Today, many Japanese are adherents of both faiths. From the 16th to the 19th century Shintoism flourished, eventually seeking unity under a symbolic imperial

rule. Adopted by the leaders of the Meiji restoration, it received state support and was cultivated as a spur to patriotic and nationalistic feelings. Following World War II, state support was discontinued and the Emperor disavowed divinity. Today, Shintoism plays a more peripheral role in the life of the Japanese people. The numerous shrines are visited regularly by a few believers and, if they are historically famous or known for natural beauty, by many sightseers. Many marriages are held in the shrines, and children are brought after birth and on certain anniversary dates; special shrine days are celebrated for specific occasions, and numerous festivals are held throughout the year. Many homes have "god shelves" where offerings can be made to Shinto deities.

Confucianism arrived with the first great wave of Chinese influence into Japan between the 6th and 9th centuries. Overshadowed by Buddhism, it survived as an organized philosophy into the late 19th century and remains today as an important strain in Japanese thought and values.

Christianity, first introduced into Japan in 1549, was virtually stamped out a century later; it was reintroduced in the late 1800s and has spread slowly. Today, it has 1.4 million adherents, which includes a high percentage of important persons in education and public affairs.

Beyond these three traditional religions, many Japanese today are turning to a great variety of popular religious movements normally lumped together under the name "new religions." These religions draw on the concept of Shinto, Buddhism, and folk superstition and have developed in part to meet the social needs of elements of the population. The officially recognized new religions number in the hundreds and total membership is reportedly in the tens of millions.

Public Institutions

Japan's parliamentary government constitutional monarchy-operates within the framework of a constitution that took effect on May 3, 1947. Sovereignty is vested in the Japanese people by constitutional definition, and the Emperor is the symbol of the state, "deriving his position from the will of the people with whom resides sovereign power."

Japan has universal adult suffrage with secret ballot for all elective offices, national and local. The government has an executive responsible to the legislature and an independent judiciary.

The seven major political parties represented in the National Diet are the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), the Clean Government Party (Komeito), the Liberal Party (LP), the Japan Communist Party (JCP), the Social Democratic Party (SDP), and the Conservative Party (CP).

Arts, Science, and Education

Japan's educational system is based on 6 years of elementary and 3 years of middle or junior high school. Schooling is compulsory and free. More than 97% of children finishing middle school go on for 3 years of upper or senior high school. Japan has over 1,174 universities, colleges, and junior colleges and over 3 million college students, making it second only to the U.S. in the proportion of its college-age population that are students. Nevertheless, the most prestigious Japanese universities can accept only a fraction of the applicants. About half of the Japanese university students study in the Tokyo area. Before senior high school and college, students must take extremely rigorous competitive entrance examinations. The most difficult college entrance examinations are for national universities like Tokyo and Kyoto.

Despite the difficulty of the written language, Japan has one of the world's highest literacy rates. It is a country of readers, ranking second only to the U.S. in book publishing. Japan's unique culture includes centuries-old graphic and performing arts.

Modern theater forms and modern graphic arts are very popular, and Japanese artists and designers are among the world's best. Institutions like Tokyo's National Theater continue to preserve and encourage traditional art forms. Flower arranging (ikebana), one of the unique cultural heritages, originated in the 1300s with the advent of the tea ceremony; today Japan has 3,000-4,000 ikebana schools with millions of followers. The tea ceremony (chanoyu), perfected in the 16th century, fascinates both participants and spectators by its simplicity and elegance, designed to create peace of mind in both the performer and the partaker. Kabuki, one of the most colorful forms of traditional Japanese entertainment, a bustling, exaggerated drama accompanied by music and song, and Noh, a form of Japanese court dance characterized by use of masks, are performed regularly in cities throughout Japan. Martial arts which include judo, karate, kendo, aikido, and Japanese long-bow archery draw on Zen philosophy and traditionally have as their objective the achievement of self-discipline and inner peace. Martial arts performances can be seen regularly in the leading cities.

Commerce and Industry

Japan's industrialized free market economy is the world's second largest, after the U.S. Together the two countries comprise over 30% of global output. Japan's economy provides the Japanese people with a high standard of living: per capita GDP in 1999 was \$24,075.

With only one-sixth of its land arable, Japan produces roughly half of the food required for its population. Food self-sufficiency rates continue

to fall, however, with the Agriculture Ministry predicting a rate of 40% by 2005. Fish is a staple of the Japanese diet, and Japan maintains one of the world's largest fishing fleets. It currently ranks third among the top fishing countries, accounting for almost 6% of global fishery production. Demand for imported food has increased yearly as Japanese dietary preferences change toward meat, bread, and dairy products. Japan imported over \$47 billion in foodstuffs in 1997.

Japan's natural resources can supply only a fraction of the raw materials needed by industry. For example, Japan imports more than 80% of its primary energy supply. Foreign trade is therefore vital; reliable sources of raw materials and stable export markets are essential to continued economic prosperity. With close government-industry cooperation, a strong work ethic, and a mastery of high technology, Japan's industries have risen to become household names and world leaders in the production of autos, electronics, and machinery.

The U.S. is Japan's leading trade partner; Japan is our third largest foreign market, and the largest for U.S. agricultural products. Japan's exports to the U.S. are primarily motor vehicles, machinery, and electronic products. The bulk of U.S. exports to Japan are agricultural products, raw materials, and high-technology products, such as aircraft and computers.

Transportation

Automobiles

A personally owned vehicle is not absolutely essential in view of the excellent public transportation systems in Tokyo and throughout most of Japan.

All vehicles must be registered with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. To obtain registration, you must provide proof of ownership (factory invoice or bill of sale) and a valid insurance policy. Third-party insurance is compulsory. Premiums for

third-party insurance differ by the age of owner and capacity of engine displacement and are currently ¥60,340 for age 26 with 1,500 cc-2,500 cc.

Many people purchase a used car for use while in Japan since these vehicles are in good supply and available at relatively reasonable prices. Traffic moves on the left and most cars are right-hand drive. Gasoline costs more than in the U.S.

Japanese streets and roads are generally congested with cars, trucks, buses, motorbikes, and bicycles. Japanese cars are small by American standards but are advantageous in the narrow streets and limited parking areas. Driving is complicated by the fact that many road signs are written in Japanese kanji, and most Tokyo streets are not numbered or marked at all. Maps are essential for getting around in the city. Rental cars are available, but the charges are exorbitant.

Apply for a Japanese driver's license issued by the Public Safety Commission. In order to have your U.S. driver's license converted to a Japanese driver's license, you must appear in person at the licensing office and submit official documents to prove that you had been in the US. for a minimum of three full months during the time your U.S. driver's license was effective.

The Japanese driving licensing office will check the issuance date and expiration date on your US. driver's license and also check the issuance date, embarkation/disembarkation stamp dates, date of entry permit on your passport and compare the two. They will accept your application if it reflects that you have been in the U.S. for 3 months anytime your US. driver's license was effective.

If your U.S. driver's license was renewed recently, and you were not physically present for 3 months in the US. before your initial arrival date to Japan, you will be required to submit an original document

issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles of the State where your license was issued that lists your previous driver's license records. The authorities will compare the DMV records with your passport entry/exit stamps and issuance date in an attempt to verify your physical presence in the U.S. for 3 months in total.

Necessary items to apply for a Japanese driver's license:

1. Japanese translation of your U.S. driver's license.
2. Diplomatic/official and tourist passport(s) or any official document that will certify that you have been in the U.S. for 3 months (e.g., expired passports, school records, letter from prior employer, copies of travel orders indicating a stateside tour.)
3. One photo (size must be 3 cm x 2.4 cm).

Yokohama: Most students, especially those bringing families to Yokohama, find it worthwhile to have a car for shopping trips and sightseeing on weekends. Others get by without a car, relying on travel by foot, bicycle, motorcycle, taxi, or the region's excellent public transportation network. Used cars are available fairly cheaply.

Roads are usually congested, and expressway tolls are high. Parking in downtown areas often costs around ¥500 per hour, although shopping centers usually discount parking for customers who spend over a certain amount. Bus lines offer frequent service to downtown Yokohama and to the nearest train stations. The rail network offers extensive and efficient, though not cheap, service from Yokohama throughout the Kanto area.

Sapporo: Reasonably priced used cars are available in Sapporo. Four-wheel drive is useful, particularly outside the city in winter. Since Japanese drive on the left, right-hand drive cars make passing and turning hazardous.

Okinawa: The limitations of public transportation make a car essential on Okinawa. A small car is appro-

priate for the many narrow and congested roads. Compared to elsewhere in Japan, cars here tend to be less costly to maintain, and probably easier to sell on departure. Cars deteriorate rapidly on Okinawa due to the humid climate and salt air, and regular steam cleaning and undercoating are advised. Spare parts for many foreign cars, including some of the more popular American models, are limited and expensive. Good used cars can be purchased from departing American personnel or from local used car dealers. Financing and insurance are available from American firms here. Insurance rates are considerably higher than in the U.S.

Public buses are a clean, safe and reliable, though expensive option. Taxis are numerous and less expensive than in Tokyo.

New cars are readily available but not recommended. Although Okinawa has a Ford dealer, repairs and spare parts for U.S.-made cars, including American-made Japanese models, are difficult to obtain. Reliable used Japanese cars can be purchased for about \$2,000-\$3,000, but may be expected to require substantial upkeep and repair expenditures during a 3-year tour. The high humidity, heavy with salt from the ocean, and blowing coral dust are hard on metal, and cars rust quickly.

Local

The public transportation systems of Japan's major cities are among the most modern in Asia and include excellent trains, extensive subway systems, and buses. All cities have an abundance of taxis. As in all heavily populated areas, transportation facilities are overtaxed, particularly during rush hours. Japan Railway (JR) electric trains link the major parts of Tokyo with outlying towns and cities, and the subway system crisscrossing Tokyo is the most inexpensive transportation in the city. Osaka has a JR loop line, and subway systems are also located in Yokohama, Nagoya, Osaka, Fukuoka, and Sapporo. Bus service links subway and

loop train lines in Tokyo and is the system of local transportation in cities and towns throughout Japan. Signs and directions in subway and railway stations in the major cities usually appear in English as well as Japanese, making subway and rail travel relatively simple for the non-Japanese-speaking traveler.

Cruising taxis are plentiful. Taxis are safe and clean, though not inexpensive. Most taxi drivers do not speak English, so have directions to your destination written in Japanese. Most hotels have these instructions at the front desk to assist their guests in returning to the hotel. Taxi doors are operated by the driver, opening and closing automatically. Taxis are metered; the charge in Tokyo is Y660 for the first 2 kilometers plus Y80 for each additional 274 meters. There are additional charges for slow movement in traffic and late-night service. Consumption tax is added to the total fare amount. It is not customary to tip taxi drivers.

Regional

Most of the country is served by the JR system. The Shinkansen (popularly known as the bullet train) is a familiar sight speeding across the Japanese countryside connecting Tokyo and many of the larger cities throughout Japan. These and other express and local trains combine to form a vast rail network that is heavily used. Sleeping, dining, and first-class (green) coaches are available on the main lines. Trains maintain strict schedules, and the personnel are polite and efficient. Porters or redcaps are available at all principal stations although they are extremely few in number. Their charges range from Y200 to Y300 per piece of baggage or more if the baggage is extremely heavy.

Most of the major international airlines and a number of steamship companies provide service to Japan. Domestic air travel is quite extensive. Several domestic airlines operate to all the major cities in Japan; airbus service has been instituted between Tokyo and several cities. The airport used for domestic travel

is Haneda, 23 kilometers from Tokyo. Rapid monorail or bus service is available from Haneda to downtown Tokyo locations, and taxis are plentiful. The taxi fare is around Y6,500.

The new Tokyo International Airport at Narita, about 77 kilometers from Tokyo, is used for all international flights (except those of China Airlines, the Republic of China national carrier that operates from Haneda). Surface transportation from Narita into the city is commonly via limousine bus directly to the Tokyo City Air Terminal (TCAT) or by taxi. Train service is also available, but its use is not recommended for the newcomer due to the complicated connections. Transit time by bus and taxi can be time consuming, at least 1-1/2 hours, often more, depending on traffic conditions on the heavily congested highways serving the airport from central Tokyo. The airport limousine bus fare is Y3,000, and taxi fare is approximately Y27,000, including toll charges.

Many express toll roads are excellent. Almost all roads are paved. The main roads are generally in good condition, the secondary roads are more inclined to be narrow and winding.

Communications

Telegraph and Telephone

To obtain the lowest possible rates, bring a telephone credit card from AT&T, MCI, or SPRINT. These carriers also provide International Long Distance service from any phone within Japan.

International telegrams can be sent from any Kokusai Denshin Denwa (KDD) office in any leading city, any local telegraph or telephone office, and most hotels.

Mail

Postal rates for ordinary letters addressed within Japan are Y80 and for ordinary postcards Y50. International postal rates to the U.S. for airmail letters are Y110 for

the first 25 grams; postcards Y70, aerogram Y90, and printed matter up to 20 grams Y80 plus Y40 for each additional 2 grams.

Radio & TV

The Far East Network (FEN) is an affiliate of the U.S. Armed Forces Radio Network. FEN broadcasts 24 hours daily in English with the latest news, music, and sports events (AM 810).

Japanese radio stations present a variety of classical and popular music on both AM and FM. Japanese FM radios operate on a lower frequency spectrum of 76 MHz to 90 MHz rather than the U.S. frequencies of 88 MHz to 108 MHz. It is impossible to convert a U.S. receiver for Japanese frequencies; so if you wish to receive most Japanese stations, you will need to buy a domestic receiver.

TV in Japan has reached the highest levels of technical sophistication. TV is broadcast in stereo, bilingual multiplex, high-definition, and direct broadcast satellite (DBS). Of the many channels available, two government non-commercial channels (NHK) broadcast high quality programs that include public service, sports, and music events. The program content of the commercial networks varies little from channel to channel with a large emphasis on entertainment, musicals, and quiz programs. They do broadcast in stereo.

Movies and U.S. TV series are often transmitted with a unique bilingual soundtrack. Several hours of bilingual programming, including live news broadcasts are transmitted daily.

Residents often have access to satellite TV companies, including "Direct TV" and "Perfect TV" as well as the Japanese broadcast stations.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

Five English-language daily newspapers are published in Tokyo—the Japan Times, the Daily Yomiuri, the Mainichi Daily News, the Asahi

Evening News, and the U.S. Army's Stars and Stripes. Nihon Keizai Shimbun, Japan's major financial daily, has a weekly English-language edition. Home delivery is available for all of these newspapers. The Asian Wall Street Journal, published in Hong Kong, is also available daily.

American magazines arrive from a few days to a month after publication. The most popular periodicals are available in Stars and Stripes bookstores, military exchanges, major hotels, or by subscription. Asian editions of Newsweek and Time are published in Tokyo and are promptly available by subscription or at major newsstands.

Large Japanese bookstores and bookstores in major hotels carry a wide selection of English-language books. Books also can be purchased at the Sanno Hotel.

Health & Medicine

Medical Facilities

Many English-speaking Japanese physicians, with U.S. post-graduate training, as well as Western doctors, maintain private practices in Tokyo. Local hospitals and clinics range from older facilities to very modern medical centers. Language continues to be a frustrating barrier in many facilities.

Completing the following "to do" list will make your transition to Japan easier:

- * Do not pack prescription medications in your check-in luggage. Hand carry your prescription medications.

- * Individuals enrolled in a preferred provider organization (PPO) or health maintenance organization (HMO) will find it difficult to use this coverage overseas. Individuals that are members of a PPO or HMO should consider changing insurance policies before arriving to Tokyo.

- * Bring a hot-steam humidifier(s) for dry winter weather.

- * Bring a dehumidifier(s) for the hot and humid summer weather.

- * Bring flashlights and emergency firstaid kit(s) for your home and car.

- * Enroll in a first aid and CPR course.

- * Visit your dentist for cleaning and dental check-up before arriving to Tokyo. Dental care in Tokyo is expensive.

Okinawa: The Adventist Medical Center provides an alternative for dental and medical care at Camp Lester. It is a modern, well-run facility staffed by American or American-trained missionary physicians and dentists from the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Full payment in yen at the time of service is expected.

Osaka-Kobe: There are excellent medical resources in Osaka-Kobe. Physical exams can be done at Kobe Kaisei Hospital. Serious medical problems are referred to appropriate medical specialists.

Sapporo: Sapporo has two university hospitals for emergency and routine care.

Community Health

General health conditions in Japan are similar to those in the U.S. The city water supply, in all major cities, is potable. Sewage and garbage disposal facilities are adequate. The country has no special pest or vermin problems.

Air pollution has been a problem in Tokyo over the years, but an active anti-pollution program has reduced the problem significantly. Nevertheless, the summer heat and humidity will exacerbate respiratory ailments such as asthma.

In recent years, tuberculosis (TB) has been on a sharp increase in Japan. Employees and eligible family members are encouraged to have annual TB skin testing (PPD).

Preventive Measures

Endemic diseases are not prevalent and no particular preventive measures need be taken beyond updating routine immunizations. The water is not fluoridated.

No immunizations are required to enter Japan.

OKINAWA

Okinawa is the largest of the Ryukyu Islands, a chain that extends from Kyushu to Taiwan. Okinawa Prefecture (which includes the southern part of the archipelago) derives its name from the main island. Naha, the prefectural capital, is also located on the main island. The island of Okinawa is 70 miles long and on average 7 miles wide. It has over 1 million inhabitants, including about 50,000 U.S. military personnel and their families. Another 200,000 people live on the outlying islands. Naha is 800 miles southwest of Tokyo, 350 miles northeast of Taipei, and 750 miles north of Manila.

Although it is part of Japan, Okinawa has a distinct history and identity. It was once an independent kingdom, with a language and culture of its own, and paid tribute to the Chinese emperors. Even today, it differs from mainland Japan as climate, diet, customs, and other aspects of life shade into those of Southeast Asia. Okinawa officially became a part of Japan in the 1870s, and many of the Japanese emigrants to Hawaii and South America at the turn of the century actually came from Okinawa.

The island was the scene of the last major U.S.-Japanese battle of the Second World War, a battle in which about one-third of the Okinawan population was killed. From 1945 to 1972, Okinawa was under U.S. administration. The war and occupation left the Okinawan people with strong reservations about the use of military force. It is a source of friction that this small, crowded island is home to a large concentra-

tion of U.S. and-to a much lesser extent-Japan Self Defense Forces.

Climate

Okinawa's climate resembles that found along the South Carolina coast. Winters are comfortable but cool at night and at the shore. Spring and fall are delightful. Summers are long, hot, and humid. Okinawa often experiences typhoons or strong tropical storms in the fall and occasionally heavy weather in the spring. Accordingly, most buildings are low and built of concrete.

Whenever annual rainfall is less than the normal 80 inches, water rationing is necessary. As of late 2000, there had been no rationing since a 21-day period in the winter of 1994.

Okinawa has a full complement of semitropical insects and reptiles, including the habu, a very aggressive, poisonous species of snake. Although Okinawan field workers and small animals are occasional snakebite victims, no consular personnel have experienced problems with snakes in recent memory. Prudence, however, especially at night, is the watchword; 200 to 250 snakebites are reported annually. Ants, spiders, fleas, ticks, rodents, and other small pests have from time to time caused minor problems. Small lizards called geckos are a standard part of the exterior and interior landscapes.

History

Ryukyuan history has had its legendary heroes, fine artists and patrons of the arts, sages, diplomats, philosophers, the rise and fall of dynasties, and alternating periods of foreign domination and vigorous independence. Written records, beginning about A.D. 600, mention several unsuccessful attempts by China and Japan in the seventh century to require tribute and submission from this diminutive Oriental state.

The first significant date in Ryukyuan history is 1187, when Shunten, the son of a Japanese hero and an Okinawan princess, established himself as king of Okinawa. Out of respect for his legendary father, Shunten gave Japan titular jurisdiction over the islands, thus providing a basis for later Japanese claims to the Ryukyus. Under the dynasty of Eiso, who reigned from 1260 to 1299, the unified kingdom made rapid strides in cultural development, achieved economic order, and enjoyed internal peace. Tradition also ascribes to his reign the introduction of Buddhism into Okinawa.

During the first half of the 14th century, the kingdom collapsed and the island reverted to feudalism. In 1372, King Satto, usurper of the Shuri throne, reunified the kingdom, acknowledged the suzerainty of the Ming dynasty, and brought in Chinese traders and teachers. Under his rule, Ryukyus became enterprising, prosperous sea traders, voyaging as far as Korea and the Indies. During this period, the people also became students and imitators of Chinese art, philosophy, and craft.

Okinawa's "golden age" began in 1477 with the reign of King Sho-shin, whose successors carried on the grand tradition until 1609, when the good fortune came to an abrupt, disastrous end. Japan, having suffered defeat in Korea, invaded the defenseless island as punishment for Okinawa's refusal to aid the *shogun*. During the next few years, King Shonei was held hostage while the Japanese exploited the island and monopolized the trade with China. In 1611, Shonei was permitted to return to Okinawa, but only after acknowledging the suzerainty of the Lord of Satsuma and pledging that the Ryukyus would always remain a dependency of Japan.

The next two centuries marked a continuous struggle for economic survival. The Satsuma clan dominated Okinawa, controlling its foreign affairs, many aspects of its

internal administration, and its overseas trade, particularly trade with China. The people were left to make their living from the meager resources of the countryside. By chance, the sweet potato was introduced in 1606, and sugarcane in 1623. These became major crops and alleviated, to some degree, the Okinawans' struggle for survival in that era.

In 1853, Americans arrived in Naha harbor under the command of Commodore Matthew C. Perry, whose objective was to establish a base in the Ryukyus in order to open Japan to foreign trade and commerce. In 1854, Perry proposed that the U.S. assume territorial jurisdiction over Okinawa to prevent other nations from seizing it, and to provide a continuing base for American shipping in the event negotiations with Japan failed. His proposal was rejected by Washington. Perry successfully carried out his mission to Japan in March 1854, and his interest in the Ryukyus rapidly waned. However, before his departure for the U.S., he sought to preserve American interests in Naha against outside intrusion. He drafted a covenant of friendship between Okinawa and America, and the compact was signed on July 11, 1854.

Japan began to exert greater control over the Ryukyus and, in March 1879, the king abdicated. Tokyo proclaimed Okinawa a prefecture and appointed a governor and other officials to administer the islands.

Okinawa remained a prefecture of Japan, eventually with elected representatives in the Japanese national Diet, until shortly before the end of World War II in 1945. U.S. military forces invaded the island on April 1 of that year. In the Battle of Okinawa, which lasted almost three months, American casualties totalled 12,000 dead and 35,000 wounded. Japanese losses approached 100,000. A high percentage of the Okinawan civilian population lost their lives, and the Battle of Okinawa has remained a major determinant of Okinawan attitudes towards the presence of

either U.S. military forces or the Japanese Self-Defense Forces on Okinawa.

The U.S. administered the Ryukyus (except for the Amami Oshima Islands, which were returned to Japan in 1953) under the provisions of the Treaty of Peace with Japan until May 15, 1972; America then returned the administration of the islands to Japan in what is referred to as the Okinawa Reversion. The island reverted to its former status as a prefecture of Japan, and the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty and Status of Forces Agreement and Japanese national laws became applicable to Okinawa.

Public Institutions

As a Japanese prefecture, Okinawa elects a governor and legislative assembly every 4 years. Local branches of conservative and reformist political parties vie for power, with the electorate divided roughly between the two broad persuasions. Anti-base sentiments and desires for base reductions are widespread among the Okinawan people, but anti-Americanism is very rare. Individual Americans rarely encounter expressions of hostility.

Okinawa receives the largest part of its income from the Japanese central government as transfer payments; tourism contributes about 12%; and direct, military-related spending accounts for about 6% of prefectural income. The U.S. military presence is less important to Okinawa's prosperity than it once was, and some Okinawans argue that in fact it hinders the island's development prospects.

The conduct and stationing of U.S. military personnel on Okinawa are subject to the US. Japan Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). All four services are represented. These forces assist in the defense of Japan according to the terms of the Mutual Security Treaty and have regional responsibilities that take them throughout the western

Pacific area on exercises and training missions.

U.S. Military

American life on Okinawa is heavily influenced by the presence of 50,000 U.S. military personnel and their families. The military bases offer a full range of American-style conveniences, shopping, education, and leisure activities. Some neighborhoods just outside the larger bases resemble similar communities in the U.S., with shops, restaurants, car lots, and bars catering to service members.

Although many Americans make an effort to experience Okinawan culture, most focus the vast majority of their activities on base and within the American community. This is partly attributable to the fact that, despite many years of association with Americans, relatively few Okinawans can converse easily in English. The decline of the dollar against the yen has also made it more expensive to venture off base for shopping or entertainment. At the same time, few Americans-most of them on short assignments-acquire a working competence in Japanese.

The U.S. Navy operates a hospital, and the Air Force a clinic, but the cost for civilians for nearly all forms of treatment is higher than at local hospitals. Off-base, only one hospital-Adventist Medical Center-has an English-speaking medical staff. For dental care, the only reasonable option is at an off-base clinic, such as Adventist's, because civilians are a low priority at military facilities and prices are far higher than off base.

Utilities

Electricity on Okinawa is 100 volt, 60 cycles, with American standard wiring. American appliances such as fans, microwaves, radios, lamps, TVs and VCRs usually operate without problem.

Although some TV programs on Japanese stations are bilingual, a U.S. bilingual set will not work. A special FM receiver can be pur-

chased locally for about \$100. Locally available rental videotapes are VHS. Telephone calls to the U.S. are relatively inexpensive, but internet service is somewhat costlier than in other countries since local calls are charged by the minute. During water shortages, water is rationed, and the tap water is not potable.

Food

Dairy products such as milk, cottage cheese, and sour cream are ultra-pasteurized for extended shelf life but still sometimes spoil prior to their expiration date. Japanese grocery stores offer a better selection of high-quality produce but at much higher prices. There is no need to import anything except perhaps ethnic or specialty cooking ingredients and spices. American and other wines and liquors are available.

Clothing

Bring clothing suitable for the Carolinas, including warm jackets. Clothes can be purchased at the exchange (akin to Walmart or Sears in selection, but with slightly higher prices), at local shops catering to foreigners (where prices are very high), or through catalog mail orders. Bring special sizes or brand names, or plan to shop by mail. Japanese adult clothing is expensive and comes only in small sizes. Dry-cleaning and laundry service is available on the military bases through Japanese concessions, so prices are the same as at off-base facilities.

Men: Normal US. leisure clothing is fine, bearing in mind that Japanese tend to dress conservatively.

Women: Cotton and other lightweight dresses and accessories are suitable for summer wear. Afternoon and evening wear is similar to that worn in the U.S., though depending on the occasion, more variety and less formality is seen. Scarves, jackets, and wraps are practical during the cool months. Lightweight wool suits and dresses are worn, as well as coats, jackets, and sweaters.

Children: Children dress as they would in the U.S. As with adults, shopping for children's clothing is best accomplished through local stores, and mail order. The supplies available on the island are adequate, but the range of choice in both style and price is often limited. Kids have the most luck in Japanese department stores, although prices are higher than in the U.S.

Religious Activities

Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Orthodox, and Muslim services are offered on the military bases. Protestant services offered off-base in English include Episcopalian, Lutheran, Baptist, Evangelical, and other denominations. There are a number of Catholic churches off-base, but not all offer masses in English.

Education

Several English-language school choices are available for children. The Department of Defense operates two senior high schools, two middle schools, and several elementary schools, offering a standard kindergarten through grade 12 American public school curriculum, athletic program, and after school activities, as well as a range of special education facilities.

The Okinawa Christian School is U.S. accredited and Protestant affiliated, and offers a kindergarten through grade 12 curriculum with American teachers and texts. It functions as the de facto international school here for students who do not have access to DOD schools, but want an English-language education; nearly half of the students come from non-Christian homes. The school is located in Yomitan village, a fair distance from the Consulate General residential areas; busing is available.

New Life Academy, which is not U.S. accredited, offers a kindergarten through grade 6 academic curriculum with a Christian focus. It is located in Okinawa City near Kadena Air Base.

Several Montessori pre-schools and kindergartens for children age 2-6 have been used by recent employees. All of the military bases have day care facilities for younger children, but waiting lists are long and military dependents are given preference. Some off-base care facilities include teaching components.

Special Educational Opportunities

The following universities offer undergraduate and graduate degrees on Okinawa through military base education offices:

* Central Texas College: Associate of Applied Science (business management, child development, computer technology, legal assistant, other)

* University of Maryland: Associate of Arts (accounting, Japanese studies, management, other); Bachelor of Arts (Asian studies, business management, English, history, psychology, sociology, other); Master of Education (counseling and personnel services); teaching certification (secondary teaching)

* Michigan State University: Master of Science (community service)

* University of Oklahoma: Master of Arts (economics); Master of Human Relations; Master of Public Administration

* Troy State University: Master of Science (educational leadership, management).

Sports

Okinawa offers a variety of excellent facilities for anyone interested in taking up or playing a personal sport. Okinawan bullfighting (bloodless, between two bulls), Japanese professional baseball games during spring training, and marathon running are options. There is an active Hash House Harriers organization, with several runs/walks weekly.

The military bases offer a selection of youth activities: Cub/Boy Scouts, Brownie/Girl Scouts, soccer, peewee

basketball, Little League baseball or t-ball, touch football, dance, gymnastics, cheerleading, etc.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Although many of the Okinawan beaches consist of ground coral mixed with sand, they are still one of the main attractions of a tour here. The better beaches on Okinawa charge an admission fee, but the military beaches are free. Wonderful islands just an hour away and accessible by ferry boats are great for snorkeling and diving. The northern half of Okinawa is sparsely populated and features a beautiful coastline of mountains and coral reefs. Unfortunately, all historical sites with the exception of ancient castle ruins were leveled in the 1945 battle. Shuri Castle, home of the most recent Okinawan monarch, has been rebuilt and is a major tourist attraction, as are other, older castle ruins. A large botanical garden and many well-maintained parks make Okinawa a family-friendly place.

Okinawa is a small, crowded island far from the mainland, so island fever can be a serious problem, especially given the prohibitively high cost of traveling off island. Northwest Airlines operates a ticketing office on Okinawa, but connections must be made in Tokyo or Osaka.

Entertainment

Japanese movie theaters show recent foreign films in the original language with Japanese subtitles, but admission is quite expensive. Video rental shops offer wide selections. A military TV station with standard U.S. programming, three Japanese TV commercial stations, and one Japanese public TV station, may be picked up off-site with roof antennas. The military also operates AM and FM radio stations. Numerous cable TV packages are available but more expensive than such services in the U.S.

Other eating establishments are found off-base at higher prices and include numerous steak houses,

Mexican, Korean, Chinese, Indian, Thai, Italian, French, Argentine, pizza, fast food, and Japanese restaurants. Prices are slightly lower than in Tokyo for comparable meals. Bars and discos abound,

though some refuse to cater to non-Japanese. American musical groups sometimes visit Okinawa, but these activities receive limited English-language publicity. Several large and impressive concert halls offer cultural events throughout the year.

Social Activities

The 50,000 military personnel and family members on Okinawa focus most of their activities on the bases. Contacts with most Americans, DOD personnel and others come from work, church, or through children's school activities. There is a small expatriate community and international women's clubs where English is spoken are active. Other international contacts are more difficult, though not impossible, without Japanese language ability.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs & Duties

Northwest and United Airlines offer several flights daily from the U.S. to Tokyo. American, Delta, and Continental Airlines also provide service. Flight time varies from 9 to 14 hours, depending on the route.

All international flights (except China Airlines, which operates between Japan and Taiwan out of Haneda) arrive and depart from the Tokyo International Airport at Narita. American airlines, Northwest and United are served at terminal 1. Continental Airlines and Delta Air Lines are served at Terminal 2. Clearance at Customs, Immigration, and Quarantine (CIQ) is fast and courteous.

Public transportation via airport limousine bus is recommended; it can be taken to a number of downtown hotels, including the Okura

and ANA. Train routing is complicated and taxi fares are prohibitive. Person using public transportation facilities into Tokyo are encouraged to limit accompanying baggage to two pieces plus one carry-on in view of limited baggage space available on the carriers.

Travelers arriving from the U.S. need no special immunizations. Those arriving directly from other areas of the world must make certain they have appropriate inoculations to enter Japan.

A valid passport and an onward/return ticket are required. A visa is not required for tourist/business stays up to 90 days. For information about the Japanese visa waiver for tourists, Japan's strict rules on work visas, special visas to take depositions, and other visa issues, travelers should consult the Consular Section of the Embassy of Japan at 2520 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008, tel. (202) 238-6700, or the nearest Japanese consulate. In the United States, there are Japanese consulates in the following cities: Agana (Guam), Anchorage, Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Denver, Detroit, Honolulu, Houston, Kansas City, Los Angeles, Miami, New Orleans, New York, Portland (Oregon), Saipan (Northern Marianas), San Francisco and Seattle. Additional information is available via the Internet on the Embassy of Japan home page at <http://www.embjapan.org/>.

U.S. citizens transiting Japan should ensure that their passports and visas are up to date before leaving the United States. Many Asian countries deny entry to travelers whose passports are valid for less than six months. It is not usually possible to obtain a new U.S. passport and foreign visa during a brief stopover while transiting Japan. Airlines in Japan will deny boarding to Americans who seek to transit Japan without the required travel documents for their final destinations in Asia.

It is illegal to bring into Japan some over-the-counter medicines com-

monly used in the United States, including inhalers and some allergy and sinus medications. Japanese customs officials have detained travelers carrying prohibited items, sometimes for several weeks. Some U.S. prescription medications cannot be imported into Japan, even when accompanied by a customs declaration and a copy of the prescription. Japanese physicians can often prescribe similar, but not identical, substitutes. Lists of Japanese physicians are available from the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo through its web site, from U.S. consulates in Japan, and from the Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs, Office of American Citizens Services. Persons traveling to Japan carrying prescription medication that must be taken daily should consult the Japanese Embassy in the United States before leaving the U.S. to confirm whether they will be allowed to bring the particular medication into Japan. Japanese customs officials do not make on-the-spot "humanitarian" exceptions for medicines that are prohibited entry into Japan.

U.S. citizens resident in or visiting Japan are encouraged to register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo or one of the five U.S. Consulates in Japan, where they may also obtain updated information on travel and security within Japan. Registration forms are available via the home pages or by fax from the U.S. Embassy or one of the U.S. Consulates. Online registration is available for the areas served by the Embassy and our Consulate in Naha, Okinawa through the respective web sites. Travelers and residents can also sign up for an e-mail Community Security Update newsletter through the Embassy web site at <http://www.tokyoacs.com>. Alien registration formalities required under Japanese immigration law are separate from U.S. citizen registration, which is voluntary but allows U.S. consular officials to better assist American citizens in distress. Registration information is protected by the Privacy Act.

The U.S. Embassy in Tokyo is located at 1-10-5 Akasaka, Minato-ku, Tokyo 107-8420 Japan; telephone 81-3-3224-5000; fax 81-3-3224-5856. Recorded visa information for non-U.S. citizens is available at the following 24-hour toll phone number: 0990-526-160. The U.S. Embassy in Tokyo's web site is <http://www.tokyoacs.com>. Please see also the U.S. Commercial Service in Japan's web site at <http://www.csjapan.doc.gov>.

The U.S. Consulate General in Osaka-Kobe is located at 2-11-5 Nishitenma, Kita-ku, Osaka 530-8543; telephone 81-6-6315-5900; fax 81-6-6315-5914. Recorded information for U.S. citizens concerning U.S. passports, notarials and other American citizens services is available 24 hours at 81-6-6315-5900. Recorded visa information for non-U.S. citizens is available at the following 24-hour toll phone number: 0990-526-160. Its web site is <http://synapse.senri-i.or.jp/amcon/>.

The U.S. Consulate General in Naha is located at 2564 Nishihara, Urasoe, Okinawa 901-2101; telephone 81-98-876-4211; fax 81-98-876-4243. Its web site is <http://www.congennaha.org>.

The U.S. Consulate General in Sapporo is located at Kita 1-Jo Nishi 28-chome, Chuo-ku, Sapporo 064-0821; telephone 81-11-641-1115, fax 81-11-643-1283. Its web site is <http://usembassy.state.gov/sapporo/>.

The U.S. Consulate in Fukuoka is located at 2-5-26 Ohori, Chuo-ku, Fukuoka 810-0052; telephone 81-92-751-9331; fax 81-92-713-9222. Its web site is <http://usembassy.state.gov/fukuoka/>.

The U.S. Consulate in Nagoya is located at the Nishiki SIS Building, 6th Floor, 3-10-33 Nishiki, Naka-ku, Nagoya 460-0003; telephone 81-52-203-4011; fax 81-52-201-4612. The U.S. Consulate in Nagoya offers only limited emergency consular services for U.S. citizens. The U.S. Consulate General in Osaka-Kobe handles all routine matters. A consular officer from the U.S. Consulate

General in Osaka-Kobe visits the U.S. Consulate in Nagoya on the second Wednesday of every month. During those visits the consular officer provides consular services to U.S. citizens by appointment. To make an appointment for consular services in Nagoya, please contact the U.S. Consulate in Nagoya at the number listed above. The U.S. Consulate in Nagoya's web site is <http://usembassy.state.gov/nagoya>

Pets

All dogs and cats imported into Japan are subject to a minimum quarantine of 14 days to a maximum of 180 days at the Animal Quarantine Facility of the arrival airport (Shin-Chitose, Narita, Haneda, Kansai, Fukuoka, Kagoshima, Naha airports).

Upon arrival, you must present two types of documents to the Animal Quarantine Office at the airport: 1. Health Certificate issued or endorsed by the government agency, indicating that your pet is rabies- or leptospirosis-free. 2. Rabies Vaccination Certificate, including the date, type and validity of the vaccination. The vaccination must be administered over 30 days prior to entry into Japan and still be within the valid period. You will also need to fill in an import quarantine application form at the Animal Quarantine Office.

When your pet is not hand carried, the importers need to notify the Animal Quarantine Services in charge of the importing airport from 70 to 40 days prior to the arrival. Advance information about the pet should include the following: species of animal, total number, sex, age, weight and country of origin, estimated date of arrival, name and address of consignee and consignor, date and port of embarkation, flight information, and any remarks you would like to put for their information.

The owner of the dog/cat is not required to be present in order to apply for quarantine inspection. Such application may be made by proxy. The Quarantine Service

charges a detention fee for pets, which includes boarding, food and care while in quarantine, at a rate of around Y2,000-Y2,500 per day for a cat and Y3,000-Y3,500 for a dog, depending on the size. In relation to your pet import, other costs such as transportation fee to kennel custom clearances and import tax will be involved.

Importing pets from countries other than the U.S. may have different requirements. Please contact the Animal Quarantine Office at Narita at 81-476-32-6664 or <http://www.animal-quarantine-service.go.jp>.

Firearms and Ammunition

Local law prohibits the purchase and/or importation of personally owned firearms.

Currency, Banking, and Weights and Measures

The unit of currency in Japan is the yen. Bills are in denominations of Y10,000, Y1,000. Coins are Y500, Y100, Y50, Y10 and Y1. Japanese currency floats on international markets so exchange rates can vary dramatically. In calendar year 2000, the exchange rate has averaged about Y107 to the U.S. dollar.

The use of credit cards is not widespread, particularly outside major cities. While there are ATMs in Japan, most are not open 24 hours a day or do not accept a U.S.-based card.

Japan uses the metric system of weights and measures.

Disaster Preparedness

Japan is faced with the ever-present danger of deadly earthquakes and typhoons. Japan is one of the most seismically-active locations in the world; minor tremors are felt regularly throughout the islands. While responsibility for caring for disaster victims, including foreigners, rests with the Japanese authorities, one of the first things a traveler should do upon arriving in Japan is to learn about earthquake and disaster preparedness from hotel or local government officials. Additional details

on self-preparedness are available via the Internet on Embassy Tokyo's web site at <http://www.tokyoacs.com>

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan. 1	New Year's Day
Jan. (2nd Mon)	Coming of Age Day (Adults Day)*
Feb. 3	Beginning of Spring
Feb. 5	Martyr Day
Feb. 11	National Foundation Day
Feb. 14	Valentine's Day
Mar. 3	Doll's Festival (Girl's Festival)
Mar. 14	White Day
Mar. 21	Vernal Equinox
Apr. 29	Green Day
May 1	May Day
May 3	Constitution Day
May 5	Children's Day (Boy's Festival)
July 7	Star Festival
July 20	Ocean Day
July/Aug.	Obon (Commerates deceased ancestors)
Sept. 16	Respect for the Aged Day
Sept. 21/22	Autumnal Equinox
Oct. (2nd Mon)	Sports Day
Nov. 3	Culture Day
Nov. 23	Labor Thanksgiving Day
Dec. 23	Emperor's Birthday
Dec. 25	Christmas

*variable

RECOMMENDED READING

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Seidensticker, Edward. *Low City, High City. Tokyo From Edo to the Earthquake: How the Shogun's Ancient Capital Became a Great Modern City, 1867-1923*. New York: Knopf, 1983.

Shiraishi, Takashi. *Japan's Trade Policies 1945 to the Present Day*.

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KAZAKSTAN

Republic of Kazakstan

Major City:

Almaty

Other Cities:

Astana, Chimkent, Karaganda, Pavlodar, Semipalatinsk

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated June 1996. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

The Republic of **KAZAKSTAN** celebrated its tenth anniversary of independence in 2001. Kazakstan is the ninth largest country in the world, but has a relatively small population of 15 million. In 2000, the Government of Kazakstan completed its move to the new capital Astana. The U.S. Embassy is still located in Almaty, which remains the country's largest city, business center and transportation hub. Many Americans also travel to Atyrau and

Aktau, cities in the heart of Kazakstan's oil producing region on the Caspian Sea

As in several other former Soviet republics, ethnic conflict has erupted into violence. In Kazakstan, the conflict is between the Kazakhs and Russians. The Kazakhs represent 53% of the population; Russians 30%.

MAJOR CITY

Almaty

Almaty (Formerly Alma-Ata) was the capital of Kazakstan from 1929 to 2000. It is the largest city with over 1.3 million residents. Almaty (apple place) is located just north of the Trans-Alay Alatau Mountains, near the border with Kyrgyzstan. The city is situated at an altitude of 2,300–3,000 feet above sea level.

Modern Almaty was founded by the Russians in 1854 and was settled by a variety of ethnic groups, but mainly Russians and Ukrainians.

In the 1930s, the population increased dramatically after the construction of the Turkish-Siberian Railroad. Industrial development followed and the capital is now a major industrial center.

Education

The Almaty International School is a private, coeducational institution for children from preschool to grade eight. The University of Nebraska provides correspondence courses for grades nine through twelve. The school's curriculum is similar to U.S. schools.

Recreation and Entertainment

The mountainous area in which Almaty is located offers much of interest to the tourist. Chalets on the mountain slopes may be rented. Mountaineering, skiing, and winter sports are available. In the mountains, 12 miles from Almaty, is the Medeo Winter Sports Complex, where many skating records have been set.

Visits to other areas of Kazakstan should be made by air; the distances are great. Lake Balkhash is a 45-



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Building in Almaty, Kazakhstan

minute flight from Almaty. Part freshwater, part seawater, the lake is 400 miles long. Near Karaganda is Baykonur, which was the site of a Soviet space center. Space flights, with cosmonauts aboard, were launched from here.

Almaty is a pretty city with well-thought out urban planning. Trees line the wide streets and there are many parks for the residents to enjoy. The city's natural beauty is enhanced by the nearby mountain range. Built in 1907, the former Russian Orthodox Cathedral is the only historical building of note. Made of wood, it is the second highest such building in the world.

Kazakhstan's academic and cultural life is centered in Almaty. Located here are 15 institutions of higher learning, including Kazakh State University, with 13,000 students, and many research organizations. Several museums have been established, including the Kasteyev Kazakh State Art Museum containing 20,000 exhibits and a library of 30,000 volumes, and the Central State Museum of Kazakhstan, with 90,000 exhibits. The State Public Library, founded in 1931, has almost 3.5 million volumes in its collection. The city also has a botanical garden.

Cultural performances are offered by the Abay Opera and Ballet Theatre, Avez Drama Theatre, Lermontov Russian Drama Theatre, and the Uighur and Korean Theatre of Music and Drama. Reflecting the ethnic diversity of Almaty, performances are given in several languages.

OTHER CITIES

With a population of 313,000 (1999 est.), **ASTANA** became the capital of Kazakhstan in 1997. Officially, the move of the government from Almaty to Astana was due to Almaty's susceptibility to earthquakes and its proximity to the Chinese border. However, the government also hopes that relocation of the capital will both boost the economy in the northern regions and ease ethnic divisions between the predominantly Russian north and the Kazakh south.

Though much work is yet to be done in building the city as a more prosperous capital, Astana is set to become the most important cultural and scientific center of Kazakhstan. The L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian University and Akmola State Medical Academy are located in Astana, as

is the Kazakh Scientific-Research Institute of Grain and Agricultural Products. In the past few years, several major hotels have been built and the city now offers a modern trade center; Zhastar, a sports and entertainment complex; Kinderdorf, a children's park; two drama theatres; and a branch of the Union of Writers and Artists of Kazakhstan. A memorial to the famous Russian poet A.S. Pushkin is also located in Astana and construction of a national museum and library is already underway.

The surrounding Central Region offers a variety of sight-seeing excursions. Lake Balkash, is one of the largest lakes in the world and is half saltwater, half freshwater. The Bayan-Aul National Park has rock drawings, stone sculptures, and hiking opportunities around clean, sparkling lakes.

CHIMKENT (also spelled Cimkent) is located in southern Kazakhstan by the Turkestan-Siberian Railroad line, approximately 75 miles north of Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Established in the 12th century, Chimkent is now a major industrial, cultural, and rail transportation center. The city has a population of 404,000.

Founded in 1856, **KARAGANDA** has a population of 596,000 and is Kazakhstan's second largest city. It is a sprawling city, containing more than 300 square miles. Large coal deposits, major iron and steel works, and a railway link have contributed to the city's growth and importance. Karaganda has five institutions of higher education, including a university established in 1972.

PAVLODAR, with a population of 349,000, is 180 miles northwest of Semipalatinsk. Located in a fertile farming region, since the mid-1960s it has developed into a major industrial center with several heavy industries and an oil refinery.

SEMIPALATINSK, located in the northeastern section of the country near the Russian Federation border,

has a population of 342,000. Founded in 1718, the gates of the old fort still exist. Semipalatinsk's growth has been due to its location at the junction of trade, caravan, and railway lines. The city is known for its food processing and meat packing industries. In the late 1980s, its factories produced one-third of Kazakstan's consumer goods. Residents of Semipalatinsk have been plagued with health problems that some attribute to nuclear fall out. In a forty year span, 1949–1989, 500 nuclear devices were detonated at the nuclear test site here.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Kazakstan is the second largest (after the Russian Federation) of the former Soviet republics. At 1,049,200 square miles, it represented 12 percent of the former U.S.S.R.'s total land area and is approximately four times the size of Texas. The country borders the Russian Federation to the north; China to the east; the Caspian Sea to the west; and Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan to the south.

The country has a diversified landscape. Lowlands account for more than one-third of its territory, mountainous regions for one-fifth, and the rest consists of hilly plains and plateaus. There are also several sparsely inhabited desert regions. Khan-Tengri Peak on the Kazakstan-Kyrgyzstan border is the highest point.

The area around Almaty is subject to earthquakes and mud slides. Earthquakes in 1887 and 1911, along with a serious mud slide in 1921, resulted in much destruction. A dam, built in 1966, has reduced considerably the chances of another catastrophic mud slide.

Most of Kazakstan's climate is continental with hot summers and cold winters. However, the different elevations result in wide variations in temperature and precipitation. In Almaty, daytime temperatures in July average 81°F; in January the average is 23°F.

Population

The estimated population of Kazakstan is approximately 16,820,000 (2000). Kazakhs (a Turkish people with Mongol features) make up 46 percent of the population; Russians, who live mainly in the north, comprise 35 percent; and Germans, residing mostly in the northeast, three percent. More than 100 other ethnic groups live in the country.

Deaths of Kazakhs during the U.S.S.R.'s collectivization programs and purges plus the immigration of many ethnic groups has resulted, until recently, in the Kazakhs being a minority in their own country. Much of the German immigration resulted from forced deportation by Stalin as German troops invaded Russia in the early 1940s. Recently, many Germans living in Kazakstan have migrated to Germany.

Russians were sent to Kazakstan to work in the industrial sector and to suppress Kazakh nationalism. The large Russian population has led to ethnic conflict with the Kazakhs. There were riots in December 1986, in 1989 when Kazakh was declared the official language, and again in 1991 when Kazakhs became leery about Russian Federation designs on the mostly Russian inhabited area along the northern border. Independence and the resulting fall of Kazakstan's Russians as the more privileged class have led to an increase in ethnic tension.

Russian was the official language for many years, but in 1989 a law was passed declaring Kazakh the official language. Russian is still commonly used. Uighur, German, and Korean are spoken by small portions of the population.

Most Kazakhs are Sunni Muslims of the Hanafi school. Kazakstan has 60 mosques and 230 Islamic religious communities. An Islamic institute is located in Almaty. The major Christian denomination is Russian Orthodox, attended by the Slavic minorities. Protestant churches, mainly Baptist, are also found.

Government

Kazakstan's declared its sovereignty in October 1990, and its independence on December 16, 1991, one of the last two Soviet republics to do so. The Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic then adopted the name Republic of Kazakstan, and United Nations membership followed on March 2, 1992. The Kazakh Communist Party disbanded seven months later.

Kazakstan is a constitutional republic with a strong presidency. The president is the head of state and the commander in chief of the armed forces. Nursultan Nazarbayev, an ethnic Kazakh and former leader of the Communist Party, was elected as president in 1990 and reelected in 1999. The prime minister chairs the Cabinet of Ministers and serves as Kazakstan's head of government. There are four deputy prime ministers, 14 ministers, and 11 chairmen of state agencies. Kasimzhomart Tokayev, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, has been Prime Minister since 1999.

Kazakstan has a bicameral parliament, comprised of a Lower House (the Mazhilis) and upper house (the Senate). The 77-seat Mazhilis is popularly elected by single mandate districts, with 10 members elected by party-list vote. The Senate has 39 members. Two senators are selected by each of the elected assemblies (Maslikhats) of Kazakstan's 16 principal administrative divisions. The president appoints the remaining seven senators.

Political parties have traditionally played little role in local politics, where personal and family ties are

more important. Several new parties formed and were registered in 1999 following passage of a constitutional amendment that created 10 new seats in the Mazhilis attributed by party-list voting.

Arts, Science, Education

Education is free and compulsory between the ages of seven and 14. More than 60 percent of primary and secondary students are taught in Russian. However, since Kazakh was established as the official language in 1989, there have been attempts to increase the number of schools using it as the language of instruction. There are 55 institutions of higher education, including three universities—Karaganda State University, Kazakh State University, and the Technical University at Karaganda Metallurgical Combine.

Commerce and Industry

Kazakstan has vast quantities of a variety of natural resources. Almost one-fifth of the coal mined in the former Soviet Union was from here and the country has major oil reserves, much of it not yet exploited. A focus on oil production and increased prices in the world market provided a much needed boost to the economy in 2000. In that year, the GDP grew nearly 10%.

Foreign investments in oil and mineral exports have been significant for the industry with over \$12 billion in investments since 1993. The Tengiz oil field, developed by the TengizChevroil joint venture, established by the Government and Chevron in 1993 and subsequently expanded to include ExxonMobil and Lukarco, is the flagship foreign investment project in Kazakstan. Kazakstan's current oil production is not that vast, almost 800,000 barrels/day, but offshore oil discoveries in the North Caspian Sea look promising.

Kazakstan has become a major regional grain exporter, supplying markets in Russia, Iran, China and other Central Asian countries. Important agricultural crops are grain, meat, and cotton.

With unemployment at about 12.8% in 2000, the government is taking an active role in seeing that foreign firms give preference to Kazakstanis in their employment practices. The government has also tightened its policy on foreign labor, which has made it more difficult for foreign companies to obtain work permits for expatriate employees.

Transportation

Several airlines have frequent flights to and from Kazakstan.

Railroad service is also available within Kazakstan and neighboring major cities.

Roads are in poor repair, especially in rural areas. The road between Almaty and Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan is especially treacherous at night or during poor weather. Americans and other travelers have been killed in traffic accidents on that road, and travel at night is not recommended. Street lighting, especially on side streets, may be turned off at night. Drivers often ignore lane markings. Potholes are common, and they are often dangerously deep. Pedestrians frequently dart out in front of cars. Visitors should use special caution if driving at night. Defensive driving is a must because many local drivers do not follow traffic laws. Accidents involving severe injury and/or death are common. Traffic police have reportedly stopped cars to seek bribes on main city streets and at periodic checkpoints on major highways.

Travelers should be particularly careful when using public transportation and taxis. Buses tend to be very crowded and can be unsafe and unreliable. Due to the danger of theft or assault, travelers should be selective regarding which taxi they contract and always avoid entering

a cab that already contains persons other than the driver.

Communications

Telephone service is considered fair to good. Phone service to the other former Soviet republics is by land line or microwave; to other foreign countries, by the Moscow international gateway switch.

Kazakh Radio broadcasts in several languages: Kazakh, Russian, Uighur, German, and Korean. State TV broadcasts informational programs and films in both Kazakh and Russian languages, with filler shows about Kazakh music and dance. In the cities, independent television stations are popular. Their main fare is poorly-dubbed pirated American films and cartoons. They also focus on local news shows. Talk shows with interesting discussions but uninspiring production values are also popular. Televised classified advertising is also a favorite among the people.

Kazakstanis are avid newspaper readers, but the print media is in poor financial health. Most newspapers have drastically reduced their circulation due to the cost and difficulty in obtaining paper. The government supports freedom of the press. Investigative reporting and political commentaries are popular. English-language and German-language newspapers and magazines are available at newsstands in major hotels and the airports.

Health

Medical care has declined since independence and does not meet Western standards. There is a severe shortage of basic medical supplies, including disposable needles, anesthetics, and antibiotics. U.S. citizens in frail health are strongly advised not to visit Kazakstan.

Several regions of the country have high rates of infant deaths, birth defects, and illness. Most severely affected are the areas around the

Aral and Caspian Seas, which suffer from pesticide damage; the area around Semipalatinsk, which was a nuclear test site; and in industrialized cities, which have pollution from their factories.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs and Duties

A valid passport and visa are required. The Kazakstan Embassy in Washington, D.C., issues visas (based on an invitation from an individual or organizational sponsor in Kazakstan). The U.S. Embassy in Almaty does not issue letters of invitation to citizens interested in private travel to Kazakstan. All travelers, even those simply transiting Kazakstan for less than 72 hours, must obtain a Kazakstan visa before entering the country. Travelers may also be asked to provide proof at the border of their onward travel arrangements. Travelers transiting through Kazakstan are reminded to check that their visas allow for sufficient number of entries to cover each transit trip and to check the length of validity of the visa. Crossing the land border to and from the neighboring Kyrgyz Republic can result in delays or demands from border officials to pay fines. For complete information concerning entry requirements, U.S. citizens should contact the Kazakstan Embassy at 1401 16th Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20036, telephone (202) 232-5488. The Kazakstan Embassy may also be reached by Email:kazak@intr.net, and at their home page: <http://www.kazakhstan-embassy-us.org>.

Several border areas with China and cities in close proximity to military installations require prior permission from the government to enter. In 2001, the government declared the following areas closed to foreigners: Gvardeyskiy village, Rossavel village, and Kulzhabashy railway station in Zhambyl Oblast; Bokeyorda and Zhangaly districts in Western Kazakstan Oblast; the

town of Priozersk and Gulshad village in Karaganda Oblast; and Baykonur, Karmakshy, and Kazakly districts in Kyzylorda Oblast. Americans traveling within Kazakstan have on occasion reported local officials who demand documentation authorizing travel within their area of jurisdiction, despite appropriate registration in Almaty or Astana. Americans should report any trouble with local authorities to the U.S. Embassy in Almaty.

There are local Kazakstani registration requirements. All travelers staying for more than three business days must register with the Office of Visas and Registration (OVIR). OVIR offices are located in Almaty, Astana and all other major cities. Visitors who do not register may have to pay fines upon departure. All visitors who plan to stay more than 30 days must also present to the OVIR office within 30 days of arrival a certificate indicating a negative HIV test conducted no more than one month before registration. Evidence of an HIV test performed abroad is acceptable. Testing may also be done at the Center for the Prevention and Control of AIDS (7 Talgarskaya Street, Almaty).

Tenge, Kazakstan's currency, can be exported in amounts up to \$10,000 without written certification on the origin of funds. For legal requirements on the export of tenge, travelers should consult with local Customs officials. In practice, travelers have been erroneously charged duty on tenge exports or asked to surrender tenge before departing the country. Kazakstani customs authorities may enforce strict regulations concerning export from Kazakstan of items such as antiquities. It is advisable to contact the Embassy of the Republic of Kazakstan in Washington for specific information at 1401 16th Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20036, telephone (202) 232-5488.

Americans living in or visiting Kazakstan are encouraged to register at the U.S. Embassy Consular Section in Almaty and obtain

updated information on travel and security within Kazakstan. Registration with the Embassy is different from Kazakstani OVIR registration. It can help the U.S. Embassy contact you in case of an emergency, and it can streamline replacement of a lost or stolen passport. The U.S. Embassy in Almaty is 11 hours ahead of U.S. Eastern Standard Time and is located at 99/97A Furmanova Street, tel. 7-3272-63-39-21, after-hour emergencies 7-3272-50-76-27, fax 7-3272-50-62-69, and e-mail: consularalmaty@state.gov.

Currency, Banking and Weights and Measures

Kazakstan remains largely a cash economy. Traveler's checks and credit cards are not widely accepted, except at large hotels and restaurants catering to international visitors. U.S. dollars can easily be exchanged for the local currency (tenge) at local and authorized currency exchanges, but all denominations of U.S. dollar bills must have been issued after 1990 and be in good condition (not worn or torn and without any writing or marks).

Disaster Preparedness

Kazakstan, especially the mountainous southeast region, is an earthquake-prone country. The U.S. Department of State has ranked the earthquake threat level within Almaty as a Level 4 (the highest level assigned). Building practices within Kazakstan do not generally meet U.S. seismic standards. In addition, local authorities do not have sufficient resources to respond to a large-scale disaster. American citizens traveling to Kazakstan are encouraged to register with the U.S. Embassy Consular Section to assist in contacting them in the event of an emergency. General information about natural disaster preparedness is available via the Internet from the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) at <http://www.fema.gov>.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan. 1	New Year's Day
Jan. 7	Christmas (Orthodox)
Mar. 8	International Women's Day
Mar. 22	Nauryz Meyrami (Traditional Spring Holiday)
May 1	Labor Day/ People's Unity Day
May 5	Constitution Day
May 9	Victory Day
Aug. 24	Flag Day
Aug. 30	Constitution Day
Oct. 25	Republic Day
Dec. 16	Independence Day

*variable

RECOMMENDED READING

The following titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country:

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KIRIBATI

Republic of Kiribati

Major City:

Tarawa

Other Cities:

Abemama, Butaritari

INTRODUCTION

The main wave of Micronesian settlement to the islands now known as **KIRIBATI** came from the Samoa Islands sometime between the 11th and 14th centuries, but the Samoans were probably not the first settlers. European contact began in 1537, when Kirimati (Christmas Island) was sighted by the Spanish. Commercial activity by the English began in the early 19th century. By the 1850s and 1860s, trade ships were visiting the islands regularly. The British declared a protectorate over the Gilbert and Ellice island groups in 1892. During World War II, the Japanese occupied the Gilberts until 1943. In 1974, the Ellice island group split away and became the independent nation of Tuvalu. Self-government for the Gilberts was established on July 12, 1979, and the islands became the independent Republic of Kiribati.

MAJOR CITY

Tarawa

Tarawa, the capital of Kiribati, is actually a small atoll with government offices located on south

Tarawa at Betio, Bairiki, and Bikenibeu. Tarawa lies among the nation's western island group between the larger islands of Maiana and Marakei.

Tarawa has a population of about 28,000. Between the 1950s and the 1980s, Tarawa's population increased ten-fold. An estimated 40% of the country's entire population lives on Tarawa, and overcrowding of the island is a major concern. The government has begun a resettlement program to eventually relocate almost 5,000 people from the densely populated western atolls (especially Tarawa) to the sparsely populated or uninhabited Line Islands and Phoenix Islands. During 1988–93, some 4,700 people were resettled on the Teraina and Tabuaeran atolls in the eastern Line Islands.

Most of the country's roads are located on Tarawa. The Nippon Causeway, completed in 1987 with Japanese assistance, replaced ferry service between the town of Bairiki and Betio (an islet) on Tarawa. A series of similar causeways linking north and south Tarawa are under construction.

Betio is the main port for western Kiribati and is equipped to handle containers. The Pacific Forum Line

links Tarawa with other shipping routes. The airport at the town of Bonriki on Tarawa handles international flights.

An industrial center was established in 1990 at Betio with aid from Great Britain. Manufactured items include clothing, shoes, furniture, leather goods, and kamaimai (coconut liquor). The Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific, located at Bairiki, provides technical assistance for agriculture and nutrition programs.

Recreation and Entertainment

Tourism is underdeveloped because of a lack of regular transport. Tarawa has a visitors' bureau, and there is a hotel on Betio. However, the government has singled out Kirimati, in the eastern Line Islands, for tourist development. The government is encouraging ecotourism, game fishing, and the promotion of historic battle sites of World War II. The Japanese constructed a fortress on Betio, which was the site of a 1943 battle resulting in 4,000 Japanese, 1,000 American, and no Kiribati casualties. Soccer is a popular recreational sport, and traditional singing and dancing are practiced. The National Library and Archives in Tarawa has 50,000 volumes. Items are in storage at the National

Archives in anticipation of the formation of a national museum to be built in Tarawa.

OTHER CITIES

Robert Louis Stevenson was one of the most famous temporary residents in **ABEMAMA**. He came to the island in 1889 with his wife. As the story goes, she was so taken by the place that she took it upon herself to design a flag for the island, which featured the picture of a shark wearing a crown. Of course, the flag was never officially used. The atoll is one of the Gilbert islands with a population of about 3,200 (1990 est.). With the exception of two major resorts, it remains fairly undeveloped. As such it provides an opportunity to enjoy the natural beauty of the island and experience the original I-Kiribati culture. Nature lovers should try to catch a sight of the unusual tiny yellow "barking" frog that is believed to be helpful in controlling the mosquito population. Abemama is about 50 mi. southwest of Tarawa and can be reached by air or boat.

The lush, green island of **BUTARITARI** (formerly Makin Island) is worth a visit for the adventuresome who don't mind a little rain. Also located in the Gilbert Islands, Butaritari has a population of over 3,700 (1990 est.) and receives about 157" of rain a year. Several war relics, included downed aircraft can be seen around the island as what remains from a 1942 US Marine operation. The American film, "Gung Ho," basically retells the story of this operation, starring Ronald Regan. Visitors will want to find an opportunity to sample fried breadfruit while on the island, since this particularly variety does not exist anywhere else. A large, beautiful lagoon with coral reefs can be explored from the island.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The islands of Kiribati are situated around the intersection of the International Date Line and the Equator. Scattered over 2 million square miles are 33 islands with a total land area of 277 square miles. Kiribati has more sea area per person than any other country. There are three main island groups: the seventeen Gilbert Islands, the eight Line Islands, and the eight Phoenix Islands.

The islands are coral atolls built on submerged volcanic chain and seldom rise more than 13 feet above sea level. Kirimati (Christmas Island), in the Line Islands, is the largest atoll in the world, with an area of 481 square miles. The atoll was used as a nuclear test site by the British from 1957 to 1962, and by the US in 1962.

Kiribati has an equatorial climate, with high humidity during the November–April rainy season. Although the islands lie outside the traditional South Pacific tropical storm belt, there are occasional gales and even cyclones. Annual rainfall varies from 40 inches near the Equator to 120 inches in the extreme north and south. Daily temperatures range from 77°F to 90°F, with very little fluctuation during the year. The islands have prevailing easterly trade winds.

Population

Kiribati has a population of approximately 87,000, unevenly distributed among the islands. Some 40% of the population is concentrated on Tarawa, while some of the islands of the Phoenix and Line groups are uninhabited. Since the 1980s, the government has resettled people from Tarawa to Teraira and Tabuar-ean in the Line Islands because of overcrowding.

Nearly all of the country's population is Gilbertese or Micronesian. Polynesians (mainly from Tuvalu) account for less than 0.5%, and Europeans and people of mixed races, 0.6%.

Nearly all the population is Christian, the largest sects being the Kiribati Protestant Church and the Roman Catholic Church. Religious minorities include Seventh-Day Adventists, Church of God, Assemblies of God, Mormons, and Baha'is. Christianity is an integral part of social interaction.

The main languages spoken are Gilbertese (I-Kiribati) and English. The official language is English, but it is seldom used on the outer islands. I-Kiribati is an Austronesian language related to many other in the South Pacific.

Government

Kiribati became an independent democratic republic within the Commonwealth of Nations in 1979.

Kiribati has a unicameral chamber legislature called the Maneaba ni Maungatabu House of Assembly). There are 41 members: 39 are directly elected for four years; the Attorney-General is an ex-officio member; and there is one representative of the Banaban community (inhabitants of Ocean island). The president is head of both state and government, and is also directly elected. The president appoints a cabinet from the incumbent members of the Maneaba, with which he shares executive power.

In 1994, Teburoro Tito, head of the Maneaban Te Mauri Party, was elected president.

The judicial system consists of the High Court, a court of appeal, and magistrates' courts. All judicial appointments are made by the president.

Though political parties do exist, they are more similar to informal coalitions in behavior. They do not have official platforms or party

structures. Most candidates are considered as independents.

Kiribati's flag shows a blue and white heraldic representation of the Pacific waters, with a golden sun rising on a red background. There is a golden frigate bird in flight over the sun.

Arts, Science, Education

Education is compulsory between the ages of 6 and 15. For many residents, a primary-level education is all that is needed to succeed in a subsistence community. Secondary school students take the New Zealand School Certificate. Tarawa Technical Institute conducts courses in technical and vocational subjects. A nurses' training center operates at the hospital in Tarawa. The Marine Training Centre trains about 200 students each year for working on foreign merchant shipping lines. There is a state-operated college for primary school teachers, and a satellite center of Fiji's University of the South Pacific at Tarawa.

Commerce and Industry

The people of Kiribati depend on the sea for their livelihood. Individuals fish for their family's food, and commercial fishing is also important. A hatchery provides bait fish to domestic commercial fishing vessels. The government also sells fishing licenses to foreign fishing vessels, and the Royal New Zealand Air Force patrols the vast sea area to discourage poaching. The economy relies on foreign aid supplied by the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Japan, and Australia. Foreign aid typically accounts for 25–30% of the domestic economy. Money sent home by men working overseas on oceangoing vessels accounts for a significant portion of the cash economy. The economy was once reliant on phosphate exports from the island of Banaba until production ceased in 1979. Since then

Kiribati has relied on fishing, subsistence agriculture, and exports of copra (dried coconut meat). Coconuts are one of the few natural resources on the islands, due to poor soil quality and occasional droughts.

Tourism is one of the largest domestic activities. Between 3,000 and 4,000 visitors per year provide \$5–\$10 million in revenue. Attractions include World War II battle sites, game fishing, ecotourism, and the Millennium Islands, situated just inside the International Date Line and the first place on earth to celebrate every New Year. The government is also promoting Kirimati (Christmas Island) in the Line Islands as a tourist destination for game fishing and bird watching.

With a per capita GDP of about \$850 (2000 est.), Kiribati is one of the poorest nations in the world.

Transportation

Kiribati has about 400 miles of roads, mostly on Tarawa. The Nippon Causeway opened in the 1980s, connecting Betio and Bariki. Other causeways linking north and south Tarawa were built in the 1990s. There is no rail, river, or lake transport, but canoes travel across the lagoons frequently. Motorcycles are the most popular land vehicles.

Roads in Tarawa, while satisfactory in some areas, are generally in need of repair. After heavy rains, some road sections experience temporary flooding. Vehicle traffic proceeds at a relatively slow rate. Drinking and driving is a common practice, especially on the weekends. Kiribati was a former British protectorate, and cars drive on the left side of the road.

The main islands have airstrips that are served from Tarawa. Passenger ferries also go to many of the smaller islands.

Communications

Radio Kiribati, operated by the government, is the country's only radio station, transmitting in I-Kiribati and English and broadcasting a few imported Australian shows. Tarawa has an earth station to transmit and receive satellite communications. Kiribati is on the Peacesat network, which provides educational transmissions from Suva, Fiji.

There is no commercial press; all publications are government- or church-sponsored. The government publishes the weekly *Atoll Pioneer*; *Te Itoi ni Kiribati* is published by the Roman Catholic Church; and *Te Kaotan te Ota* is published monthly by the Protestant Church.

Health

The Central Hospital in Tarawa, with 160 beds, is the main health care facility. There are four medical districts, each with its own medical officer and staff. Each inhabited island has its own medical dispensary, and a medical radio network links all the islands.

Tuberculosis is the most serious health problem on the islands. Other problems include leprosy, filariasis, and dysentery. Vitamin A deficiency, causing night blindness and xerophthalmia, occurs often among children in Kiribati. There was a cholera outbreak in the 1970s.

As the role of cash in the economy has grown, the level of nutrition has declined. Malnutrition, obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular problems have increased among urbanized islanders, because many have given up the traditional nutrient-rich diet for store-bought rice, canned food, and sweets. Inhabitants of the outer islands have largely avoided these nutritional problems.

All water should be regarded as a potential health risk. Visitors should therefore refrain from drinking any water that is not bottled, boiled or otherwise sterilized. Vegetables should be cooked and fruit should be peeled before eating.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

A valid passport and visa are required. Visa requirements include one application form, two photos and a fee. There is no Embassy of Kiribati in the United States. For information on entry requirements, please contact the Honorary Consulate of the Republic of Kiribati, Suite 503, 850 Richards Street, Honolulu, HI 96813, telephone (808) 529-7703; fax (808)521-8304. For visa or other information, travelers may consult the Consular Section of the nearest British embassy or consulate. The British Embassy in the United States is located at 3100 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C., 20008. The telephone number is (202) 588-7800.

The Republic of Kiribati's customs authorities strictly prohibit the importation of firearms, ammunition, explosives and indecent publications. Strict quarantine laws govern the import of any part of plants, fruits, vegetables, soil, as well as animals and animal products. Visitors are not allowed to export human remains, artifacts

that are 30 or more years old, traditional fighting swords, traditional tools, dancing ornaments or suits of armor. For more information, please contact the British Embassy.

Americans living in or visiting Kiribati are encouraged to register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Majuro, whose consular district includes the Republic of Kiribati. U.S. citizens may also obtain updated information on travel and security within Kiribati from the Embassy. Officers of the U.S. Embassy in Majuro, Republic of the Marshall Islands, are concurrently accredited to Kiribati and make periodic visits. The U.S. Embassy does not have a street address in Majuro. The Embassy is located on the ocean-side of the island's road, near the Church of the Latter-Day Saints and Gibson's Express, "Long Island." The U.S. Embassy's mailing address is P.O. Box 1379, Majuro, MH 96960-1379. The telephone number is (692) 247-4011. The fax number is (692) 247-4012.

Currency

In Kiribati, the Australian dollar is the legal currency. Travelers' checks and all major currencies are

accepted by banks and may also be exchanged for local currency at some local hotels. Visa and MasterCard are accepted at most hotels

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan. 1	New Year's Day
Mar/Apr.	Good Friday*
Mar/Apr.	Easter*
Mar/Apr.	Easter Monday*
Apr. 18.	Health Day
July 12	Independence Day
Aug.	Youth Day*
Dec. 10	Human Rights Day
Dec. 25	Christmas
Dec. 26	Boxing Day

*Variable

RECOMMENDED READING

Journal Films. *Kiribati*. Produced by Juniper Films, 1989.

KOREA, NORTH

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Major Cities:

Pyongyang, Hamhung, Chongjin, Wonsan

Other Cities:

Haeju, Hyesan, Kanggye, Kimch'aek, Najin, Namp'o, Sinuiju

INTRODUCTION

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea, or **NORTH KOREA**, is one of the world's last hard-line Communist nations. Since its creation in 1948, North Korea has been extremely hostile toward Western nations, especially the United States, and has isolated itself from most of the world. The fall of Communism in Eastern Europe in 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 has deprived North Korea of many important allies and trading markets.

Since the end of the Korean War in 1953, North Korea has pursued, both through violence and peaceful negotiations, reunification with neighboring South Korea. On September 17, 1991, North Korea was granted a seat in the United Nations along with South Korea and five other nations. The North Koreans had previously been barred from membership because of their opposition to a separate seat for South Korea. The two countries signed an historic nonaggression pact on December 13, 1991. The pact called for a relaxation of trade and travel restrictions and allowed the construction of telephone and postal services between North and South Korea. The accord has allowed the reunification of families

separated since the end of the Korean War. On December 31, 1991, North Korea and South Korea signed an agreement that banned the production of nuclear weapons by either country. The new openness between the two Koreas has renewed the hope that a political reunification of the Korean peninsula will eventually occur.

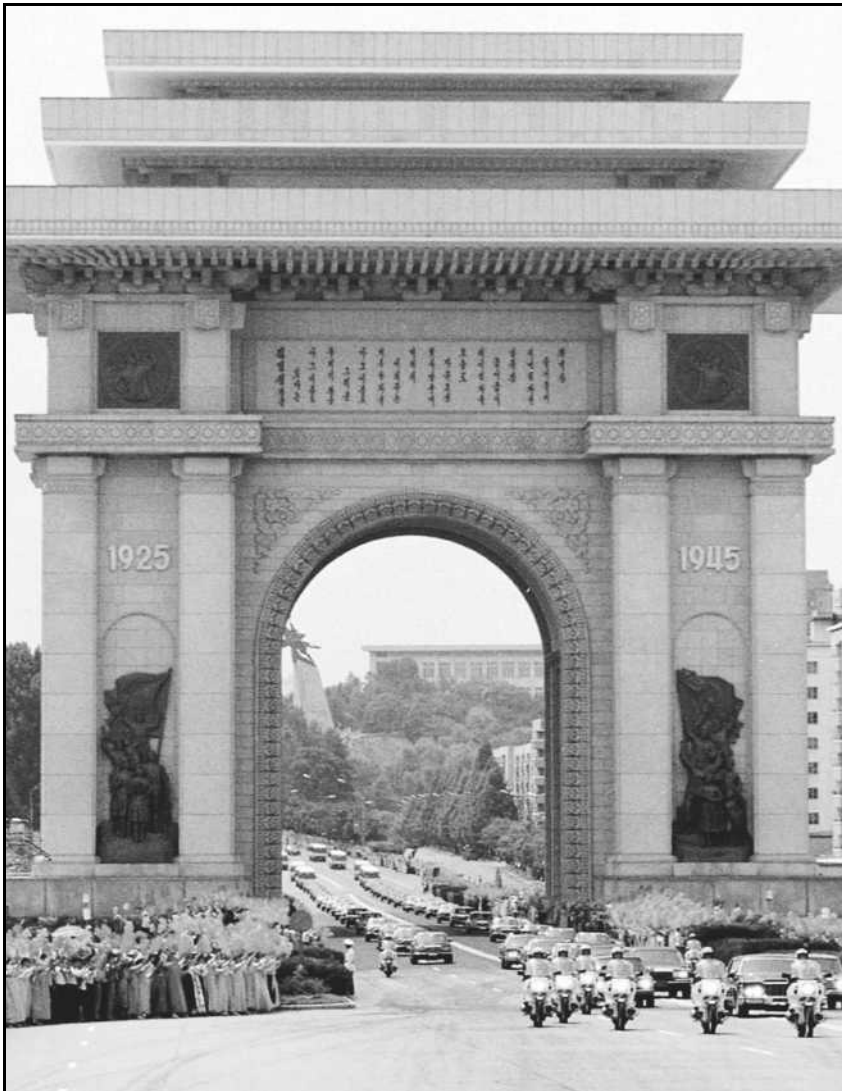
MAJOR CITIES

Pyongyang

The capital city of North Korea, Pyongyang, is located on the Taedong River and is roughly 30 miles (48 km) from the Yellow Sea. Although North Korea is very mountainous, Pyongyang is situated on a flat, open plain. Because it receives no protection from mountains or hills, Pyongyang is buffeted by bitterly cold winds during the winter. Temperatures during the winter are generally very cold, averaging 17°F (-8°C) in January. The temperature in Pyongyang is rather pleasant during the summer with highs around 70°F (21°C).

Pyongyang is an ancient city, its origin dating back to 1122 B.C. In that year, a Chinese-born scholar named Kija established a kingdom with

Pyongyang as its capital. The city quickly became a center for agriculture and textile manufacturing. Pyongyang was controlled by Kija and his successors for nearly one thousand years. In 108 B.C., Pyongyang was attacked and captured by Chinese armies. Under the Chinese, the city became an important trading center. By 427 A.D., Pyongyang became the capital of the Koguryo, a culturally advanced and warlike people. The Koguryo kingdom controlled Pyongyang until 668, when they were attacked and conquered by the Silla kingdom. The Sillas ruled in Pyongyang until 918, when the city was captured by the Koryo dynasty. The Koryos established Kaesong as their capital and made Pyongyang a secondary capital. The Mongols attacked the Koryos and seized control of Pyongyang in 1392. The city again changed hands in 1592 following an invasion by Japan. In 1627, Pyongyang was destroyed when the Manchus overran Korea and defeated the Japanese. Following the Manchu invasions, Korea was closed to all foreigners. When foreigners were allowed to return nearly 200 years later, Pyongyang became a major religious center for Christian missionaries. In 1895, the city was a battleground for the warring armies of China and Japan. Pyongyang was decimated. When Korea became a colony of Japan in



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Gate of Triumph in Pyongyang, North Korea

1910, the Japanese rebuilt Pyongyang and established several industries in the city. During the Korean War (1950-1953), Pyongyang was totally destroyed for the third time in its history. Following the war, the city was rebuilt with the help of Chinese and Soviet financial aid.

Pyongyang is North Korea's largest city, with an estimated population of 2,484,000 in 2000. The North Korean government has touted Pyongyang as a workers' paradise and a model for socialist progress. The city has block after block of modern apartment buildings, tree-lined streets, handsome boulevards, theaters, parks, and a zoo. Most of North Korea's libraries and muse-

ums, two modern sports stadiums, and several opera houses and cultural centers are located in Pyongyang. The city has several lavish statues and monuments honoring North Korea's leader, Kim Il-sung. Among them are a 60-foot tall bronze statue that, when flood-lit at night, is visible for miles. From 1986-1988, the North Korean government spent between \$4 and \$7 billion on the construction of luxury hotels, sporting facilities, and athlete villages in Pyongyang in an unsuccessful bid to jointly host the 1988 Summer Olympics with Seoul, South Korea. This construction boom nearly bankrupted the country and many of the building projects were never completed.

Although Pyongyang has many of the trappings of a modern, vibrant city, it is often described by visitors as drab and lifeless. The streets of Pyongyang are often devoid of cars, bicycles, pets, and people. Those who are on the streets go about their business without smiling or making eye contact. Apartments are often very cramped, some with only one toilet for every two floors. The lives of Pyongyang residents are tightly regimented. Individual expression and creativity are discouraged.

Western entertainment, such as movies or dancing, is nonexistent in Pyongyang. Hotels, inns, restaurants, barbershops, beauty parlors, public baths, tailor shops, and laundries are owned and controlled by the State. Restaurants open at noon and generally do not remain open late in the evening. Only a simple meal is offered by restaurants. Diners may choose between a rice meal, rice mixed with another grain, or a noodle dish. Very few restaurants offer meat or eggs, as these are scarce and very expensive. In the few existing barbershops, each barber is expected to give about 20 haircuts each day. Beauty parlors and laundries are reserved for the wives of high government officials.

Pyongyang is one of North Korea's major industrial centers, its factories powered by coal from the nearby deposits along the Taedong River. The city's industrial base is comprised of iron and steel mills, sugar refineries, rubber factories, textile mills, and ceramics factories. Chemicals, processed food, and electrical equipment are also produced in Pyongyang.

Pyongyang serves as the major hub for North Korea's railway system. The city has a very modern, clean, and efficient subway system. Subway stations are adorned with beautiful chandeliers, marbled walls, and mosaic murals of Kim Il-sung. North Korea's international airport, Sunan Airport, is located approximately 10 miles (6 km) north of Pyongyang. Sunan Airport handles international flights to Moscow and

Beijing as well as domestic flights from Pyongyang to North Korea's other major cities.

Most of North Korea's major educational institutions are located in Pyongyang. The city's largest university, Kim Il-sung University, was founded in 1946 and is located on the outskirts of Pyongyang overlooking the Taedong River. Admission to Kim Il-sung University is widely regarded as one of the highest honors to be attained by a North Korean youth. The university's departments include mathematics and dynamics, physics, chemistry, biology, history, economics, philosophy, law, Korean language and literature, and foreign language and literature. Pyongyang is also the home of the Pyongyang Pedagogical University. This university is responsible for training teachers for technical schools and universities. Pyongyang Pedagogical University offers postgraduate courses, research facilities, and a library. The university library is North Korea's central repository for educational publications and materials. Copies of all publications and materials relating to the study of education and textbooks are kept here for educational research purposes. North Korea's principal medical school, Pyongyang Medical College, is also located in the capital.

Hamhung

The city of Hamhung is located northeast of Pyongyang in east-central North Korea. In 1960, Hamhung was merged with the port of Hungnam, a small village on the Sea of Japan coast. Together, Hamhung and Hungnam comprise North Korea's second largest urban area. The combined population of Hamhung and Hungnam was estimated at 670,000 in 2000.

Hamhung was established as an important government center during the Yi dynasty (1392-1910). Hungnam developed as a very small fishing village. In 1928, a major hydroelectric plant was built near Hamhung. This power plant sparked new industrial develop-

ment with the construction of a large fertilizer plant. Other industries soon followed, among them oil refineries, food processing plants, chemical industries, a textile plant, and machine plants. Hamhung became an important industrial center. The city was nearly leveled completely during the Korean War. However, most of the industries were rebuilt in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Today, Hamhung and Hungnam form the backbone of North Korea's chemical industry. The city is home to the Hamhung State Historical Museum. Hamhung has three major colleges, a medical college, the Chemical Industry College, and the Chemical Research Institute.

Chongjin

Chongjin, located on the northeastern coast, is North Korea's third largest city. In 1986, Chongjin had a population of approximately 530,000. The city is the major port and distribution center for eastern North Korea.

Chongjin originated as a small fishing village. However, during the years of Japanese colonial rule (1910-1945), the Japanese established oil, steel, and iron ore manufacturing industries in Chongjin. Railroads were built connecting Chongjin with iron mines along the Tumen River near the North Korean border with the People's Republic of China. The Japanese also constructed modern port facilities at Chongjin. The city soon became a major conduit for manufactured goods from Korea to the Japanese home islands. Following the end of Japanese rule in 1945, the North Koreans modernized and expanded Chongjin's steel industry, railroads, and port facilities. Currently, Chongjin is North Korea's primary steel producing center. The North Koreans have also established other industries in the city. These industries are involved in the production of chemicals, textiles, and machinery. Because of Chongjin's location as a port city, shipbuilding has also evolved as a major industry.

Wonsan

Located 80 miles (130 km) east of Pyongyang, Wonsan is one of North Korea's principal ports and the site of a major naval base. The city developed during the Yi dynasty as a trading center and port known as Wonsanjin. In 1914, the railroad connecting Wonsan with Seoul (now in South Korea) was constructed. On the east coast, the Wolla rail line, running from Wonsan to the extreme northeastern port of Najin, was constructed in 1928. In 1941, North Korea's major east-west railroad connecting Wonsan and Pyongyang was completed. These railroads, which have all been modernized, make Wonsan a major railway hub.

Fishing is one of Wonsan's major economic activities. The presence of a warm and cold current in the waters off Wonsan attracts a great number of species. Fish caught include pollack, octopus, anchovy, sardines, flatfish, sandfish, herring, and mackerel. The abundance of fish near Wonsan has led to the development of a thriving fish processing industry. The city is also the home of other major industries, including shipbuilding, brickyards, locomotive works, chemical plants, textile mills, and a large oil refinery. Many of these industries were destroyed during the Korean War, but have been rebuilt and modernized. Wonsan has over an estimated 350,000 residents.

OTHER CITIES

HAEJU is situated in southwestern North Korea on the coast of the Yellow Sea. The city is one of North Korea's most valuable ports, particularly because it is the only port that remains unobstructed by ice during the winter months. Because of Haeju's location on the Yellow Sea, fishing is an important economic pursuit. The city serves as an export center for agricultural products grown nearby. A copper refinery, cement manufacturing plant, and several chemical plants are

located in and around Haeju. The city's population in 1993 was approximately 229,172.

The city of **HYESAN** is located in extreme northern North Korea along the border with the People's Republic of China. It's population in 1993 was approximately 178,000. By virtue of its location near the Paektu Mountains, which offer abundant forests of larch, spruce, and pine, Hyesan manufactures lumber and paper products. The city's location on the Yalu River makes it an important transportation center. Winters are extremely cold in Hyesan, with temperatures plummeting as low as -44°F.

KANGGYE, a city on North Korea's northern frontier, is an important transportation center. The city is connected via railroad and roadway with Pyongyang. Kanggye is located in a region where graphite, zinc, copper, and coal are abundantly available. Consequently, mining and mining-related industries are an important part of Kanggye's industrial base. Other industries in Kanggye manufacture ceramics and process timber. According to latest estimates, Kanggye had approximately 223,000 residents.

The city of **KIMCH'AEK** is located in eastern North Korea on the shores of the Sea of Japan. Originally known as Songjin, the city's name was changed in 1952 in honor of a fallen North Korean war hero. Kimch'aek is an important seaport which exports lumber and agricultural products. Also, rich deposits of graphite, magnesite, zinc, and iron are located near Kimch'aek. Mining and mining-related industries are important components of the city's economy. Kimch'aek's location on the Sea of Japan has encouraged the development of fisheries and fish processing industries. Kimch'aek has a population over 281,000.

Located in extreme northeastern North Korea is the city of **NAJIN**. Najin is an important transportation center and port city. An important rail line links Najin with

Wonsan, Hamhung, and Chongjin. The city's coastal location has led to the development of a large shipbuilding industry. The waters off Najin offer an abundance of fish, particularly herring, codfish, and pollack. The latest population estimate for Najin is 34,000.

NAMP'O, located approximately 30 miles (50 km) southwest of Pyongyang, is one of North Korea's primary western ports. Situated at the mouth of the Taedong River, Namp'o is a center for both international and domestic trade. Imported goods arrive at Namp'o and are shipped down the Taedong River or by railway to markets in Pyongyang or other major cities. The city has a well-developed industrial base centered on gold and copper refining, shipbuilding, and glassmaking. In 1980, Namp'o had roughly 241,000 residents. Current population figures are unavailable.

The city of **SINUJU** is located in northwestern North Korea near the mouth of the Yalu River. The city is highly industrialized and is an important producer of chemicals, electrical equipment, textiles, and consumer goods. Hydroelectric power for these industries is supplied by the Sup'ung Dam. By virtue of its location across the border with the People's Republic of China, Sinuiju is a major trading center. Railways, roads, and air routes link Sinuiju with Pyongyang. In 1981, Sinuiju had roughly 200,000 people. Current population figures are unavailable.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

North Korea occupies the northern half of a mountainous peninsula. The country's geographic area is approximately 46,540 square miles, slightly smaller than Mississippi. North Korea is bordered by the People's Republic of China and Russia

on the north, on the east by the Sea of Japan, on the west by the Yellow Sea, and on the south by South Korea. Hills and mountains cover almost the entire country, with narrow valleys and small plains in between. The major mountain ranges are located in the north-central and northeastern sections of North Korea and along the eastern coast. On the eastern coast, the hills drop sharply down to a narrow coastal plain, whereas on the west coast the slope is more gradual, forming broad, level plains. North Korea has no active volcanoes and does not experience severe earthquakes.

North Korea has several major rivers, most of which flow westward into the Yellow Sea. These rivers include the Yalu, Taedong, Chongch'on, Imjin, and the Yesong. The east coast has several swift-flowing rivers. Only two, the Tumen and the Songchon Rivers, are large. North Korea's rivers flow strongly during the summer, fed by seasonal rainfall and melting snow in the mountains, but the volume drops considerably during the dry winter months.

Population

Koreans are a racially and linguistically homogenous people. In 2000, North Korea's population was estimated at approximately 21,690,000. Although there are no indigenous minorities, a small community of approximately 50,000 Chinese reside in North Korea. Traditional Korean religions are Buddhism, Confucianism, Shamanism, and Chondokyo, a religion peculiar to Korea combining elements of Buddhism and Christianity. However, religious activity in North Korea is practically nonexistent. Several government-sponsored religious groups exist to provide the illusion of religious freedom. North Koreans are encouraged to embrace *juche*, a state ideology which espouses self-reliance and national identity, as a substitute for organized religion.

Life expectancy in North Korea is approximately 68 years for males and 74 years for females (2001 est.).

History

According to legend, the god-king Tangun founded the Korean nation in 2333 B.C., after which his descendants reigned over a peaceful kingdom for more than a millennium. By the first century A.D., the Korean Peninsula, known as Chosun ("morning calm"), was divided into the kingdoms of Silla, Koguryo, and Paekche. In A.D. 668, the Silla kingdom unified the peninsula. The Koryo dynasty succeeded the Silla kingdom in 918. The Yi dynasty, which supplanted Koryo in 1392, lasted until the Japanese annexed Korea in 1910.

Throughout most of its history, Korea has been invaded, influenced, and fought over by its larger neighbors. Korea was under Mongolian occupation from 1231 until the early 14th century and was devastated by a large number of Chinese rebel armies in 1359 and 1361; Hideyoshi launched major Japanese invasions in 1592 and 1597. To protect themselves from such frequent buffeting, the Yi kings finally adopted a closed-door policy, earning Korea the title of "Hermit Kingdom." Although the Yi dynasty paid nominal fealty to the Chinese throne, Korea was, in fact, independent until the late 19th century. At that time, Japanese, Chinese, and Russian competition in Northeast Asia led to armed conflict. Having defeated its two competitors, Japan established dominance in Korea. The Japanese colonial era was characterized by tight control by Tokyo and by ruthless efforts to replace the Korean language and culture with those of the colonial power. Japan formally annexed Korea in 1910.

Japan occupied the entire Korean peninsula until the end of World War II. After the surrender and withdrawal of Japanese forces in 1945, the Allies divided Korea into two occupation zones. Soviet troops occupied areas north of the 38th

parallel. Territory south of this line was controlled by American forces. The Soviet Union and the United States engaged in a series of conferences in an attempt to agree on a new government for the entire Korean peninsula. These efforts were fruitless. In September 1947, the United States submitted the question of Korea's future to the United Nations General Assembly. The General Assembly ruled that U.N.-supervised elections should be held in both occupation zones. Elections were carried out under U.N. observation in the south, and on August 15, 1948, the Republic of Korea (South Korea) was established. The Soviets refused to hold elections and decided to create a Communist state in the northern zone. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) was declared on September 9, 1948. The governing body for this new state was the Korean Workers' Party, under the leadership of Kim Il-sung.

On June 25, 1950, North Korean forces invaded South Korea. The United States and sixteen U.N. member nations sent troops to defend South Korea. North Korean forces were initially successful, driving the U.N. forces back and nearly conquering all of South Korea. However, after a surprise landing at Inchon, South Korea, U.N. forces gained the upper hand and drove North Korean troops back to the North Korea-China border. The Chinese sent thousands of troops across the border, forcing U.N. troops back down the Korean peninsula. A bloody conflict was waged for control of Korea. On July 27, 1953, an armistice was signed at Panmunjom by China, North Korea, South Korea, and the United States. No formal peace agreement officially ending the war has ever been signed between the two warring factions. Therefore, the border between North Korea and South Korea remains one of the most volatile regions in the world.

Government

North Korea is a Communist state dominated by the Korean Workers' Party. Kim Il-sung, ruled North Korea at its creation in 1948, wielding unrivaled power. Often referred to as the "Great Leader," Kim was president of North Korea and general secretary of the Korean Workers' Party. Following his death, his son, Kim Jong Il, inherited supreme power. Kim Jong Il was named General Secretary of the Korean Workers' Party in October 1997, and in September 1998, he was reconfirmed Kim Jong Il as Chairman of the National Defense Commission, a position which was then declared "highest office of state."

The North Korean constitution provides for the establishment of a Supreme People's Assembly. The Supreme People's Assembly is authorized to approve or amend laws and to formulate domestic and foreign policy. The Assembly is also charged with approving state economic programs and state budgets, establishing or changing administrative subdivisions, granting amnesties, and electing judges to the Supreme Court. Delegates are elected to a four-year term. Citizens seventeen years or older can vote and be elected to the Assembly. The Assembly elects a president and the Central People's Committee. The Central People's Committee directs the Administrative Council, which implements policies created by the Committee.

Despite this elaborate constitutional process, the Korean Workers' Party is the sole political authority in North Korea. It elects a Central Committee, who in turn elects a Politburo. The senior members of the Administrative Council are all members of the Central Committee and the majority are also members of the Politburo.

A three-tiered court system is composed of the Supreme Court at the top, provincial courts in the middle, and people's courts at the bottom. Judges are usually members of the Korean Workers' Party or are con-

trolled by the Party. They are trained in judicial procedures for three months before assuming office. Trials are usually open to the public. The accused is guaranteed the right to defend himself and to have counsel, but there are only Government defenders.

The courts of first instance are those established at city, county, and district levels. Presided over by judges elected for two-year terms, they can try civil as well as criminal cases. Assessors, who are vested with authority equal to that of judges, participate in the proceedings. Decisions are by majority vote of the one judge and two assessors. Provincial courts also hear appeals or complaints resulting from the decisions of the lower courts. In practice, however, appeals reaching the provincial courts are said to be infrequent.

The Supreme Court is empowered to supervise the operation of the lower courts in the enforcement of civil and criminal law. Its judges are elected by the Supreme People's Assembly for a term of three years. The court is expected to render judgments in accordance with the basic policies of the Government and the Party.

The flag of North Korea consists of horizontal stripes of blue, red and blue separated by narrow white bands. The red stripe contains a white circle within which is a red five-pointed star.

Arts, Science, Education

Education is a monopoly of the State, which uses it for well-defined political, economic, and nationalist purposes dictated by the Korean Workers' Party. Education is designed to indoctrinate the entire population in Communist ideology. Also, the educational system intends to imbue the population with pride in its own history and culture and to create a supply of skilled workers, technicians, and scientists to meet the regime's eco-

nomical goals. A strong emphasis on working while learning, or the integration of theory and practice, permeates the educational system, and all students are required to engage in productive labor along with their studies, both in their specialties and in other areas, for nominal pay. This is a means whereby the regime is reimbursed for educational costs.

The North Korean government stresses the elimination of Confucian methods of learning by rote and emphasizes instead full use of practical experiments in the laboratory, in the field, and in work experience. Excursion trips to military installations and old battlefields, industries, and other points of interest are among the techniques used. Speech and composition contests, debate meetings on scientific subjects, exhibitions of the arts, contests on new inventions and new designs, story-telling and poem recital meetings, music auditions, art contests, athletic meets, and motion picture appreciation gatherings are among the devices used by the schools to keep students interested and occupied in practical ways. Students are also assigned to such group projects as rabbit raising, fire prevention, and assisting the public health services.

The curriculum of North Korea's educational system includes a heavy emphasis on Communist ideology and combines Korean studies with Marxist-Leninist principles. Principal subjects include scientific subjects, such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, and biology; and social science subjects.

North Korea has an adult education system that is designed to provide ideological and technical training and to reduce illiteracy. Adult education classes are conducted at factories or through correspondence schools located at some colleges and senior technical schools.

Eleven years of education are required for North Korean children and are provided at government expense. Students receive one year of preschool, four years of primary

school beginning at age six, and six years of secondary school. In 1986, there were approximately 9,530 primary and senior middle schools. North Korea has an estimated 280 institutions of higher education and three universities.

All students are required to study English as a second language beginning at age fourteen. The literacy rate in North Korea is approximately 99%.

Commerce and Industry

The economic system of North Korea was inspired by the model used in the former Soviet Union. The means of production are socialized, and the allocation of natural resources are centrally determined by the State. The State owns and operates industry, banking, agriculture, mining operations, and domestic and foreign trade. State control of economic affairs is unusually tight even for a Communist country because of the small size and homogeneity of society and the strict rule of Kim Il-sung.

Agricultural productivity is centered around State-controlled (collectivized) farms. Despite the use of improved seed varieties, expansion of irrigation, and the heavy use of fertilizers, North Korea has not yet become self-sufficient in food production. Four consecutive years of poor harvests, coupled with distribution problems, have led to chronic food shortages.

The economy of North Korea is heavily industrialized. Industrial workers account for nearly 64% of the work force. Textiles, food processing, machine building, military products, mining, metallurgy, and petrochemicals are major industries. North Korea has abundant hydroelectric resources and is rich in minerals, especially uranium, zinc, coal, lead, iron ore, graphite, manganese, copper, and gold. Minerals and mineral ores are North Korea's primary exports. Since 1995, Japan and China have been

major trading partners, followed by South Korea and Germany.

North Korea has about \$520 million in exports, but relies on \$960 million in imported goods (1999 est.). In comparison, South Korea exports \$172.6 billion and imports, \$160.50 billion (2000 est.). The fall of Communism in Eastern Europe in 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 has deprived North Korea of its main trading partners and increased the country's isolation in the world community. In 1991, dozens of factories were forced to close due to fuel shortages. This is seen as a further sign of North Korea's worsening economy.

On August 24, 1992, North Korea's last principle ally and trading partner, the People's Republic of China, established diplomatic and trade relations with South Korea. Both countries pledged to eliminate all economic and political barriers. North Korea has been forced to seek financial aid, trade links, and foreign investment from the West. On October 20, 1992, North Korea approved legislation that promotes foreign investment in the country. Foreign investors will be allowed to open joint business ventures with North Koreans and establish privately owned companies within government-created enterprise zones. The legislation is viewed as North Korea's first positive step toward a new openness with the rest of the world.

Transportation

Damage to the transportation facilities during the Korean War was particularly severe in North Korea. The country lost 70 percent of its locomotives, 90 percent of its locomotive sheds, 65 percent of its freight cars, and 90 percent of its passenger cars. The restoration of rail transportation received high government priority, since the greater part of imported goods enter the north by rail. The postwar rehabilitation program, in addition to restoring destroyed railroad tracks, called for the restoration of railroad bridges and the reconstruction of

tunnels. Normal traffic was restored to the country by the early 1970s. Today, North Korea has a well-developed railway system. Travel and the shipment of manufactured goods and raw materials is mostly done by rail. In 1989, North Korea had approximately 3,050 miles (4,915 km) of railroad track. International passenger rail service is available from Pyongyang to Beijing and Moscow.

Motor transportation plays a secondary role in the movement of freight and passengers. Very few North Koreans own cars. Also, seasonal factors make motor transportation impractical. Since most roads are unpaved, early snows in the winter and rainfall during the summer make roads impassable. Modern highways link Pyongyang to the cities of Namp'o, Wonsan, and Kaesong. As of 1989, North Korea had approximately 18,630 miles (30,000 km) of roadway.

International airline service to Beijing, Hong Kong, and Moscow are available. There are domestic flights from Pyongyang to the cities of Chongjin, Wonsan, and Hamhung.

Communications

Telephone communication with North Korea is virtually impossible. Direct or operator assistance calls cannot be made to North Korea from the United States.

The Korean Central Broadcasting Committee supervises radio programming. Radio Pyongyang broadcasts are transmitted over loudspeakers into factories and municipal centers. Programs include news, weather, music, drama, literary recitations, some light entertainment, analyses of international affairs, and glorification of Kim Il-sung and the Korean Workers' Party. Shortwave frequencies carry foreign broadcasts in Russian, Chinese, French, English, Japanese, Spanish, Arabic, and German.

North Korea had an estimated 291,000 televisions and 4.2 million radios in use in 1990. The main television station is located in Pyongyang, with stations at Munsudae and Kaesong. Foreign films, news, music, and dance and cultural programming is shown daily. Television service is available throughout most of North Korea.

Foreign language publications are available in Pyongyang. Those published in English include: *The Democratic People's Republic of Korea*, *Foreign Trade of the D.P.R.K.*, *Korea*, *Korea Today*, *Korean Women*, *Korean Youth and Students*, and *The Pyongyang Times*. The types of books published in North Korea include essays, short stories, plays, literary criticism, textbooks, children's books, poetry, and novels. A large proportion of all titles are devoted to a glorification of Kim Jong-il.

Health and Medicine

Persons with medical problems should be aware that, because of continuing economic hardship, the level of medical care falls far below U.S. standards, and medical care for Americans who become ill or injured in North Korea, including emergency medical evacuation, is generally not available. Hospitals in Pyongyang and other cities often lack heat, medicine, and even basic supplies, and suffer from frequent power outages. Hospitals do not have food for patients. Functioning telephones are not widely available, making it difficult to summon assistance in a medical emergency. Americans should not bring personal medications to North Korea without written authorization from the North Korean Embassy in a third country or the North Korean Mission to the United Nations in New York. Absent such permission, persons requiring regular medication should not travel to North Korea. Hospitals will expect immediate U.S. dollar cash payment for medical treatment.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs & Duties

The United States does not maintain diplomatic or consular relations with North Korea. The U.S. Government therefore cannot provide normal consular protective services to U.S. citizens in North Korea. On September 20, 1995, a consular protecting power arrangement was implemented, allowing for consular protection by the Swedish Embassy of U.S. citizens traveling in North Korea. In this capacity, the Swedish Embassy in the capital city Pyongyang endeavors to provide basic consular protective services to U.S. citizens traveling or residing in North Korea who are ill, injured, arrested or who may die. Since 1998, four U.S. citizens have been detained by North Korean authorities. Consular access has not always been granted readily, and there have been allegations of mistreatment while in custody, as well as the requirement to pay large fines to obtain release. U.S. citizens should therefore evaluate carefully the implications for their security and safety when deciding whether to travel to North Korea.

U.S. passports are valid for travel to North Korea. North Korean visas are required for entry. The U.S. Government does not issue letters to private Americans seeking North Korean visas, even though in the past such letters have sometimes been requested by DPRK embassies. Prospective travelers to North Korea must obtain in advance a Chinese visa valid for at least two entries prior to their arrival in the region. A valid Chinese visa is essential for both entry into China en route to North Korea, as well as departure from North Korea by air or land to China at the conclusion of a visit or in an emergency. Travel across the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) between North and South Korea is not permitted. U.S. citizens who arrive in North Korea without a valid U.S. passport and North Korean visa may be detained,

arrested, fined or denied entry. Payment for travel costs by Americans in North Korea must be made in U.S. dollars at inflated prices. Payment may be required as well for the costs of security personnel assigned to escort foreign visitors.

U.S. citizens traveling to North Korea should carry only valid U.S. passports bearing the proper North Korean visa. Under no condition should U.S. citizens bring with them to North Korea any document that identifies them as citizens or residents of either the Republic of Korea (South Korea) or the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea). There is currently no way to replace a lost or stolen U.S. passport in North Korea.

There is no North Korean embassy or consulate in the United States. U.S. citizens and residents planning travel to North Korea must obtain North Korean visas in third countries. For information about entry requirements and restricted areas, contact the North Korean Mission to the United Nations in New York. Address inquiries to the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations, 820 Second Avenue, New York, New York 10017, tel: (1-212) 972-3105; fax: (1-212) 972-3154, or contact the North Korean embassy in a country that maintains relations with North Korea.

U.S. citizens traveling to North Korea usually obtain their visas at the North Korean Embassy in Beijing, China, which will only issue visas after authorization has been received from the North Korean Foreign Ministry in Pyongyang, the capital city. Prior to traveling to the region, travelers may wish to confirm with the North Korean Embassy by telephone at (86-10) 65321186, 65321189, 65325018, 65324308, or 65321154 (fax: 65326056), that authorization to issue visas has been received from Pyongyang.

U.S. citizens are encouraged to carry photo-copies of their passport

data and photo pages with them at all times so that, if questioned by DPRK officials, proof of U.S. citizenship is readily available to DPRK authorities and Swedish protecting power officials.

All needed vaccines should be administered prior to traveling to North Korea. Vaccine recommendations and disease prevention information for traveling abroad are available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's International Travelers' Hotline, which may be reached from the United States at 1-877- FYI-TRIP (1-877-394-8747), via its toll-free autofax number at 1-888-CDC-FAXX (1-888-232-3299), or via the CDC Internet site at: <http://www.cdc.gov/>. In addition, travelers should bring food with them to North Korea as the few restaurants available to foreigners are often closed for lack of supplies and in any case have limited menus that lack variety and nutritional adequacy.

DPRK authorities may seize documents, literature, audio and video tapes, compact discs, and letters that they deem to be pornographic, political, or intended for religious proselytizing. Persons seeking to enter North Korea with religious materials in a quantity deemed to be greater than that needed for personal use can be detained, fined and expelled. Information concerning laws governing items that may be brought into North Korea may be available from the North Korean Mission to the United Nations or from a North Korean embassy or consulate in a third country.

The Embassy of Sweden, which acts as U.S. Protecting Power, is located at: Munsu-Dong District, Pyongyang. The telephone and fax numbers, which are frequently out of order due to poor telecommunications in the DPRK, are: Tel: (850-2) 381-7908; Fax: (850-2) 381-7258. U.S. citizens contemplating living in or visiting North Korea are encouraged to register in person, by telephone or fax with the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, China, and to obtain updated information on travel and

security within North Korea. The Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Beijing is located at 2 Xiushui Dongjie, Beijing 100600; telephone: (86-10) 6532-3431; after hours: (86-10) 6532-1910; fax: (86-10) 6532-4153; e-mail AmCit-Beijing@state.gov. It is also possible to register from the United States via the Internet through the U.S. Embassy's home page at <http://www.usembassy-china.org.cn>.

Security

The activities and conversations of foreigners in North Korea are closely monitored by government security personnel. Hotel rooms, telephones and fax machines may be monitored, and personal possessions in hotel rooms may be searched. Photographing roads, bridges, airports, rail stations, or anything other than designated public tourist sites can be perceived as espionage and may result in confiscation of cameras and film or even detention. Foreign visitors to North Korea may be arrested, detained or expelled for activities that would not be considered crimes in the U.S., including involvement in unsanctioned religious and political activities or engaging in unauthorized travel or interaction with the local population. Since 1998, four U.S. citizens have been detained by North Korean authorities. Consular access has not always been granted readily, and there have been allegations of mistreatment while in custody, as well as the requirement to pay large fines to obtain release.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

- Jan. 1 & 2 New Year's Day
- Feb. Sollal (Chinese New Year)*
- Feb/Mar. Taeborum (Lantern Festival)*
- Feb. 16 Kim Jong-il's Birthday
- Mar. 1 Anti-Japanese Uprising Day
- Mar. 8 International Women's Day
- Apr/May Buddha's Birthday*
- Apr. 15 Kim Il-sung's Birthday
- May 1 May Day
- June 1 Children's Day
- June 6 Young Pioneers of Korea Day
- June 25 Fatherland Liberation War Day
- July 27 Victory Day
- Aug. 15 Liberation Day
- Sept/Oct. Ch'ilsok (Harvest Moon Festival)*
- Sept. 9 Independence Day
- Oct. 10 Korean Workers's Party Day
- Nov. 3 Kwangju Student Uprising Day
- Nov. 7 October Revolution Day
- Dec. 27 Constitution Day

*variable

RECOMMENDED READING

The following titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country:

Byoung-Lo, Philo Kim. *Two Koreas in Development: A Comparative Study of Principles & Strategies of Capitalist & Communist Third World Development*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transactions Publications, 1991.

Cummings, Bruce. *The Two Koreas: On the Road to Reunification*. New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1991.

Hayes, Peter. *Pacific Powderkeg: American Nuclear Dilemmas in Korea*. New York: Free Press, 1990.

Merrill, John. *D.P.R. Korea: Politics, Economics, & Society*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1987.

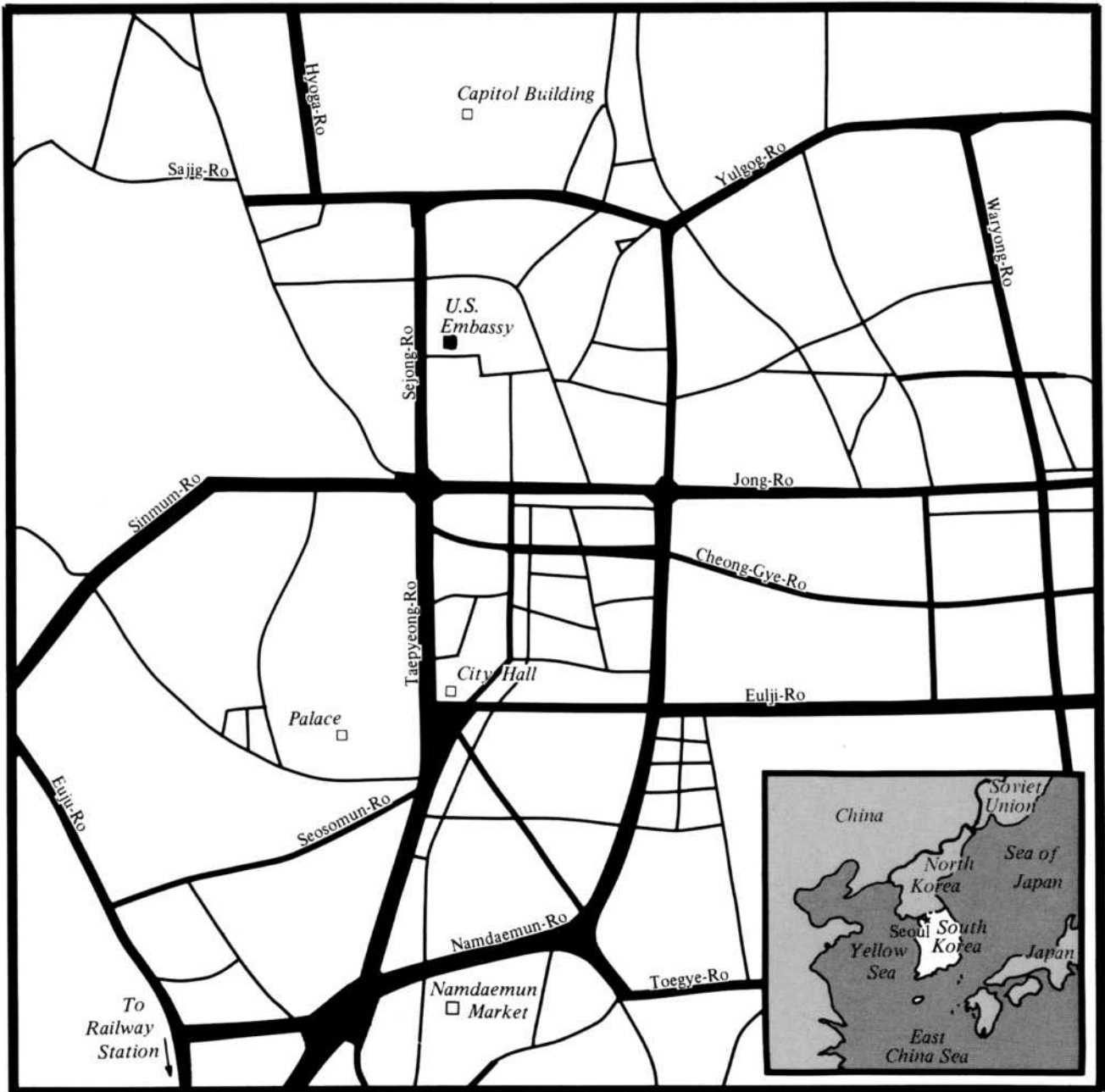
Mosher, Stephen W., ed. *Korea in the 1990s: Prospects for Unification*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publications, 1991.

Nahm, Andrew C. *Introduction to Korean History and Culture*. Elizabeth, NJ: Hollym International, 1992.

Nash, Amy. *North Korea*. New York: Chelsea House, 1990.

Suh, Dae-Sook. *Kim Il-Sung: The North Korean Leader*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1989.

Taylor, William J., Jr., et al., eds. *The Korean Peninsula: Prospects for Arms Reduction under Global Detente*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990.



Seoul, Korea (South)

KOREA, SOUTH

Republic of Korea

Major Cities:

Seoul, Pusan, Taegu, Kwangju

Other Cities:

Cheju, Inchön, Kwangju, Kyöngju, Masan, Panmunjön, Suwön, Ulsan, Yösu

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report 2001 for South Korea. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to "The Land of the Morning Calm," a country with a people obsessed with nature, and with mountains in particular. Wherever you travel, you will see them out in the open air, clad in the latest adventure fashions.

According to the Koreans, the first of their kin was born in 2333 B.C.E. Less aesthetically-minded scientists believe Korea was first inhabited around 30,000 B.C.E., when tribes from central and northern Asia migrated to the peninsula. Under constant pressure from China, these tribes banded together to found a kingdom in the 1st century C.E. By 700 C.E. the Silla Kingdom of Korea was at its cultural stride, proliferat-

ing the country with palaces, pagodas, and pleasure gardens. But in the early 13th century, the Mongols reached Korea and pursued a scorched-earth policy. When the Mongol Empire collapsed, the Choson Dynasty succeeded, and a Korean script was developed.

In 1592 Japan invaded the country and was followed by China. The Koreans were routed, and the Chinese Manchu Dynasty established itself. Turning its back on a hostile world, Korea closed its doors to outside influence until the early 20th century, when Japan annexed the peninsula. The Japanese occupied Korea until the end of World War II. After the war, the U.S. occupied the south of the peninsula; the U.S.S.R. occupied north. Elections to decide the fate of the country were held only in the south, and when the south declared its independence, the north invaded.

By the time the war ended, 2 million people had died, and the country had been officially divided. After a few years of semi-democracy in the south, martial law was declared in 1972. The next 15 years roller-coasted between democracy and repressive martial law, hitting a low in 1980, when 200 student protesters were killed in the Kwangju massacre. By the late 1980s, the country was at a flash point, student pro-

tests were convulsing the country and workers throughout Korea were walking off the job to join them. Among the demands were democratic elections, freedom of the press, and the release of political prisoners. The government did not budge until President Chun suddenly decided to grant everything the protesters asked for.

Korean society is based on the tenets of Confucianism, a system of ethics developed in China around 500 B.C.E. Confucianism emphasizes devotion and respect-for parents, family, friends, and those in positions of authority. Many Koreans attribute their country's remarkable success in recent decades to this attitude. In modern Korean society, Confucianism is most noticeable in relations between people. The Five Relationships prescribe behavior between ruler and subject, father and son, husband and wife, old and young, and between friends. If you fall outside any of these relationships, you do not effectively exist.

South Koreans have turned their hand to all art forms. Traditional music is similar to that of Japan and China, with an emphasis on strings. Traditional painting has strong Chinese and calligraphic elements, with the brush line being the most important feature. Most tradi-



Susan Rock. Reproduced by permission.

Food vendor outside subway station in Seoul

tional sculpture is Buddhist, and includes statues and pagodas. Seoul is also a showpiece of modern and traditional architecture, including the city gates and the Choson-era Kyonbok Palace.

The Republic of Korea represents a fascinating blend of the past and present. The Korean people are proud of their long history and unique cultural traditions, and they remain committed to preserving their heritage into the next millennium.

Korea and its capital, Seoul, offer a wide range of both cultural and recreational opportunities. By providing a lifestyle that includes a combination of both the unique and familiar, Korea will prove to be a fascinating place to live, work or travel.

MAJOR CITIES

Seoul

Seoul has a population of more than 10 million people. It is located in the northwest part of the Republic, about 30 miles south of the DMZ, which separates North and South Korea.

The name derives from "Sorabol," the capital of the Shilla Kingdom. Seoul was established as the capital in 1392 by the first emperor of the Yi Dynasty. At that time, Seoul was surrounded entirely by the four hills that now simply form the boundaries of the downtown area. Today, the urbanized area extends well beyond those boundaries. The Han River flows through the southern part of the city and into the Yellow Sea.

As mentioned earlier, Seoul is the repository for Korea's history and culture. Part of the city's charm is the juxtaposition of traditional characteristics with modern life. For example, three of the major palaces in the city, Kyongbok, Changdok, and Toksu are all located in downtown Seoul within walking distance of the Embassy and the Compounds I & 11 residential areas. A walk in almost any city neighborhood will reveal not only concrete, high-rise apartments, but also small parks and traditional homes. Shops range from those high-dollar establishments catering to the expatriate community, to local "mom and pop" stores and streetside vendors peddling traditional snacks.

Seoul was a major casualty of the Korean war, with 80% of the city razed. Since that time, modern

buildings have sprung up everywhere, and factories and industrial areas have mushroomed throughout the city and beyond. Hosting the 1986 Asian Games and the 1988 Summer Olympic Games boosted Seoul's image as a major venue for international conferences (hotels, tourist services, etc.). Seoul now looks forward to cohosting the soccer World Cup in 2002.

Utilities

Apartments and houses are wired for 110/120 volts, 60 cycles. Electricity is reliable, so regulators are not required.

Food

Local markets provide an alternative to grocery shopping. Large supermarkets, usually located in the basement level of major department stores, have a wide selection of local produce and meats, as well as imported items—the latter being quite expensive. Residents also have a choice of patronizing the high-end delicatessens and foreigner's shops, which offer a wide array of items. Neighborhood vendors will be less expensive, but their standards of handling and cleanliness may not meet U.S. standards. Although there have been no reports of serious illness from eating locally purchased produce, it is always wise to carefully clean all fruits and vegetables, and to handle meats/poultry/fish with appropriate care and common sense.

Liquor is readily available in Korea. Korea's local beer (OB and Crown) is reasonably good. Imported wines are available at various delicatessens and shops throughout the city; expect to pay an extraordinarily high price.

Clothing

In addition to dressing for a relatively conservative environment, employees should come prepared for the four very distinct seasons that Korea offers: from hot, humid summers to cold, dry winters. Fortunately, Korea exports a wide array of clothing items. It is easy to supplement a wardrobe here. Many American/European

designer names can be located in the markets of Seoul (Itaewon, Namdae-mun, Tongdae-mun). These items are usually "seconds," however, and you need to be on the look-out for glaring flaws. Larger sizes (be it with clothing or shoes) can be difficult to find, although there are plenty of tailors and shoemakers in Itaewon who can happily create whatever designs you have in mind. Items that are easy to find are: wool and acrylic sweaters, knit shirts, leather goods, sport shoes, raincoats, jackets, parkas.

Men: Dark suits are appropriate for summer and winter wear. Those with definite preferences or who are hard to fit should bring a good supply or arrange to receive mail-order catalogs to replenish their wardrobes as necessary. Many have suits and shirts made on the local economy; service and standards are usually high, and prices are exceptionally reasonable.

Women: Women in Seoul dress more conservatively than they do in the U.S. In deference to local customs, American women usually wear clothing that is not conspicuously bare-although attitudes toward fashion styles are changing, showing too much skin is still considered uncouth.

Modern styles and attractive clothing are readily available and reasonably priced. Availability, however, will depend on what local factories are producing at that time. Larger sizes can also pose a challenge. In response to that, there are good seamstresses available, and many employees have had clothes made. As always, mail-order catalogs are a big help.

Children: Various kinds of children's clothing are available at local markets and are reasonably priced. However, some parents find shopping for infants and pre-teens difficult. Shopping for teenagers will not pose any problems-stylish brand-name items made for export are readily available and at good prices.

Supplies and Services

There are numerous beauty shops and barbershops on the local economy as well. However, the latter establishments may not have a staff fluent in English; bring a friend to help out, at least initially.

Domestic Help

The days of inexpensive domestic help are long gone. Most domestic help are not Korean, but rather hail from the Philippines, Thailand, and Sri Lanka.

Religious Activities

Yongsan Military Base has services for the following faiths: Protestant, Roman Catholic, Episcopal, Jewish, and non-denominational. Roman Catholic Mass is also offered in Spanish. American and European missionaries, as well as military chaplains, can provide religious services and Sunday School services.

Seoul has several churches throughout the city, some of which provide English-language services. There is a Mosque near Itaewon market. Other faiths represented are: Seoul Union Church (interdenominational), the International Union Church of Seoul, and the Seoul Memorial Baptist Church. In addition, services are available for the Anglican, Greek Orthodox, Christian Science, Seventh-day Adventist, Latter Day Saints/Mormons, Catholic and Lutheran faiths.

Education

Seoul American Middle School. The middle school program covers students in grades six through eight. The programs and enrollment are similar to those of the DoDDs elementary and DoDDs high schools. Seoul American Elementary School (SAES) (DoDDs). The elementary school program covers kindergarten to grade five. Children must be 5 years old by October 31st of the school year to enroll. SAES follows the U.S. curriculum but has many extracurricular activities. Enrollment is 1,500 students. Unlike many of the private schools in Seoul, it offers an extensive educational, physical, and behavioral

specialist program. There is also a talented/gifted program. After school care is available through the School Age Services (SAS) program.

program for children 3-4 years old. Seoul American High School (SAHS) (DoDDsj). The high school program covers grades 7 to 9. Enrollment is approximately 1,000. The school follows the U.S. curriculum and offers a variety of extracurricular activities. Approximately 80% of graduates pursue higher education. There are programs available for students with special needs.

Seoul Foreign School. The campus consists of two elementary schools (one American and one British), a middle school and a high school. SFS American elementary school provides program for children from Junior-K through grade 5. Children must be 4 years old by September 30 in order to enroll in the half-day JK program. All other programs are full day. SFS British elementary school follows the British system and accepts children from 3 to 12; it works closely with SFS middle school and children can automatically transfer. SFS Middle and High Schools follow the U.S. curriculum and offer a wide range of programs and activities-SFS has its own pool and auditorium. The high school also offers the international baccalaureate. SFS has extremely high academic standards and caters to high achievers. It does not offer programs with special needs. The school is very popular with the international community and should be contacted as soon as possible to secure a place. For new students there are application and registration fees totaling USD 500, which are due at the time of application.

SFS provides programs from kindergarten through grade 12. JK students must turn 4 by December 31 of the school year. SIS follows the U.S. curriculum and offers a wide range of programs and activities however, it does not provide programs for children with special needs. The school also has a large



Naksonjae Palace and garden in Seoul

Courtesy of Motoko Huthwaite

ESL (English as a Second Language) department catering to children who do not speak English as their native language.

Special Educational Opportunities

A multitude of educational opportunities is available at post for spouses and dependents. Many take advantage of the opportunity to complete undergraduate or graduate degrees, as well as to learn Korean.

There are several avenues of educational opportunities available through the military base. The University of Maryland and Central Texas College offer undergraduate level programs. For example, the University of Maryland offers courses in Asian Studies, Business, Computer Studies, English, Government/Politics, History, Management Studies, Psychology, Sociology, and Technical Management. Alternatively, the Central Texas

College offers Associate Degrees in Applied Management, Automobile Maintenance, Business Management, Computer Science, Food Service, Hotel/Motel Management, Law Enforcement, MicroComputer Technology, and Office Management.

Additionally, Troy State University offers graduate degree programs. In general, the school year for these institutions is divided into five 8-week semesters, with classes meeting 2 nights weekly for 3 hours.

The Moyer Recreation Center is a U.S.-military facility that offers classes in arts and crafts. Power tools and photography supplies/equipment are also available for personal projects. Check the military newsletters for scheduling.

Nursery Schools and Child Care. There are a few good preschools in Seoul, using both Montessori and social learning concepts.

Sports

Koreans are sports enthusiasts, and nearly all participate in some form of athletics, including golf, tennis, skiing, hiking, and mountain climbing. Korean spectator sports include soccer, baseball, tennis, and hockey. Foreigners are welcome to attend the competitive sports events held at Seoul City Stadium. In season, the Seoul gymnasium has boxing, wrestling, basketball, or volleyball events.

Golf is extremely popular among Koreans. New golf courses are plentiful, and several are located a short distance outside the city. They are attractive and challenging, but quite expensive.

Ice-skating is available all through the year at an indoor rink in Seoul. It is best to bring your own skates. Korean hockey, figure, and racing skates are available, but they are not of the best quality and often do not fit American feet.

Skiing is a popular sport in Korea. There are several resorts within a 3-4-hour drive of Seoul. However, many families drive themselves. Since natural snowfall near Seoul is unreliable, the closer ski resorts rely on man-made snow, enabling them to operate effectively for the whole season. All areas operate poma lifts and chair lifts, which are kept in good condition. Ski equipment can be rented at local resorts, although it will be expensive. Avid skiers may wish to bring their own equipment. It is possible to purchase equipment here, but the selection may be limited and expensive. A good selection of ski clothes can be made or purchased to order at the local markets, e.g., Itaewon. Ski helmets are not readily available in Seoul—skiers are advised to bring their own.

Courses in the traditional Korean martial arts of Tae Kwon Do and Hap Ki Do are readily available.

Hiking around Seoul is popular or Seoulites, especially in the spring and fall. The mountains and hills near the capital offer relatively easy

climbs and good photo opportunities.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

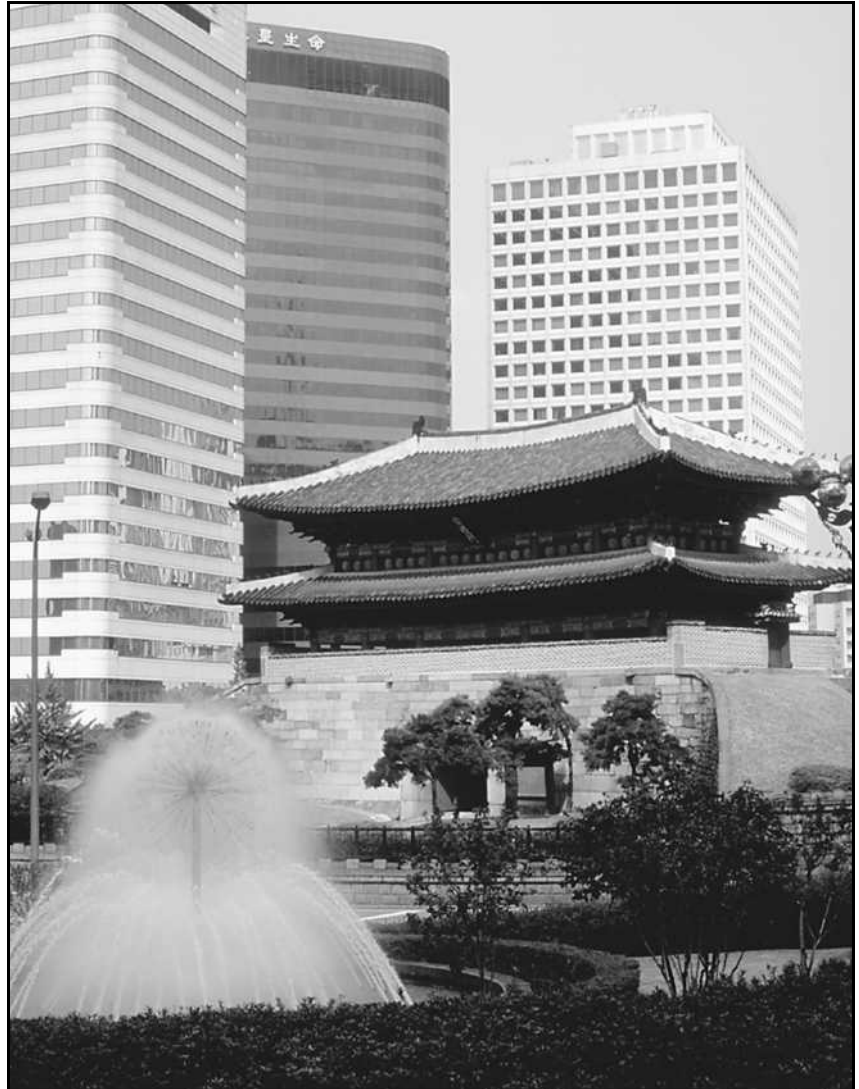
Korea has a rich, varied culture. As mentioned earlier, there are palaces, parks, museums, and historical sites scattered throughout Seoul. Beyond the cities' limits, regional capitals host exhibits and festivals, and offer even more opportunities for the adventurous traveler.

Families with small children will be interested in the amusement parks and similar facilities geared for younger interests. Lotte World is a huge indoor amusement/shopping complex, and a zoo is located at Seoul Grand Park, located at the southern edge from the city. Everland is a family entertainment area with a modern theme park, zoo, outdoor and indoor water parks and winter sledding about an hour's drive from downtown Seoul. Near the provincial capital of Suwon—a tourist destination in its own right—is the highly popular Korean Folk Village. At the Folk Village, traditional dress, buildings, and folk traditions are re-created, making a pleasant day trip.

There are other travel options on the peninsula. For example, the southern city of Kyoungju, is noted worldwide for its historical importance as the capital of the Shilla Dynasty. Cheju Island, 60 miles off the south coast, offers waterfalls and fishing villages, as well as being a popular honeymoon choice for Korean newlyweds. For the mountain climber, the east coast of Korea offers a myriad of opportunities, most notable of which is Mount Sorak.

Entertainment

Seoul offers a wide range of choices for entertainment, from the very expensive, black-tie event to much more reasonable options. Plays, operas, ballet, and orchestral performances are held frequently throughout the year, and at venues around the city. Local artists, as well as “big-name” international



View of Seoul, South Korea

© Wolfgang Kaehler/Corbis. Reproduced by permission.

artists, perform in Seoul. The National Theater, Sejong Cultural Center, and Seoul Arts Center and the LG Arts Center produce regular programs and schedules of their offerings, as well as ticket prices.

Popular movies find their way to the local Korean theaters. First-run American movies are shown with Korean subtitles. The theaters are clean and quite modern, and prices for shows are commensurate with U.S. prices, if not a little less expensive.

There are ample avenues for the thespian in the family; the Yongsan Players is an active amateur theater group sponsored by the mili-

tary. The Yongsan Chamber Music Society, which has Korean and American professional and amateur members, gives concerts. Shutterbugs will find many fascinating photo opportunities in Korea.

Seoul offers countless restaurants, bars, and coffee shops, to suit everyone's taste and pocketbook. There are some publications that detail some of the more prominent establishments (see Recommended Reading); they provide a good “jumping off point” for exploring the city.

Social Activities

The American Women's Club is active in Seoul as is the Seoul International Women's Association



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Harbor at Pusan, South Korea

(SIWA). The United Services Organization (USO) and American Red Cross (ARC) also offer volunteer opportunities. Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, and a new Teen Center for older children offers a variety of family options. Supervised gatherings include barbecues, picnics, swimming, local tours, theater parties, and other activities.

Koreans generally enjoy socializing with Americans. Please refer to Recommended Reading for books that deal with some of the cultural nuances of entertaining, gift giving, etc. In addition to the massive U.S. military presence in Korea, there is likewise a huge expatriate community of third-country diplomats and businesspeople. Finding venues to meet these groups can be a challenge, but well worth the effort in getting different points of view about life on the peninsula.

Pusan

Located about 330 kilometers from Seoul at the southeastern tip of the peninsula, Pusan is Korea's second largest city, its main seaport, and a major industrial center. In July 1950, Korean War refugees increased Pusan's population tenfold, from 200,000 to 2 million.

Today Pusan has nearly 4 million inhabitants.

Automaking, shipbuilding, electronics, footwear, and textiles currently are the main export industries of the district. Aerospace and tourism industries are growing rapidly.

The ocean moderates Pusan's weather, giving it the mildest climate on the Korean peninsula. Although Pusan has four distinct seasons, its winters are usually warmer than Seoul's and its summers are cooler and drier. However, heavy rains and typhoons which come in late summer often hit the southern areas harder than in Seoul, sometimes causing serious damage.

Tourist attractions in and near Pusan include Kyongju, the capital of the ancient Shilla Kingdom; many centuries-old Buddhist temples, fortresses, and Confucian schools; several well-developed beach resorts; and the Hallyo Waterway National Park, a rocky, island-studded 100-kilometer stretch of Korea's south coast that can be visited by hydrofoil or ferryboat.

There are daily flights from Pusan to several Korean and Japanese cit-

ies, including Seoul and Tokyo. Pusan is 1 hour from Seoul by plane; 4 hours by train; and 5-6 hours by car. Ferryboat service also links Pusan to Cheju Island, and to the Japanese ports of Shimonoseki and Osaka.

Food

A wide variety of foods can be purchased in Pusan, although some items are rather expensive. There is a good selection of fresh fish, fruits, and vegetables in local markets. Also, fish is available at the large waterfront fish market.

The tap water quality varies, so boiling is advisable. Bottled distilled water and carbonated water are plentiful but not cheap.

Pusan offers a great variety of Korean, Japanese, Korean-style Chinese, and Western restaurants ranging from cheap noodle houses to expensive tourist hotel restaurants. Pusan is well known for Japanese-style seafood restaurants, where such delicacies as sushi and broiled eel are fresh and authentic, but expensive. Good Western bakeries and American ice cream franchises are more recent arrivals.

Supplies and Services

Almost any consumer goods or services are available on the economy in Pusan, although luxury goods and some imports, such as petroleum products, are expensive.

Pusan's department stores, specialty shops, and open-air markets offer a wide selection of Korean-made consumer goods. Good values are available in clothing, luggage, and leather goods, furniture, brass, porcelain, silks, and other textiles, lacquerware, amethyst, and smoky topaz.

Local labor and services are generally of good quality, but expensive.

Health and Medicine

Pusan has several modern, full-service private hospitals, including two (Baptist and Maryknoll) that have foreigner clinics and American doctors and dentists. There are many

U.S.-trained Korean doctors and dentists. There are also fine doctors trained at Korean medical schools, some of whom speak English well.

Transportation

Pusan has serious traffic problems, with inadequate roads to accommodate the heavy volume of trucks and buses and the growing number of private cars. Public transportation, which includes a subway, is improving but is very crowded.

Religious Activities

Chapels at Hialeah hold regular Catholic, Protestant, and Latter-day Saint services. English-language Protestant services, as well as a wide range of Korean-language Protestant, Catholic, and Buddhist services, also are available off post. Pusan's small expatriate Jewish community is served by a U.S. Army rabbi based in Seoul.

Education

An international school, with a curriculum based on the British system, serves the Pusan expatriate community. In February 1994, the school had six full-time teachers and 60 students, including 30 Americans. Dependents of U.S. diplomats assigned to Pusan are authorized to attend. The school is for preschool through junior high grades, ages 3-13. To enter grade 1, the equivalent of American kindergarten, a student must be 5 years old by December 31.

Special Educational Opportunities

Although the University of Maryland has a branch at Hialeah, only a few courses are offered. Other American universities have more extensive English-language course offerings in Seoul. Several very good Korean universities in the Pusan area offer a full range of undergraduate and graduate-level courses and welcome qualified foreign students. Although the language of instruction is normally Korean, graduate textbooks are often in English.

Sports

Mountain hiking is Pusan's most popular athletic activity. Snow is insufficient for skiing. Coastal sailing is severely restricted for military security reasons. Golf is available at military golf courses, two of which, at Jinhae and Taegu, are about a 1-hour drive from Pusan. Otherwise, golf on the economy is prohibitively expensive.

The USIS, municipal, and university libraries all have English-language collections. Same-day delivery of English-language daily newspapers from Seoul is affordable.

Entertainment

Pusan's symphony orchestra gives periodic concerts, and Pusan's municipal cultural center occasionally hosts attractions from Seoul or foreign countries. Several movie theaters show foreign films, usually with original soundtracks and Korean subtitles.

Pusan has several Korean-language television and radio stations.

Social Activities

English is spoken widely among Pusan's relatively small professional class, especially by the young. Korean working contacts are often eager for social contact. All-male group drinking excursions remain popular, but traditional tendencies for socializing to be segregated by gender and to be done outside the home are gradually weakening. Flower arranging, bonsai tree cultivation, the Korean tea ceremony, Chinese calligraphy, traditional music, martial arts, mountain hiking, Korean chess, go, Buddhism, and Christian churches are among the many foci of local social organizations. Many of these welcome interested foreigners.

The international expatriate community offers many diverse working and social contacts and a broad range of informally organized activities. These activities generally are centered on the International School and on the International Women's Association.

Taegu

Taegu, a city of over 2 million people, is located about 200 miles southeast of Seoul. It is about 50 minutes by air from Seoul, 3 hours by train, or about 3½ hours by car. The city is situated in a large plain surrounded by mountains. The climate is similar to that of Seoul, but is often somewhat colder in the winter and hotter in the summer. It can be windy and dusty.

Taegu has five large universities and is known as an educational and cultural center. Citizens tend to be more conservative than their counterparts in Seoul. Taegu is in the center of the apple- and grape-growing region of Korea. Its economy has traditionally been dependent on textiles, though recently the auto parts and machinery industries have expanded rapidly.

Local markets, with reasonable care in selection, are the best source for seasonal fruits and vegetables and some fish. Two of the larger department stores in the city also stock a variety of supermarket items, but at premium prices.

AFKN television and radio reception is good in Taegu. Three Korean television stations also broadcast. Shortwave radio reception is good.

Local university hospitals have modern facilities and clinics. A Catholic Hospital is also available. A few dentists in the city have U.S. training.

Good beaches are about a 2-hour drive from Taegu on the east coast of Korea, near Pohang. Pusan is also 2 hours away. Kyongju, an historical area dating from the Silla period, is 1 hour away by car. There are many other interesting historical sites easily accessible from Taegu. Hiking and picnicking are favorite pastimes here.

Kwangju

The provinces of Cholla-Namdo and Cholla-Pukto. About 6 million people live in the two provinces; 1.2

million in Kwangju, the capital of Cholla Namdo, and about 500,000 in Chonju, the capital of Cholla-Pukto. Chonju and Kwangju are connected to Seoul and Pusan by a limited access, toll highway. Kwangju is about 4 hours from Seoul and about 3½ hours from Pusan. A four-lane super highway exists between Kwangju and Taejon.

Multiple flights go to and from Seoul daily, and there is air service to Pusan and Cheju. No air service is provided to Taegu. Several express trains travel to and from Seoul every day; one-way travel takes about 3½ hours. Seoul bus service is frequent, but conditions are only fair.

Theaters in Kwangju City show a few foreign films with original soundtrack and subtitles in Korean. A civic auditorium stages Korean pop and classical concerts. The new Kwangju Art Center houses two state-of-the-art theaters, an art gallery, a theater for traditional Korean music, an outdoor amphitheater, and a restaurant and coffee shop. Nearby are the Kwangju National Museum and the Kwangju Folk Art Museum. The Kumho Cultural features individual performing artists from time to time. It also has a small tea room.

Two enclosed sports arenas hold basketball, volleyball, and other indoor sports events. The city's large outdoor sports arena is used for political and civic events and soccer and baseball games. Several private country clubs offering 18-hole golf courses are located within 40 minutes from downtown Kwangju. There is a 9-hole public golf course at Kwangju Air Base.

Kwangju has several first-class hotels, with Western, Chinese, and Japanese restaurants. Prices are expensive. The hotels also have conference facilities, and there has been an increase in the number of events held in Kwangju in recent years.

Beaches nearest Kwangju are of poor quality. The one exception is the beach at Mokpo, but it is small and crowded during the summer season. Within a 2-hour drive, however, there are several nice beaches. There are also bridges to two islands, Chindo and Wando, which have recreational areas with hiking and swimming facilities. Temples and other cultural and scenic spots abound in the two provinces. Mountain climbing and hiking are excellent. In Cholla-Pukto, about 2 1/2 hours from Kwangju, Muju Resort offers skiing, swimming, and golfing.

Korean TV reception is good in Kwangju. Two Korean networks offer a full schedule of variety shows, dramas, and some U.S. shows run with Korean soundtracks. However, AFKN-TV can no longer be received,

Medical facilities are adequate. Kwangju has three large hospitals and numerous clinics. Although there are no American doctors in Kwangju, many doctors have been trained in the U.S. or Europe and speak English. Adequate medical care is available for emergencies.

The city sprays heavily in the summer to help prevent the spread of encephalitis. Cholera is now uncommon, but there still are regular outbreaks of diphtheria. Individuals should keep their inoculations up to date.

Schools for English-speaking children are not available in Kwangju. Children must attend school in other parts of the country, or out of the country.

OTHER CITIES

CHEJU, the capital of the island province of the same name, is located 120 miles south of Kwangju off Korea's southern coast. Called the "Hawaii of Korea," the island is a major tourist spot, and the city is its service center. Along with its international airport and myriad

accommodations, Cheju has a large port and light industries. Among the city's attractions are the Cheju Folk Museum; the Samsonghyöl (Cave of Three Spirits), which is said to have been the cradle of the island's three ancestral families; the Yongduam (Dragon Head Rock), a 30-foot high basalt rock head; and a wood and rock park on the outskirts. Cheju grew as a seaport after 1913; the port facilities were built following World War II. The current population of Cheju is roughly 259,000.

INCHŎN, located in northwest South Korea on the Yellow Sea, is the country's second largest port. Protected by a tidal basin, Inchŏn has an ice-free harbor and is the port and commercial center for Seoul. The city's economy is heavily dependent on the shipping and transshipping of goods, and is one of the country's main industrial centers. Products manufactured in Inchŏn include iron, steel, coke, light metals, chemicals, fertilizers, and textiles. In addition, fishing is an important industry. The tidal flats off the coast of Inchŏn have developed large salt fields. Historically, Inchŏn was opened to foreign trade in 1883. Formerly called Jinsen by the Japanese as well as Chemulpo, Inchŏn is famous as the site of the landing of U.S. troops on September 15, 1950; a statue of Douglas MacArthur in Chayu Park commemorates this event. It was from Inchŏn that the subsequent U.N. drive northward was launched. Inchŏn's population today is approximately 2.3 million.

KWANGJU, in southwest South Korea, is an agricultural and commercial center built on the site of an ancient market. The capital of South Cholla Province, Kwangju has rice mills, and industries that produce rayon, cotton textiles, and beer. Situated in the Yongsan River lowland, the city is a railroad hub with more than one million residents. Kwangju is connected to Seoul and Pusan by a limited access toll highway and is four hours south of Seoul and three-and-a-half hours west of Pusan. Ancient tombs and

temples are located in the hills around Kwangju. The city of Tamyang, 7.5 miles north of Kwangju, is known for its bamboo wares. They are sold every five days at a market. The city also has a bamboo museum. The provincial town of Namwon is to the northeast. It is the home of Chunhyang, the heroine of Korea's famous story of love and conjugal fidelity.

KYŎNGJU, situated 205 miles southeast of Seoul, has been called one of the world's 10 most historic cities. Often described as a museum without walls, the city was the birthplace of Silla culture in 57 B.C., and served as the dynasty's capital until A.D. 935. Spared the destruction of war, there are many pagodas, shrines, temples, and tombs that survive today. The town's most popular temple—Pulguksa—dates from 535 and is an example of Korean Buddhist architecture. Sökkuram Grotto, home of a stone Buddha, is a well-known historic site. Several of the region's largest royal tombs may be found in downtown Kyöngju's Tumuli Park. Korea's most revered and best-known monument is probably Chömsöngdae Observatory, the country's oldest secular building, constructed in 634. Outside of Seoul's National Museum, the Kyöngju National Museum houses the country's finest exhibits of Silla culture. Kyöngju, with a population of more than 274,000 (1995 figure), is a four-and-a-half hour train or bus ride from Seoul; there is no direct air service. On the outskirts of Kyöngju is Pomun Lake Resort, with deluxe hotels, extensive shopping, and recreational facilities.

MASAN, situated 26 miles west of Pusan, is one of the most important commercial hubs in South Kyöng-sung Province. With a population of 500,000, the city has a thermoelectric plant, and machine and chemical factories. Masan serves as the market center for the agricultural regions of the Kimhae plain, as well as a service center for the hinterland. The port, now a free export zone, was instrumental in the region's expansion early this century. It was closed in 1908 because

of its strategic military location, but was reopened in 1967. Masan has road and rail connections to Pusan, and a junior teachers' college, which opened in 1968.

The village of **PANMUNJÖN** lies just south of the 38th Parallel. Truce negotiations during the Korean War began at nearby Kaesong, north of the 38th Parallel, but in October 1951, were moved to Panmunjön, where the truce was signed on July 27, 1953. Daily tours are arranged only by the Korean Tourist Bureau.

SUWÖN, located just south of Seoul is an 18th-century walled city, famous for its elaborate gates and its replica of a Korean folk village. The capital of Kyonggi province, Suwön is an important communications point and a local agricultural center. With a population of over 755,500, Suwön has large silk and rayon textile mills.

ULSAN is the site of the mammoth Hyundai automobile plant, in the center of a special industrial district. The city lies on the eastern edge of the T'aebaek-sanmaek Mountains, 35 miles northeast of Pusan. Shipbuilding and aluminum and fertilizer factories are among this open port's industries. Ulsan was transformed from a market center and fishing town to an industrial metropolis in the early 1960s, when road and rail links to Korea's major cities were finished. The population is an estimated 967,000.

YÖSU is a port in the extreme south, located 60 miles southeast of Kwangju on the Yösu Peninsula. Korea's navy was headquartered here from 1392 to 1910. This is now a fish exporting area of 183,600 residents, though industrial development in the Yochon Industrial District is also important. Yösu is linked to Seoul by rail and road and has regular connections to other seacoast cities.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Located on a peninsula squarely between China and Japan, Korea is a mountainous and ruggedly beautiful land of diverse geographical features. The Republic of Korea encompasses 34,247 square miles, or an area roughly the size of the State of Indiana. Seas form three of its boundaries: to the east is the Sea of Japan (or East Sea); to the south, the narrow Korean Straits, and to the west, the Yellow Sea. The Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) forms the northern boundary, separating the Republic of Korea from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK/North Korea).

The capital city of Seoul lies some 30 miles south of the DMZ. In addition, there are the regional capitals for various provinces in the country. There are also several important seaports in Korea. Pusan, about 300 miles southeast of Seoul, is Korea's main seaport. Inchon, about 40 miles west of Seoul, is the second most active port. The cities of Pohang, Ulsan, and Chinhae are also key sites in commerce.

Korea's climate is marked by four very distinct seasons. The winters are dry and cold, with snow usually appearing in January. The advent of the cherry blossoms heralds spring—a season that can also be somewhat unpredictable. A brief monsoon season and high temperatures combine to make city life rather humid in the summertime. Autumn is easily the best time of year in Korea, when both the cities and the countryside benefit from clear skies and vibrant fall foliage.

Only 19% of the country is flat enough to be arable, and that land is farmed intensively. In addition, there has been a steady shift away from the farm and into urban areas. Two-thirds of Korea's population now live in its cities.

Population

Korea is one of the world's most densely populated countries. Government figures from 1999 estimate South Korea's population to be 46.8 million, and the city of Seoul's is figured to be more than 10 million. The average age of the population has increased slightly, but the numbers who have first-hand memory of the Japanese occupation or the Korean war continue to decline.

Since 1945, exposure to Western influences has increased dramatically, bringing with it a corresponding evolution in lifestyles, thought, and behavior. Western-influenced attitudes and dress are now common throughout Seoul, but the traditional ideals still hold considerable sway, particularly in the countryside.

Religious freedom is one of the tenets of Korean law. Buddhism (23%) and Christianity (25%) show the most adherents. Others combine practices from Confucianism and Shamanism in their faith.

The Korean language is very distinct from Chinese, but shares a similar grammar and word order with Japanese. The Department of State classifies Korean as a "super-hard language." Han-gul, the phonetic alphabet, is used almost exclusively in all facets of daily life, with occasional Chinese characters finding their way into various publications. Although not a tonal language (such as Chinese or Vietnamese), Korean relies heavily on the Confucian idea of rank and status within society, using various forms of address, expressions, and grammatical nuances to convey those ideas. However, as with any language, a working knowledge of the Korean script and basic phrases will certainly be ample for most residents.

In Korea, the first name is the family name, followed by a given name. Married women continue to use their maiden names but add the prefix "Mrs." Only when associating with Westerners will women occa-

sionally identify themselves by their husband's surname. Koreans seldom address one another by their first names. It is very common practice here to exchange business cards upon introduction.

Traditionally, Korean homes were built of brick or stone around a courtyard, and had three to four bedrooms, a living room, and a kitchen. Bedrooms had charcoal-heated floors called "ondol." Windows were of glass, and sliding doors between rooms in the homes were latticed frames of wood covered with rice paper. Today, very few can claim to live in such housing. Most city dwellers live in high-rise apartments or in homes of cement block with tile roofing.

Traditional Korean food consists primarily of rice, soups, and the ubiquitous "kimchi," which is a mixture of pickled vegetables, red pepper, and garlic. Grilled meats, such as barbecued beef and ribs ("bulgogi" and "kalbi," respectively) are always popular. As with most of Asia, rice figures prominently in the Korean diet, not just as an essential part of one's meal, but also in traditional drinks. It is used to make "makkoli" (a light rice wine) and "soju" (a considerably stronger libation).

A brief Political History. Throughout most of its history, Korea has been invaded, influenced, and fought over by its larger neighbors. To protect themselves from such buffeting, the Yi Dynasty kings finally adopted a closed-door policy, which earned Korea the title of the "Hermit Kingdom." Although the Yi kings showed nominal fealty to the Chinese throne, Korea was, in fact, independent until the onset of Japanese colonialism in the early 20th century. Japan actually annexed Korea in 1910, beginning an era of almost total control from Tokyo. This era was marked by an effort to replace the Korean language and culture with those of Japan. Japanese colonial rule continued until the end of World War II.

With the defeat of the Japanese in World War II, the peninsula was divided along the 38th parallel. Soviet troops accepted the surrender of the Japanese in the North, and U.S. troops accepted it in the South. This division was cemented when the U.S.S.R. refused to allow a U.N. Commission to enter the North and supervise free elections. Thus, the Republic of Korea was established only in the South. The U.S.S.R. established a separate government in the North, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (D.P.R.K.), headed by Kim Il Sung.

In June 1950, the D.P.R.K. launched a massive invasion of the Republic of Korea, which was halted at the Naktong River near the southeastern city of Pusan, and then reversed by the historic U.S. Marine landing at Inchon that September.

Three years of bloody fighting followed, with massive numbers of troops from the People's Republic of China aiding the North, and troops of 16 U.N. member nations assisting the South. The truce signed on July 27, 1953 established a demilitarized zone along the 38th parallel.

A peace treaty has never been concluded. U.S. military forces remain in the Republic of Korea today to help enforce the Armistice and to deter aggression, pursuant to the Mutual Security Treaty concluded between the U.S. and the Republic of Korea in 1954. While an uneasy peace has been maintained on the peninsula since the Armistice, large armed forces confront each other across the DMZ and incidents continue to occur.

The Republic of Korea has had a stormy domestic political history. After 1948, short interludes of instability punctuated three long periods of authoritarian rule under Presidents Syngman Rhee (1948-1960), Park, Chung Hee (1961-1979), and Chun, Doo Hwan (1980-1987).

In 1987, a new constitution was drawn up in concert with all political parties. In the December 1987

election, a split between major opposition figures allowed Roh Tae-Woo of the Democratic Justice Party (DJP) to become Korea's first directly elected President since 1971, with just 36% of the vote. In the April 1988 legislative elections, the opposition parties together gained control of the National Assembly for the first time. In January 1990, however, the ruling DJP and two of the opposition parties merged to form the Democratic Liberal Party (DLP), which gained control of more than two-thirds of the seats in the Assembly.

In December 1992, Kim Young-Sam, former leader of one of the opposition parties that had merged to create the ruling DLP, was elected as the first civilian president in three decades. In his first year in office, President Kim implemented sweeping political and economic reforms, which signified a fundamental policy break from the previous administration, and which ended the political careers of several key officials from that administration.

President Kim Dae-Jung's historic election in 1997 represented the first time in Korean history that an opposition leader reached the highest office in the land. An internationally recognized human rights and democracy advocate, President Kim has made political and economic reform, together with the promotion of democracy and human rights, the watchwords of his Presidency. He has also reached out to North Korea with his policy of engagement, and, thus far, progress in expanding private-sector North-South contacts and cooperation has been great. He has also successfully pursued summit diplomacy with the U.S., Japan, China, and Russia, as well as other countries in Asia.

Public Institutions

Under the constitution, the Government is divided into three branches: the executive, legislative, and judicial. The President administers the country with the assistance of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, whom he appoints. All provincial and local

officials are appointed and work under the administration of the Ministry of Home Affairs. The judicial branch consists of the Supreme Court, three appellate courts, three district courts, and one family court. In addition, the military services have special courts.

The one-house National Assembly has 299 members. Three-quarters of the Assembly members are elected from single-member districts, while the others are chosen via a nationwide representative system. Each party receives one proportional seat for every three seats won in the election districts. The constitution provides for direct presidential elections every 5 years and National Assembly elections every 5 years.

Arts, Science, and Education

Korea's 5,000 years of history have produced a rich and vibrant artistic heritage. The handiwork seen, for example, in ceramics, woodworking, architecture, needlework, and calligraphy showcases the high level of craftsmanship evident here. Indeed, Korea has designated several artisans as "Living National Treasures," to honor their contributions to the arts and crafts of Korea, and to pass their skills on to the next generation.

Museums and galleries located primarily in Seoul, but also scattered throughout the country, display the works of the Koguryo, Paekche, and Shilla Dynasties. These displays reflect the different impacts of regional interests and conflicts-e.g., Chinese influence during the Koguryo, Buddhist influence during the Shilla. Later on, the Yi Dynasty (C.E. 1392-1910) illustrated the Confucian mores.

Traditional music in Korea is quite distinctive, and is used primarily in religious rituals, combined with prayer and dance. Concerts showcasing traditional court and temple music are quite popular. The art of "Pan'sori," where a lone singer relates a story, often lasting for up

to 8 hours, is also unique to the region.

Traditional dance is usually court, temple dance, or folk dancing, with highly stylized moves and musicals interpretations. Again, festivals and performances highlighting these dances are popular.

Korean research and development activities are centered in the scores of research institutes located in Seoul and elsewhere. These include the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIS), the Korea Institute of Industrial Economics and Technology (KIET), the Korea Atomic Energy Research Institute (KAERI), the Agency for Defense Development (ADD), and the Korea Educational Development Institute (KEDI).

Education at all levels is a highly emphasized facet of Korean life. School children take their studies seriously, and there is enormous pressure from the family and friends to succeed. Government and private investment in education is heavy, particularly in technical schools and colleges, both of which have expanded exponentially in the last decades.

Numerous institutions of higher education were originally established through missionaries' assistance: Ewha Women's University (Methodist), Yonsei University (interdenominational), Soongjun University (Presbyterian), and Sogang University (Jesuit). Of these, the most prestigious is Seoul National University (SNU). These institutions introduced Western culture to Korea during the early part of the 1900s, and many national leaders have since received their education from them.

Commerce and Industry

Korea is one of the largest of the U.S. trading partners, and, currently, our sixth largest export market, surpassing those of Australia, Brazil, China, France, and Italy.

Imports to Korea are returning to pre-crisis (1997) levels, with strong growth expected throughout 2000. Concurrently, Korea also has been described as one of the toughest markets in the world for doing business, a place where firms must do their homework and take nothing for granted.

In response to the late-1997 economic crisis, the administration is implementing structural reforms, especially in the financial and corporate sectors aimed at putting the Korean economy on a more open, market-oriented basis. With the rapid improvement in the nation's economy, however, the pressure to press on with reform and restructuring has abated somewhat.

Despite these challenges, there are many outstanding export possibilities for U.S. goods and service providers, and new opportunities continue to abound. For instance, Korea will be Asia's third largest e-commerce market by 2002. Korea's e-commerce market is forecast to grow to almost \$10 billion by 2003, making Korea the 10th largest e-commerce market in the world. The number of Korean Internet users is now estimated to be about 10 million-more users than exist in Australia, Taiwan, Italy, Sweden, Netherlands, and Spain, and rapidly gaining on Canada and the U.K. The Korean market for U.S. non-memory-integrated circuits and microassemblies continues to expand. Korea imports more integrated circuits than it does gas and oil.

In sum, Korea is undergoing a fundamental and revolutionary period of change. Although barriers remain, it is clear that Korea is gradually evolving into a more competitive, more transparent, more user-friendly business environment. U.S. exporters realize the strategic importance of being active in this key market and contribute to the vibrant commercial environment that is Korea.

Transportation

Automobiles

Given the narrow streets and crowded traffic conditions here, small, maneuverable vehicles that are easy to park are best. Vehicles shipped to Korea should not be crated, and all-risk maritime insurance is recommended. Before driving a vehicle, you must have third-party, property damage, and liability insurance, which can be purchased locally.

To obtain a local drivers license, a valid drivers license issued elsewhere (U.S. or foreign) is needed. Otherwise, the local drivers test, which is considered difficult, must be taken. A Korean license is valid for 5 years and is renewable. The fee for both initial issuance and renewal (as of 1999) is 3,500 won.

Traffic accidents in Korea are a serious problem. The Republic of Korea has one of the world's highest traffic fatality rates per number of cars on the road, well over 10 times the rates in the U.S. and Japan. Pedestrian casualties are also high. There are many streets with unmarked crosswalks, and many crosswalks that are marked yet not observed by drivers. Pedestrians often exacerbate traffic problems by jumping into the street to hail taxis. Motorcycles make the situation even more hazardous, with a marked tendency to drive wherever there happens to be room-which can even include the sidewalks.

Local

Local bus transportation in Seoul is inexpensive (for example, W600 per ride on a city bus, regardless of distance) and offers an easy alternative for getting around town. However, schedules per se are nonexistent and buses can be extremely crowded during the rush hour. Routes are printed on the sides of buses-but in Korean script. A basic knowledge of the local language will be a great help in navigating your way around.

Seoul has a fast, safe, and inexpensive subway system, which is easy

to understand. Routes handle both major city stops and areas well beyond the city boundaries. As with any large city, the subway is crowded at rush hour.

Local cabs are convenient and reasonably priced; all taxis are metered so bargaining is not necessary. Tipping is also not expected. Taxis can be hailed from anywhere on a street, although there are some taxi stands near the larger hotels. When hailing a cab, beckon with your hand facing down. Cabbies will not pick up a rider if they do not wish to go to that destination; they will also be disinclined to pick up fares during their shift change (usually late afternoon).

Deluxe cabs are clearly marked. Geared primarily for foreign tourists, the meter starts at W3,000, and the drivers are said to have a grasp of Japanese and some English-language skills.

Regional

Both highways and city streets are often heavily congested with cars, taxis, and buses. Construction projects are continuous. There are good roads from the airport into Seoul proper, and also to points south and east.

Intercity bus transportation is available throughout Korea. Modern, air-conditioned coaches provide inexpensive transportation to major cities. Schedules are available at both the Seoul Express and Nambu Bus Terminals.

The Government owns and operates the entire railway system and continues its efforts to modernize and expand railroad facilities. The well-developed system has first-class coaches available at reasonable fares. There is train service to all major cities. Night express trains have Pullman sleeper cars, and long-distance trains have a dining car. Licensed vendors are authorized to come aboard to sell refreshments.

Sea transport is essential to Korea because there are no open land bor-

ders. Shipping services are well developed, and almost all major foreign shipping lines regularly call at ports here. Usually, these are cargo or cargo/passenger ships. The principal ports are Pusan, on the southern tip of the peninsula, and Incheon, northwest of Seoul.

Many international airlines operate in Korea, and Korean carriers (Asiana and Korean Airlines) fly domestic routes. The schedules are convenient and the airfares are usually quite reasonable.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

The Republic of Korea has made great strides in both its telephone and telecommunications services. Cellular phone service is available with many carriers and options to choose from. A wide variety of Internet services is available and prices are comparable to those found in the US. Prepaid phone cards are available, the price per minute back to the U.S. ranges from 8 to 10 cents a minute.

Radio and TV

Korean radio stations offer a wide variety of good musical programs—particularly classical—on both AM and FM stations. In addition to these local Korean channels, the Armed Forces Network Korea (AFN-K) broadcasts news, music, sports, and some US. radio programs. Voice of America programs and National Public Radio are available as well. Some employees use shortwave radios to pick up the BBC, CBC, Deutsche Welle, and others.

Cable TV, some with foreign programming, is widely available. The four Korean television networks offer a variety of programming, with a few either in English or with the benefit of subtitles for foreign viewers. The AFN-K-TV transmits a choice of CNN newscasts and U.S. television programs. The NTSC system is used in Korea, so a U.S.-make television set can receive local broadcasts. Hong Kong's Star TV

Network is also available. There are plenty of locally run video shops, which also carry popular releases.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

The Korea Times and the Korea Herald are the two English-language newspapers published in Seoul, with an obvious emphasis on Korean news. The U.S. military newspaper, the Pacific Stars and Stripes, is published daily in Japan and shipped to Seoul. All these publications are available for home delivery/subscription. In addition, the International Herald Tribune (Asia edition), and the Financial Times are now printed locally. Asian Wall Street Journal, and USA Today arrive a day late.

Most popular American magazines and recent paperback novels are available at the post exchange.

In addition to these options, the Kyobo Building is well known for its wide selection of English-language titles. Although prices may be higher than in the U.S., the selection is usually quite good.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

Medically speaking, Korea is an advanced country. Hospitals are usually well equipped with state-of-the-art diagnostic and therapeutic equipment. Many Korean physicians have trained and practiced in the US. Specialized care is available at Korean hospitals, as well. High-quality dental care, both general and specialized, is available in Seoul at costs comparable to those in the U.S. U.S.-trained orthodontists are available. Optical services, including American board-certified ophthalmologists, are available at major university-affiliated hospitals at reasonable costs.

In general, specialized medical needs can be handled, but there may be cultural differences that can affect overall satisfaction with services. You may find Korean medical

practices (bedside manners) somewhat different from what you are accustomed to: be prepared to discuss your medical needs and medical history. In Korea, it is normally regarded as the patient's responsibility to inform the doctor of any potential medical concerns. Don't wait until you are asked; you may not be.

Korean doctors do not always volunteer information about their diagnosis or treatment options. When asked, they are usually reluctant to give the patient such information.

Korean doctors rarely tell the patient the nature of the medicines prescribed. The name of the medication, too, will most likely not appear on the package. You may wish to ask your doctor the name and type of medication he is prescribing before having the prescription filled at the pharmacy; the pharmacist may simply refer such questions to the doctor. In Korea there is no primary care system; all doctors are specialists. Be prepared to pay, in cash, at the completion of each visit.

Community Health

Seoul has air pollution levels that are considered moderate by U.S. standards. Hazardous levels are episodic and seasonal, not continuous. Photochemical pollution or smog results from the action of sunlight on motor vehicle exhaust producing ozone. This type of pollution predominates in summer. In winter, particulate and sulfur oxides, which result from coal-fired heating and industrial processes, predominate. Overall levels of winter pollution have decreased in Seoul by 50% in the last 5 years largely due to the switch to natural gas for heating and in industry. However, summertime smog has increased due to the increased number of vehicles in Seoul.

Respiratory problems are the major cause of clinic visits. The cold, dry winters are responsible for recurrent sinusitis, bronchitis, otitis media, and pneumonia. The best protection against these winter illnesses is humid air. Sturdy, cool-

mist humidifiers are the best way to replace the moisture in the air. Humidifiers are available locally. Locally purchased fruits, meats, vegetables need extra cleaning to be on the safe side.

Preventive Measures

Gastrointestinal illnesses are not generally a problem, but the incidence of Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, and tuberculosis is rising. Anyone traveling to other parts of East Asia (e.g., China and Thailand), should get two series of Hepatitis A and three series of Hepatitis B vaccinations as they are prevalent in those regions. Long-term visitors may want to be checked annually for TB status.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage Customs & Duties

A passport is required. Visas are not required for tourist or business stays up to thirty days. For longer stays and other types of travel, visas must be obtained in advance. Changes of status from one type of visa to another (from tourism to teaching, for example) are normally not granted in South Korea. Individuals who stay in Korea longer than the period authorized by Korean immigration are subject to fines and may be required to pay the fines before departing the country. Individuals who plan to stay longer than the period authorized must apply to Korean immigration for an extension in advance.

For further information on entry requirements, please contact the Embassy of the Republic of Korea at 2320 Massachusetts Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008, telephone (202) 939-5660/63 or the Korean Embassy Internet home page at <http://www.mofat.go.kr/main/etop/html>. South Korean consulates are also located in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Guam, Honolulu, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New York City, San Francisco, and Seattle. The Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs

and Trade has a web site with a directory of all Korean diplomatic missions worldwide at http://www.mofat.go.kr/en_missions.htm.

Americans living in or visiting South Korea are encouraged to register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Seoul and obtain updated information on travel and security within South Korea. The U.S. Embassy is located at 82 Sejong-Ro Chongro-Ku, Seoul, telephone (82-2) 397-4114 fax (82-2) 738-8845. The U.S. Embassy's web page can be found at <http://usembassy.state.gov/seoul>.

Pets

The 10-day quarantine period for dogs and cats entering Korea from the U.S. has been removed, but importing pets is still subject to the following conditions: Dogs and cats from rabies free areas, such as Hawaii, will be released on the day of arrival into Korea. Puppies and kittens less than 90 days old from anywhere will be released on arrival day if accompanied by a valid animal health certificate. Dogs and cats more than 90 days old from rabies areas, such as the US., will be released upon the day of arrival, if accompanied by a valid animal health certificate that shows that the animal has been vaccinated against rabies at least 30 days prior to departure from the US. (and less than 1 year since the previous vaccination.)

Currency, Banking, and Weights and Measures

The official currency unit is the won, issued in denominations of 1,000, 5,000, and 10,000 won notes. Coins are 10, 50, 100, and 500 Won. U.S. dollars are accepted in the Itaewon shopping area and in some other locations that deal with tourists. As of May, 2001, the exchange rate is approximately W1,300=US\$1. This rate fluctuates almost daily. Travelers checks can be purchased at various local banks, including Citibank.

No limit is placed on the amount of foreign currency you can bring into Korea, provided you declare it. Cur-

rency exchange facilities for American currency or travelers checks (not personal checks) are available at Incheon International Airport. Won, the local currency, cannot be imported. There is a departure tax of approximately Won 10,000 for all passengers.

Security Information

Civil defense air raid drills are usually conducted on the 15th of each month. The drills are always announced in advance in English newspapers and AFKN. The alerts last about 20 minutes. During that time, all local business activities cease, and traffic comes to a complete standstill. If indoors, you remain there until the all-clear siren sounds. If you are on the street, you must go indoors or into an underpass or subway station for the duration of the drill.

Seoul is one of the world's largest cities and has criminal activities normally associated with large urban areas. Robberies and pick-pocketing/purse snatchings, especially those targeting foreigners, are frequent. Incidents of sexual harassment and molestation of foreign women have occurred. Home burglaries and car thefts are more common, but have not affected Embassy personnel. Police are considered capable and well trained.

Isolated acts of violence have been directed at U.S. facilities in the past. It is a function of political dissidence, and the organizers are mainly from a small but active group of radical university students. During periods of increased tension on university campuses, usually in the spring and autumn, Americans are advised to avoid universities and political rallies. The great majority of Korean people consider themselves to be friends of the U.S. Government and the American people.

Seoul is only 30 miles south of the Demilitarized Zone, one of the most heavily fortified and tense borders in the world. However, with the exception of incidents along the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) and occa-

sional attempts by North Korean agents to infiltrate the South, peace has prevailed on the peninsula for 50 years. However, should it ever be necessary, the Embassy and U.S. Forces Korea have worked together for plans to evacuate noncombatants from the peninsula. The Consular Section, American Citizen Services, has the most current information on Noncombatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) exercises.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan. 1	Solar New Year's Day
Jan/Feb.	Lunar New Year
Jan. 3	Folklore Day
Feb. 26	Taeborum
Mar. 1	Independence Movement Day
Mar. 10	Labour Day
Apr. 5	Arbor Day
May 1	Labor Day
May 5	Children's Day
May 19	Buddha's Birthday
June 6	Memorial Day
June 15	Tano
July 17	Constitution Day
Aug. 15	Liberation Day
Sept. 20-22	Chuseok (Harvest Moon festival)
Oct. 3	Foundation Day
Dec. 25	Christmas
*variable	

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These titles are provided as a general indication of the materials published on this country. The

Department of State does not endorse unofficial publications.

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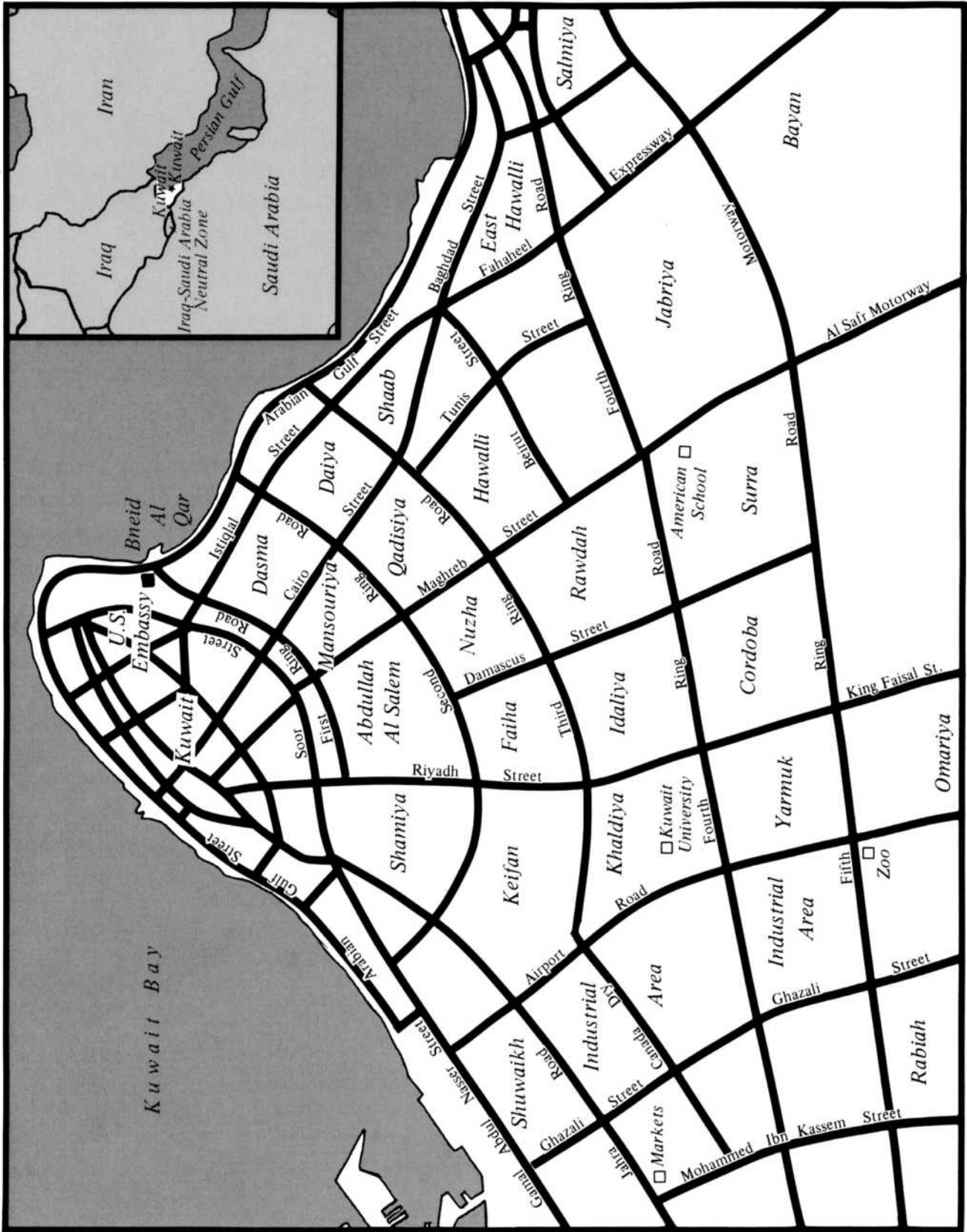
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Kuwait City, Kuwait

KUWAIT

State of Kuwait

Major City:

Kuwait City

Other Cities:

Ahmadi, Al-Khiran, Jahra

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated August 1994. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

Modern **KUWAIT** was settled early in the 18th century by desert nomads from Saudi Arabia, but archaeological evidence suggests habitation for more than 3,000 years. Its name is derived from the word "kut," meaning small fortress, which was built by the Sheikh of the Bani Khalid in 1672. Today, the country is one of the wealthiest and most progressive in the Middle East. It has been fully independent since 1961, when the British ended a six-decade protectorate sought by the Kuwaitis, who had spent a century under the threat of Turkish and Arabian tribal domination.

Oil, first exported in 1946, is the mainstay of the economy. Oil pays

for free medical care, education, and social security; there are no taxes, except customs duties.

The 1990 Iraqi invasion and subsequent Persian Gulf War brought Kuwait into the world's spotlight. The seven-month occupation by the Iraqis left the country with destruction and rebuilding costs in the billions of dollars. Buildings were not only damaged but also looted by Iraqis; oil wells bombed; and communication, power, and water supply connections severed. Up to a decade will be needed to rebuild and repair the damage.

MAJOR CITY

Kuwait City

Greater Kuwait City extends 15 miles along the Bay of Kuwait and a similar distance down the coast of the Arabian Gulf, where a succession of smaller towns comprise with it a growing metropolitan area where most Kuwaitis live. It is the most important city in the State of Kuwait. The old city outgrew its mud walls with the advent of the country's oil prosperity in the late 1950s, though a few gates have been preserved as historical monuments. The city has continued to expand

along the coast, and new suburban communities have grown up adjacent to it. In contrast to the flat, arid countryside are ever-changing colors of the sea and green areas of trees, flowers, and grass in the city and the older suburbs. Its population in 2000 was estimated at 1,187,000.

Food

Subject to seasonal variations and occasional shortages, a wide variety of foods is readily available in Kuwait. Good fresh fish, fruits, and vegetables are available on the local market. Canned and frozen vegetables from the U.S., Europe, and Australia are sold. Frozen meat and poultry are imported from Denmark, New Zealand, Australia, or the U.S. Pork products are prohibited. The Kuwait Danish Dairy offers a large selection of ice cream, yogurt, cream, sour cream, and milk with different degrees of fat content. All items are reconstituted and quality is good. Soft drinks are available.

Each district of Kuwait has grocery stores and a larger cooperative shopping center complex. One American-type supermarket also exists.

The sale of alcoholic beverages is prohibited in Kuwait.

Clothing

Although summers are long and hot in Kuwait, winters are chilly and occasionally rainy. The same type of clothing worn in Washington, D.C. (without snowsuits and snow boots) is suitable. Summer clothing is worn for about 7 months of the year. You will need more than the usual amount of clothing necessary in the U.S. Wash-and-wear clothes do not last as long as in the U.S. since they must be washed frequently in the summer. (Water tanks on the roof produce hot water during summer.) During November-March, fall, winter, and spring clothing, including topcoats and rainwear, is worn.

A wide variety of fabric is available at reasonable cost. Local dressmakers and tailors have been used with varying degrees of success, but good tailors are expensive.

Lightweight summer suits for office and evening wear, and slacks and sport shirts for casual wear, will meet summer dress requirements. Acceptable dry-cleaners can be found. Tails and morning dress are not worn in Kuwait. Medium to lightweight American fall, spring, and winter suits are appropriate for cooler months. English and continental men's shoes, underwear, shirts, neckties, socks, and ready-made suits are available, but they can be expensive, and the selection of sizes, styles, and quality varies.

Conservative dress is the rule. Bring summer cotton dresses, slacks, skirts and blouses, and pantsuits for all occasions. Shorts are not worn publicly but can be worn at poolside or on private beaches. Sleeveless dresses or blouses are not suitable for street wear; wear short jackets or shawls to cover bare shoulders. For evening wear, cocktail dresses with sleeves are appropriate. Kuwaiti women are fashion conscious, and London and Paris designs and skirt lengths will be seen at most evening parties. In winter, pantsuits, slacks, dresses, skirts, blouses, and coats are worn. Stores selling women's clothing offer a variety of European-made

dresses, skirts, and suits at medium to high prices.

Lingerie (some American-made) is available at reasonable prices, but selection is limited. Most women prefer to wear cotton or cotton blends. Stockings are available at reasonable prices. Formal hats and gloves are seldom worn. European shoes are available at varying prices. Dress or casual sandals do not last long, but reasonably priced local replacements are available.

Clothing for children and babies is available at reasonable prices. Shoes for children are available but are extremely expensive and tend to be of inferior quality. Narrow sizes are almost impossible to find, and shoe repair is substandard. Winter coats, jackets, or windbreakers are needed. Mandatory school uniforms (navy blue slacks or skirts with blue or white shirts) must be purchased locally. No slipovers or T-shirts can be worn in Kuwaiti schools. Navy blue cardigan sweaters are accepted for in-class wear during cooler months. For outdoors, a lightweight, flannel-lined windbreaker for fall and spring and a heavier jacket/coat of your choice for winter is sufficient to get through the year. Physical education uniforms are white shorts and plain white T-shirts for boys, and navy blue shorts and white blouses for girls. These must be purchased locally and are worn for gym only.

Supplies and Services

It is said that everything is available in Kuwait, if you look long and hard enough, but supplies are often limited, and particular items may be out of stock at any given time. Despite minimal import duties, prices are high, as overhead and profit margins are large and transportation costs great. Adequate stocks of toiletries, cosmetics, shaving supplies, medicines, and household entertainment needs are available.

Most common brands of American and British cigarettes and some American brands of cigars, pipe tobacco, and smoking accessories

are available at prices comparable to, or lower than, U.S. prices.

Several satisfactory women's beauty shops exist. A shampoo and set costs \$15 and up. Haircuts range from \$15 to \$42. Men's haircuts cost from \$10 to \$20, and styling is about \$25.

Religious Activities

Both Roman Catholic and Protestant church services are conducted in Kuwait City and in the oil town of Ahmadi, a 45-minute drive south. In Kuwait City, interdenominational Protestant services are held at the National Evangelical Church on Sunday evenings. The Roman Catholic Church, with daily services, is located near the Sheraton Hotel. St. Paul's Church (Anglican) is located in Ahmadi. Its rector holds monthly services in various homes in Kuwait City.

Education

American children attend the American School of Kuwait (ASK), established in September 1964 as a joint Embassy and American business effort. Enrollment (K-12) has exceeded 900. The student body, which represents 35 countries, is about 30% American. Virtually all teachers except Arabic language and Islamic studies teachers are certified American teachers. The school provides instruction for kindergarten through grade 12. The curriculum is that of a U.S. general academic, college preparatory public school. It does not offer separate classes for native and nonnative speakers of English. Religious instruction is offered for Muslim students. Arabic, French, and Spanish are taught as foreign languages with Arabic being mandatory from grade 4. French is an elective from grade 9. High school Advanced Placement courses are offered. Most graduates go on to colleges and universities in the U.S. or other countries.

ASK is housed in two campuses, one for grades K-5 and one for grades 6-12. It has a gymnasium, theaters, a playground, a swimming pool, and labs for art, computers, ESL, music,

reading, science, and special education. The school sponsors an activities program for students of all ages for the payment of an additional activities fee. The school year is divided into two semesters of 18 weeks each. The school year begins in August/September and ends in June.

Some American children also attend the Universal American School (UAS). UAS received full accreditation in November 1985 and like ASK is a member of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. The school provides instruction for kindergarten through grade 12. The curriculum is also that of a U.S. general academic, college preparatory public school. Approximately 85 percent of the faculty is American. Enrollment exceeds 600 students. The school does not offer separate classes for native and nonnative speakers of English. Religious instruction is offered for Muslim students. Advanced Placement courses are available for juniors and seniors.

UAS has a media center (audiovisual), laboratories, a playground, art room, and a gymnasium. The school year is divided into two semesters of 18 weeks each. The school year begins in September and ends in June.

The American International School, a private independent college preparatory day school, offers education from pre-kindergarten through grade 12. The International Baccalaureate program and the Advanced Placement program are available for students in grades eleven and twelve. The current enrollment of over 800 students is served by a faculty 80 percent recruited from North America.

Among Kuwait's numerous private schools are several on the British model and a French school. Several private English-speaking pre-schools are also available.

Special Educational Opportunities

No special facilities exist for advanced or for emotionally, physically, or mentally handicapped American children. Limited help exists for children with learning disabilities. Tutors for catchup work are hard to find. Courses at Kuwait University are taught in Arabic and English depending on the faculty. The Voltaire Institute, attached to the French Embassy, offers instruction in French.

Sports

Soccer and basketball are the only major sports in which Kuwaitis participate regularly. Competition in soccer is between Kuwaiti and other national teams, and is not open to U.S. employees and their families. Ice hockey teams have been formed and include skaters from the U.S., Sweden, and Canada. Activities that one can enjoy are swimming, fishing, snorkeling, tennis, horse-shoes, squash, darts, scuba, golf, water skiing, and sailing, although care must still be taken in water sports due to unexploded ordnance. Many people play tennis, even in midsummer. Bowling leagues function during most of the year. Softball teams have games scheduled from September to April. An ice skating rink is available, and horseback riding is popular.

If foreigners are discreet, photographs can be taken in Kuwait. Some Kuwaitis, especially women, object to being photographed. Local police might warn against picture-taking in the suq (market). In certain areas, including military compounds and ports, photography is prohibited, and in a few cases, film has been confiscated. Muslims regard all things pertaining to their religion as sacred; this applies to mosques, and you should therefore seek permission to enter or take photos of Kuwait's many mosques. No objections arise when photographing at private parties or outings where only friends are present.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Many touring and outdoor activities were curtailed after the Gulf War because of the presence of unexploded ordnance throughout the country.

The Tareq Rajab collection is privately owned and open to the public at the Rajab Museum in Jabriya. This collection is Islamic with emphasis on ceramics, early Korans and historical documents, and the tracing of the trade routes through jewelry. The Bedouin jewelry collection (mainly silver) is one of the most extensive in the world.

One of the most unique cultural places in Kuwait is the Sadu House, the center for traditional Kuwaiti bedouin weavings. On certain days visitors can watch the women weave. The house also offers a short film on the history of bedouin weaving, a research lab, and a number of exhibition rooms.

Green Island, enclosing a large lagoon, is constructed out into the sea. A fun place to bring children, it features an observation point, paddleboats, and a scaled-down ruined castle surrounded by a moat. Another fun place for children is the recently reopened Kuwait Zoo.

Khiran Resort, about 45 minutes outside of Kuwait City, also reopened recently. A typical beach resort, it offers bungalows and villas for rent, a swimming pool, a playground, a cafeteria, beachfront, recreation areas, and special bicycles for rent.

The Kuwait Towers, Kuwait's most identifiable landmark, serve as an excellent vantage point overlooking the rest of the city. The top sphere has a snack bar with a revolving observation area; there is also a fancy (non-revolving) restaurant.

Three of Kuwait City's gates and a section of the mud wall remain as a reminder of the Wahhabi and Saudi invasion of Kuwait over 65 years ago. The wall, constructed in 1920, remained standing until 1957.

About a half-hour drive from Kuwait City is a group of private shipbuilding establishments on the edge of Kuwait Bay. Here wooden dhows are still constructed with simple tools by skilled craftsmen.

Al Jahra lies about 78 miles west of Kuwait City and was the scene of a famous 1920 battle between Kuwait and Bedouin forces. On Fridays a large and active camel market is held in the center of town. Nearby is the Red Palace, an old fortress of the village.

Another popular Friday activity is the Friday suq, a Kuwaiti-style flea market with a traditional open market flavor.

Indoor gardening is a satisfying outlet for apartment dwellers. Most have found that anything that will grow and flourish in the ground can be coaxed to thrive indoors as well. Nurseries and flower shops are abundant. Potting soil is expensive. Prudent care and programming can assure continuous enjoyment of some kind of flowering plant year round. Limits to indoor gardening are dictated only by light available within a given area and your imagination and perseverance. Excellent investments for the prospective outdoor and indoor gardener are the Sunset books of *Desert Gardening*, *Gardening in Containers*, and *House Plants*.

Outdoor gardening is practical during winter since the weather is cooler and damper.

Entertainment

Kuwait has few indigenous cultural activities accessible to non-Arabic speakers. Musical and artistic groups periodically come to give performances to residents of all nationalities. Public lectures in English are provided occasionally by guest lecturers at Kuwait University. Most cultural activities are do-it-yourself. An amateur theater group performs about four times a year; an amateur choir meets weekly and performs occasional concerts.

Kuwait has no professional orchestra. Many public movie houses in Kuwait show mostly Indian and edited English-language films. Bridge is a popular pastime.

Eating out is also a popular form of recreation and entertainment in Kuwait. Restaurants are expensive. All international hotels (Sheraton, Kuwait International Hotel, Holiday Inn, SAS Hotel, and Meridien) have dining rooms plus coffee shops. These establishments regularly offer specials on food from foreign countries.

Many people find that various fast food places (Kentucky Fried Chicken, Arby's, Baskin Robbins, Wendy's, Hardee's, Pizza Hut) are excellent and maintain good food and health standards.

Social Activities

The American Women's League is an association of women who are U.S. citizens or are married to U.S. citizens. Social in nature, since fund-raising for charitable causes is not deemed necessary by the Kuwaiti Government, the league holds monthly meetings throughout fall, winter, and spring and features general-interest programs. Occasionally, it organizes barbecues, outings, fashion shows, and other similar activities.

Kuwait is an excellent place to begin or continue tennis instruction; prices are comparable to those in the U.S. Bike riding is limited because paved areas on the compound are minimal, and traffic is hazardous on public roads.

Younger children have few adjustment problems in Kuwait, even though the range of activities for them is limited. There is, however, an active Little League, as well as scouting for both girls and boys. Teenagers find life more confining. The school provides limited non-coed social and extracurricular outlets. On weekends and evenings, social life is limited to shopping, movies, video, TV, and swimming (in season). TV programs include a few hours of English-language

shows; 30 minutes of cartoons each evening are the high point of the sunset hour for the younger set. Sesame Street, in Arabic, appears daily. The swimming season, however, extends from the beginning of April through October, and the compound swimming pool is a social and recreational center for dependents of all ages during summer.

Most entertaining is informal. Buffets are the most common form of dinner party. Sit-down dinners are a hazard unless you know your guests, as Arabs are casual about accepting invitations or sending regrets. The formally set table frequently may have several empty places—or may be squeezed to add two more—by the time dinner is served. Cocktail buffets are a common way of handling large groups.

Kuwait's traditionally family-oriented, cosmopolitan society offers opportunities to form excellent professional and personal relationships. In addition, both Arab and other expatriate communities are active socially.

Special Information

Kuwait is a modern, progressive, and in many ways a Western-appearing country. The religious heritage of Islam, however, has given Arabs a different culture and a strict code of ethics. Although they differ from those in the West in many respects, the rules of common sense and politeness will enable a visitor to enjoy Kuwait.

Hospitality is the basic rule of life in the desert, and this custom has been carried forward. Avoid overly admiring or praising the private belongings of your host, or the host may feel compelled by the dictates of his culture to make a gift of the object you admire. You should not refuse an offer of food or drink unless it is necessary. Shopkeepers sometimes offer tea or coffee to shoppers while they are browsing.

Males should not inquire or appear curious about women members of an Arab family. Western women should dress modestly and be dis-

creet whenever they go outside their homes.

During the Holy Month of Ramadan, Muslims abstain from all food and drink from sunrise to sunset. During the day, it is not permissible for anyone (including non-Muslims) to eat, drink, or smoke in public.

OTHER CITIES

AHMADI, situated in eastern Kuwait off the Persian Gulf, offers a contrast to the dry regions of the nation. The pleasant gardens, villas, and tree-lined avenues lure Kuwaitis here to enjoy its peace and tranquility. An industrial and self-sufficient city of 305,000 residents (1985 census), Ahmadi was established as Kuwait's oil town. It developed around the oil industry which provided houses and other facilities for its employees. Crude oil is shipped from Ahmadi's port. Due to rapid growth, Ahmadi will more than likely be merged with the nearby capital in the future.

Situated about 50 miles south of Kuwait City, **AL-KHIRAN** was once an uninhabited desert area visited only by a few swimmers fond of its clear waters. In 1981 urbanization of the city began and its sandy coast was revamped into a modern tourist resort offering a wide range of facilities. This new town has been designed to eventually accommodate 115,000 residents.

One of Kuwait's oldest towns, **JAHR**A (Al-Jahra) is situated eight miles west of the capital. Archaeological findings in Jahra suggest that it flourished during pre-Islamic times. Traditionally an agricultural city, Jahra's urban development has replaced most of its farm land with modern buildings. Some farms may still be found in the eastern part of the city, but new projects and commercial endeavors are being developed by the government. One of Kuwait's most outstanding tourist landmarks is the Qasr Al-Ahmar (Red Palace). It commemorates the

1920 battle of Jahra. The palace serves as a exhibition center as well as hosting festivals. The city has an approximate population of 280,000 (1985 census).

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Kuwait is located in the northeastern corner of the Arabian Peninsula. It is bounded on the north and west by Iraq, on the South by Saudi Arabia, and on the east by the Arabian Gulf. With an area of about 7,780 square miles, it is slightly smaller than New Jersey.

The country is a sandy, riverless desert interspersed with small hills. Vegetation is sparse. Kuwait's climate is typical of the region. Summer (April-October) temperatures often exceed 120°F, although daytime temperatures of 110°–115° 120°F are more common. Mean annual rainfall is 4-5 inches and occurs mostly during December and January. Short autumn and spring seasons (November, February, and March) are delightful. During winter (December and January), clear, sunny days are common, but it is often cold enough to require a light winter coat in the mornings and evenings. In the early morning the frost point is occasionally reached. Sand and dust storms occur throughout the year, especially between March and August. Periods of high humidity occur, but during the hottest months (June, July, and August), humidity levels range between 45 percent and 50 percent.

Population

Foreign nationals comprise approximately 55% of Kuwait's population of 2 million (2001 est.). The largest foreign groups are Egyptians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Indians, Syrians, Lebanese, and Filipinos. The largest Western community is Americans (about 6,200), followed

by British, French, Germans, and Canadians are also represented. Kuwaiti citizens include recently settled Bedouin and long-established townspeople with antecedents in central Arabia, Iraq, and Iran. This variety of origins is reflected in religion: about 45% of Kuwaitis are Sunni Muslims; about 40% are Shi'ite Muslims. Although Sunnis comprise the ruling elite, many Shi'a have acquired great wealth and the influence money brings. Other religions practiced include Christianity, Hindi and Parsi.

Arabic is the official language, but English is widely understood and spoken. The literacy rate, estimated at more than 78%, is one of the highest in the Arab world, and exceeds Population growth is 3.5%.

Kuwait's standard of living approaches that of the most developed Western states in many respects. Most families own a car. Homes of wealthy Kuwaitis are large and, in some cases, palatial. While there are pockets of relative poverty, Kuwait's generous system of government social programs guarantees a minimum standard of living that is high by Third World standards.

Public Institutions

Kuwait, independent since 1961, is a constitutional hereditary emirate, ruled by emir's drawn from the al-Sabah family, which has ruled Kuwait since 1756. Succession as emir is restricted by the 1962 constitution to descendants of the late Mubarak al-Sabah "the Great." The emir selects the prime minister in consultation with senior members of the ruling family. By tradition, the emir's successor, the crown prince, also serves as prime minister. The ruling family's selection of a crown prince is subject to parliamentary approval. Kuwait's emirs have traditionally governed in consultation with members of several commercially powerful families and other influential community leaders. With the emergence of Kuwait as an economically wealthy state,

based initially on its vast oil resources and subsequently on its overseas investments, actual power was increasingly centered in the hands of the ruling Al-Sabah family.

Kuwait's National Assembly, the seat of Kuwaiti legislative power, has served both to institutionalize traditional consultative participation with the ruling family and to act as an outlet for popular expression. Its 50 popularly elected deputies are chosen by an electorate composed of the approximately 82,000 adult male Kuwaiti citizens who can trace their Kuwaiti ancestry back to 1920. (Kuwait has not granted suffrage to females or "second class" male Kuwaiti citizens.) The entire Cabinet sits in the Assembly *ex officio*.

The judicial system includes courts of the first degree (magistrates, civil, domestic and commercial courts), a Misdemeanors Court of Appeal, a High Court of Appeal and a Court of Cassation. Kuwait has a civil law system with Islamic law playing a significant role in personal matters. According to the Kuwait constitution, however, Islamic law is not the only source of Kuwaiti law.

Officially, political parties are banned. Nonetheless, political activity finds an outlet in social clubs and religious societies as well as through family or neighborhood fora, known as "diwaniyyas." A number of political "groupings," both secular and Islamic, act as political parties during elections and in the National Assembly. Labor unions are permitted in several sectors but, since they are financed by the Government, seldom act independently.

The government has recently begun to advocate extending the right to vote and hold public office to women. However, in 1999, the Assembly rejected an emiri decree granting women's rights.

Kuwait's democracy, albeit limited, is much more open and participatory than are the regimes of its



Aerial view of Kuwait City, Kuwait

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neighbors. In a single generation, oil-related wealth has brought vast change to the once poor, isolated members of the society. The large expatriate population has also exposed Kuwaitis to numerous social and cultural forces. With its high per capita income, Kuwait has distributed its wealth among the population through education, medical care, housing, and guaranteed employment for citizens.

Arts, Science, and Education

A traditional Arab sheikhdom, Kuwait has a cultural life of its own. Kuwait has several artists who work in their own homes or in government-sponsored art studios and who give occasional public showings.

Arab and Western music is heard on radio and TV and in public settings in connection with special events. Western music is also presented at various times during the year, primarily by performers sponsored by Western embassies, cultural centers, or major international hotels.

Kuwait has made great strides in its pursuit of scientific knowledge. Most scientific subjects are offered at the undergraduate level at

Kuwait University, while research is carried on at the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) and in projects funded by the Kuwait Fund for the Advancement of Science (KFAS).

Education is free for all Kuwaiti children. Most foreign dependents attend private schools that charge rates approved by the Ministry of Education. At the university level, Kuwaiti nationals attend Kuwait University free, while other nationalities pay a fee. Scholarships are available for many students from other Islamic and Arab countries. Kuwaiti students scoring in the upper *)% in sciences and upper 70% in arts courses during their secondary schooling years are eligible to study abroad at the governments expense, and many other Kuwaitis do so at their own expense. In 1995, over 12,000 students were enrolled at Kuwait University. In 1992, about 4,000 were studying in the U.S. on scholarship or privately funded programs.

Commerce and Industry

Modern Kuwait was founded about 1740 by desert nomads from Saudi Arabia, but archaeological evidence indicates habitation for over 3,000

years. Because of its Gulf location, fishing, pearl diving, and trading became the most important occupations. Oil was discovered in 1938, but production was insignificant until after World War II. Since 1950, the country has developed rapidly. Today, Kuwait's prosperity depends on oil and income generated by oil revenues invested primarily in the U.S. and Europe. The oil sector provides more than 90%% of Kuwait's export earnings and a comparable proportion of total government revenues. Many other commercial and economic activities serve the petroleum industry and its employees.

Existing industries include water-desalination plants, oil refineries with desulfurizing plants, an LPG plant, an ammonia plant, a chemical fertilizer factory, cement, brick, and concrete block production, bottling plants, and various light industries.

Kuwait has the world's highest per capita imports. The local market reflects Kuwait's free trade outlook. The United States is Kuwait's second largest trading partner, after Japan, owing to Kuwait's purchases of American aircraft, industrial equipment, cars, air-conditioners, and other durable consumer goods. The U.S. also exports substantial services to Kuwait. A wide range of products from the U.S., Europe, neighboring countries, and the Far East are also available. Kuwaiti importers choose their goods almost entirely by price and local demand, not by national origin.

Transportation

Local

Driving is on the right; roads and highways are excellent, and several major highways exist. Most principal roads are divided highways with four to six lanes. Excellent all-weather highways lead south and west to Saudi Arabia. The accident rate in Kuwait is one of the world's highest, due to excessive speed, lax enforcement, and a lack of basic training of many drivers. Practice defensive driving to avoid accidents.

Visitors can use international driving permits issued by their respective countries within the time limit of their visas; however, the visitor must have liability insurance. It is illegal to drive in Kuwait without a license and car registration documents. If you are stopped and cannot produce them, you may be taken to a police station and held until they are presented on your behalf.

If you are in an accident, Kuwaiti law mandates that you must remain at the scene until the police arrive.

The use of seat belts in the front seats is mandatory in Kuwait. Speed limits are posted. Making a right turn on a red light is not permitted unless there is a special lane to do so with a yield sign. Parking is not allowed where the curb is painted black and yellow. Digital cameras for registering traffic violations, including speeding, are in use on Kuwaiti roads.

Driving while under the influence of alcohol is a serious offense, which may result in fines, imprisonment, and/or deportation. Repeat traffic violations or violations of a serious nature may also result in the deportation of an expatriate offender.

When a driver flashes his/her high beams in Kuwait, it is meant as a request to move your car into a slower lane to allow the driver with the flashing beams to proceed ahead.

Kuwait has one of the highest rates of cellular telephone ownership per capita in the world. Although using a cellular telephone while driving is not yet illegal, a law requiring the use of a hands free accessory with the cellular telephone while driving is expected to be enacted.

Local emergency service organizations may be contacted by dialing 777. Ambulance crews do not respond as quickly as in the United States and are often not trained paramedics.

The government-owned Kuwait Public Transportation Company

operates bus service throughout the Kuwait City metropolitan area on 50 different routes and is widely used by the low-income expatriate labor force. Two types of taxi service are available: (1) orange taxis work a fixed route and pick up passengers anywhere along that route and may be shared, and (2) call taxis are available at major hotels and pick up passengers at other locations on telephonic request. Unaccompanied women should not use taxis after dark.

Regional

For destinations outside Kuwait, air transportation is commonly used, and adequate connections can be made to most points. Kuwait is served by a number of international airlines. For travel to the U.S. from Kuwait, the traveler can connect with American carriers in several major European cities. No train service operates from Kuwait.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

Local telephone service is good and costs about US\$100 annually. Long-distance telephone service to Europe and the U.S. via satellite is excellent. Trunk calls can also be placed to most countries; reception is good. A 3-minute call to the U.S. costs about US\$11, and US\$3.50 for each additional minute. Most businesses and hotels, including the Kuwait International Hotel, have a fax machine.

U.S. carriers such as AT&T, MCI, and Sprint are not allowed to offer services within the country by order of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Communication.

Kuwait currently has three licensed Internet Service Providers. Internet access prices remain, however, since the Ministry of Communications retains control of both local telephone service and marine cable and satellite telecommunications in and out of Kuwait.

Radio and TV

TV (KTV) has been broadcasting since 1961, and began color transmission in 1974. It is government controlled and operates on PAL 62 lines standard. KTV currently broadcasts on two channels. Channel 1 is exclusively Arabic, but includes a few non-Arabic programs dubbed or subtitled in Arabic. Channel 2 is almost exclusively foreign-language programs, about 90 percent of which are in English with Arabic subtitles. Channel 1 begins transmission each day at 4 pm (earlier on Thursdays and Fridays), while Channel 2 begins daily at 5 pm. Both channels finish transmitting at about midnight, later on Thursdays. Each channel carries one-half hour of news nightly—at 9 pm in Arabic on Channel 1 and at 8 pm in English on Channel 2. Many American programs are shown on KTV, chiefly on Channel 2. They consist mainly of cartoons, family situation comedies, police stories, and wildlife programs. An increasing number of better quality U.S. made-for-TV serials are also beginning to appear on KTV.

Kuwait Radio broadcasts daily in English, Urdu, Persian, and Arabic. Western rock is popular, and classical music is played regularly on the FM station. Voice of America, BBC, and other foreign radio services can be heard and reception is good.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

The Kuwaiti press has traditionally had the reputation of being the most active and unfettered in the Arab world. Kuwait has two English-language daily newspapers. Five dailies and numerous weekly, biweekly, and monthly periodicals are published in Arabic. The *International Herald Tribune*, the *Wall Street Journal* (European edition), and the international editions of *Time*, *USA Today*, and *Newsweek* are available in Kuwait within a day or two of publication. Many other English-language periodicals and newspapers are available, but from 1-3 months after publication.

American and British books on a variety of subjects are available at selected bookshops at 50 to 100 percent above publisher prices. No public libraries carry collections in English, although a small British Council library offers membership at a fee.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

Several local hospitals can provide basic emergency or routine care.

Families with infants may wish to bring a full supply of preferred nutritional supplements and vitamins, many of which are unavailable in Kuwait. Local water is fluoridated but does not supply the currently recommended one part per million of fluoride ion. Use of water filters does not alter the fluoride content, but if you choose to use bottled water, you may wish to bring a supply of fluoride drops.

Bring an extra set of glasses or contact lenses, and have a prescription ready for refill of glasses or contacts. If you or a family member are taking a long-standing medication or allergy injection, bring a supply and arrange beforehand for regular refills.

Community Health

Respiratory infections, colds, coughs, sore throats, etc., lead the list of common complaints. Middle ear and external ear infections, sinusitis, and bronchitis are not uncommon. Dust aggravates the respiratory tract, complicating ordinary infections. Allergic and asthmatic persons may also have increased problems due to dust. May through September is hot and dry, increasing the incidence of urinary tract stones, heat stroke, and exhaustion. Common-sense measures are effective in preventing these conditions. High dry heat can cause serious problems of dehydration if preventive measures are not undertaken. Gastrointestinal infections are not common.

Preventive Measures

Fruits and vegetables should be cleaned well before eating. Meat should be well-cooked. Fly and insect control is rudimentary. Obtain immunizations for typhoid, polio, and tetanus. Have the basic series given in the U.S. Gamma globulin should be given every four months for prevention of hepatitis. Malaria suppressants are not necessary in Kuwait. No immunizations are required, but it is recommended that childhood immunizations be updated. Additional recommended immunizations are meningococcal and the Hepatitis B series.

To prevent sunburn, bring along a strong (SPF of at least 15) sunblock lotion. Local pharmacies carry some sunscreens, but the complete range may not always be available. Protective clothing is also a must, and a sun hat is useful during summer months.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs & Duties

Travel to Kuwait is usually by air. There are direct, nonstop flights to Kuwait on most days of the week from London and Paris, with less frequent flights to Bangkok, Rome, Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Athens, Geneva, New Delhi, and Bombay. Some of the more popular international airlines serving Kuwait are Lufthansa, British Airways, Air France, KLM, Kuwait Airways, Emirate Air, Air India, Gulf Air, and Olympic Airways. The most direct route from the U.S. east coast to Kuwait is via the Atlantic with connections made at any of the European cities serving Kuwait. This is the safest and surest way of travel.

Passports and visas are required for U.S. citizens traveling to Kuwait. For further information on entry requirements, travelers may contact the Embassy of Kuwait at 2940 Tilden St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008, telephone (202) 966-0702, or the Kuwaiti Consulate in New York

City, telephone (212) 973-4318. Information also may be obtained from the Consulate's Internet home page at <http://www.undp.org/misions/kuwait>.

Alcohol, pork products, and pornography are illegal in Kuwait. Religious proselytizing is not permitted. Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis, including Americans, charged with criminal offenses or placed under investigation, or involved in financial disputes with local business partners, are subject to travel bans. These bans, which are rigidly enforced, prevent the individual from leaving Kuwait for any reason until the matter is resolved. In purely financial disputes, it may be possible to depart the country if a local sponsor authorizes funds equal to the amount in dispute.

U.S. citizens are encouraged to register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy and enroll in the Embassy's emergency alert network in order to obtain updated information on travel and security in Kuwait. Initial registration may be done on-line at <http://www.usembassy.gov.kw/registration-main.htm>. The U.S. Embassy in Kuwait is located at Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa Street, Plot 14, Block 14, Bayan, Kuwait. The mailing address is P.O. Box 77, Safat 13001, Kuwait. The primary telephone numbers are 965-539-5307 or 539-5308. The after-hours number is 965-538-2097. Additional information may also be obtained through the Embassy's Internet web site at <http://www.usembassy.gov.kw>.

Pets

Pets may be brought, but obtain a veterinarian's certificate of good health and rabies vaccination before the animal is sent and have them with you when your pet arrives. No restrictions are placed on entry of pets and no quarantine is required. The climate is severe for pets. Veterinary services in country are limited, so have your U.S. veterinarian recommend medications that your pet may need. Pet food and kitty litter are readily available.

Currency, Banking and Weights and Measures

The unit of currency is the Kuwaiti dinar (KD), which is issued in notes of 20, 10, 5, 1, ½, and ¼ KD. The Kuwaiti dinar is divided into 1,000 fils and currently is equivalent to about US\$3.87.

Foreign banks are not permitted in Kuwait. Travelers checks can be cashed without difficulty.

Kuwait uses the metric system of weights and measures. Gasoline is sold by the liter; temperature is cited in degrees Centigrade; distances are measured in kilometers.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

- Jan. 1 New Year's Day
- Feb. 25 Kuwait National Day
- Feb. 26 Kuwait Liberation Day
- Id al-Adha*
- Hijra New Year*
- Mawlid an Nabi*
- Lailat al-Miraj*
- Lailat ul-Bara'h*
- Ramadan*
- Id al-Fitr*

*variable, based on the Islamic calendar

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These titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country. The Department of State does not endorse unofficial publications.

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KYRGYZSTAN

The Kyrgyz Republic (formerly the Kirghiz Soviet Socialist Republic of the former U.S.S.R.)

Major City:

Bishkek

Other Cities:

Dzhalal-Abad, Osh, Przhevalsk, Tokmak

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated January 1996. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

The Republic of **KYRGYZSTAN** declared its independence on August 31, 1991, during the collapse of the Soviet Union. Formerly known as the Kirghiz Soviet Socialist Republic, its independence was recognized by the United States on December 25, 1991 and an embassy was opened in Bishkek the following February. The country was admitted to the United Nations on March 2, 1992. Of all the former Soviet republics, Kyrgyzstan has been the most reform-minded, politically and economically. However, the country has severe economic problems, along with continuing ethnic and clan-based conflict.

MAJOR CITY

Bishkek

Bishkek is located in the extreme northern part of Kyrgyzstan, 10 miles from the border with Kazakhstan. It's population in 2000 was approximately 662,000. A 30-minute drive from Bishkek, and one climbs into the foothills of the Ala-Too range of the Tien Shan, or "Heavenly" mountains. Bishkek has lovely tree-lined walking parks and wide streets (although one must watch for open manholes).

Food

Shopping for food on the local economy requires knowledge of local sources, perseverance, and a high tolerance level for crowds and less than hygienic conditions.

Those who prefer to do their own shopping on the local market find the best source of basic foodstuffs to be found in the large open-air food bazaars such as the Osh or Alamedin bazaar. During summer and fall there is a plentiful supply of fruits (apples, oranges, local berries, melons, pears, peaches, tomatoes and imported bananas) and vegetables (cabbage, beans, loose leaf lettuce, onions, cucumbers, radish, squash, beets, spring onions, summer

squash, pickled vegetables and, of course, potatoes). During the winter and early spring months the selection shrinks dramatically leaving only basic root vegetables and a very limited selection of high priced imported fruit.

There are a number of small private shops which import canned goods from Western Europe for sale to the expatriate community. Prices tend to be high but these shops do provide variety during the winter months. Noticeably lacking in even these shops are fresh dairy products. Post continues to experience difficulty in finding reliable sources of long-life milk products. Staff members usually purchase long-life milk in shops in the neighboring capital of Almaty (a seven- to-eight hour round trip drive from Bishkek). Almaty also provides a much larger selection of Western food products, albeit at high prices.

Purchase and preparation of meat products are of particular concern to staff members. There are no western style butchers and most meat is sold in open air, unrefrigerated bazaar stalls. Usually a large piece of meat must be purchased and cut down into smaller pieces at home. Great care must be taken to thoroughly cook all meat products to eliminate the risk of bacterial contamination. Beef, mutton, pork, and

a limited selection of chicken, (and horse, if desired) meat products are available year round. Frozen chicken from Holland and the United States can also be found in the markets.

A selection of soft drink products including Coke, Sprite, Fanta is available. Currently the products are imported from Turkey by a joint venture Coke representative company. This company plans to begin bottling operations in Kyrgyzstan in 1996. A selection of European beer is available on the local market as well as Kyrgyz champagne and cognac products.

Local sources of sugar, flour, salt, baking soda, and macaroni are adequate but the quality of these products may not be suitable for American tastes. Local salt is not adequately iodized.

There is an abundance of local spices but they are sold in bulk and the purchaser must provide his/her own container. The markets also have an abundance of locally-pickled cabbage, onions, cucumbers, tomatoes. There is excellent rice available locally in bulk.

Items which are difficult to find locally include coffee (other than instant), cleaning products (though a Proctor & Gamble representative has recently opened a retail store in the city which sells P&G products such as TIDE), personal care products (some available through the P&G store), paper products (to include toilet paper, tissues, paper napkins, paper towels, note paper, computer paper, construction paper for school supplies, wrapping paper for gifts, gift cards, etc.), women's nylon stockings, chemical products to fight insect infestation (cockroaches, flies, mosquitoes, pet care flea/tick products), school supplies (pens, pencils, notebooks), batteries, English language books and magazines, contemporary music tapes and CDs.

Clothing

The choice of shoes and clothing in Bishkek is limited. The type of

clothing worn in the northeast of the U.S. is appropriate in Bishkek. Winters are cold, snowy and icy. However, Bishkek does have many crystal clear winter days. Late spring, summer, and fall are generally pleasant with long stretches of sunny temperate weather. Midsummer can be very hot (mid-90s). Temperatures average 30°F (-2°C) in midwinter and 80°F (22°C) in midsummer.

A warm coat with a hood or a separate warm hat, several pairs of woolen and waterproof gloves and appropriate shoes are recommended. A good supply of shoes and boots for all types of weather, such as tennis, dress shoes, rubber rain boots, hiking boots and lined, thick-soled winter boots for children and adults is also recommended. Drycleaning is available in Almaty, Kazakstan (4 hours away). Commercial laundries are not available. Washable clothing is most practical.

Both heavy and light topcoats are desirable for spring and fall. Warm waterproof gloves, overshoes, and sweaters are also necessary. Woolen suits worn in the U.S. are satisfactory for winter in Bishkek, but some prefer heavier suits and sweater vests during the coldest months. Lighter suits are needed for summer.

Versatile clothing for luncheons, receptions or the theater is essential. Slacks, skirts, blouses and sweaters are ordinary daily wear. Most Kyrgyz women wear skirts or dresses, not slacks. Women are rarely seen in shorts. Women wear woolen clothing of several weights during fall and winter. Cottons, synthetics and blends, preferably washable, are worn in the summer. Raincoats with removable linings and a heavy coat are necessary.

Children need washable, sturdy wool, corduroy and other heavy clothing. Waterproof boots with insulated foam lining, several pairs of waterproof mittens, long thermal underwear, both heavy and light-weight pajamas, and waterproof snowpants all come in handy. Since

children's clothing available locally is not of Western quality and limited in quantity.

Supplies and Services

Laundry service provided in hotels is hard on clothes. Drycleaning is available in Almaty, Kazakstan.

Tailoring and dressmaking is available in Bishkek. Service varies from place to place, and it is best to frequent shops or dressmakers recommended by others with similar tastes. The choice of fabrics available in Bishkek is limited.

Local barbers and beauty shops are plentiful. Although relatively inexpensive, techniques and methods used by hairdressers differ from those in the West. Some European hair products are available in a few stores. Special hair products generally are not available.

Religious Activities

Religious services are held in several mosques, the Russian Orthodox Church, the Jewish Synagogue, the Presbyterian (Korean), Baptist and the Seventh Day Adventist churches in Bishkek. Several missionary groups are in Bishkek including the Hare Krishna, the Church for Unification and other nondenominational faiths. Some offer services in English.

Education

The Bishkek International School, a private institution which opened in September, 1994, offers English language instruction for elementary students from 5 years through 13 years of age. The school operates under the control of Quality Schools International, a private nonprofit organization, which operates schools in Yemen, Albania, Kazakstan, and Ukraine. The school typically has an enrollment of less than 10 students.

The school term is from early September to mid-June. The curriculum includes English, mathematics, cultural studies, science, art, music and physical education.

Some American parents have placed their children in local Russian language schools. If children are prepared for the extra work involved in learning Russian and if parents are prepared to devote the time to give children extra help, the experience can be rewarding.

Sports

Many sports are available in Bishkek and the surrounding countryside. A large outdoor swimming pool is available in the summer, and a modest indoor pool is sometimes available in the winter. A limited number of tennis courts are available in good weather. An indoor tennis court (converted basketball court) is available for rent in the sports palace during the winter. Some spectator sports such as soccer and wrestling are available.

Downhill skiing is possible in the mountains, about a one hour drive from Bishkek. Ski weekends are organized to the slopes with chalets.

Horseback riding is available in Bishkek. Trekking through the mountains of Kyrgyzstan by horseback and on foot are popular ways to see the beautiful areas of the country during the spring, summer and autumn. Fishing, hunting and white-water rafting are other popular sports in Kyrgyzstan.

In general, bring all your own sports equipment and clothing as items are difficult to find and/or unavailable locally.

Recreation Shopping

Bishkek offers wide range of local products of interest to staff members. Kyrgyz rugs are unique in their design and construction. Local jewelers produce beautiful designs utilizing semiprecious stones and local rocks. Craftsmen also produce stone boxes with inlaid designs from types of rock found throughout the country. Kyrgyz musical instruments, local wool felt hats and ethnic clothing, and pottery are also of great interest to expatriates. There are a large number of expert painters and sculptors in Kyrgyzstan.

Prices for quality Kyrgyz artwork and crafts are still reasonable.

Entertainment

Bishkek has several cultural activities. The Bishkek Opera and Ballet Theater offers autumn and winter performances. The Philharmonic provides classical, modern symphony and Kyrgyz orchestral and traditional performances. The Philharmonic was built in 1980. The gigantic statue in front depicts the 1,000-year-old epic hero Manas atop his magic steed Ak-Kula slaying a dragon. The Kyrgyz Drama Theater and the Russian Drama Theater perform classic productions.

Bishkek has many beautiful parks and monuments. Walking tours to the many architectural and historical landmarks are a good way to get a feel for the city. Within three blocks of the Embassy are the Museum of Fine Arts, the National Library, the Opera House, the National Museum, the Circus (a Kyrgyz troop of horse riders and acrobats have just begun a one year tour with the Barnum and Bailey Circus in the U.S.), the Frunze Memorial House-Museum, the Zoological Museum and the Monument to the Great Patriotic War.

Directly in front of the U.S. Embassy is Erkindik Prospect (Erkindik means "freedom" in Kyrgyz) It is a one mile long walking park lined with huge oak trees. One can stroll Erkindik Prospect through an outdoor sculpture garden, past the Drama Theater, along the Art Gallery in the Park, by the Tea House and continue in the large walking park for 30 minutes until you reach the Train Station. This walk provides a pleasant break in summer and winter.

Markets (rynoks) provide a colorful feature to Bishkek life. The largest market is the Osh market, named for the second largest city in Kyrgyzstan. The Osh market features the greatest variety and least expensive fruits, vegetables, meats and souvenirs in Bishkek. On the weekends, cats, dogs and birds are sold at the Osh market. The Alame-

din market is a smaller market located near the U.S. Embassy. On the weekends, the "Push" Market, so-named because you have to push to get through the market, offers the greatest selection of merchandise in Bishkek, the latest from the popular shopping trips to India, Turkey and the Middle East.

Two Chinese, one Korean, two Turkish and one pizza restaurants are the eating establishments most frequented by the international community in Bishkek. Ethnic Kyrgyz food such as shashlik, plov and manti is served in a few restaurants, but primarily from stands on the streets. One should be careful when deciding to try the local cuisine from street vendors.

The two main hotels in Bishkek have bars, cafes and souvenir gift shops.

Movie theaters, for the most part, show films in Russian. Some Western films also play in theaters, but they are dubbed in Russian. Kyrgyz television programming includes some interesting cultural events and historical documentaries.

Social Activities

The American community in Bishkek numbers around 125 and is composed primarily of USAID contractors and a few businessmen/women. Embassy personnel, as well as contractors, entertain each other informally at dinner, receptions or theatrical performances.

On an informal level, individuals organize visits to areas of interest and short trips for rest and recreation. Members of the international community get together for volleyball, softball, and touch football.

The International Women's Club is a social organization for women of the foreign community of Bishkek. The organization is nonpolitical, nonreligious and wishes to promote friendship and understanding between their members and the people of Kyrgyzstan. The group was founded in May, 1995 to give English-speaking women a chance

to get together socially and to meet new women in the foreign community. Currently the club has over 50 members representing 15 countries. The club has meetings twice a month on Thursdays; new arrivals to Bishkek are always welcome. Meetings are held in homes and restaurants.

Canadian citizens are numerous in Bishkek due to the Kyrgyz-Canadian joint venture gold mining company. Many international visitors with international organizations such as the IMF, UNICEF, UNDP and British, Dutch, German, and European Community assistance organizations are active on the social scene. Social relationships with Kyrgyzstani citizens are not difficult to establish, particularly if one possesses Russian or Kyrgyz language skills. There is no prohibition on establishing social relationships with Kyrgyzstani citizens. On the contrary, reaching out and making Kyrgyzstani friends is encouraged.

Special Information

Americans are popular and generally welcomed by all segments of society in Bishkek. The level of violent crime is not high by American standards; however, theft, burglaries, and even mugging is on the increase because of the declining economy. Westerners are likely to become targets as they are associated with wealth.

Because of energy deficits and broken, unreplaced street lamps, Bishkek is poorly lit after dark. The precautions necessary in any large Western city should be taken in Bishkek after dark. One should avoid walking alone at night, especially where there are few people.

Many apartment buildings have poorly lit entrances through courtyards or in the rear of the building. A pocket flashlight is essential for nighttime activities. Some bars and restaurants are frequented by the local "mafia." It is better to avoid these facilities.

Travel by train from Bishkek to Moscow and other locations is not

recommended due to an increase in crime on the trains. Bus travelers have had backpacks slashed.

Normal precautions, such as not exposing money or dressing ostentatiously, are recommended.

OTHER CITIES

DZHALAL-ABAD, with a population of approximately 74,000, is located in southwest Kyrgyzstan near the border with Uzbekistan. Surrounded by an agricultural area, the city's main commercial enterprises are food processing plants and other light industries.

OSH is near the Uzbekistan border, only 30 miles from the Uzbek city of Andizhan. A large number of ethnic Uzbeks live in the Osh region. Agriculture and mining are the most important enterprises. Silk, cotton textiles, and food processing are the main industries. Many Muslims make a pilgrimage to Osh to visit Takht-i-Sulaiman, a hill mentioned in Islamic lore.

PRZHEVALSK (formerly Karakol) is located in northeast Kyrgyzstan on the eastern boundary of Issyk-Kul. The city is in the center of an agricultural region. A resort area, it is also a transportation hub—as a port for water transportation on the Issyk-Kul and as a commercial transport center with routes to the north and east.

TOKMAK is an industrial town, located just east of Bishkek. The building of a railway in 1938 contributed to the city's development. Tokmak has a population of 72,000.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Located in Central Asia, it is about the size of the State of Nebraska, with a total area of 198,500 square

kilometers. It is 900 kilometers east to west and 410 kilometers north to south. Kyrgyzstan is bordered on the Southeast by China, on the north and west by Kazakhstan, and on the south and west by Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Bishkek (formerly Frunze), the capital, and Osh are the principal cities.

Kyrgyzstan is a mountainous country with the Tien Shan and Pamir mountain ranges dominating 65% of the country. The average elevation is 2,750 meters, ranging from 7,439 meters (24,409 feet) at Pik Pobedy (Mount Victory) to 394 meters in the Fergana Valley of the south. Kyrgyzstan's estimated 6,500 distinct glaciers are thought to hold 650 billion cubic meters water. The alpine regions provide rich pastures for sheep, goats, cattle, horses and yaks. Agriculture is conducted in the Chui River valley of the north and in the Fergana valley in the south. Over half the cultivated area is irrigated. Cotton, sugar beets, silk, tobacco, fruit, grapes and grains are grown. There are gold, coal, antimony, lead, tungsten, mercury, uranium, petroleum and natural gas deposits. Industries include food processing, the manufacture of agricultural machinery and textiles. The country is lightly forested; woods cover only about 3.5% of the country. However, forests in southern Kyrgyzstan include the largest wild nut (walnut) groves on earth.

The local climate is cold in the winter and desertlike hot in the summer. In January, evening temperatures can be in the teens (Fahrenheit); daytime temperatures often rise to above freezing, enough to start melting ice and snow. Summer temperatures can rise above 90 degrees by the end of May. The air is dry year round.

Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan, is situated in the extreme northern region of the country.

Population

In 2000, the population of Kyrgyzstan was approximately 4,600,000, of whom 52.4% were ethnic Kyrgyz. Russians make up 18%

of the population, Uzbeks 12.9%, Ukrainians 2.5% and Germans 2.4%.

Because of the country's mountainous terrain, the population tends to be concentrated in a relatively small area. About two-thirds of the population live in the Fergana, Talas and Chui valleys. The Chui valley, where the capital Bishkek is located, is the major economic center, producing about 45% of the nation's gross national product. Virtually all ethnic Uzbeks live in the southern area of the country, the Fergana valley. As a result, the Fergana region is more orthodox Muslim and traditional than the north.

The Kyrgyz language is a Turkic-based language with Mongol and Altaic elements. Kyrgyz did not become a written language until 1923, at which time an Arabic-based alphabet was used. Kyrgyz was changed to a Latin-based alphabet in 1928 and to a Cyrillic-based one in 1940. Most Kyrgyz living in the cities speak Russian. In rural areas, more Kyrgyz is spoken.

Arts, Science and Education

The Arts, Science and Education have suffered tremendously from lack of funding for the last four years. Public school teachers, especially in the rural areas, are seldom paid and usually in products rather than salary. Fuel shortages and the lack of funding to purchase fuel have forced many schools to operate without heating. Books and other learning materials are in short supply. At the university level, new private universities are operating entirely on revenues raised by tuitions and public universities likewise are charging tuitions to cover costs. Some universities are affiliated with foreign universities, including several American universities.

Education was one of the strongest features of the old regime, and many areas of strength still exist, especially in the sciences. The Academy of Science still operates. The

recent introduction of Internet communications is expanding the ability of Kyrgyz scientists to work with scientists from other regions of the world. Ecological and environmental concerns of the country are observed by new NGOs which monitor the condition of Lake Issyk-Kul and measure fallout on Kyrgyz territory from Chinese Lop Nur nuclear tests.

Commerce and Industry

While a Soviet republic, Kyrgyzstan was dependent on transfer from Moscow for 12% of its GDP and had developed an industrial structure tightly integrated into Soviet structures and heavily weighted toward the defense industry. Consequently the breakup of the Soviet Union has had severe consequences for Kyrgyzstan's economic output. For this and other reasons, Kyrgyzstan has been in the forefront of economic reforms. Privatization was begun earlier than in other Central Asian states and is now proceeding steadily with U.S. assistance. Collective and state farms have been broken up and investment is being sought to develop gold mining and hydroelectric power.

Kyrgyzstan has stabilized its economy with a stable national currency—the Som—which has traded at around 10 to 11 som per U.S. dollar, and a low inflation rate. Exports began to pickup in 1994 and continued to grow in 1995. The former CIS countries remain major trading partners but China is now the largest market for Kyrgyzstani exports and trade patterns continue to diversify away from traditional trading partners. The banking and financial sector remains weak and tourism, which has great potential, remains undeveloped.

Agriculture accounts for over 40% of GDP with wool, cotton and hides being important products. Since independence the country has not been self-sufficient in grains and has needed to import wheat, rice and animal feeds. Herds have decreased sharply in recent years.

The production of fruits, vegetables and cotton has increased. The agricultural sector is in the midst of a major transition and it will be several years yet before this important sector stabilizes. Aside from mining, food processing and textiles based on locally produced raw materials offer the best prospects for industrial growth.

Unemployment is high in Kyrgyzstan and standards of living for Kyrgyzstanis have dropped dramatically since independence.

Transportation

Traffic regulations and procedures in Kyrgyzstan are similar to those in the U.S. However, driving habits of local drivers mean that one must use caution when driving and when crossing streets as a pedestrian.

Winter evenings in Kyrgyzstan are dark and cold with severe icing on city streets. Only the main streets of Bishkek are plowed regularly; side streets and housing complexes remain covered with snow and ice throughout the winter.

Local

Public transportation in Bishkek is inexpensive, but overcrowded. The city's network of buses and trolley-buses covers the entire city. Riders should be ready to contend with a good deal of pushing and shoving during the morning and evening rush hours. Passengers enter the bus from the rear doors and exit/pay through the front doors. The city has no streetcars or subway.

Many taxis cruise the city and private cars often provide taxi services. There are taxi stands at some busy corners in central Bishkek. After a taxi or car stops, the required destination should be stated; if the driver agrees, a price should be negotiated before entering the vehicle. Kyrgyz or Russian is a necessity when dealing with taxis. Extra precautions should be taken in the evenings, when it is advisable to use only clearly marked taxi rather than a private vehicle.

Regional

Kyrgyzstan's rail and air transportation system is limited and service is marginal. The rail system runs from Bishkek east to Lake Issyk-Kul and to the north to connect with rail lines for Uzbekistan, Russia and Kazakstan. Trains are unclean, overcrowded, dangerous and have no ventilation.

Air travel from the Bishkek International Airport (Manas airport) is often unreliable due to delays, sudden cancellations, or lack of fuel, particularly in winter. The successor to Aeroflot in Kyrgyzstan, Air Kyrgyzstan, operates regular service throughout the country and on a limited basis to Tashkent, Uzbekistan and a few cities in Russia. There are regular charter shopping flights to the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, India and Thailand. A German charter flies several times per month to three cities in Germany.

The road system in Kyrgyzstan provides access to all cities, towns and most villages. However, north-south travel in Kyrgyzstan is impossible from December through March due to heavy snow in the mountain passes. In all seasons, the traveler should plan her/his trip carefully since information, food, water, lodging and fuel are often not readily available. In winter, the traveler must be well prepared with food, water, heavy clothing and fuel as roads can close quickly due to ice and snow, leaving the traveler stranded for hours.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

Telephone service from Kyrgyzstan to the U.S. and to most European cities is inadequate but improving. Local calls often have serious static interference. Calls requested through the operator may require a wait. International calls to the U.S. cost about \$1.00 per minute. The phone system in Bishkek uses the "pulse" rather than the "tone" method as commonly found in the U.S.

Newspapers, Magazines and Technical Journals

No foreign newspapers and magazines are available in hotels or in newspaper kiosks. However, copies of the *International Herald Tribune* can be ordered and delivered from Singapore by air through Almaty.

Radio and TV

Television and radio programming in Bishkek provides regular news broadcasts and basic information about Kyrgyzstan and international affairs. Broadcasts rely heavily on educational documentaries, films, and concerts. One station broadcasts from Bishkek, two stations provide broadcasting from Moscow in Russian and one broadcasts in Turkish from Turkey.

Radio programs on Bishkek's radio stations begin early in the morning. Much of the programming is musical. A good shortwave radio is required to receive Voice of America, BBC World Service and Radio Liberty. VOA is broadcast on an AM station in Bishkek at Sam.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

Local medical practice in general is not up to the standards of Western medicine. Pharmaceutical supplies and drugs are in short supply. Routine laboratory work is problematic due to lack of supplies or working equipment.

Community Health

Air pollution in Bishkek continues to increase. Utility smokestacks have no scrubbers. Residents of the suburbs burn coal or wood for heat and cooking, which adds to the haze trapped in the Bishkek valley. Persons with respiratory problems will notice increased sinus/allergic difficulties.

A high pollen count in the spring sometimes compounds air pollution problems. Persons susceptible to hay fever should bring an ample supply of medications and tissues as local supplies are uncertain.

Pests such as cockroaches and ants can be a nuisance in some apartments. Mosquitoes can be an annoyance in the summer. Travelers should bring an ample supply of insect repellent, traps, and fly swatters, as these items are not available locally.

Fruits and vegetables bought locally should be washed with a chlorine disinfectant.

The standard of cleanliness in many public buildings, restaurants, taxis, airports, and train stations fall short of Western standards. The few toilet facilities found on the roads while traveling are usually avoided for the cleanliness of nearby trees.

Drinking tap water is not recommended. Parents should bring fluoride fortified vitamins or fluoride tablets to add to the water supply for their children as once water is distilled, it loses its fluoride content. Locally produced carbonated mineral water is available, but it has a high sodium content.

The number of restaurants available in Bishkek is limited. Local markets have a good variety of fruits and vegetables in the summer, with winter produce consisting of potatoes, carrots, onions, cabbage and beets. Meats are hung in the market without refrigeration. No meat is packaged. A few small stores have opened with imported canned and packaged meats and vegetables.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs & Duties

A passport and visa as well as an invitation are required. For further information regarding entry requirements, contact the Embassy of the Kyrgyz Republic at 1732 Wisconsin Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20007, telephone (202)338-5141, fax: (202) 338-5139, or on the Internet at <http://www.kyrgyzstan.org>. Americans are required to register

their passports with the Office of Visas and Registration, of the Kyrgyz Internal Affairs Ministry, within five business days of arrival in the Kyrgyz Republic. There are fines for failure to register and fines for late registration. This requirement does not apply to official delegation members and bearers of diplomatic passports.

U.S. citizens are encouraged to carry a copy of their U.S. passport with them at all times, so that, if questioned by local officials, proof of identity and citizenship are readily available. To this end, the American Citizen Services Unit of the Consular Section at U.S. Embassy Bishkek provides free-of-charge certified photocopies of the passports of U.S. citizens who register with the Consular Section.

In accordance with the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations and certain bilateral treaties, a consular officer from the U.S. Embassy must be given access to any U.S. citizen arrested in the Kyrgyz Republic. U.S. citizens who are arrested or detained should ask for the U.S. Embassy to be contacted immediately.

Americans living or visiting the Kyrgyz Republic are encouraged to register at the U.S. Embassy and obtain updated information on travel and security in the Kyrgyz Republic. The U.S. Embassy in Bishkek is located at 171 Prospect Mira, 720016 Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic. The phone number is 996-312-551-241, fax 996-312-551-264.

Pets

All dogs and cats entering Kyrgyzstan and Kazakstan must be accompanied by a certificate of good health bearing the seal of the relevant local board of health and signed by a veterinarian. The certificate should not be issued more than 10 days prior to the animal's arrival. A rabies certificate is needed. Travelers should carefully check with the airlines to ensure that the airline has room on all portions of the trip to Almaty to ensure

that the pets arrive at the same time as the owner.

There are some competent local vets in Bishkek, but in general, veterinary care is at a level similar to that of the U.S. in the 1950s. Few vets have access to up-to-date vaccines from reliable companies. Refrigeration of vaccines is frequently ignored, thereby putting the vaccine's effectiveness at risk.

Currency, Banking, and Weights and Measures

Kyrgyzstan is no longer a part of the Soviet centralized banking system and has established its own independent system. The Kyrgyz Republic is a cash-only economy. The banking system is not well developed and there are no automated teller machines. One or two hotels or banks may, on occasion, accept travelers checks or credit cards but fees can be quite high for travelers checks, as much as 20%. U.S. bills dated earlier than 1990, or bills that are worn, torn or stained are usually not accepted in Kyrgyzstan. Several years ago the country introduced its own currency, the som. The rate of the som to the dollar in December, 1995 was 11Som to US\$1.

The metric system of weights and measures is used.

Disaster Preparedness

The Kyrgyz Republic is an earthquake-prone country. General information about natural disaster preparedness is available via the internet from the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) at <http://www.fema.gov>.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

- Jan. 1 New Year's Day
- Jan. 7 Christmas (Russian Orthodox)
- Mar. 8 Women's Day
- Mar. 21 Noruz (Persian New Year)
- May 1 Worker's Day

- May 5 Constitution Day
 - May 9 Victory Day
 - June 13 Commemoration Day
 - Aug. 31 Independence Day
 - Dec. 2 National Day
 - Id al-Adha*
 - Ramadan*
 - Id al-Fitr*
- *variable

RECOMMENDED READING

These titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on Kyrgyzstan. The Department of State does not endorse unofficial publications.

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Vientiane, Laos

LAOS

Lao People's Democratic Republic

Major City:

Vientiane

Other Cities:

Luang Prabang, Paksé

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated April 1994. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

Although **LAOS** has been known as the Lao People's Democratic Republic only since December 1975, recent archaeological discoveries in Southeast Asia have provoked increased interest and reassessment of the nation and its place in Asian history. The ancient culture that flourished along the upper Mekong River had made basic advances in agriculture, pottery, metallurgy, and the polishing of stone tools made by 3,000 B.C. These people also spread their culture north into China and south-eastward into Indonesia, the Philippines, and even to Australia. The numerically dominant Lao people began entering present-day Laos before A.D. 1,000 from southern China. This migration accelerated

after the Mongol destruction of their kingdom of Yunnan in 1253.

Today, Laos is a nation of pronounced ethnic, linguistic, and geographical diversity. Because it is strategically located, it receives an abundance of interest and a large amount of assistance from other nations. One of the world's poorest countries, Laos faces daunting tasks in every field of economic development.

MAJOR CITY

Vientiane

Vientiane is the political, administrative, and commercial center of Laos. The capital of Laos, it is the largest city in the country, with a population of 534,000 (2000 est.). The name is a French version of the Lao *Vieng Chan*, or "City of Sandalwood." It was once the ancient capital of the rich and powerful kingdom of Muong Lan Xang Hom Khao, the "Land of the Million Elephants and the White Parasol."

Vientiane is a provincial town in appearance and atmosphere. It is situated on the left bank of the Mekong River, at the edge of a large plain which extends some 40 miles

north of the city. To the north and east, the foothills visible from Vientiane are the rugged uplands of the Annamite cordillera, which cover most of the country.

Utilities

Short power failures occur almost daily because the lines are old and poorly maintained. Voltage fluctuates at times and sensitive electronic equipment is subject to damage. Voltage regulators are not available locally. Minor repairs to stereo equipment and small appliances can be done. More complicated repairs must be done in Bangkok.

Food

The local markets offer a large variety of fruit, vegetables, rice, eggs, poultry, pork, fresh fish, and beef. Fruits and vegetables vary with the season; adequate quantities of good quality are available year round. Chicken and pork are fine; beef is tasty but tough. Because local selection is limited, some Westerners shop in Bangkok to supplement their food supply.

Clothing

Dress in Vientiane is generally casual because of the tropical climate. Cottons or cotton blends are worn year round; nylon and other pure synthetics are uncomfortable during the hot season. From



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Wat That Luang in Vientiane, Laos

November to February, when the temperature averages 60°F, spring or fall clothing is appropriate.

The climate and an active social life define wardrobe requirements. Clothing wears out quickly because of more changes during the day and frequent laundering. Tailors and dressmakers of limited capability are available, and clothing needs can be made to order in Vientiane or Bangkok. A variety of materials can be purchased locally.

Raincoats, umbrellas, and rubber boots are needed for the rainy season. Special attire should be brought from home for active sports. Sweaters and jackets are useful in cool weather.

American men in Laos find that suits (including safari styles) are needed only for official functions, and these should be lightweight and washable. Men wear short-sleeved shirts and washable slacks for business, leisure, and most social functions. For the rare occasion when formal attire may be needed, a tuxedo or white dinner jacket and black slacks will suffice at any time of the year.

Women's wardrobes should include washable dresses of cotton blends, or lightweight knits, for office work or for social events. Cottons are most suitable for casual wear, but any cool, washable fabric that does not cling will be comfortable. Shorts are useful at home and for sports,

but are not worn on the street. Pantsuits are acceptable in offices and, in appropriate styles and fabrics, may be worn for all but formal occasions. Lightweight wools and synthetics are suitable in the brief cool season.

During the cooler months, the usual dress for parties is a long-sleeved blouse and long skirt, long dress, or pantsuit. Hats and gloves are not worn.

Supplies & Services

Laundry is done in the home. No bona fide dry cleaning exists in Vientiane; Americans living in the city take their better clothing to first-class Bangkok hotels for cleaning, which is very expensive.

A few beauty shops in Vientiane offer haircuts, permanents, and manicures. Hair coloring can be applied, but it is recommended that coloring kits be brought to the country with you. Even Bangkok beauty shops have limited hair coloring supplies. Several barbershops are located in the downtown area, and their services are reasonably priced; often, however, resident Americans have their hair cut during trips to Bangkok.

Shoes can be repaired locally, usually with satisfactory results.

Several men's tailor shops make suits, slacks, and shirts to order, with acceptable results. Prices are reasonable, but material must be supplied by the customer. Most American women in Vientiane use dressmaker services in Vientiane and Bangkok; prices and results vary. In general, custom-made clothes are reasonable, but not up to the highest U.S. standards.

Religious Activities

Currently, no formally organized English- or French-language Protestant or Jewish religious services are held in the country. Protestant clergymen occasionally visit Vientiane to conduct services; the city has three small Lao Protestant churches. Mass is celebrated daily in Lao, French, and English at the

Roman Catholic Cathedral in Vientiane.

Domestic Help

Domestics are readily available in Vientiane. The hot climate, lack of centralized shipping facilities, and the language barrier make it necessary to hire domestic help.

The number of employees employed depends on preference and life-style (also on the size of living quarters). Most Americans living in Laos find that a combination maid/cook adequately satisfies requirements for shopping, food preparation, entertaining, house cleaning, and laundry. Most residences have quarters for at least one domestic; however, few if any live in. They use the quarters during the day for eating, bathing, and rest periods. Salaries are negotiated between employer and employee, but are quite reasonable by American standards.

The majority of domestics have little command of English, and misunderstandings are frequent. Patience is required.

Prospective domestics should have physical examinations before starting work and periodically thereafter. Exams can be taken at one of the local hospitals for a small fee. Be sure your employees seek medical attention when needed. Many of the employees in Vientiane have been employed in American households for some time and are well versed in health and food requirements. Nevertheless, their activities should be routinely monitored to ensure compliance.

Education

The Vientiane International School is registered with the Lao Ministry of Education and is a member of the International School System. The school curriculum and schedule are patterned on the U.S. system, but with an international flavor. Children from all nationalities are represented, with the Americans and Australians predominating. Instruction is in English; French and Lao are also taught. Classes are from grades pre-K through eight.

The principal and all teaching staff are accredited.

There is also a French school which goes to grade twelve.

Recreation

Facilities exist for golf, tennis, squash, volleyball, swimming, and badminton.

Bicycling is a popular and pleasurable pastime, particularly during cooler weather. Vientiane is flat and easy to get around in by bicycle. Bicycle rallies are occasionally organized and are very popular.

Of particular interest to visitors are the That Luang Monument and the Sisaket and Phra Keo Temples. The National Museum provides interesting insights into recent Lao history. On weekends, many Lao and foreigners make picnic excursions to the Nam Ngum dam or to one of several waterfalls within a few hours of town.

Laos has many natural and historical attractions that can be visited with tours sponsored by local travel agencies. Among the most important tourist destinations are Luang Prabang, the old royal capital, with its many beautiful temples; Xieng Khouang, site of the Plain of Jars; Pakse, famous for its handwoven silks and cottons and for the beautiful Khmer ruins at Wat Phu; Saravane, known for the Bolevans Plateau and its natural surroundings; and Savannakhet, a gateway to the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

Vientiane is served by Lao Aviation, Thai Airways, Air Vietnam, and Aeroflot. Less than two hours away by air, Bangkok is readily accessible for shopping, sight-seeing and vacationing.

Bangkok is a major air stop for connections to other cities in Southeast Asia, and to world capitals. From there, direct flights are available to Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), Yangon (Myanmar), Singapore, Manila (Philippines), Hong Kong, Australia, and Europe. Thailand has many popular resorts: the beaches of

Phuket and Koh Samui are world famous; and Chiang Mai, Sukothai, and Lopburi are famous for historical monuments.

Pattaya is a popular beach resort two hours' drive south of Bangkok on the east coast of the Gulf of Thailand. Accommodations are available at hotels or private cottages. Boats can be rented for trips to the islands off the coast. Beach resorts are located at Bang Saen on the east coast, and at Hua Hin on the western shore, where there is a good golf course.

No definite restrictions are placed on photography in Laos with the exception of the Wattay Airport and on military installations, where no photos are allowed. Courtesy and discretion should be exercised at all times in photographing people, particularly uniformed security guards or policemen and in taking pictures of any government building or installation. Children welcome having their photograph taken and often follow Westerners around when they observe them taking pictures.

Entertainment

American films are shown weekly at the American Embassy compound, while French films and duplicate bridge nights are organized by the Alliance Francaise. The American and Australian Embassies maintain small libraries. A wide selection of books, including best-sellers, is available in Bangkok.

A limited number of restaurants in Vientiane serve Western, Chinese, French, Vietnamese, and other cuisines.

A few discos have opened and are frequented by both Lao and Westerners.

Many of the Lao festivals, known as *bouns*, celebrate seasonal changes and important dates in the life of Buddha. The Lao New Year, known as *Pi Mai*, lasts for three days and is celebrated in April. It is the most festive and widely celebrated holiday. The annual long boat races on

the Mekong River between Vientiane and Nong Khai, Thailand are well worth seeing. Permission is required, but Americans have been invited to attend in recent years with few problems.

The *baci* ceremony is one of prayers and good wishes. It is uniquely Lao, and is celebrated elsewhere only in northeast Thailand. It can be performed on various occasions, such as Lao New Year, a wedding, farewell, welcome, or the birth of a child. The *baci* ceremony follows a precise pattern, and is conducted by an elderly man (*mohpohn*) who is highly respected for his wisdom and ceremonial skill. Shoes are removed and the participants sit on the floor during the ceremony. Of brief duration, usually less than an hour, it is normally followed by a traditional Lao meal and dancing. It has no Buddhist significance, but derives from native animist beliefs pre-dating the arrival of Buddhism centuries ago. Photography is permitted at a *baci*.

Entertainment in Vientiane depends largely on individual tastes, initiative, and ingenuity. Home entertaining among foreign residents is extensive; dinners, cocktail parties, and barbecues are the usual forms of social activity. The Western community in the capital is small, and people socialize regularly with members of the diplomatic and private communities. It should be noted, however, that home entertainment by the Lao is rare.

OTHER CITIES

The port city of **LUANG PRABANG** lies on the Mekong River, 130 miles northwest of Vientiane. For over two centuries, beginning in 1353, this was the capital of the Lan Xang Kingdom. The city acquired the name Luang Prabang about 1563, and became the capital of a new kingdom in 1707. Over 20 Buddhist pagodas stand in what had long been the nation's religious center—the Phu Si pagoda allegedly

enshrines Buddha's footprint. Luang Prabang is a small, backward community where goldsmithing, lacquering, and silversmithing has flourished. The population is over 46,000.

PAKSÉ (also spelled Pakxe) is a distribution center for the southern panhandle of Laos, located at the convergence of the Xédôn and Mekong rivers. Industry here includes sawmills, brick and tile manufacture, and an ice plant. Electricity arrived in the district only in 1970, when the Selabam Dam was completed. Irrigation of the region was another benefit from the dam. Paksé, until 1966 Laos' main port of entry, has road connections to the Thailand and Cambodia borders. The population of Paksé is over 50,000.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The Lao People's Democratic Republic, a landlocked nation, shares a common frontier with five countries: Burma to the northwest; China to the north; Vietnam to the east; Cambodia to the south; and Thailand to the west.

The total land area covers about 91,425 square miles, and is approximately the size of Oregon. Close to six percent of the country's surface, particularly in the north and east, is covered with dense jungle or rugged mountains; mountainous topography is characteristic of all of Laos outside of the Mekong River Basin. Some mountains rise over 7,000 feet; the highest point in the country is 9,249 feet above sea level. Except in limited areas, soil is poor; most of the forested area is not exploitable.

Vientiane, the capital, is also the largest city. Other population centers are, like Vientiane, on or near the banks of the Mekong River.

They are: Luang Prabang, the former royal capital, and the towns of Ban Houei Sai; Savannakhet; Paksé; Sayaboury; and Thakhek.

The Mekong River, with its headwaters in Tibet, flows more than 2,600 miles to its mouth in southern Vietnam. One of the world's great rivers, it forms the country's western boundary for the greater part of its length and is the cradle of Lao culture. The only significant population center in Laos far removed from the Mekong is Vieng Say in Sam Neua Province; it is a new town, established by the Lao People's Revolutionary Party during its struggle with the former Royal Government of Laos. The Lao government has been encouraging the establishment of other new towns and villages in the country's interior.

Laos has a monsoon climate with three overlapping seasons. The rainy season extends for five months, from June through September. In October, the rains start to taper off and the cool season begins in November, and lasts through February. March, April, and May are hot and humid. In April, the hottest month, temperatures in Vientiane normally range between 72°F and 93°F, and in January, the coolest month, between 57°F and 83°F. However, temperature extremes of 103°F (April) and 39°F (January) have been recorded. Vientiane's climate is more varied, drier and cooler than that found in Singapore; Jakarta; Indonesia; or Bangkok, Thailand.

Dust, during the dry period, and mud in the wet season, are common but tolerable obstacles. It is not unusual for the Mekong River to overflow its banks in late August and early September. With the construction of dikes, however, the incidence of flooding in Vientiane has decreased.

Tropical flowers flourish in the Laos climate, as well as a wide and fascinating variety of insects and reptiles. The most common pests are mosquitoes, ants, and termites.



Street market in Vientiane, Laos

AP/Wide World Photos, Inc. Reproduced by permission.

Population

Laos has the smallest population of any Southeast Asian country except Brunei. The population, composed of many ethnic groups, is estimated at 5.6 million (2001 est.). This sparse population is spread out unevenly; the greatest concentration is in the Mekong Valley, especially in the Vientiane Plain and the Savannakhet Basin. Eighty-five percent of the population lives in the countryside. Laos has an extraordinary ethnic diversity. About 68% of the population is composed of ethnic Lao (known as *Lao Loum*), a people of Thai stock who are believed to have migrated originally from southwestern China during the 13th century, in the wake of the onslaught of Kublai Khan's forces. The *Lao Loum* dominate the country politically, culturally, and economically.

The rest of the Lao population is divided into a welter of ethnic groups, some sizable, some tiny. These groups include mountain tribes of Thai stock found in northern Laos, the Hmong (Meo) tribesmen of Tibet-Burman origin, and a number of other mountain tribes of Malayo-Polynesian background who inhabit the hills of central and southern Laos. Although no one is quite sure of the exact number of tribes or ethnic groups, the government estimates 68 different groups.

Vietnamese and Chinese represent less than one percent of the population (most left the country after 1975). There are also small groups of Thai, Cambodians, Indians, and Pakistanis. The ethnic Lao and the population of northeast Thailand share the same language, and historically have had a close social and commercial relationship. Many peo-

ple in Laos have relatives in northeast Thailand and, in numerous cases, a claim to Thai citizenship. There is also a small European community in Vientiane, most of whom are from the Commonwealth of Independent States (C.I.S.) and Eastern Europe. However, there are increasing numbers of Australians, Swedes, Japanese, French, and North Americans working for UN agencies. Improved relations with the West and a growth in foreign investment should contribute to an increase in the number of Westerners living in Laos.

History

Laos was first united in 1353 by Fa Ngum, a Lao prince. He brought the scattered Lao princedoms together to form the Kingdom of Lan Xang (Kingdom of a Million Elephants). The Lan Xang covered much of

present-day Thailand as well as Laos. Fa Ngum also established Buddhism as the state religion. Dynastic struggles and conflicts with neighboring kingdoms precipitated a decline of power that began in the 16th century and by the 18th century the Siamese and Vietnamese kingdoms were competing for control of Laos.

For much of the 19th century, the country was under Thai suzerainty and was split into three parts: Luang Prabang, Vientiane, and Champassak. In 1893, France established a protectorate over Laos, but in the process, a large area of what had been Lan Xang, on the west bank of the Mekong River, became part of Thailand. The Franco-Siamese treaty of 1907 defined the present Lao boundary with Thailand.

Under pressure from Japanese occupation forces during World War II, King Sisavang Vong of Luang Prabang declared his independence from France and in September 1945 a new Kingdom of Laos was formed along with the principalities of Vientiane and Champassak. French troops reoccupied the area but in August 1946 recognized Lao autonomy. In 1949, France formally recognized the independence of Laos within the French Union and Laos remained under French rule until 1953 when the country was granted full independence.

From 1945 to 1975, Laos was involved in the bloody conflict that raged throughout Indochina. In 1972, the Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP) was proclaimed by Lao Communists. A cease-fire was signed in February 1973 and a coalition was set up in April 1974. The Pathet Lao, sparked by communist victories in Indochina in 1975, steadily assumed complete control.

On December 2, 1975, a group led by the Lao People's Revolutionary Party abolished the Kingdom of Laos and established the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

Government

Laos is a communist country. Power is monopolized by the Marxist-Leninist Lao People's Revolutionary Party, the only legally recognized party in the country. The party is small in number, estimated at about 40,000 members and compared to other Communist parties, highly secretive. Party and state are intermingled in Laos; members of the party politburo hold the important government positions.

In 1991, the National Assembly adopted the first constitution to be effective in the country since 1975. The new constitution describes the governing authorities of the country, which include the National Assembly, which is elected by the Lao citizenry; the President of the Republic, who is elected and subject to removal by the National Assembly; and the executive government, headed by the Prime Minister, who is appointed and subject to removal by the President with National Assembly approval.

Since the 1970s, Laos has maintained a close relationship with Vietnam, Cambodia, and the former Soviet bloc countries; while at the same time remaining hostile to the West. However, beginning in the late 1980s, Laos has sought to improve its relations with other countries; economic issues have been the impetus for this dramatic change in policy.

The flag of the Lao People's Democratic Republic is blue, with two horizontal red stripes at the top and bottom; a large white circle is centered.

Arts, Science, Education

Probably the best known form of Lao art is the architecture, ornamentation, and sculpture of the Buddhist pagodas, called *wats* in Lao. Often, an incident from Buddha's life is portrayed. Bas-relief sculpture in wood, finished in gold leaf against a red background, deco-

rate the door panels, archways, and gable ends of the structures.

The architecture of Lao homes reflects the country's pastoral and agrarian traditions. Houses raised on stilts permit livestock to shelter beneath them, and the height allows the occupants to catch the evening breezes and to avoid floods in the rainy season.

Handwoven fabrics and fine embroidery appear in both modern and traditional dress. Appliqué, handloomed fabric, and embroidery characterize the dress of the ethnic minorities.

Lao authorities are attempting to encourage traditional musical forms. These include both the *lam-vong*, or circle dance, and other dances performed by fine arts groups at festivals and ceremonies.

The Lao Government has reorganized the country's educational system. Schooling is compulsory for five years. Primary school begins for children aged six years, followed by three years of secondary school, with an additional three years of high school.

In the past, most secondary education was in French. The government has emphasized that instruction at all levels will be in Lao. Laos has teacher-training institutes and medical schools.

The predominant religion of Laos is Theravada Buddhism. To the Lao, Buddhism is not only a religion—it is a way of life. The mountain tribesmen are principally animists, but some of them have adopted Buddhism, while at the same time retaining many of their old beliefs. The two forms of worship coexist easily. It is not unusual to see spirit shrines alongside Buddhist temples.

Lao, the national language, belongs to the Thai linguistic family. It is a difficult tongue, and has six tones. Diverse dialects are spoken in different regions of the country. Like most languages of Southeast Asia,

Laos has adopted many words of Indian origin into its vocabulary. About 80 minority languages are spoken in Laos, primarily by tribal groups living outside the Mekong Valley. French, formerly the language of government and higher education, is slowly losing its importance. However, many government officials still speak French. Increasingly, English is gaining favor as a common language; Russian is also spoken by a number of Lao.

Commerce and Industry

Over 80% of the population earns its income from agriculture, mostly subsistence farming. Rice, corn, coffee, cotton, and tobacco are grown here. Barter is the principal method of exchange in the countryside; the money economy is limited mainly to cities and towns and along major transportation routes. In most areas, poor transportation facilities and other factors limit production levels to meeting the country's own needs, although the economy produces a small surplus of some agricultural, forest, and mineral commodities for export.

The industrial base is quite limited. Industrial plants include a small foundry; saw mills; rice mills; plywood, furniture, match, and cigarette factories; and other small-scale local enterprises. Cottage industries range from the weaving of silk and cotton textiles to shoe making, clothing, and metalwork. Handicraft production includes pottery, jewelry, silver working, and basketry.

Laos imports most of its manufactured products. Government approval is needed to use foreign exchange for imports, but an active free market exists. With the introduction of the New Economic Management Mechanism in 1985, major economic reforms have been enacted: government regulations have been relaxed, free market prices are allowed, farmers may own land, state firms now exercise greater control in authority but

have lost their subsidies and pricing advantages, and trade restrictions have been lifted. Consumer goods, mostly from Thailand, are now available in the more populated areas of the country. As a landlocked country, Laos has been primarily dependent on the cooperation of Thailand to facilitate the transshipment of imported and exported goods. The Lao Government is now trying to develop, with Vietnamese assistance, alternate transit routes to Vietnamese seaports.

Major exports include timber and forestry products, tin, coffee, and hydroelectric power which is sold to Thailand. Foreign investment in Laos remains low, although the government actively encourages it and has increased ties to the West.

Laos is one of the poorest countries in the world due to its over-dependence on agriculture and its lack of a skilled labor force. Both of these factors present significant problems for the future.

Laos has relied heavily on foreign assistance from the former Soviet bloc nations, which has decreased in recent years. Improved relations with the West is now a priority in order to offset the loss of aid from those countries. Projects financed by Western foreign aid include: expansion of hydroelectric power generation facilities; building of roads, bridges, and port facilities; and the improvement of communications. Most Western assistance has been concentrated on infrastructure and agricultural development projects.

A number of business concerns, mostly Thai but including some from the U.S., Japan, and Europe, have invested in manufacturing, mineral extraction, and service industries. As the government refines its economic reforms and improves banking and communication procedures, foreign investment will increase.

The Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry can be reached at P.O. Box 1163, Vientiane, Laos.

Transportation

Vientiane is served by five international airlines: Thai Airways, Air Vietnam, Lao Aviation, and Aeroflot (C.I.S.), and China Southern. Bangkok is the nearest city served by an American carrier, and many people make onward connections from there.

Foreigners may enter and leave the country by air at Vientiane's Wattay Airport, by ferry at Thadeau's ferry crossing, or at Thanaleng shipping port.

Laos is landlocked, mountainous, and sparsely populated—factors which have hindered the development of its transportation system. The country has no railroads, and roads are mostly unpaved and poorly maintained. Public transportation in Vientiane is poor and unreliable. Taxis are available, but meters and fixed rates do not exist. Taxis fares generally depend on the passenger's ability to bargain, and on the distance traveled. Drivers speak little or no English. They pick up as many passengers as the vehicle will hold, although it is possible to engage a taxi privately for a higher fare. Many taxis are old and poorly maintained, and drivers may be reckless.

Several bus routes in the city, and for intracity travel, are available. *Samlors* (tricycle rickshaws) can be engaged for rides within the city limits. Recently motorcycle driven rickshaws (*tuk-tuks*), imported from Thailand, have appeared on the streets of Vientiane. *Samlor* or *tuk-tuk* fares are bargained.

Traffic is light and undisciplined. Ill-trained drivers operate poorly maintained vehicles on crowded, potholed streets. While in theory traffic moves on the right, pedestrians and bicycles use all parts of the streets, so most cars do the same. Animals roam the street as well, including cows, goats, all fowl, as

well as cats and dogs. Cyclists pay little or no heed to cars and bicycles are rarely equipped with functioning lights or reflectors. Driving is particularly dangerous at dusk and at night.

Defensive driving is necessary. Helmets should be worn when riding motorcycles, and gloves and sturdy shoes are strongly recommended.

Seasons of rain and dust cause roads to deteriorate rapidly, consequently placing stress on cars. Vientiane has limited facilities for maintenance and body work. Spare parts for foreign-made cars can generally be obtained from Bangkok, but parts for American-manufactured vehicles are normally ordered from the U.S. Permission is usually granted to drive cars to Bangkok or Udonrdhani (Thailand) for repairs.

The Lao Government requires proof-of-ownership documents before it will register a vehicle. There is no registration fee for those on the diplomatic list, but other foreigners are required to purchase tax stickers, license plates, and registration cards. The cost of the tax sticker varies with the size and make of the car. Unleaded fuel is not available.

All persons operating motor vehicles in Laos must have valid Lao licenses. U.S. or international permits must be surrendered at the time of application, but will be returned upon departure from the country. The U.S. Embassy in Vientiane suggests that all Americans coming to Laos obtain international permits so that they will not have to give up their U.S. licenses.

Communications

Overseas telephone service is available on a 24-hour basis through the local Posts, Telephone, and Telegraph (PTT) facility, but is not reliable. Calls to the U.S. are frequently inaudible, if one is able to get through at all. The PTT telegraph facility is slow and expensive. A three-minute call to the U.S. costs about \$15. Calls must be "booked"

in advance and there may be a two to three hour wait for your call to be completed.

International mail service is not considered completely dependable. Registered mail service is not available. Transit time to and from the U.S. is approximately two weeks.

Several radio stations broadcast on medium wave (AM) in Vientiane. The most important of these is the Lao National Radio. Most broadcasts are in Lao, but government news is given in English, French, and other languages.

Television is available in Vientiane via satellite from the former Soviet Union. Two TV channels can be received from Thailand. None broadcast in English.

Shortwave programs are received from Voice of America (VOA), British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), and American Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS); other foreign broadcasts can be picked up on shortwave receivers.

Two daily Lao-language papers are published in the capital—*Vientiane Mai* and *Pasason*. Khao San Pathet Lao, the official government news agency, prints daily bulletins in English and French.

Arrangements may be made for personal subscriptions to newspapers and periodicals. English-language books are not available for purchase locally, but can be bought in Bangkok.

Health

Medical and dental facilities and the availability of medicines in Vientiane are extremely limited. It is imperative that all possible medical and dental care be completed before entering Laos. The official U.S. community has consultation access to the regional medical officer in Bangkok, who visits Laos on occasion. Bring or arrange to have sent any special medications required; also bring a supply of non-prescription health aids, such as

aspirin, cold and allergy medications, antiseptic solutions, and Band-aids.

Community health services, including basic programs such as sanitary waste disposal, are inadequate by U.S. standards. Most houses occupied by Americans use septic tanks. The long rainy season and high water table cause frequent malfunction of these and other waste-disposal systems. Neither the municipal water supply in Vientiane nor water from wells is potable without filtration and boiling.

Raw fruits or vegetables which are peeled before they are eaten require only simple cleaning. Fruits eaten whole should be washed and soaked in a germicidal solution. Locally bought leafy vegetables, such as lettuce and watercress, cannot be made completely safe for raw consumption. Eating in a few local restaurants is relatively safe if one is careful to select well-cooked foods and bottled beverages.

Tuberculosis, hepatitis, rabies, and many tropical parasitic diseases are endemic here. Malaria and other mosquito-borne viral diseases do not currently constitute a hazard, but dengue fever occurs sporadically.

Immunizations for visitors to Laos are a source of medical controversy. Some doctors advocate immunization for a wide variety of diseases. It is recommended that visitors consult with their physicians. Consider shots against the following: hepatitis-B, encephalitis, and possibly typhoid. No cholera inoculations are necessary and unless you travel outside the city of Vientiane anti-malaria medicines are not needed. Children should have the normal variety of immunizations, including the three-shot rabies preventives series and a tetanus booster. With added awareness, and with prompt attention to small problems before they become serious, health difficulties can be prevented or significantly minimized during a stay in Laos.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan. 1.	New Year's Day
Jan.	Bun Pha Wet*
Jan. 20.	Army Day
Feb.	Magha Puja*
Feb.	Tet*
Mar.	Boun Khoun Khao (Harvest Festival)*
Apr.	Boun Pimai (Laotian New Year)*
Apr.	Pi Mai (Lunar New Year)*
May	Visakha Bu-saa (Buddha's Birthday)*
May	Bun Bang Fai (Rocket Fesitval)*
May 1.	Labor Day
June 1	Children's Day
June/July.	Khao Phansaa (Buddhist Lent)*
July 19.	Independence Day
Aug.	Haw Khao Padap Din (Remembrance of the Dead)*
Sept.	Boun Ok Phansaa (Buddhist Lent ends)*
Oct.	Bun Nam (Water Festival)*
Nov.	That Luang Festival (Full Moon Festival)*
Dec. 2.	Lao National Day

*variable

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs & Duties

Flights connect Vientiane to Bangkok, Yangon, Hanoi, and Moscow. Bangkok is the nearest city served by a U.S. airline. Almost all

travelers must arrive in Vientiane by air.

A passport and visa are required. Visas are issued upon arrival in Laos to foreign tourists and business persons with two passport size photographs and \$30 at Wattay Airport, Vientiane; Friendship Bridge, Vientiane; and Luang Prabang Airport. Visas on Arrival are not available at the Chong Mek border crossing. Foreign tourists are generally admitted to Laos for 15 days with a Visa on Arrival or for 30 days with a visa issued at a Lao embassy. The Department of Immigration in Vientiane will only extend tourist visas for one day. It is sometimes possible to get an extension for an additional 15 days by submitting an application through a tour agency. Foreigners who overstay in Laos risk arrest, and they will be fined \$5 for each day upon departure.

Foreign tourists planning on entering Laos at any international checkpoint where Visas on Arrival are not available must obtain a visa in advance. In the United States, visas and further information about Lao entry requirements can be obtained directly from the Embassy of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, 2222 S St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008, tel. 202-332-6416, fax 202-332-4923, Internet home page: <http://www.laoembassy.com>.

U.S. citizens should not attempt to enter Laos without valid travel documents or outside official ports of entry. Unscrupulous travel agents have sold U.S.-citizen travelers false Lao visas which have resulted in those travelers being denied entry into Laos. Persons attempting to enter Laos outside official ports of entry risk arrest or more serious consequences.

Immigration offices at some of the less used border-crossing points are not well marked. Travelers should make sure that they complete immigration and customs formalities when they enter Laos. Travelers who enter Laos without completing these formalities may be subject to

fine, detention, imprisonment, and/or deportation.

Customs officials may inspect baggage by nondiplomatic visitors upon either arrival or departure or both, but it is usually just a cursory inspection.

According to the Lao Tourist Police, all foreign tourists are required to use the services of a licensed Lao tour company -- unassisted tourism is not permitted. However, this regulation does not appear to be strictly enforced.

Foreign tourists have been informed by the Lao Tourist Police that any group of more than five foreign tourists must be accompanied by a licensed Lao tour guide. Violation of this regulation can result in detention, deportation, and fines of \$200 to \$2000.

Ministry of Trade and Tourism regulations prohibit any person who is not a licensed Lao tour guide from performing the functions of a tour guide -- including explaining Lao culture and custom to foreign tourists. Lao and Thai nationals accompanying American friends to Lao tourist sites have been detained and fined by Lao Tourist Police who suspected that they were acting as unauthorized tour guides.

Lao citizens who wish to have a foreign citizen -- including a family member -- stay in their home must obtain prior approval from the village chief. The foreigner may be held responsible if the Lao host has not secured prior permission for the visit. American citizens are strongly advised to ensure that such permission has been sought and granted before accepting offers to stay in Lao homes.

Lao authorities require that hotels and guesthouses furnish information about the identities and activities of their foreign guests. Lao who interact with foreigners may be compelled to report on those interactions to the Lao Government. Persons traveling outside of the main tourist areas may be required to

register with local authorities and may be questioned by security personnel.

Lao security personnel may place foreign visitors under surveillance. Hotel rooms, telephone conversations, fax transmissions, and e-mail communications may be monitored, and personal possessions in hotel rooms may be searched.

U.S. citizens living in or visiting Laos are encouraged to register at the U.S. Embassy where they may obtain updated information on travel and security within the country. The U.S. Embassy is located at Thanon Bartholonie (near Tat Dam), in Vientiane; from the United States, mail can be addressed to U.S. Embassy Vientiane, Box V, APO AP 96546; telephone (856-21) 212-581, 212-582, 212-585; duty officer's emergency cellular telephone (856-20) 502-016; Consular Section fax number (856-21) 251-624; Embassy-wide fax number (856-21) 512-584; Internet home page: <http://usembassy.state.gov/laos/>.

Pets

Pets brought into Laos must be accompanied by certificates of good health and have had anti-rabies vaccinations. Upon arrival, contact with local animals should be kept to a minimum. Veterinary services are poor, with few vaccines or medications available. Proof that an animal was imported must be shown before officials will allow it to leave the country. It is recommended that pets be carried on board the plane as carry-on baggage, if possible.

Currency, Banking, and Weights and Measures

The time in Laos is Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) plus seven.

The official Lao currency is the *kip*. The *kip* is neither a recognized international monetary unit, nor is it exchangeable outside Laos. Its use within Laos is also limited, since most transactions in which foreigners participate are in dollars or in Thai *baht*, both of which are

freely exchangeable throughout Laos. *Kip* is usually used for small purchases at the market.

There are no automatic teller machines in Laos. Credit cards are accepted only at some major hotels and tourist-oriented businesses. Credit card cash advances can be obtained at some banks in Vientiane. Although it is illegal to do so, the U.S. dollar and Thai baht are both widely used for larger transactions. U.S. dollars are required by the Lao Government for the payment of some taxes and fees, including visa fees and the airport departure tax.

Weights and measures in Laos are based on the metric system, except for gold and silver, which are measured in *baht* (15 grams) or *taels* (30 to 35 grams).

Special Circumstances

The Lao Government prohibits sexual contact between foreign citizens and Lao nationals except when the two parties have been married in accordance with Lao Family Law. Any foreigner who enters into a sexual relationship with a Lao national may be interrogated, detained, arrested, or jailed. Lao police have confiscated passports and imposed fines of up to \$5000 on foreigners who enter into disapproved sexual relationships. The Lao party to the relationship may also be jailed without trial. Foreigners are not permitted to invite Lao nationals of the opposite sex to their hotel rooms; police may raid hotel rooms without notice or consent.

Foreign citizens intending to marry a Lao national are required by Lao law to obtain prior permission from the Lao government. The formal application process can take as long as a year. American citizens may obtain information about these requirements from the U.S. Embassy in Vientiane. The Lao Government will not issue a marriage certificate unless the correct procedures are followed. Any attempt to circumvent Lao regulations governing the marriage of Lao

citizens to foreigners may result in arrest, imprisonment, a fine of \$500-\$5000, and deportation. Foreigners who cohabit with or enter into a close relationship with Lao nationals may be accused by Lao authorities of entering an illegal marriage and be subject to the same penalties.

Foreign citizens who wish to become engaged to a Lao national are required to obtain prior permission of the chief of the village where the Lao national resides. Failure to obtain prior permission can result in a fine of \$500-\$5000. Lao police frequently impose large fines on foreign citizens a few days after they hold an engagement ceremony with a Lao citizen based on the suspicion that the couple probably subsequently had sexual relations out of wedlock.

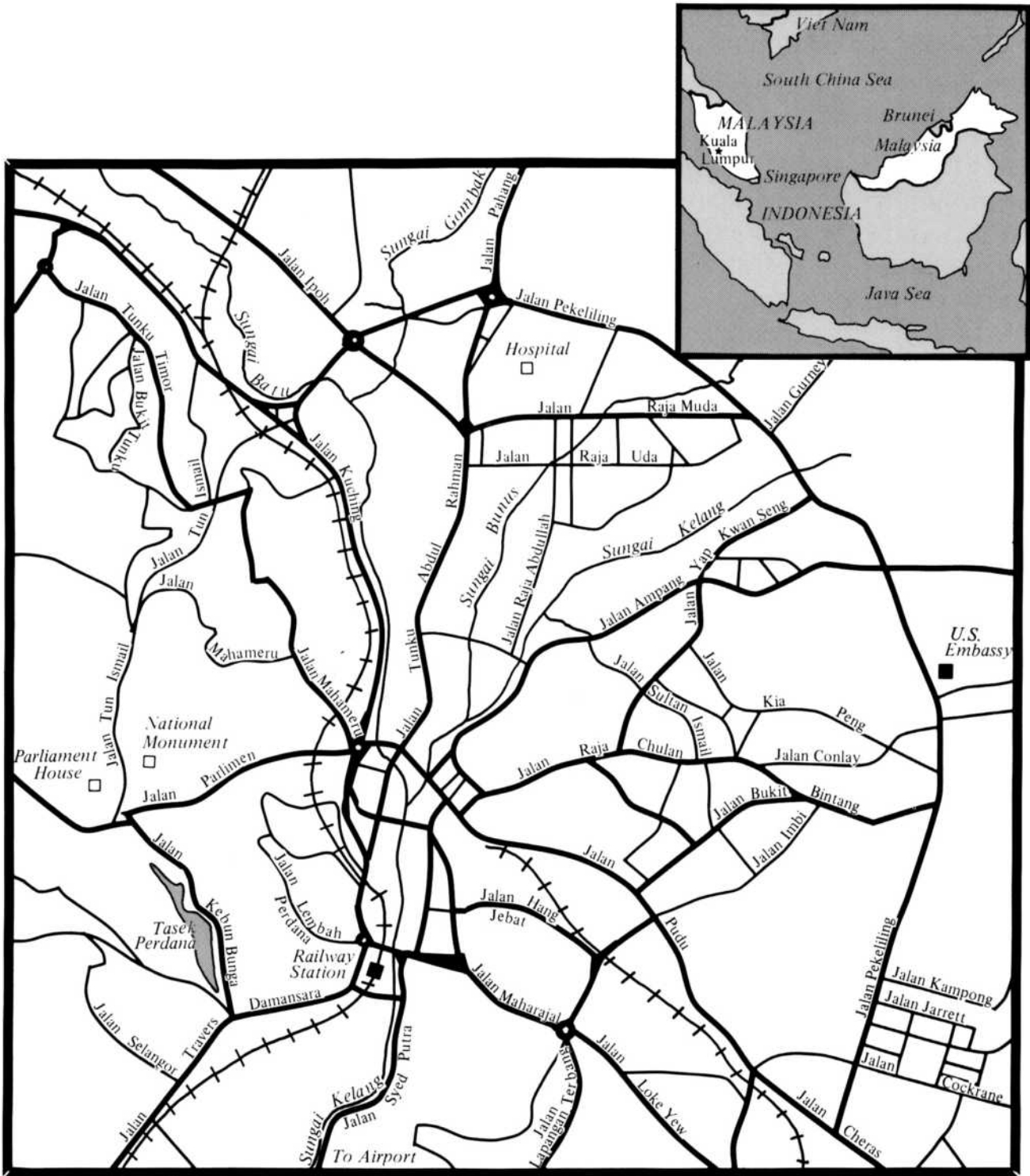
Religious proselytizing or distributing religious material is strictly prohibited. Foreigners caught distributing religious material may be arrested or deported. The Government of Laos restricts the import of religious texts and artifacts. While Lao law allows freedom of religion, the government registers and controls all associations, including religious groups. Meetings, even in private homes, must be registered and those held outside established locations may be broken up and the participants arrested.

Taking photographs of anything that could be perceived as being of military or security interest -- including bridges, airfields, military installations, government buildings or government vehicles, may result in problems with authorities, including detention or arrest and confiscation of the camera. Tourists should be cautious when traveling near military bases and strictly observe signs delineating the military base areas. Military personnel have detained and questioned foreigners who innocently passed by unmarked military facilities.

RECOMMENDED READING

The following titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country:

- Adams, Nina S. *Laos: War and Revolution*. New York: Harper and Row, 1970.
- Brown, Macalister, and Joseph H. Zasloff. *Apprentice Revolutionaries: The Communist Movement in Laos, 1930–1985*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1986.
- Coedes, George. *The Making of Southeast Asia*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983.
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- Karnow, Stanley. *Vietnam*. New York: Penguin, 1984.
- Larteguy, Jean. *The Bronze Drums*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967.
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- Stanton, Shelby L. *The Rise and Fall of an American Army*. New York: Dell, 1985.
- Stuart-Fox, Martin. *Laos: Politics, Economics, and Society*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1986.
- Yost, Charles W. *The Conduct and Misconduct of Foreign Affairs: Reflections on U.S. Foreign Policy*. New York: Random House, 1972.



Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

MALAYSIA

Major Cities:

Kuala Lumpur, George Town

Other Cities:

Alor Setar, Ipoh, Johor Baharu, Kota Baharu, Kota Kinabalu, Kuala Terengganu, Kuantan, Kuching, Melaka, Seremban

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated October 1994. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is a colorful amalgam of traditional and modern influences. Situated between the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean, it has drawn on China, India, Western Europe, Polynesia, and the Arab world to create a unique multilingual and multicultural nation.

British stewardship of the Malay States began in Penang in the late eighteenth century. After Japan's temporary conquest during World War II and a major Communist insurgency during the 1950's, sovereignty was transferred peacefully in 1957 to an independent federal government. Since independence, the Federation has expanded to include the former British colonies of Sabah

and Sarawak on the island of Borneo and changed its name from Malaya to Malaysia to recognize the importance to the country of Chinese, Indian, and aboriginal peoples as well as the ethnic Malays. Singapore was a part of the Federation from 1960-1968.

For over a century Malaysia had enjoyed economic prosperity based on large-scale rubber and tin production. Over the past twenty years production of oil and gas has fueled Malaysia's rapid economic growth. Manufacturing, especially of electronics components, has recently assumed the chief position among Malaysia's exports.

The prosperity brought by tin, rubber, and later natural energy and electronics is supplemented by a stable system of public administration and public services. The culture, variety, and people make it a challenging and interesting country in which to live and work.

MAJOR CITY

Kuala Lumpur

Kuala Lumpur lies within the Federal Territory, an area of 244 square kilometers surrounded by the state

of Selangor. It is near the middle of the west coast of peninsular Malaysia, 400 kilometers northwest of Singapore and 40 kilometers inland. Its population is approximately 1.3 million (2000 census). Within metropolitan Kuala Lumpur are located all the major offices of the Malaysian Federal Government; the city also serves as the commercial center of the country.

Food

Kuala Lumpur has several supermarkets, minimarkets, and other local markets that sell fresh produce and imported items. While the variety is large, most imported items cost substantially more than in the U.S. Excellent tropical fruits and vegetables, which often form part of menus here, include both the familiar and the exotic, such as bananas, mangoes, mangosteens, jackfruit, papayas, and the notorious, uniquely-scented durian.

Local seafood of good quality includes prawns, crabs, and a variety of fish. Local beef, mutton, pork, and poultry are also available. Many Americans prefer frozen or chilled beef and lamb imported from Australia and New Zealand. U.S. beef is available but expensive.

Many canned, bottled, frozen, and packaged foods are imported, as are most paper products. Shoppers can

usually find the desired item or brand or a good substitute, but anything imported is expensive. Most stores stock baby foods, including formula, cereals, and strained foods. These items are more expensive here than in the U.S. Strained baby foods carry freshness dates. Not all brands of American-made formula are available and not all formula containers are dated for freshness, so arrange for shipment of any special brand recommended by a pediatrician.

Clothing

Malaysians are increasingly style-conscious; many are fully aware of the latest trends in Western fashions. However, Westerners should be conscious of relatively conservative dress codes in certain circumstances, especially among Malays. Use discretion in selecting attire to avoid inadvertently causing embarrassment to your host or guests. This is particularly important for women. Traditional dresses for Malay women have ankle-length skirts and long sleeves.

Generally speaking, Malaysia's hot, humid climate calls for light clothing, except at hill resorts, where sweaters or light jackets may be needed, especially at night. Extensive use of air conditioning, often supercooled, in offices, hotels and restaurants in Kuala Lumpur and other cities, needs to be taken into account in selecting attire. Hence there are occasions when transitional clothing such as lightweight sweaters, linen jackets for women, and suit jackets or blazers for men, should be worn for comfort. Rainstorms in Kuala Lumpur can be heavy, often occurring in the afternoon or early evening, but usually are brief. Because of the heat, umbrellas are used instead of raincoats.

Clothing and shoe stores in Kuala Lumpur offer a wide selection of items. However, adult sizes tend to be smaller than in the U.S., and large sizes can be hard to find. Prices are comparable to those in the Washington area. It is possible

to find shoemakers who will make shoes to order at reasonable prices.

Many reasonably priced tailors are available, and most of them stock good supplies of imported and domestic materials. Attractive, locally-produced batik ties and shirts are reasonably priced. Cotton long-sleeve batik ranges from \$12 to \$40; silk batiks are more expensive and can exceed \$100 each. Shoes larger than size 10 are difficult to find.

Women wear lightweight dresses with either long or short sleeves, or light skirts and blouses. A number of dressmakers offer an extensive selection of materials. In general, custom-tailored clothes are better than ready-made clothes which can be expensive, poorly tailored, and of inferior quality.

There are many shoe stores in Kuala Lumpur, but shoes larger than size 9 and narrow widths are hard to find.

Clothing requirements for children are simple. Schools require uniforms, but they can be made inexpensively here. Summer-weight clothes are worn all the time, except at the hill resorts. Tennis shoes and thongs are popular for all casual activities. I.S.K.L. uniforms include regulation shirts, which must be purchased at the school, and navy blue pants or skirts which can be made inexpensively by local tailors or purchased locally. High school students can wear navy blue or white slacks or long shorts. Girls may also wear navy blue or white skirts. Bring a basic supply with you. No denim is allowed. Some students wear light weight sweaters to school because of the air conditioning.

Supplies and Services

Malaysia is becoming an increasingly consumer-oriented society, and numerous shopping malls cater to the needs of Malaysia's growing middle class and the many expatriates living in Kuala Lumpur. Almost any product you would want to buy, or a reasonable substitute,

can be purchased in Kuala Lumpur, but prices are higher than in the U.S. Most standard household and medical supplies and toiletries are readily available, but tend to be more expensive here than in the U.S. Some items are in constant supply, while others appear and disappear unexpectedly.

Familiar brands of American and English cigarettes and Dutch and English cigars are sold locally, as are various pipe tobaccos, but American brands are hard to find.

Basic Services: Tailoring, dress-making, and shoe repair are all easy to obtain. Dry-cleaning services are available, but treatment for special-care fabrics is not always available. Beauty shops and barber shops abound. Those in the international-class hotels are convenient and provide the most acceptable service. However, many people try the numerous unisex styling salons found in the shopping malls or the small barber shops clustered in alleyway shophouses run by Malay, Indonesian and Indian barbers.

Religious Activities

Malaysia is officially an Islamic country. However, non-Moslems are free to pursue their own religious beliefs and worship as they please. A variety of religious organizations serve the local Chinese, Indian, and expatriate communities. To avoid unintentionally giving offense, try to become familiar with the standards of behavior appropriate for interacting with members of each of the major Malaysian ethnic groups.

For Christians, local Anglican, Lutheran, Mormon, Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist, and Roman Catholic denominations hold English-language services. The Presbyterian congregation serves as the principal expatriate international Protestant church, welcoming attendance by all worshippers without regard to previous affiliation. The nearest synagogue is located in Singapore.

Education

The International School of Kuala Lumpur (ISKL) is the only school in Kuala Lumpur which provides elementary and secondary education for foreign students using American elementary and college preparatory curricula. ISKL has been accredited by the Western Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges.

The school offers classes from pre-school (ages 3–4 years) through grade 12. Students transfer to equivalent grades in the U.S. Enrollment is generally about 1400. Students from a total of 46 countries attend ISKL. More Americans attend than any other nationality; Americans make up about 15% of the student body. (The Japanese are second at about 15%) ISKL offers a full college-preparatory program as well as a variety of extracurricular activities and intramural sports. Graduating seniors have a high acceptance rate at the colleges to which they apply in the U.S. The school provides bus transportation but no boarding facilities. Each year the faculty and students present several stage productions. The playing field is used not only for school events, but also for community softball games on Sunday-afternoons, football games sponsored by the American Association, and other community events. ISKL follows the standard American school year, but celebrates Malaysian instead of American holidays.

The school is now divided into two campuses located several miles apart (one for pre-kindergarten through grade 5, the other for grades 6-12). The upper school (grades 6-12), includes a gymnasium, swimming pool, tennis courts, outdoor basketball courts, an outdoor playing field, an open-air snack bar, air-conditioned classrooms, a library, and an auditorium.

For more information, write to the ISKL administrator at the following address:

International School of Kuala Lumpur
PO Box 12645 50784 Kuala Lumpur
Malaysia.

The private Alice Smith School uses a mainly British curriculum. It offers instruction from kindergarten through the equivalent of grade five. For more information, write to: Alice Smith School, Jalan Bellamy, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The Garden School, although similar to the Alice Smith School in its use of a British curriculum, differs in that it offers instruction through the secondary level. For more information, write to: The Garden School, 251 Jalan Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Special Educational Opportunities

With the exception of the International Islamic University, local 4-year colleges and universities normally are not open to foreigners, and in any case an increasing number of courses are being taught in Bahasa Malaysia instead of English. Some private 2-year colleges will accept foreigners, but check to be sure credits can be transferred to a recognized U.S. school. Other classes in various Malaysian arts and handicrafts are offered periodically in the community. For further information on these classes, check *Selamat Datang*, an information book published by the women's division of the American Association. *Selamat Datang* contains extensive information on such topics as local customs, food, tourism, shopping, churches, schools, and clubs.

ISKL has an extensive ESL program. It also offers special classes for children with reading difficulties and limited facilities for other learning disabilities. No other special educational facilities are available for the handicapped.

Sports & Clubs

Opportunities to join local clubs are limited and require some persistence and patience. Arrangements vary from club to club, but usually involve a deposit of approximately \$1,000 which may or may not be refundable, sponsorship by club members, and an interview. For many years, local clubs were the

main focus of organized social life and athletic activities among the expatriate community. Some of the best clubs in Kuala Lumpur now are either closed to new members, have long waiting lists, or require fees that are prohibitive. However, always inquire about temporary membership at any clubs in which you are interested.

Kelab Darul Ehsan offers "term" and fully transferable memberships. Non-golf term membership costs about \$1,200 per year. Membership including golf costs about \$2,000 per year. The club has indoor and outdoor tennis, squash, badminton, an exercise room, swimming pool, golf course, and restaurants. Many of the larger hotels have modern health clubs open to local residents. One that is especially convenient is the "Sweat Club", located adjacent to the MiCasa Hotel, off Jalan Tun Razak. The Sweat Club offers a full range of health club exercise facilities, including an aerobics studio, exercise machines, a swimming pool, tennis courts and a squash court. Full membership costs around \$400, "off-hour" membership is about \$120; monthly dues cost about \$40.

The Royal Selangor Golf Club, on Jalan Tun Razak, is no longer offering individual short-term memberships. Corporate memberships of \$8,000 per individual might be available, however.

The Subang Golf Club, located near the international airport 30 minutes from downtown, has facilities for golf, swimming, tennis, dining, and slot machines. Foreign applicants are restricted to temporary memberships. The two year temporary membership has a three month waiting list; entry fees are around \$4,000 with monthly dues. The Hilton Hotel Racquet Club has two tennis courts and five squash courts on the roof of the downtown Hilton Hotel. Members are entitled to use the Hotel's pool. Annual dues are over \$900 for family memberships; over \$600 for single memberships. Members are entitled to one hour of

court time per day. Court time must be booked at least two days in advance, and booking is difficult for certain times of the day.

The Lake Club, located near the Parliament Building on the other side of town, has temporary memberships with an initiation fee of about \$1,200. The club has several grass and synthetic tennis courts, squash courts, a large pool complex, a library, several restaurants, and movie presentations on the weekends.

The Selangor Polo and Riding Club offers riding instruction for children and adults as well as polo for experienced adults. School horses are available for lessons, and members may board their own horses at the club. The club has a bar and schedules occasional activities in connection with tournaments and other special events. Entry fees for subscribing members are around \$600; with monthly dues for families or single members. A refundable riding deposit of about \$200 is required for family memberships; \$100 for single members. Lessons range in price. A temporary membership for up to 2 months is available.

The Selangor Yacht Club, located an hour away in nearby Port Kelang, owns several sailboats that members can rent at moderate rates. Mooring and landing facilities are also available. The club operates a bar and restaurant featuring a selection of Western and Eastern dishes. The club, which has about 200 members, sponsors weekly sailboat races. Membership is now open and requires sponsorship by two members, a modest initiation fee, and monthly dues. Temporary memberships for up to a year are available and require, in addition to two sponsors, a low, refundable deposit and monthly dues are required. The Royal Selangor Flying Club, at the military airport 6 kilometers from the center of the city, provides its own planes for private flying instructions and for members' use. Meals are available. Fees for plane rental, which vary according to the

type of plane and whether or not a professional pilot is needed.

Kelab Golf Angkatan Tentera (the Armed Forces Golf Club) is located near the Royal Selangor Flying Club on the Air Force Base just south of town. It features a short, but challenging, nine-hole golf course. The clubhouse includes a bar and small restaurant. Only 50 expatriates can be members at any one time, and a wait of 4–5 months is customary before a membership application is accepted. Entry fees, which include first quarter dues, are about \$650. Monthly dues apply.

The Royal Port Dickson Yacht Club is located 1½ hours away from Kuala Lumpur on a beach along the Straits of Malacca. Facilities include a restaurant, five tennis courts, four squash courts, a swimming pool, billiards, boat rentals, equipment for windsurfing and water skiing, and an active yacht basin. When membership applications were last accepted, initiation fees were \$600, and applicants needed two sponsors and were interviewed by a membership committee. Three month temporary memberships are currently available.

The Hash House Harriers, a 45-year old association of cross-country running enthusiasts, and its associated splinter groups, organize runs through oil palm and rubber plantations. Membership rates are reasonable, but expect a wait to enter as a regular member.

Several other clubs have more open membership arrangements. The Selangor Club, also known as “the Spotted Dog”, is located downtown facing several of Kuala Lumpur's more picturesque colonial structures across a large public green. Housed in a renovated colonial building featuring Tudor styling, it has long been a landmark in Kuala Lumpur. The club uses the green for national tournaments and its own sporting events including cricket, soccer, field hockey, squash and tennis. Besides four grass tennis courts, the club facilities include a restaurant and ballroom. Bridge

lessons are available. All membership applications must be sponsored by two members. Temporary memberships are available, but expect a wait of one year before memberships can become permanent.

Public facilities, such as swimming pools, tennis courts, and playgrounds for children, are limited. The ISKL pool is open to pupils and their families during certain hours of the day. The schedule is posted at school.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Short trips to outstation areas offer a change of scenery and diversion from the pace of city life, but only the highlands offer any relief from the city's hot, humid climate. Hazardous driving conditions outside of Kuala Lumpur deter many potential travellers, but the rewards of the change of scenery and natural beauty of the country make it worth the effort. In general, the roads are well maintained but winding and overcrowded.

The Awana Golf Club, and Genting Highlands complex, about a one-hour drive from Kuala Lumpur into the Pahang mountains, includes several hotels and a golf course, and offers a cool change to the lowlands.

Fraser's Hill, about 100 kilometers north of Kuala Lumpur and 2½ hours away by car, sits at an altitude of 1,370 meters, and is reached by a narrow, winding mountain road. The resort offers a nine-hole golf course, a few new tennis courts, squash courts, and walking paths through the jungle. The weather is refreshingly cool despite high humidity and intense sunlight during the daytime. Sweaters or light jackets should be worn at night. Besides accommodations at a new hotel, the resort rents numerous houses and bungalows, each with full furnishings and its own staff. Make reservations at least 3 weeks in advance for the hotel and 6 months in advance for bungalows. For major holidays, some families book a year in advance.

Higher at 1,450 meters and farther north than Fraser's Hill, **Cameron Highlands** offers the same basic change in climate. It lies about 240 kilometers north of Kuala Lumpur, about five hours away by car. Cameron Highlands offers hotels, bungalows, restaurants, and an 18-hole golf course, all at reasonable rates. There are also several hiking trails through the mountain forest. Flowers and excellent local produce, such as strawberries, can be purchased in the area, which is also known for numerous tea plantations that dot the hillsides.

A round trip can be made in one day by car to **Port Dickson**, one hundred kilometers southeast of Kuala Lumpur, (about 1½ hours drive each way). Port Dickson, a seaside resort, consists of the town itself and a series of sandy bays stretching 17 kilometers south along the coastal road. Facilities are available for swimming, fishing, water skiing, windsurfing, tennis, and golf. Unfortunately, many areas of the beaches are no longer scenic and have pollution problems. Despite this, clean and picturesque coves can still be found.

Several rest houses and hotels provide meals and accommodations. Company-owned bungalows can be rented for a weekend or several days at reasonable cost, but they have become harder to find.

Malacca, situated about 150 kilometers southeast of Kuala Lumpur, a two hour drive by highway, (longer if the scenic coastal drive is taken), is one of the more interesting and picturesque places in Malaysia. The city's architecture reflects its long history as a seaport city-state and later as a colonial stronghold of the Portuguese, Dutch, and British, who held it from 1824 until Malaysia's independence in 1957. Though prices for antiques have climbed in recent years, window shopping in Malacca for Chinese, Portuguese, Dutch, and British antiques is always enjoyable. Malacca is a good place to take visitors.

Like Malacca, **Penang** offers many opportunities for camera enthusiasts and sightseers. An island city off the northwest coast of Malaysia, Penang boasts beautiful beach hotels, an inclined railway to the top of Penang Hill, ferries to the mainland, small antique shops, and numerous temples, mosques, and British colonial buildings.

Flights from Kuala Lumpur take about an hour. Penang can also be reached in 7 hours by car on a route that takes the traveller through the principal tin mining region of the country and near Kuala Kangsar, the site of the Ubidiyah Mosque, one of the most beautiful in Malaysia.

Singapore lies about an hour away by air or 7 hours by car or train off the southern coast of the peninsula. It offers a wide range of shopping and sight-seeing opportunities, and a cosmopolitan atmosphere.

Both car and boat must be used to reach **Taman Negara**, the National Park, which is in the middle of the peninsula 6 hours from Kuala Lumpur. It offers camping or bungalow facilities, and trails in virgin jungles give hikers excellent opportunities to see Malaysia's flora and fauna in their natural habitat. Caution should be taken to avoid leech and insect bites during certain times of the year.

On the island of **Borneo**, also known as Kalimantan, the states of Sabah and Sarawak and the Sultanate of Brunei, have unique history, some modern resorts, and give the truly adventurous a chance to glimpse aboriginal culture, jungles, and mountains.

East Malaysia can be reached in 2 hours on flights across the South China Sea.

The East Coast, accessible by plane or car, offers beautiful, white-sand beaches and numerous examples of Malay culture and handicrafts. The drive to the nearest East Coast city, **Kuantan**, takes 4 hours. **Kuala Trengganu** and **Kota Baru** and are an additional several hours

north along the coast. Roads are fairly good. The pace of life is considerably more relaxed than in Kuala Lumpur. Several resorts, including a Club Med, have opened along the coast in recent years.

A number of small, secluded islands off both coasts have hotel accommodations. Many are ideal for scuba diving and snorkeling, particularly those off the East Coast, such as **Tioman Island**, one hour from Kuala Lumpur by air, which is lovely, but seasonal (March to September). Off the West Coast, **Pangkor Island** resorts are increasingly popular year-round. By car, it is a 4½ hour drive to Lumut followed by a short ferry ride to the island.

Around Kuala Lumpur are several interesting places to visit, such as the National Museum; Batu Caves, a limestone formation north of the city; Chinatown; bird and butterfly parks, an orchid garden, a pewter factory and a local handicraft center. Tours to visit local places of interest in the vicinity are available through the hotels.

Entertainment

A number of air-conditioned theaters in metropolitan Kuala Lumpur show a good selection of American films, but many films are censored. Local cinemas also show a variety of Chinese, Indian, Indonesian, and Malaysian films, occasionally with English subtitles. Ticket prices are reasonable, but these theaters are not frequented much by the expatriate community.

Although the city has no professional theaters, the major hotels do have occasional dinner theater presentations, amateur theatrical events are staged at ISKL, and local professional productions are occasionally presented at various venues.

Dining out is a favorite pastime. The cuisine offered by local restaurants reflects the rich diversity of Malaysia's population; literally hundreds of restaurants, coffee shops, and open air food stalls spe-

cialize in Malay, Indian, Western, and any of several types of Chinese food. Except at hotel restaurants, dining out is fairly inexpensive. Restaurants are sanitary, and while not up to U.S. standards by any means, are acceptable for most people. The food can be exciting to taste and, at open air restaurants or stalls, exciting to watch being prepared. For those who seek other kinds of excitement, the city also has several discos and a number of bars and nightclubs. Visiting musicians perform at several concerts each year.

Penang and East Malaysia have several organized festivals and pageants that may appeal to the enthusiastic traveler. Most festivals in Kuala Lumpur are celebrated in a low-key manner. A parade marks Independence Day; banners and arches are erected for Hari Raya, which marks the end of the Islamic month of Ramadan; and a Quran-reading contest occurs each year during Ramadan.

At Chinese New Year, lion dancers and fire crackers can be seen and heard throughout the Chinese sections of the city. During the Indian festival of Thaipusam, hundreds of thousands of devotees come to Batu Caves just north of the city to pay homage to Krishna. Many of the devotees carry ornately decorated kavadis, some attached to their bodies with hooks through the skin. Smaller, but still elaborate, versions of the Thaipusam festivities take place in Penang and elsewhere throughout the country.

Social Activities

The American Association of Malaysia, which is open to all resident Americans, conducts charity and social programs, luncheons, and trips to Bangkok and around Malaysia. The AAM also sponsors the annual George Washington Birthday Ball, a the Memorial Day picnic, and a community 4th of July Celebration. The women's division meets monthly and offers a variety of classes and other activities.



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Petronas Twin Towers in downtown Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

The Lincoln Resource Center, while primarily for Malaysians, welcomes Americans interested in meeting Malaysians and joining the dialogue. The center also features a library of books, journals, films, and video cassettes specializing in American social studies and the humanities. Similar facilities are offered by the British Council, the Goethe Institute, and Alliance Francais.

Special Information

The States of Sabah and Sarawak in East Malaysia maintain separate customs and immigration offices, so travel to the Borneo States must be treated as an international journey. All long-term residents of Malaysia

must obtain national identity cards (ICs).

George Town

George Town is the capital of Penang, a Malay state on the Strait of Malacca. Penang consists of Penang Island where George Town is located and a narrow strip of land along the coast on mainland peninsular Malaysia. George Town has a population of over 180,000 (2000 census), and is Malaysia's leading port. The British were first attracted to George Town's natural harbor as the spot to anchor their warships in defending British East India Company posts. As trading in the area developed, Chinese, Indi-

ans, Arabs, and many others settled harmoniously alongside the indigenous Malays.

George Town boasts two mosques; several historic churches; Chinese, Siva, and Sri Mariamman temples; and Buddhist pagodas. The temple of Kek Lok Si, in the suburb of Ayer Itam, is reputed to be the largest and finest temple in Southeast Asia. The Botanical Gardens and Fort Cornwallis, a historic landmark that marks the spot where Captain Francis Light first set ashore on Penang Island over 200 years ago, are other places of interest. Several religious and/or cultural festivals are held in George Town every year. Street markets are popular, selling interesting things to eat, drink, wear, or use in the home. Penang Island is known as a resort area.

Education

Dalat School, which offers a U.S. curriculum for grades one through 12, is located six miles from the center of the city, on the north shore of the island. Founded in 1928, the school has boarding facilities; enrollment is around 200 with a little over 100 boarders. Accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, the school is sponsored by the Christian and Missionary Alliance. The staff includes specialists in reading, computers, and learning disabilities; also available are a counselor, psychologist, nurse, and chaplain. The school year runs from the end of August to June, with a six-week vacation in December and January. The campus of Dalat School is situated on eight acres. Facilities include 22 buildings, 13 classrooms, a 10,000-volume library, and six dormitories. The school's address is: Tanjung Bunga, 11200 Penang, Malaysia.

OTHER CITIES

ALOR SETAR (also spelled Alor Star) is the capital of Kedah State in the northwestern region of Malaysia, about 50 miles north of George Town. The city, with a population of approximately 115,000

(2000 census.), lies near the Kedah River. A railway links Alor Setar with Kuala Lumpur to the south and the Thai railroad system to the north. Once a bustling inland port, the city today is fast becoming an important shopping and trading center. The Zahir Mosque in Alor Setar is one of the most beautiful in the country. The city also has a state museum that houses some ancient artifacts, and has an interesting section on early Chinese porcelain ware.

The capital city of Perak State, **IPOH** has an estimated population of over 566, 000 (2000 census). It is situated in western Malaysia, midway between George Town and Kuala Lumpur in the tin-producing Kinta Valley. With a hot, rainy, tropical monsoon-type climate, the city's average annual rainfall exceeds 80 inches. Limestone and tin are produced here by both modern and ancient methods. Ipoh has a thriving market and railroad. Known as "the city of millionaires," it has a lovely park, Japanese Gardens, and Chinese cave temples for tourists to visit. The city was occupied by the Japanese from 1942 until the end of World War II. The coastal town of Lumut is 55 miles southwest; its modern naval base has contributed to its fast growth. Known for its shell and coral handicrafts, Lumut is the site of the annual Sea Festival.

JOHORE BAHRU (also spelled Johore Bharu and Johore Bahru) is located in the southern Malay Peninsula, just opposite Singapore and about 175 miles southeast of Kuala Lumpur. The capital of Johore State, the city has a population of more than 384,000, most of whom are Chinese, and is connected with Singapore by a stone causeway across Johore Strait.

Johore Bahru is the seat of the sultan of Johore, and his residence, Bakit Serene, houses priceless art treasures. The beach resort of Desaru is just east of Johore Bahru on the South China Sea. There are luxury-class hotels here, an 18-hole golf course designed by Robert

Trent Jones, and plans for further expansion.

Johore Lama is 18 miles from Johore Bahru. Of historic interest, it is the site of a restored fort originally built in 1587.

To the west is the town of **Pontian** and a famous fishing village with homes on stilts near the water's edge. It is known for its seafood restaurants.

Northwest of Johore Bahru is **Ayer Hitam**, known for the ceramics produced at the Aw pottery works. The quiet town of **Kota Tinggi**, 35 miles north, is known for its waterfalls.

Johore Bahru is accessible by a fine network of road, rail, and air services. The airport at Senai connects it to all major Malaysian cities.

KOTA BAHARU (also spelled Kota Bharu) is situated on the Malay Peninsula, about 380 miles northeast of Kuala Lumpur on the South China Sea. Historically, the city was seized by Japan on December 10, 1941, as part of the offensive against Singapore during World War II.

Today, Kota Bahru, the capital of Kelantan State, is a modern city, with an important power station, and a population of over 234,000 (2000 census). Kota Bahru is connected to almost all major cities in Malaysia and Singapore by roads, rail, and air; Kuala Lumpur is a 45-minute flight away.

The city's cultural center, Gelanggang Seni, offers performances of *gasing* (top-spinning), kite-flying, *wayang kulit* (shadow puppet theater), and *silat* (Malaysian art of self-defense). Native handicrafts may be purchased in the central market.

Landmarks in Kota Bahru include the State Mosque, completed in 1926; Merdeka Square, which honors Malay warriors who died during World War II; and the Istana Jahar, or State Museum, built during the reign of Sultan Muhamad IV and

completed in 1899. The city has many hotels and beach resorts in the area.

KOTA KINABALU was formerly known as Jesselton and is the capital of Sabah, Malaysia in East Malaysia (formerly North Borneo). Situated on a small inlet of the South China Sea, Kota Kinabalu was founded in 1899, and in 1947 became the capital of British North Borneo, replacing Sandakan. It is a relatively new town, built on the ruins of the original city, which was razed during World War II.

With a population of approximately 113,000 (1980 census), the city is the chief port of the state, connected to the interior by road and rail. Rubber is exported from Kota Kinabalu's port. The Kinabalu International School is located three-and-a-half miles from the city. Founded in 1973, this coeducational, day school employs a British and Australian curriculum for kindergarten through grade six.

Kota Kinabalu has an international airport, about four miles from the city. Daily air service operates between all of Sabah's major towns—Kota Kinabalu, Labuan, Sandakan, Lahad Data, and Tawau.

Other cities of interest near Kota Kinabalu include **Penampang**, nine miles away, which reveals a cross-section of Sabah's exotic flora, fauna, and sociocultural life. The village of **Semporna**, on the south coast, is known for its cultured pearls (Sabah is the only state in Malaysia that produces pearls). **Tuaran**, about a half-hour drive from Kota Kinabalu, is known for its *tamu* (market). A colorful *tamu* is also held every Sunday morning at **Kota Belud**, 48 miles north. **Kudat**, 150 miles from Kota Kinabalu, is noted for its natives—the Rungus. **Sandakan**, the former capital of North Borneo, is on Sabah's east coast, 240 miles from Kota Kinabalu. It is a modern city sprawled along the sea's edge, with a population of over 350,000.

KUALA TERENGGANU (also spelled Kuala Trengganu) is located on the South China Sea in central Malaysia. About 175 miles north-east of Kuala Lumpur, Kuala Terengganu is the capital of Terengganu State. With a population over 250,000 (2000 census), it is both a port and the site of an important weaving industry. Situated on the Terengganu River, the city is also the home of the sultan of Terengganu.

South of the city are numerous fishing villages—**Kemaman**, **Kemasik**, and **Kuala Dungan**. **Rantau Abang** is where the famous giant leathery turtles are found. They return to this area to lay their eggs and can be seen from May to September, with the peak months being July and August.

KUANTAN, the capital of Pahang State, is rapidly developing as an important port and seaside resort. Situated on the east coast of the central Malay Peninsula on the South China Sea, Kuantan is just north of the mouth of the Pahang River. The area was a strategic point in the Japanese invasion of the peninsula, and was seized during December 1941 and January 1942.

Today, this city of over 283,000 (2000 census) offers miles of beautiful, clean, sandy beaches, ideal for fishing, swimming, and boating. Kuantan is noted for its authentic craftsmanship in woodcarving, batik printing, brocade, and pandan leaf weaving.

The numerous villages near Kuantan are known for their rich cultural traditions. **Beserah**, six miles north of Kuantan, is a serene fishing village. Cherating, 30 miles north, is the site of Asia's first Club Med, but is also known for its native charms. At **Pekan**, 28 miles south, the Royal Palace, Istana Abu Bakar, stands out as a modern architectural design in this charming town of small, old-fashioned shops. It is also the site of a four-day cultural and sporting festival celebrating the sultan's birthday. Kuantan is accessi-

ble by air and road from Kuala Lumpur 125 miles to the southwest. There is regular bus service as well as outstation taxis.

KUCHING is the capital and financial center of Sarawak in East Malaysia, formerly Northwest Borneo. Situated on the Sarawak River, Kuching is the state's largest city and a river port where sago flour and pepper are exported.

Founded in 1839 by James Brooke, the city has Anglican and Roman Catholic cathedrals and a museum of Borneo folklore. The world-famous Sarawak State Museum here houses one of the finest collections of Sarawak tribal weapons, tools, art, and artifacts. The law courts, the clock tower, and Fort Margherita are some of the best-preserved and most beautiful examples of British colonial architecture in this area. Kuching's Masjid Besar (State Mosque) was completed in 1968; the city also has several historic Chinese temples.

Interesting places near Kuching include **Santubong**, 20 miles away, a seaside village known for its swimming and fishing. From the seventh through 13th centuries, this town was an important trading village for the Chinese dynasties of the period. Kuching's population is approximately 152,300 (2000 census).

The historic city of **MELAKA**, formerly Malacca, is situated on the Strait of Malacca about 90 miles south of Kuala Lumpur. The oldest town in Malaysia, founded about 1400 by a Malay prince, Melaka was one of the leading commercial centers of the Far East until the 17th century. Traders introduced Islam to Malay through Melaka. The city was captured by the Portuguese in 1511 and by the Dutch in 1641. Using the city more as a fortress than as a trading port, the Dutch retained control of Melaka until 1824, when it was transferred to Great Britain.

Today, Melaka has little economic importance, but retains some Portu-

guese and Dutch buildings, as well as a Portuguese-Eurasian community. With a population about 270,000 (2000 census), most of the city's inhabitants are Chinese, who have acquired many Malay customs. It is a mecca for antique hunters, but if an antique is purchased to take out of the country, permission must be sought from the director general of Museum Negara. Melaka can be reached from Kuala Lumpur by express buses or cabs. Domestic flights are also available.

SEREMBAN is situated between Kuala Lumpur and Melaka in southern Malaysia. Linked by rail with Port Dickson on the Strait of Malacca, Seremban is the commercial center for the surrounding rubber-growing region. Tin mines are also located near the city which, as the capital of Negeri Sembilan, has a population over 133,000.

Of interest are Lake Gardens and the State Museum which features a Malay house built without the use of a single nail. Negeri Sembilan is traditionally a matriarchal state, where women inherit rights over property and land to the exclusion of men. West of Seremban is the royal town of **Sri Menanti**, where the Istana, or ruler's palace, is located.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Peninsular Malaysia, slightly smaller in size than Michigan, extends south for 800 kilometers from Thailand's Isthmus of Kra to Singapore and the Indonesian Archipelago. Sabah and Sarawak, the states of East Malaysia that together are about the size of Kansas, lie 600 kilometers to the east across the South China Sea. These two states, former British colonies on the northeast coast of Borneo, stretch for 1000 kilometers to the southern islands of the Philippines.

Malaysia's land area covers 336,400 square kilometers. A central mountain range with peaks rising to 2100 meters divides peninsular Malaysia. Scenic coastal plains lie on either side of the mountains; most of the population lives in the plains and foothills of the western coast along the Straits of Malacca. The eastern coast, along the South China Sea, has beautiful white, sandy beaches but fewer people. Between the two coasts lie the mountains and an often impenetrable jungle. Primary forest covers 60% of Malaysia and contains a variety of flowering plants and immense, but now diminishing, timber reserves. Vegetation, even in the cities, is lush and tropical. Forest wildlife includes gibbons; tigers; elephants; mouse deer; countless species of birds, monkeys, and insects; and, in Sabah and Sarawak, the orangutan.

The weather in Kuala Lumpur varies little throughout the year. daily minimum and maximum temperatures remain fairly constant averaging 24°C (75°F) and 32°C (90°F). Average annual rainfall of 250 centimeters keeps the humidity high. Kuala Lumpur's location in a valley compounds not only the humidity but also the smog problem brought on by increasingly congested streets. Longtime foreign residents sometimes complain of the enervating effect of the unchanging climate.

Although Kuala Lumpur is not subject to typhoons or cyclones, brief rainy seasons occur each year and bring scattered flooding to the metropolitan area. One to two months of relatively dry weather usually precede the rainy seasons, although afternoon and evening thunder showers occur regularly in Kuala Lumpur throughout the year. The east coast and East Malaysia experience longer rainy seasons, and more widespread flooding occurs as a result.

Malaysia, an entomologist's paradise, abounds in insect life of all kinds, including beautiful jungle butterflies and incredibly large cockroaches. Insects do carry dis-

ease in Malaysia. Mosquitoes and other bugs can be bothersome; dengue, cholera, and malaria are endemic in parts of the country, but with the exception of dengue, rarely affect the expatriate population in Kuala Lumpur or other major cities.

Population

In 2000, Malaysia's estimated population was approximately 21.8 million, with about 83% in Peninsular Malaysia and 17% in East Malaysia. In 1991, the Federal Territory, consisting primarily of the city of Kuala Lumpur, had a population of over 1.1 million. Malaysia's population is growing at over 2% per year.

The population of Malaysia includes several ethnic groups; the largest group, the Malays, make up about 58% of the population. Almost without exception, Malays follow the state religion of Islam and speak the national language of Bahasa Malaysia (formerly called Malay).

Chinese, most of whose ancestors came to Malaysia from southern China during the 19th and early 20th centuries to work in the tin mines or to set up small businesses, make up about 27% of the population. Today, most Chinese live in urban areas and work in trade, business, and finance. The most common Chinese dialects are Cantonese and Hokkien; however, Mandarin is also widely understood as it is the language of instruction in Chinese schools.

Malaysians of Indian descent make up another 8% of the population. Their ancestors came from the Indian subcontinent as laborers on the rubber plantations and as civil servants in the British colonial government.

Non-Malay indigenous groups, Eurasians, and Europeans make up the remainder of the population. Most of the non-Malay indigenous peoples are concentrated in East Malaysia, where they are an important social and political force.

About 84% of the population speaks Bahasa Malaysia. The literacy rate for the country as a whole is approximately 84%; the rate in East Malaysia is somewhat lower than in Peninsular Malaysia. English is still widely spoken, particularly in urban areas. English proficiency declined in the 1980s, when the government promoted the use of Bahasa Malaysia in schools, government, and business. In recent years, however, the government has promoted English language skills.

Public Institutions

Malaysia has a parliamentary system of government based on free, multi-party elections. A free market economy, abundant natural resources, and a well-educated population have helped Malaysia become one of the most prosperous of the developing countries. Malaysia is a constitutional monarchy, nominally headed by the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong, or paramount ruler. The ruler is elected for a five-year term from among the nine hereditary rulers of the peninsular Malay states. The ruler also is the leader of the Islamic faith in Malaysia, as are the rulers in their own states.

Malaysia's Constitution was promulgated in 1963 when Sabah and Sarawak joined the Federation of Malaya to form Malaysia. The Constitution has been amended frequently since its original enactment. Executive power is vested in the Cabinet, led by the Prime Minister. The Cabinet is chosen from among the members of parliament as in the British system of government. All of Malaysia's Prime Ministers since independence have been the leaders of the country's predominant political party, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO).

The bicameral Parliament consists of the Dewan Negara (the National Council or Senate) and the Dewan Rakyat (the People's Council or House of Representatives). Of the 69 members of the Senate, the Paramount Ruler appoints 43 and each of the 13 state legislatures elects

two. All Senators sit for 6-year terms. Members of the House, the more influential of the two bodies, are elected in single member constituencies by universal adult suffrage. General elections must be called at least once every 5 years. The House has 180 members, of which 133 are from the states of Peninsular Malaysia and the island of Labuan and 47 are from Sabah and Sarawak. Legislative power is divided between the Federal Parliament and the elected assemblies of Malaysia's 13 states, with state governments retaining power over several important areas, including land use and religion.

The Malaysian legal system is based on English Common Law. The Supreme Court, the highest court in Malaysia, reviews decisions referred from the High Courts and has original jurisdiction in constitutional matters and in disputes between states or between the Federal Government and a State. Below the Supreme Court are two High Courts, one for Peninsular Malaysia and one for East Malaysia. Islamic, or Syariah, law applies nationwide to Moslems. Islamic courts come under the jurisdiction of the individual states, and ultimate appellate authority rests with the ruler of the state concerned.

The titular heads of 9 of the 13 states in Malaysia are the hereditary rulers, the others being Governors appointed by the Federal Government. Effective executive power rests in the hands of the Chief Minister of each State, and the members of their State cabinets, selected from the members of the State assemblies.

Arts, Science, and Education

Intellectual life in Malaysia is not limited to the country's seven universities. In addition to public lectures and seminars given in the national language at the universities, there are various other professional and service organizations whose activities are open and which

welcome foreigners as members. Examples are the Malaysian Nature Society, the Malaysian Association for American Studies, and the Malaysian Culture Study Group.

The National Museum in Kuala Lumpur houses exhibits on Malaysian culture and history. The city also has a National Art Gallery and several small private art galleries that regularly put on exhibits of local and internationally recognized artists. Major hotels and foreign missions frequently sponsor exhibitions and musical and dramatic performances. Several amateur groups also present dramatic and/or musical performances relating to the major cultures represented in Malaysia.

The Museum of Asian Art at the University of Malaya exhibits an excellent collection of ceramic art. Lessons are available in Kuala Lumpur in Asian art and music.

Commerce and Industry

Manufacturing has accounted for 33% of GDP in 2000. Principal manufactured products include semiconductors, consumer electronic and electrical products, textiles, and apparel. Malaysia is the world's third-largest producer and one of world's largest exporters of semiconductors. The U.S. is the primary trading partner for these products, taking about 26% of Malaysia's electronic products in 2000.

The agricultural sector employs about 15% of the work force. Malaysia is the world's largest producer and exporter of palm oil (about half of the world's supply). Malaysia is also a significant producer of natural rubber, cocoa and tropical timber.

An increasing variety of American companies are involved in Malaysia, such as Esso, Motorola, Intel, Texas Instruments, Mattel, Colgate-Palmolive, RJR Nabisco, Citibank, American International Assurance

(AIA), Johnson and Johnson, and Baxter Healthcare. In 1992, an Embassy survey of U.S. companies in Malaysia indicated that U.S. firms held nearly \$7 billion in assets in Malaysia at the end of 1991, chiefly in the petroleum (65% of total investment) and the microelectronics and manufacturing (32%) sectors.

The United States is Malaysia's third most important trading partner (after Singapore and Japan).

Transportation

Buses and minibuses are dangerously overcrowded except late at night and can be unreliable at all times. Taxis are numerous, metered, and inexpensive, but hard to find at peak hours or when it is raining. Drivers usually speak enough English to reach a destination and to follow directions, but language problems are still frequent and some drivers do not know the city well.

Kuala Lumpur's narrow and winding streets, built a century ago to handle hawkers and trishaws, are now very crowded. While several new "circular" roads have been built recently to help alleviate the overcrowding, and more new highways are under construction, traffic remains heavy, especially at peak hours. Multilaned highways often merge into narrow two lane roads in the center of town and cause added congestion.

Malaysia's west coast has a well-developed system of roads between major cities. Paved and fairly well-maintained, these primarily two-lane roads are usually congested because of heavy use by buses, intercity taxis, and trucks carrying timber and other commodities. A paved coastal road follows the east coast. Its traffic is not as heavy as that on the west coast, but the main trunk roads occasionally suffer from lack of repair. A good road across the peninsula connects Kuala Lumpur with the east coast. Other cross-peninsular routes exist farther south; in the north a new east-west



Street scene in Malaysia

Cory Langley. Reproduced by permission.

highway cuts through the jungles and mountains and links the two coasts. Although the roads on both coasts are scenic and you can drive to Singapore, Penang, and other distant cities, most employees prefer to fly to these cities and avoid the congested, often hazardous traffic. By car, Singapore and Penang are 6 to 8 hours from Kuala Lumpur. A new Malaysia/Singapore divided highway stretches from Singapore to the Thai border.

Train travel is inexpensive. Many employees find it quaint, even rustic, but occasional delays occur. Daily train service connects Kuala Lumpur with Penang and Singapore. From Penang, the international express operates to Bangkok daily, but reservations must be booked in advance. The trip to Singapore takes from 6 to 10 hours, depending on the type of train. First-class accommodations with air conditioning are available, as are sleeping compartments on night trips. Subang International Airport is 20 kilometers from Kuala Lumpur. Regular jet service operates between major cities in the region with connections to Western Europe and the U.S. Because American carriers do not yet offer direct passenger service to Kuala Lumpur (although United has plans pend-

ing), travelers to and from post use Singapore, Tokyo, Seoul, Hong Kong, or Bangkok to change from either Northwest Orient Airlines or United Airlines to foreign carriers. Taxis are available at the airport. Fares are based on a zone system.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

Direct-dial facilities exist to most of Peninsular Malaysia, Singapore and the U.S. The telephone system is only occasionally overloaded.

Telephone service to the U.S. is available 24 hours daily. A 3-minute overseas call to any point within the U.S. through the Malaysian telephone company is about \$9 for person-to-person and \$6 for station-to-station; each additional minute costs around \$2. Persons with an AT&T Calling Card can reach the U.S. via AT&T's "USA Direct" service by dialing 800-0011. Such calls cost about \$3.70 for the first minute and \$1.48 for each additional minute, plus a service charge of \$2.50. Sprint and MCI have similar calling plans and can be accessed in Malaysia. Calls from the U.S. are usually cheaper than those placed from Malaysia. The Malaysian telephone company, Telekom Malaysia, has recently introduced a service

which enables callers in the U.S. to dial a special toll-free number which will connect them to the Malaysian telephone system so they can make a collect call to someone in Malaysia.

Telegrams may be sent from main telegraph offices, post offices, and hotels, by phone. The minimum charge is over \$4 for 22 words; the address counts as regular wording. Each additional word costs \$0.20. FAX facilities are also available, and are often a cost-effective way to communicate.

Radio and TV

English-language programs share time with broadcasts in Malaysian, Chinese, and Tamil on both radio and TV in Malaysia. Voice of America and BBC can be received with some interference, but Radio Singapore and Radio Australia are usually clear. There are three television channels, two of which are run by the Malaysian government. In addition to local productions, Tamil movies, and Chinese movies and soap operas, the stations show a variety of American, British, and Australian programs. Weekday broadcasting usually begins at 4:00 p.m. and lasts until midnight. Programming begins earlier in the afternoon on weekends and in the morning on local holidays.

Malaysia uses the European PAL TV system.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

Numerous magazines and newspapers are published in East and West Malaysia, most in Malaysian, Chinese, and Tamil. Several are published in English, and some English-language newspapers in Kuala Lumpur serve a national market. Most foreigners read the *New Straits Times* (morning), the *Star* (morning), and the *Malay Mail* (afternoon), which give limited coverage to U.S. and international news and sports and more extensive coverage to local news and to other more sensational topics. The *Asian Wall Street Journal* and Asian editions of *USA Today*, *Time*, *News-*

week, and *Reader's Digest* are sold locally. A few other selected U.S. periodicals arrive by air close to the time of their release in the U.S. or by surface mail several weeks or months later. The *International Herald Tribune*, printed in Singapore, usually arrives in Kuala Lumpur in mid-afternoon on the day of publication and always has good coverage of U.S. news and sports. The *Far Eastern Economic Review* and *Asiaweek* give excellent coverage of Asian news.

The Lincoln Resource Center, the library of the U.S. Information Service, has the best collection of American books in the country. It also has an extensive reference section, periodical section, and videotape collection. The International School also has a good library but it does not include recent best sellers.

American and British hardback and paperback books are sold in hotels and numerous bookstores, but they are usually expensive.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

Many local physicians have received at least part of their training in Australia, the U.K. or the U.S.

American citizens are advised to go to Subang Jaya Medical Center in an emergency. A private facility, this hospital resembles a standard western hospital in operation with an emergency room staffed 24 hours daily. Tawakal Hospital, has 24 hour emergency room service and is convenient if time is critical. The General Hospital, which should be used only in an emergency as an alternative to Subang or Tawakal hospitals, also has a 24 hour emergency room. Other hospitals have emergency rooms that are not open or staffed by doctors around the clock. Three other hospitals in the area, Pantai, Assunta, and University, are used to a lesser degree.

Several dentists operate private clinics in the city and can meet rou-

tine dental needs including orthodontic care. Orthodontia tends to be cheaper than in the U.S., but treatment may differ from U.S. practices.

No special facilities provide services for the handicapped except for special instruction given by the International School on a limited basis for children with reading disabilities and some other learning difficulties.

Community Health

Tropical fatigue can last for 6 weeks after arrival. The climate can be debilitating over an extended period because of rainfall, high humidity, uniformly high temperatures, and lack of seasonal variations.

Colds, bronchial disturbances and sinus conditions are common and tend to linger longer than they do in the U.S. Air conditioning probably contributes to this problem since many restaurants and shops are uncomfortably overcooled in relation to the outside temperature. Exhaust fumes from numerous and inadequately maintained motor vehicles combine with smoke from burning brush piles to cause discomfort for those with respiratory conditions.

Dengue fever, including the hemorrhagic variety, exists throughout Malaysia, and expatriates are occasionally affected in Kuala Lumpur. Cholera cases, which are reported less frequently, occur principally in rural areas. In the past, Americans have contracted hepatitis A and dengue fever. Chloroquine-resistant malaria exists, mostly in rural areas, and the number of reported cases has increased. Open drainage ditches and stagnant water at construction sites facilitate breeding of mosquitoes in the city. Malaria suppressants are recommended for extended travel in rural areas outside of Kuala Lumpur. The recommended dose is 500mg of Chloroquine per week and 200 mg of Paludrine daily.

Food poisoning rarely occurs, but a few Americans experience mild

forms of dysentery or diarrhea after eating in the local open-air food stalls and, occasionally, the better restaurants.

As in any tropical country, skin rashes, fungi, and parasites are common. There are also several varieties of snakes, some of which are poisonous.

Drinking water is potable in the urban area of Kuala Lumpur. In outstation areas, water should be boiled or chemically treated. Most medical items and drugs can be purchased locally, but some drugs available over-the-counter in the U.S. require prescriptions in Malaysia, and pharmacies may not have a licensed pharmacist on duty at all times.

Preventive Measures

Before coming to Post, you should be inoculated against tetanus, hepatitis B, immune globulin, and should take an oral dose of typhoid vaccine. Take a tuberculin test so that any change during your stay can be investigated. Children and young adults should be inoculated against diphtheria and take the oral polio vaccine. Yellow fever immunization is required for everyone arriving from Africa and Latin America or other infected areas. Exposure to the intense tropical sun should be gradual to avoid serious sunburns.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

- Jan. 1. New Year's Day
- Jan/Feb. Thaipusam*
- Feb. 1. Kuala Lumpur City Day
- Feb. Chinese New Year (2 days)*
- Mar/Apr. Good Friday*
- Mar/Apr. Easter*
- May 1. Malaysia Labor Day
- Apr/May Wesak*
- May 1. Labor Day

- June (1st Sat) Birthday of HM the King, Seri Paduka Baginda Yang di-Pertuan Agong
- Aug. 31 Malaysian National Day
- Oct. Diwali*
- Dec. 25 Christmas Day
- Ramadan*
- Hari Raya Haji/Id al-Adha*
- Hari Raya Puasa/Id al-Fitr*
- Muharram*
- Mawlid an Nabi*
- Nuzul al Qur'an*

*variable

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs & Duties

A passport valid for at least six months is required to enter Malaysia. American citizens do not need a visa for a pleasure or business trip if their stay in Malaysia is 90 days or less. For more information on entry requirements, contact the Embassy of Malaysia, 2401 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008, telephone: (212) 328-2700, or the Malaysian Consulates located in New York, telephone (202) 328-2700, or Los Angeles, telephone (213) 892-1238. See also the Malaysian Government home page on the Internet at <http://www.jaring.my>. Overseas inquiries should be made at the nearest Malaysian embassy or consulate.

Malaysia's customs authorities may enforce strict regulations concerning temporary importation into or export from Malaysia of items such as firearms, religious materials, antiquities, medications, business equipment, currency, ivory, and other items. It is advisable to contact the Embassy of Malaysia in Washington or one of Malaysia's

consulates in the United States for specific information regarding customs requirements. Customs officials encourage the use of an ATA (Admission Temporaire/Temporary Admission) carnet for the temporary admission of professional equipment, commercial samples, and/or goods for exhibitions and fair purposes. ATA Carnet Headquarters, located at the U.S. Council for International Business, 1212 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036, issues and guarantees the ATA carnet in the United States. For additional information call (212)354-4480; send an e-mail to atacarnet@uscib.org, or visit <http://www.uscib.org> for details.

Malaysia strictly enforces its drug laws. Malaysian legislation provides for a mandatory death penalty for convicted drug traffickers. Individuals arrested in possession of 15 grams (1/2 ounce) of heroin or 200 grams (seven ounces) of marijuana are presumed by law to be trafficking in drugs.

U.S. citizens living in or visiting Malaysia are encouraged to register at the U.S. Embassy in Kuala Lumpur and to obtain updated information on travel and security within the country. The U.S. Embassy is located at 376 Jalan Tun Razak 50400, Kuala Lumpur. The mailing address is P.O. Box No. 10035, 50700 Kuala Lumpur; Telephone (60-3)2168-5000. The fax number for the U.S. Embassy is (60-3)242-2207; the fax number for the Consular Section is (60-3)248-5801. Internet home page: <http://usembassymalaysia.org.my/>; e-mail address: klconsular@state.gov.

Pets

Pets shipped from non-Commonwealth countries must be quarantined for one month upon arrival in Malaysia. Current vaccination records must be available at time of entry.

The Subang International Airport quarantine kennel is a 30 minute drive from Kuala Lumpur. The kennel costs about \$1.20 per day to board cats and \$1.60 for dogs.

Excellent veterinary care is available locally. Several tropical canine diseases, for which treatment is not fully successful, are peculiar to Malaysia. Ticks and fleas can be a serious problem in some sections of the city. American pet foods are available, although more expensive than in the U.S.

Currency, Banking, and Weights and Measures

The Malaysian ringgit is freely convertible. The exchange rate, which fluctuates daily, was US\$1.00 = RM3.80 as of May 2002.

Malaysia has adopted the metric system, and government efforts to enforce its use have done away with a host of old measuring units, including pounds, katis, taels, and piculs.

RECOMMENDED READING

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MALDIVES

Republic of Maldives

Major City:

Malé

Other Cities:

Baa Atoll, Seenu Atoll

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report for Maldives. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

The Republic of **MALDIVES**, an independent chain of islands in the northern Indian Ocean about 417 miles southwest of Sri Lanka and 300 miles from the southernmost tip of India, was a sultanate under British protection until 1965. Its experience with foreign influences has been limited and, until recently, its principal economic link was through ties with Sri Lanka. During its years as a British protectorate, it was administered under the sovereignty of Ceylon (Sri Lanka). In June 1985, the Republic of Maldives became a full member of the Commonwealth.

MAJOR CITY

Malé

Malé, the capital the Maldives, is an island about one-and-a-half square miles in total area, occupying a central position in the archipelago. Land is slowly being reclaimed on the island's north side. All government offices, the four main government schools, and the single hospital are also here. The commercial district has a wide variety of small shops selling curios, antiques, sea shells, and other goods. Many of the imported items are transported by the 40 vessel Maldivian merchant marine fleet. Malé also has an attractive park, Sultan Park, and a museum with artifacts from the Arab, Dravidian, and Sri Lankan cultures which have influenced the history of this island republic.

Malé's population is about 68,000 (2000 est.). The city is densely populated and there is very little public open space. It is feasible to walk to places within the small urban area. The city is a free port; no duties are levied on articles brought here by visitors, but certain items must be declared at customs. Since the Maldives is a Muslim country, no pork products or liquor may be imported. Tourist islands in the

chain, however, often offer pork and liquor for sale to tourists only.

The Maldives international airport—Malé International—is situated on Hululé Island, adjacent to the capital city; there also are three domestic airports.

Education in government-run schools is free in the republic, but is not compulsory. Western-style education based on the British Commonwealth curriculum exists in Malé only to the high school level; studies beyond high school must be pursued abroad. Most teachers are experienced Maldivian and Sri Lankan nationals. The medium of instruction is both Divehi and English.

Clothing

Warm clothing is never required. Cotton dresses, trousers, skirts, and lightweight tropical suits are the most comfortable year-round attire. Some ready-made clothing, notably shirts, jeans, trousers, dresses and blouses, T-shirts, underwear, rubber sandals, and infants wear, are increasingly available, but only in small sizes and often expensive for the quality. A variety of high-quality synthetic materials is available and relatively inexpensive. Pure cotton cloth, which suits the climate best, is available.



Malé Harbor

Susan Rock. Reproduced by permission.

The correct dress for men in offices is trousers with either a shirt and tie or a bush shirt; shoes are preferred to sandals. Women wear slacks, or dresses with knee-length hemlines and short sleeves to offices in Malé.

Food

Most necessary items can be found on the market, although in varying degrees of availability. Many types of inexpensive fresh fish appear daily (except Friday), but the most common are tuna, bonito, and *seer*. It is possible to arrange occasional supplies of spiny lobster and turtle meat. Poultry and eggs are always available. Fresh meat is available, but dairy products are not.

Fruits such as papayas, limes, bananas, and coconuts are always on the market; one variety of mango is available in season. Tropical yellow vegetables usually can be obtained; potatoes and onions are found intermittently. Fresh green vegetables are imported and available year round.

Good-quality white loaf bread is baked daily. A variety of canned and bottled goods gradually is becoming more common in shops. Nespray powdered milk and tinned cheese, cream, and condensed milk are

nearly always sold locally. Frozen meat is available, as is ice cream. Coca-Cola and 7-Up in cans and other soft drinks are available. Beer, wine, spirits, and other drinks containing alcohol are not sold commercially because of local religious customs.

Supplies & Services

The Maldives has a few laundries and no dry cleaning shops. Shoe repair facilities are fair. Imported, high-quality goods are expensive and scarce. Spare parts for household articles must be imported. Electricians' and plumbers' services are available and are of fair quality. Hairdressers and barbers charge moderate rates. Inexpensive domestic help is available, but experienced, well-qualified servants are scarce. Language and customs differences can create problems.

Recreation

Malé has one or two good restaurants. Four hotels, an Italian restaurant, and the tourist island restaurants provide some diversion in entertainment. Sports such as swimming, scuba diving, windsurfing, and sailing are readily available.

The Maldives are renowned for their beautiful beaches.

The Ministry of Tourism is located in the Ghaazee Building, Malé 20-05, Republic of Maldives.

OTHER CITIES

BAA ATOLL is located north of Malé with a population of about 9,600 (2000 est.). The atoll is actually made up of about 50 different islands. At least five of them have major tourist resorts. The others are undeveloped, but open to visitors looking for a relaxing place to hike or swim. In fact, some of the resorts will organize day trips to the various islands. Divers and snorkellers will enjoy the pristine coral reefs around the islands and perhaps a chance see the mantas and whale sharks that share the waters. Several shops display and sell locally made laquerware and hand woven garments, particularly the "feyli," a traditional wraparound skirt. From the island of Goidhoo, history buffs can learn about the 1602 shipwreck of the French ship "Corbin." Legends say that several castaways and exiles once made Goidhoo their homes.

SEENU ATOLL (also known as Addoo Atoll), is a small, heart-shaped island at the southernmost edge of the Maldives. Diving and snorkeling are popular in the area, where a long outer fringe of reefs are complimented by a number of caves and overhangs that provide homes for turtles and nurse sharks. Mantas may also be seen in the waters. Divers can also see the remains of the "British Royalty," a ship torpedoed by the Japanese in Addoo harbor and later sunk by the British. On land, there is one major resort and travelers can bike through the streets of Hithadhoo, the islands capital, or browse through the many shops located there.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

A chain of 19 atolls with a total area of 115 square miles, the Maldives extends a distance of 500 miles north to south.

The atolls comprise 1,190 coral islands, 199 of which are inhabited. The islets are small (none larger than five square miles in area) and seldom exceed an elevation of five or six feet above sea level. The tropical vegetation varies from grass and scrub to dense woods of fruit trees or coconut palms.

The climate is hot and humid, with little daily variation; the average temperature is 80°F and the relative humidity 80%. Most of the area is subject to the southwest monsoon (June to August) and the northeast monsoon (November to March); the annual rainfall averages 100 inches in the north and 150 inches in the south. Living conditions are not healthful in this warm, wet environment.

Population

The population of the Maldives is 310,400 (2000). Average annual growth rate is 3%. Approximately 200 of the Maldives' 1,200 islands are inhabited. The population is scattered throughout the islands, but most heavily concentrated in Malé. Almost 75% of Maldivians live in rural areas. The nation is ethnically divided into admixtures of Sinhalese, Dravidian, and Arab. The Islamic faith was adopted by the Maldivian people during the 12th century. It is now the official religion; nearly 100% of the population are Sunni Muslims. Divehi is the official language, with English as a second tongue. The literacy rate is 93%.

Government

The Maldives has a republic form of government. A popularly-elected unicameral national legislature (*Majlis*) consists of 50 members who serve five-year terms. There are two elected members from each atoll and the capital Malé and eight members who are appointed by the president. There are no political parties, so each candidate must run on the basis of personal qualifications.

The president is nominated for a five-year term by a secret ballot of the *Majlis*, which requires confirmation by national referendum. President Mumoon Abdul Gayoom was elected in 1978 and reconfirmed by referendum in 1983, 1988, 1993, and 1998.

The legal system is based on Islamic law, with English common law applied in commercial matters. An appointed chief justice is responsible for the administration of the former. No organized political parties exist.

The Maldives is a member of the United Nations, World Health Organization (WHO), and United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), as well as the following international bodies: Asian Development Bank, Colombo Plan, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Islamic Development Bank, Nonaligned Movement, and the World Bank.

Three countries have diplomatic representation in Malé: India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. The Maldives has representation abroad in more than 10 foreign cities, including Bangkok, Thailand; Brussels, Belgium; Tokyo, Japan; Vienna, Austria; and Washington, DC.

The flag of the Republic of Maldives is green with a white crescent, surrounded by a red border.

Arts, Science, Education

Education is free, but only 65% of school-age children are enrolled. Until 1976, all 16 existing schools were located in Malé; most were primary schools.

Three types of formal education are offered: traditional schools (*mak-thabs*), which emphasize knowledge of the Koran (Qur'an); Divehi-language primary schools; and English-language primary and secondary schools, which teach a standard curriculum. The only higher education facility available is a teacher-training institute; most college-age students go abroad for schooling.

Commerce and Industry

The Maldives is one of the poorest and most undeveloped countries in the world. But in recent years, the economy of the Maldives has improved steadily. The gross domestic product (GDP) was \$594 million in 2000, or about \$2,000 per capita. Tourism and fishing are the most important sectors of the economy.

Tourism alone accounts for 20%-30% of GDP and over 60% of foreign exchange earnings. In 2000, there were 84 resorts in operation, with plans for expansion. Over 400,000 visitors were recorded in 2000.

The fishing industry employs 25% of the labor force and accounts for 60% of all exports. Considerable quantities of fish are exported to Japan. Dried fish is exported to Sri Lanka, where it is a delicacy. Canned tuna and dried fish exports accounted for about 53% of all marine product exports. This is quite an accomplishment considering that the use of nets is illegal. All fishing is done by line and pole. The fishing fleet usually consists of a number of small, flat-bottomed boats. Though, fishermen are now permitted to use outboard motors instead of just sails and oars.

The vegetation of the islands is coconut palms with some scrub. Cultivation of crops is virtually impossible, and nearly all food to supplement the basic fish diet has to be imported; Japan, the U.S., and Thailand are major trade partners.

One of the major problems facing the Maldives is a dwindling supply of fresh water and inadequate sewage treatment. Another environmental problem is associated with the reported rising of the world's sea level, which will gradually erode the coral foundation of the islands. Considering that none of the islands are more than six feet above sea level, the sea level is of great importance. Houses built from coral are now forbidden; cement must be imported for construction.

The Ministry of Trade and Industry is located in the Ghaazee Building, Malé 20-05, Republic of Maldives.

Transportation

Five international airlines serve Malé International; also, charter flights are available from Italy, Switzerland, and Germany. Domestic flights are operated by Air Maldives Airways. Malé International is on Hululé Island and there is ferry service to all main islands.

There is little need for transportation on any of the islands since they are so small. All areas on Malé can be reached on foot. There are only a few hundred passenger cars in the Maldives. Limited taxi service is available in Malé; taxis cannot be hailed.

Transportation between the atolls depends mainly on local sailing boats.

Communications

International direct-dial phone calls and fax services are generally available and all 199 inhabited islands of the country have been provided with access to telephone services. Dhiraagu, the partially government owned telecommunications service

provider, also provides Internet services. Mobile phone usage is increasing rapidly. There are over 10,000 mobile phone users in the Maldives with services available on 31 inhabited islands and 80 resorts islands.

Radio broadcasting on the Voice of Maldives began in 1962. Broadcasts are in Divehi and English. Television Maldives is the country's lone TV station. One Indian Ocean INTELSAT station serves the country.

There are two daily publications in Malé that are in Divehi and English: *Aafathis* and *Haveeru*. All publications must be approved by the government, those not sanctioned are banned.

Health

Clinical medical care in Malé is available at the government hospital, which also has two national dental assistants, one trained in Britain and one in Sri Lanka. Although the hospital itself is a superior small facility with excellent nursing care, most surgery or serious illnesses cannot be handled. Singapore is the nearest place giving first-class specialized care.

Malé has no piped public water supply or sewage network. Ensuring an adequate water supply is a continuing and growing problem for the government. Sweet water is obtained from household wells and rain catchment; the well water is for general use and the rain catchment is for drinking. Houses rented to foreigners have individual compound septic tanks.

As in other tropical countries, the main health problems of the population are infectious diseases. Malaria, tuberculosis, filariasis, and leprosy are found; gastroenteritis, ear infections, measles, and skin diseases are common. It is necessary to boil and filter drinking water, and wise to avoid eating raw vegetables and unpeeled fruits. The incidence of mosquito-borne diseases is high.

Cholera and yellow fever vaccinations are required of arrivals from affected areas. Immunization against tetanus, typhoid, and poliomyelitis is recommended.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs & Duties

A valid passport, along with an onward or return ticket and sufficient funds, is required for entry. A no-cost visit visa valid for 30 days is issued upon arrival. If a traveler stays in a resort or hotel, the Department of Immigration and Emigration routinely approves requests for extensions of stays up to 90 days with evidence of sufficient funds. Anyone staying over 60 days without proper authorization faces heavy fines and deportation. All travelers (except diplomats and certain exempted travelers) departing the Republic of the Maldives must pay an airport departure tax.

Arrival by Private Boat: Travelers arriving by private yacht or boat are granted no-cost visas, usually valid until the expected date of departure. Vessels anchoring in atolls other than Male must have prior clearance from the Ministry of Defense and National Security. The clearances can be obtained through local shipping agents in Male. Maldivian customs, police and/or representatives of Maldivian Immigration will meet all vessels, regardless of where they anchor. Vessels arriving with a dog on board will be permitted anchorage, but the dog will not be allowed off the vessel. Any firearms or ammunition on board will be held for bond until the vessel's departure.

Specific inquiries should be addressed to the Maldives High Commission in Sri Lanka at No. 23, Kaviratne Place, Colombo 6, telephone (94) (1) 586-762/500-943, or the Maldives Mission to the U.N. in New York, telephone (212) 599-6195.

Maldivian customs authorities prohibit the importation of non-Islamic religious materials, including religious statues. Personal Bibles are permitted. The importation of pork and pork by-products is restricted. Dogs are not permitted, but visitors may bring their cats. (Many hotels and resorts do not allow pets; travelers should confirm a particular hotel's policy prior to arrival.) Items such as alcohol and religious items will be kept and held for bond until the traveler departs. Pornographic materials are banned, and they will be destroyed upon arrival in the country. A complete summary of custom regulations is available at <http://www.customs.gov.mv/>

There is no U.S. Embassy in Republic of Maldives, but the U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka is also accredited to the Maldives. The former U.S. Consular Agency in Male closed on August 9, 1995. Americans living in or visiting the Maldives are encouraged to register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Sri Lanka and to obtain updated information on travel and security within the Republic of Maldives. The U.S. Embassy is located at 210 Galle Road, Colombo 3, Sri Lanka. The Embassy's telephone number during normal business hours Monday through Friday is (94) (1) 448-007. The Embassy's after-hours and emergency telephone number is (94)(1) 448-601. The Consular Section fax number is (94)(1) 436-943. The Internet address is <http://usembassy.state.gov/srilanka>. The e-mail address for the Consular Section is consularcolombo@state.gov.

Currency, Banking, and Weights and Measures

The monetary unit used in the Maldives is the *rufiyaa*, which is equal to 100 *laaris*.

The Maldives operates on both the metric and imperial systems of weights and measures.

The time in the Maldives is Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) plus five hours.

Special Circumstances

Public observance of any religion other than Islam is prohibited. All Maldivian citizens living in the Republic of Maldives are Moslem, and places of worship for adherents of other religions do not exist. Religious gatherings such as Bible study groups are prohibited; however, a family unit of foreigners may practice its religion, including Bible readings, privately within its residence. It is against the law to invite or encourage Maldivian citizens to attend these gatherings. Offenders may face jail sentences, expulsion and/or fines.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

- Jan. 1 New Year's Day
- Jan. 7 National Day
- July 26 & 27 Independence Day
- Aug. 12 Huravee Day
- Nov. 3 Victory Day
- Nov. 11 & 12 Republic Day
- Dec. 10 Fisheries Day
- Ramadan
- Id al-Fitr*
- Id al-Adha*
- Hijra New Year*
- Mawlid an Nabi*

*variable

RECOMMENDED READING

The following titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country:

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MARSHALL ISLANDS

Republic of the Marshall Islands

Major City:

Majuro

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report 2001 for Marshall Islands. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

Comprising over a thousand flat coral islands of white sand beaches and turquoise lagoons, the Marshall Islands beckon visitors with all the promise of a tropical paradise. There are pristine diving and lush tropical greenery, and the Marshallese people retain many of their pre-colonial crafts and traditions, especially on the outer islands. You can still watch outrigger canoes zipping around the lagoons, though these days you are as likely as not to find a VCR in that little grass shack and Coke replacing coconut milk as the drink of choice of many islanders.

Marshallese society has always been stratified, and despite increasing Westernization and the intro-

duction of a moneyed economy, social status still comes as much from one's kinship as it does from one's own achievements. Chiefs continue to wield a great deal of authority over land ownership and usage.

In travels between the islands, early inhabitants learned to read the patterns of the waves and the positions of the stars, and they made stick charts to record and pass on their observations to less-experienced navigators. By tying flat strips of wood together in imitation of the wave patterns and attaching cowry shells to the sticks to represent particular islands and atolls, the experienced navigator could memorize the patterns for when he was out at sea the charts were not actually taken on the journeys.

The first Micronesian navigators arrived in the Marshall Islands sometime between 500 and 2000 B.C.E. Little is known of their origin or culture.

In 1494 Micronesia was ceded to Spain. The Marshall Islands, however, were off the main trade routes and consequently received little attention from early European explorers. In 1525, Alonso de Salazar of Spain became the first European to sight the islands, but Spain did nothing to colonize them. After another 200 years devoid of

Europeans, the islands received a visit from English captain John Marshall (from whom they later took their name) in 1788.

Traders and whalers began to visit the islands en masse in the early 1800s, until encounters with the "friendly" native Marshallese began to turn sour. Ship after ship putting into port at various atolls in the Marshalls quickly weighed anchor after the death of their captain or crew members.

Germany annexed the Marshalls in 1885 but did not place government officials on the islands until 1906, leaving island affairs to a group of powerful German trading companies. Japan took over in 1914 and colonized the Marshalls extensively.

In 1973 the Marshall Islands withdrew from the Congress of Micronesia, seeking political independence. In 1979, the Marshalls' constitution became effective.

The flip side to the paradise picture is that many of the Marshallese still struggle with the effects of 20th century's technology. Two atolls—the Bikini Atoll in particular—served as testing sites for atomic bombs through 1958. And yet, despite these hardships, you will find the Marshallese exceptionally welcom-

ing and their culture and identity alive and well.

MAJOR CITY

Majuro

Majuro is the political and economic center of the Marshall Islands. The inhabited islands along the southern side of Majuro Atoll have been joined over time by landfill and a bridge to form a 30-mile road from Rita, on the extreme eastern end, to Laura, at the western end. Both villages were so code-named by U.S. forces in World War II after favorite pinups Rita Hayworth and Lauren Bacall.

The main downtown business and shopping area is located in Rita and extends 4 miles to the southeast corner of the atoll, home of a second shopping center, the Capitol building, and government offices. The downtown area includes the islands of Djarrit, Uliga, and Delap (DUD). Newcomers cannot identify where one area ends and another begins, but it is not necessary for finding one's way. A single paved main street parallels the lagoon, and a smaller unimproved road follows the oceanside as far as the government office area. Schools, offices, shops, restaurants, hotels, and the hospital are along the street. No longer a village, Majuro is a small town - compact, offering far more Western amenities than one might expect in the middle of the Pacific, a place where people know one another and you cannot get lost.

The DUD area contains approximately 12,000 to 15,000 people living in mostly crowded housing, many without water and sewer facilities. Since land is in short supply and controlled by each clan, graves of family members occupy a central place in front of many dwellings.

Marshallese homes typically have no furniture, only pandanus sleeping mats, which are rolled out at

night. Cooking facilities, kerosene cookers, or pit fires are often outside and may be shared by more than one family. The lagoon and ocean have traditionally been used as toilet facilities. Such use continues, despite the population increase, and causes health problems at the Rita end of the lagoon.

The population density lessens as you drive westward, and the environment becomes more suburban. The housing standard improves; green grass, coconut, and breadfruit trees are abundant. The area has a few neighborhood shops, selling individual cigarettes, some canned foods, soft drinks, and snack food.

Utilities

Electrical current is 110 v, 60 cycles. The power is stable, although fluctuations are frequent and surge protectors are a good idea for any sensitive electronic equipment. Announced outages of a few hours each are necessary at times to complete system maintenance.

Food

Majuro retail stores offer a surprising variety of consumer goods despite the country's remote location. The two largest grocery stores in Majuro are Robert Reimers Enterprises and Gibson's. Both stock a large variety of American grocery products, including packaged and canned goods, frozen meats, vegetables, ice cream, bread, fresh vegetables, and a good supply of dairy products. These two stores have a good selection of household items as well as clothing, sewing notions, cards, toys, nonprescription drugstore items, and office supplies. A limited supply of baby food and formula is available, as are disposable diapers.

Most goods are imported from California, New Zealand and Australia. Food products look a little different, for example, the cuts of meat available are not what we are accustomed to but most people agree that you can find almost anything you need. You have to plan ahead and buy when you see something that you think you may want to use in

the future and freeze it if it's perishable. Depending on the item, most food is priced higher than in the U.S. Fresh vegetables are very expensive and not always of good quality.

Imported rice is a staple in the Marshallese diet. Imported chicken is the major meat; some fish is available, but most local families who catch fish only take enough to feed their own families. Until recently the only locally grown fruits and vegetables were coconut, pandanus, papaya, bananas, and breadfruit. Recently the Taiwan government started a farm in Laura, which has produced wonderful vegetables such as tomatoes, corn, and peppers, which can be purchased in the local grocery stores.

Clothing

Majuro's tropical climate is best appreciated while wearing cotton. Synthetics may be comfortable in air-conditioning, but outside the office, they are uncomfortable in the heat and humidity.

Local stores offer few cotton garments and little of U.S. style and quality, except for a vast array of Majuro T-shirts, which are popular with local and visitors alike.

Men: The local dress code is basic. Around town, men wear T-shirts or Hawaiian aloha shirts (open-neck sport shirts usually worn untucked), long pants (shorts are acceptable in certain situations) and sandals, athletic shoes or, occasionally, conventional shoes.

Women: Local women wear long muumuus with short sleeves and rubber sandals. Few women wear American-style clothes; pants and shorts are not usually worn. Women's thighs and shoulders should be covered. Marshallese women swim in their muumuus, which are made of silky polyester that dries quickly.

Most women wear skirts and blouses or dresses. Either is also suitable for evening wear. Because of the climate, stockings are not worn and sandals, casual and

dressy, are the norm. Fancy or revealing cocktail dresses are out of place in Majuro. Long skirts and dresses are fine for evening wear.

Foreign women normally wear clothing similar to what they wear at home during hot weather, with the exception that women do not wear shorts, except those at least knee length, in public. Foreign women may wear pants to go to town or to an evening function. Women may wear a bathing suit into the water, but should wear a skirt or a wrap around their lower torso while on the beach.

Children: Several of the private schools in Majuro require uniforms, which are locally made and available at a modest cost. Otherwise, children wear T-shirts, shorts, rubber sandals (known as “zorries”), and bathing suits. Athletic shoes are occasionally worn and are best ordered from the U.S. Boys wear long pants to church and girls wear dresses. Dress clothes are not needed. Climbing coconut trees, playing on coral sand and rocks, swimming, clothed Marshallese style, and banana and coconut stains take their toll on children's clothes.

Supplies and Services

Majuro has two hardware stores, Ace and True Value, which have lately been well supplied with basic items. Fishing tackles and rods are expensive; fishermen should bring their own and buy lures here. Most items will be more expensive, so if you anticipate needing something and have the room to ship it, then do so; you will save money in the long run. The NAPA auto parts store has an uneven inventory but may have what you need or will order it. Tires may be ordered and shipped in.

A few basic services are available in Majuro. There are a few beauty shops providing haircuts and simple styling. Repair services for appliances and electronics are limited. There is one drycleaner. Majuro has only a few reputable car repair shops, so be sure to ask for recommendations when you arrive as to

where the best service can be obtained.

Religious Activities

The first Christian missionaries arrived in the Marshall Islands in 1857, and Christian religions continue to play an important part in Marshallese life. Churches provide a particularly important social setting, with gatherings throughout the week. A single village may have competing churches that create tension within the community over membership and status. The Bible, translated into Marshallese, is used as a reading textbook, and many children have Old Testament names.

Many religious denominations still support missionaries in Majuro, Ebeye, and the outer islands. Several small, private religious elementary and high schools exist throughout the Marshall Islands. Denominations represented include Unified Church of Christ (Protestant), Roman Catholic, Assembly of God, Seventh-Day Adventist, Independent Baptist, Mormon, Jehovah's Witnesses, Baha'i, and the Salvation Army program. The Unified Church of Christ and the Assembly of God churches have a theological college in Majuro.

In Majuro, Assumption Roman Catholic Church and the Assembly of God Church offer weekly services in English. Other services are in Marshallese, although most of the missionaries in every denomination are English speaking.

Education

The two private schools in Majuro most used by foreigners are the Majuro Cooperative School and Assumption Catholic School. Both schools use American textbooks and follow an American curriculum. Home schooling is always an option and is used by many Americans living in Majuro.

Recreation and Social Life

Recreation in Majuro is almost entirely of an aquatic nature. Fishing is popular with Marshallese and foreigners alike. Small boat reef

fishing, throw netting, and surf casting are popular. Larger outboard boats are available for deep-sea fishing for marlin, tuna, and other gamefish that abound in the Marshall Islands. Although no commercial charter boats are available, you can arrange for private charter or to be included in a day's fishing trip on a small boat.

The warm, clear waters are home to vast communities of fish, coral formations, and abundant tropical marine life, all easily accessible to snorkelers and divers. Sailing, windsurfing, swimming, boogie boarding, occasionally surfing, and picnicking at the beach are popular activities. The local dive shops fill air tanks, rent equipment, and offer scuba lessons, and have a small inventory of diving gear for sale.

Majuro has one large indoor athletic facility, which is used for sporting events and large assemblies. There are many outdoor basketball courts, two public tennis courts, a baseball field, and one bowling alley. Foreigners enjoy walking, bike riding, and jogging, but because of the narrow roads this can be dangerous. Rust is a problem with bicycles, and you should bring locks and patch kits for making repairs.

Evening entertainment in Majuro is limited. There are several good restaurants to go for dinner, several bars that offer live music are open at night, and there is one movie theater with three screens.

Marshallese live simply and entertain rarely, except for singular events, the most common being a “kemem,” or child's first birthday celebration. These are socially important events to which large numbers of people are invited. Food preparation for a kemem takes several days. Marshallese women usually do not accompany their husbands to events, public or private, but that situation is changing slowly. It is awkward for a Marshallese to decline an invitation, so you never can be sure if an invited guest will attend. An RSVP is not usually understood.

Most of the foreign social activity consists of friends meeting at homes or at a restaurant. Many foreigners live in modest housing and have limited ability to entertain the way they are accustomed. The tiny diplomatic community, the retiring nature of the Marshallese, the small number of foreigners, and the lack of social events, public or private, are all factors that at times emphasize the sense of isolation in Majuro. Be creative, entertain yourself, and be willing to meet others.

Bring mail-order sources for all your hobbies, reading, and audio needs.

Majuro is a casual town, where people know one another and first names are used immediately. Marshallese custom places no importance on punctuality. The concepts of planning and preparation are unfamiliar.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The Marshall Islands are located in the eastern part of the geographic region known as Micronesia, or "Little Islands," a myriad of more than 2,100 coral atolls and volcanic islands scattered across 3 million square miles of the western Pacific Ocean.

The Marshall Islands lie between latitude 4-14°N. and longitude 160-173°E. The 29 coral atolls and 5 single islands of the Marshall Islands form two parallel groups extending northwest and southeast—the Ratak ("Sunrise") Chain and Ralik ("Sunset") chain. Total land area of all of the Marshall Islands is 70 square miles. Marine resources are abundant, but poor soil provides little opportunity for agriculture, except for the harvesting and drying of coconut meat into copra, the only revenue opportunity for outer islanders.

Each atoll is a cluster of small, low-lying islands, none more than a few meters above sea level, circling a lagoon. The development of a coral atoll begins with coral growth around the edge of a high, often volcanic mountain. Growth continues as the mountain slowly sinks beneath the sea, leaving behind a circular reef that grows into small islands, islets, and open reef surrounding a lagoon.

Most atolls have free-flowing water across most of the reef, with one or two openings for boats to enter the lagoon. The islands of most atolls are not contiguous, with stretches of open reef extending for miles between islands. As the distances between islands in an atoll can be many miles, travel from island to island within an atoll can be difficult.

The capital of the Marshall Islands is Majuro, which lies 2,300 miles southwest of Honolulu and nearly 2,000 miles southeast of Guam. Majuro lies west of the international dateline, making it 17 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time.

Linking the islands of the southern side of Majuro Atoll runs the longest paved road in Micronesia, the islands having been artificially joined over the years by a 32-mile continuous road.

The climate of the Marshall Islands is tropical, with high humidity, and an average year-round temperature of 81 °F. Trade winds pick up in October or November and blow strongly from January through April, with winds varying from 12 to 22 knots. The trades, often bringing overcast skies, have a cooling effect, although the lagoon can become rough, compared to the placid days of glassy water, so frequent in summer.

Typhoon (tropical hurricane) season is from December through March. Tropical depressions form in the Marshall Islands and increase to typhoon strength as they move further west with the prevailing trade winds, making the Marshall Islands

less susceptible to a full strength typhoon than most islands in the Pacific.

In Majuro, January, February, and March are traditionally the driest months, with rainfall averaging 6-8 inches a month. September through December are the wettest months, with 12-14 inches of average monthly rainfall. The temperature remains stable year-round, averaging 84°F in the day and 76°F at night.

The Marshall Islands enjoy clean air, clear ocean water, sunshine, and adequate amounts of rainfall, with the exception of the heavily populated areas of Majuro and Ebeye, where city living has taken its toll on the environment. Water shortages occur at any time when rainfall has been below normal, but in Majuro, shortages will occur most toward the end of the dry season in March. The use of water catchment devices is being promoted throughout the Marshall Islands. The outer islands rely more on a subsistence economy, occasionally experiencing food shortages due to seasonal variations.

Population

An ethnically homogeneous population of Marshallese populates the Marshall Islands, whose origins, as determined through research of the language, appear to be in the Malayo-Indonesian area. The population shares a single language and culture, with some dialect and sub-cultural differences between the two island chains.

The total population of the Marshall Islands as of the 1999 census was 50,840 people. That was an increase of 7,460 people since the 1988 census. Majuro and Ebeye are the two urban population centers. Over 50% of Marshallese live on Majuro Atoll. Out of the total population, 19% live in the island of Ebeye in Kwajalein Atoll and 3% on the outer islands of Kwajalein Atoll. With just 0.14 square miles, Ebeye Island is the most densely populated area in the Marshall Islands, with an equiva-

lent population density of 66,750 persons per square mile. The city of Majuro and Ebeye offer amenities, such as electricity, modern Western lifestyles, and employment opportunities (albeit limited) that continually draw younger Marshallese from the outer islands. On the outer atolls the lifestyle is mostly unchanged and untouched by modern development. Fewer than 3% of the population are foreigners. Countries other than the U.S. are beginning to send diplomatic representatives to the Marshall Islands. Taiwan and Japan have embassies in Majuro. The Marshall Islands is a young population, where 43% of the population is under 15 years of age and 15% is under 5. The working age group of 15 to 65 years old is 55% of the population.

The population has doubled in the last 26 years. With limited land and economic opportunities, controlling population growth has become a major goal of government authorities.

The urban areas of the Marshall Islands, where lifestyles move away from the traditional culture, are experiencing increasingly severe problems with youth suicide, alcoholism, sexually transmitted diseases, juvenile delinquency, and disregard of parental influence.

The social structure in the Marshall Islands is based on membership in a "bwij," a system of extended families or small clans. All members of the bwij work together for the common good, sharing food, housing, property, and resources. The leader of a bwij is the "alap," who acts as manager. Each bwij forms part of a larger group, led by an "iroij," or chief. It is traditionally the chief's responsibility to allocate resources among all his people and to resolve disputes.

Land is a scarce resource in the Marshall Islands and forms an important base for the establishment of social structure. Marshallese own all land; none may be sold to foreigners, although it may be

leased to foreigners if all those holding an interest in the land agree. Ownership of land defines social status and family identity. Land rights are inherited through membership in a bwij, which is determined through the female line. Inheritance of titles is also matrilineal.

The traditional Marshallese method of dividing property, crops or catch, and income is one-third for the iroij, one-third for the alap, and one-third for the "dri jermal," or common people who make up the bwij. This customary method of allocation is now creating social, economic, and legal difficulties within Marshallese society, as the country becomes increasingly westernized and moves from a subsistence economy to a money economy.

Major disputes arise over iroij titles as they command not only great prestige, but, with the advent of U.S. aid and lease payments, great wealth as well.

The Marshallese have a relaxed and casual attitude to life and informal dress is normal. Marshallese have strong family relationships, and thus, family needs and desires take precedence over non-family matters. Most Marshallese can expect family or extended family support at any time. This social network allows relatives from the outer islands, whether invited or not, to join family members in Ebeye or Majuro, and be assured of a home and food, even if the newcomer does not plan to work or make a contribution to the host family. Many young people prefer the U.S.-influenced lifestyles of Majuro and Ebeye to the remote and quiet living of an outer island. As the population density of both centers increases, there are no indications that this trend will change in the future. There are no statistics to document how many Marshallese are actually living in the U.S. but many do and more leave for the U.S. every day. Because of the relationship between the U.S. and the RMI, Marshallese are allowed to live and work in the U.S. at will.

Public Institutions

The Marshall Islands were claimed by Spain in 1592, but were left undisturbed by the Spanish Empire for 300 years. In 1885, Germany took over the administration of the Marshall Islands and located trading stations on the islands of Jaluit and Ebon to pursue the flourishing copra (dried coconut meat) trade. Marshallese High Chiefs continued to rule under indirect colonial German administration.

At the beginning of World War I, Japan assumed control of the Marshall Islands, first under civil and later naval administration. Their headquarters remained on Jaluit.

In early 1944, U.S. Marines and Army troops with naval air support took control from the Japanese following intense fighting on Kwajalein and Enewetak Atolls. In 1947, the U.S. as the occupying power entered into an agreement with the U.N. Security Council to administer the Micronesia area as the "Strategic Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands." The area included what is now the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Palau, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas. During the lengthy negotiations leading to the present political entities, the various peoples voted to pursue their separate courses rather than join as one country.

On May 1, 1979, the U.S. extended recognition both to the Constitution of the Marshall Islands, a document that incorporates both American and British constitutional concepts, and to the establishment of the Government of the Marshall Islands.

After 13 years of negotiation, on June 25, 1983, the Government of the Marshall Islands and the Government of the U.S. signed the Compact of Free Association. The people of the Marshall Islands approved the compact in a U.S. observed plebiscite on September 7, 1983. The U.S. Congress subsequently reviewed the compact and included

several amendments that were accepted by the Government of the Marshall Islands. President Reagan signed the compact into law on January 14, 1986. The compact entered into force in the Marshall Islands on October 21, 1986. The UN voted to terminate the trusteeship with respect to the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia in December 1990.

The status of free association recognized the Republic of the Marshall Islands as a self-governing state with the capacity to conduct foreign affairs consistent with the terms of the compact.

The compact places full responsibility for defense of the Marshall Islands with the U.S. The basic relationship of free association continues indefinitely, while the economic and defense provisions of the compact are subject to renegotiating at the end of 15 years. Congress provides most of the compact funding through the U.S. Department of the Interior.

A major subsidiary agreement of the compact allows the U.S. continued use of the US. Army installation at Kwajalein, an atoll consisting of 90 islets around the largest lagoon in the world. The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) uses the facility on a lease agreement with the Government of the Marshall Islands. DOD controls 11 islands within Kwajalein Atoll.

Another major agreement of the compact provides for settlement of all claims arising out of the nuclear testing programs that the U.S. conducted at Bikini and Enewetak Atolls from 1946 to 1958.

The legislative branch of the government is made up of the Nitijela (Parliament) with an advisory Council of Iroij (high chiefs). The Nitijela has 33 members from 25 districts that are elected for concurrent 4-year terms. Members of the Nitijela hold the title of Senator.

The executive branch is under the leadership of the President, who is

elected by the Nitijela from among its membership. The President selects the other 10 members of his cabinet from the Nitijela. The first president of the republic was elected in 1979.

The Marshall Islands has four court systems: the Supreme Court, High Court, District and Community Courts, and the Traditional Rights Court. Most trial cases are heard before a judge. Jury trial is used only in unusual circumstances because of the difficulty in finding unbiased jurors within such a small population. Jurisdiction of the Traditional Rights Court is limited to cases involving titles, land rights, or other disputes arising from customary law and traditional practices. The Council of Iroij, representing traditional authority, advises the Cabinet on matters concerning customary law.

Arts, Science, and Education

The Marshall Islands has 77 public elementary schools and three public secondary schools. There are 26 private elementary schools and 13 private secondary schools. Forty-eight Head Start centers throughout the country provide preschool training. Head Start is available to 35% of the 3- to 5-year-olds in the Marshall Islands. In 1999, 84% of elementary school age children and 69% of the secondary school age children attended classes.

Test scores reveal that the education system needs to be improved. Though there is a 19 to 1 ratio of students to teachers, the quality of education is of great concern. Nearly half of the teachers in the Marshall Islands have only a secondary school diploma as their highest qualification. Scores on the entrance tests to the College of the Marshall Islands (CMI) in February 2000 required 73% of those applying to take remedial training of up to 2 years before being allowed to enroll in traditional college credit courses. CMI provides 2-year degree programs in liberal arts and sciences,

teacher education, nursing and allied health, business and computer science, and vocational and occupational education and training. Remedial programs are available to prepare students to enter CMI's degree programs, and it has an adult education program to provide an opportunity for obtaining a high school diploma. CMI is in partnership in the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), which is U.S. federally funded. The University of the South Pacific (USP) provides post-secondary education through extension programs in Majuro. Students are able to complete full majors and degrees without having to attend classes on USP campuses. USP provides training in conjunction with a U.S. federally funded Head Start Program for pre-school certificate and a diploma in early childhood education and community nutrition.

The Marshall Islands women are respected throughout Micronesia for the quality of the woven handicrafts they produce from coconut and pandanus fibers. Intricate and delicate baskets are decorated with many small shells; fans, mats, belts, handbags, and hats are woven to be decorative as well as practical. Most of the weaving is done by women on the outer islands who ship their goods to Majuro for sale at local handicraft stores. Men carve and assemble small replicas of the wooden sailing canoes that were once the only means of travel in the Marshall Islands. They also make modern stick charts, illustrating the principles of wave shape and change, which were used by Marshallese navigators to travel throughout the island chains.

The Marshallese have an oral tradition of song and legend, which is closely held and not shared with foreigners. With the increasing move toward a Western society, many fear that much of this tradition will soon be lost.

The Alele Museum is a private, non-profit corporation that operates a small museum with photos and objects of traditional Marshallese

culture and history It has an extensive microfilm inventory of documents relating to the history of the Marshall Islands and the Trust Territories. It actively encourages preservation and documentation of the Marshallese cultural heritage.

A Marshallese festive occasion always includes a song or two, sung by men and women in harmony, sometimes a cappella sometimes with a ukulele. As individuals, the Marshallese people are quiet and somewhat reticent, but they will spontaneously form a group and give an enthusiastic vocal performance at almost any event.

The "jepta" dancing performed by groups of youth and adults at their respective churches highlights the Christmas celebration. A month of late-night practices culminates in Christmas night dancing, each group in their own costume, performing variations of traditional dances.

Commerce and Industry

The government is the largest employer in the country, employing about one quarter of the workforce. The gross domestic product is derived mainly from U.S.-funded expenditures. Direct U.S. aid under the Compact of Free Association accounted for two-thirds of the Marshall Islands' 2000 budget of US \$100 million.

Per capita gross domestic product during 1999 was about US \$1,500, a figure that to understand the standard of living. The economy is a mixture of a small subsistence sector and a modern urban sector. The modern sector is largely a service-oriented economy located in Majuro and Ebeye, sustained by expenditure of the Marshall Islands Government and the U.S. Army installation at Kwajalein Atoll (USAKA). Wages, salaries, and other benefits to employees from these two sectors accounted for more than half of the gross domestic product in 1999.

The modern private sector consists of wholesale and retail trade, restaurants, banking and insurance, construction and repair services, professional services, and a small amount of copra processing. Despite its small size, however, copra cake and copra oil are by far the largest exports, standing at US \$1 million in 1999. The Marshall Islands have 22,000 acres of coconut plantations, and copra production has been the most important single commercial economic activity for the past hundred years. Unfortunately, the world market for coconut oil is currently in decline and diminishes the value of the Marshall Islands' largest export commodity.

The minimum wage is US \$2 an hour, which places the Marshall Islands at a competitive disadvantage vis-à-vis its potential Pacific and East Asian competitors. Skilled workers are few. The U.S. dollar is the official currency.

Outer islanders in an otherwise subsistence economy make copra and weave handicrafts as their sole source of income. These limited revenues fund what few items they can afford, such as soap, lantern fuel, and clothing. Most imports are consumed on Majuro and Ebeye.

Agriculture, marine resources, and tourism are top government development priorities. The Marshall Islands has no large-scale fishing operations. Sale of fishing rights to the Japanese, Taiwanese, and Koreans is a source of income, and the Marshall Islands is the recipient of aid, particularly from Japan to ensure the continuation of these rights. The U.S. and Japan are the Marshall Islands' major trading partners; retail trade with Australia and New Zealand is increasing. The Marshall Islands receives additional aid from the government of Australia.

Transportation

Automobiles

Majuro enjoys the longest paved road system in all of Micronesia:

from Rita, at the eastern end of Majuro Atoll, to Laura, the village on the far western end, a distance of about 30 miles. The island is so narrow that when driving the length of the island there are very few places where you are unable to see the lagoon and ocean at the same time. There are no street names and no addresses. As is typical in small towns all over the world, locations are identified by their occupant, their former occupant, or the nearest landmark. There are very few traffic signs, and there are no stoplights. Local police are working hard to enforce good driving habits but almost anyone who pays the fee required can acquire a drivers license. Drivers must be extra cautious as children and animals dart into the street day and night. There are no sidewalks, so the narrow roads are shared with pedestrians, and one must be alert as people and cars seem to come out of nowhere. Because there are so many vehicles, traffic is becoming a problem especially in the mornings, at noon, and at 5 o'clock. The speed limit in most areas is 25mph, but at times it's impossible to maintain even that rate of speed. Gasoline costs about twice as much as in the U.S.

Taxis are the main means of transportation for the Marshallese people. A person can ride in one direction anywhere from the end of Rita to the bridge (approximately 7 miles) for 50 cents. If a person were to travel from Rita to Long Island (at the other side of the bridge) the charge would be \$1.50. It becomes more costly to travel from town to the airport and beyond.

Taxis are not always convenient, especially on Long Island. At night it is very difficult and possibly dangerous to get a taxi into town from Long Island. What makes it dangerous is that there are few streetlights and people waiting on the side of the road to hail a taxi are not clearly visible. Drunk drivers are more likely to be driving at night so standing by the side of the narrow roads after dark is not a good idea. When using the taxi service you must share the car with as many

people as the driver chooses to pick up. That means that there are many stops made from when one gets in, to the final destination.

The convenience of having a personal car is immeasurable. Buying a new car locally is a possibility; buying a used car in Majuro, as in the U.S., can be a gamble.

It is a requirement of the Marshall Islands that vehicles be licensed. The weight of the vehicle determines the charge, but for the average car, the fee is \$35. Law requires that vehicles be inspected yearly. Inspection stickers are issued when the car is licensed, although this law is not strictly enforced. The licensing fee includes the fee for the inspection sticker. Liability insurance is required and must be obtained before the vehicle is licensed. The cost for minimum coverage locally is less than US \$200. Persons planning to drive in Majuro should have a current Marshall Islands driver's license. This driver's license will be issued for \$20. No test is required but you will probably be asked to present your U.S. driver's license when applying.

Local

Those who don't have their own vehicles move about town using the local taxi service. Individuals can license cars or vans of all descriptions as taxis. Taxis cruise the road picking up passengers who hail them from the roadside. Riders are picked up until the car is full and then dropped at their various destinations. The fare schedule is simple, with downtown transfers costing 50 cents and longer rides costing \$1.50. Students and children pay only 25 cents, but, as a result, may be ignored as they wait for a ride. The ride may be hot and the car rickety and you may have to wait for a taxi to drive by, but the operators are honest, and the service proves to be convenient.

To find a nice public sandy beach where you can spend the day swimming and snorkeling, you must drive to Laura. The road is paved

and the drive is a pleasant one. It can take as much as an hour to drive the approximately 20 miles, but there is much to see along the way, as the scenery is beautiful. Laura is a small village, different from downtown Majuro, with more land and fewer inhabitants.

Chartered boat trips can be arranged and are a wonderful way to get away from the city. Just a few islands up the reef from Majuro you will find islands that are almost completely uninhabited. Perfectly clear warm water and beautiful sandy beaches are there to explore. Most island inhabitants welcome guests but you must ask first.

Travel to the other atolls in the Marshall Islands is by boat or plane. Air Marshall Islands (AMI) provides service to the 26 grass airstrips located on various other atolls. Travel within an atoll is by small, outboard boats, as the islands on an atoll are connected only by long sections of open reef. Arno, 12 miles away and the atoll closest to Majuro, is the only outer island accessible from Majuro by small boat in a single day. Because of the travel impediments and lack of any guest facilities, the most frequent foreign visitors to the outer islands are those on occasional sailboats passing through on cruises of the Pacific.

Regional

Both Majuro and Kwajalein Atolls have airports that accommodate large jet aircraft. Continental Micronesia provides jet service between Honolulu and Guam, via Majuro and Kwajalein. Aloha Airlines provides service between Honolulu and Kwajalein via Majuro.

Majuro has excellent shipping links to the West Coast of the U.S., Hawaii, Australia, Japan, the South Pacific, and to other parts of Micronesia. Regular shipping service is provided by PM&O Lines, Matson Navigation Company, NYK, and Forum Lines. Tiger Lines and Saipan Shipping provide transship-

ment facilities out of Guam and Saipan. The ports in Majuro and Ebeye provide containerized cargo handling, warehousing, and transshipment operations.

Communications

The Marshall Islands National Telecommunications Authority (NTA) provides telecommunications services for the Marshall Islands. NTA provides access to domestic and international telephone service, local cellular telephone service, and Internet services. Residential, one party line charge is \$12 per month with a one time \$35 connection fee. As in the U.S. you can subscribe to enhanced services such as Caller ID, Call Waiting, etc. Charges for these enhanced services are nominal.

Mobile cellular telephone service is \$25 a month with a one-time \$35 service connection. Users may avail of 60 free minutes of airtime allowed per month (not including long distance time) and \$0.10 per minute airtime charge after the first 60 minutes. Cellular phones are usually available for purchase on the island.

Internet service is costly compared to the U.S. NTA charges \$40 a month plus \$3 an hour of use. There is an initial \$15 installation fee.

Mail

The Marshall Islands is a U.S. domestic mail zone and receives international mail service through the U.S. Postal Service. Because of the close ties with the U.S. system Majuro has been assigned a two-digit state abbreviation which is MH. The ZIP Code for Majuro is 96960.

U.S. domestic rates apply to and from the U.S. Although the Marshall Islands issues its own stamps, the postal system in Majuro has accepted U.S. postage stamps on single pieces mailed to the U.S.

First-class letter mail arrives by air 610 days from the East Coast. Pack-

ages sent Priority Mail also arrive about the same time, or slightly longer. Non first class mail, including parcel post and magazines sent second class, arrive by ship within 2-4 months.

In Majuro mail is delivered only to a post office box. Outer island mail requires a first class stamp; parcels are charged as freight and delivered by local plane or ship.

Radio and TV

The Marshall Islands has two radio stations. V7AB, AM 1098, is run by the Ministry of Interior and Outer Islands Affairs, broadcasting news, announcements, the Nitijela meetings when the Nitijela is in session, and popular and Marshallese music. Some news and announcements are in both Marshallese and English. WSZF, FM 104, is run by the Baptist Church and broadcasts religious music and programs. Real time news can be heard on the hour on FM 104 from the BBC; however, the reception for the BBC is poor.

Cable TV is available in Majuro through Marshalls Broadcasting Company. Initial installation is \$30 with a monthly charge of \$29.99 for one TV and \$10 a month extra for each additional TV that is hooked up. For an additional \$10 a month a Philippine station can be accessed. There are about 11 stations in all. Real time news can be received on CNN, CNBC and BBC. At this time almost everything seen here is shown approximately two weeks after its U.S. showing. A TV schedule is not published but many shows are broadcast with some regularity so one is able to predict when some shows will be aired. Movies are shown both day and night and most are suitable for all audiences. There are many video stores on the island and the selections available are quite good.

Newspaper, Magazines, and Technical Journals

The Marshall Islands Journal is an independently published weekly newspaper and is the only printed source of local news. It is issued

every Thursday at a cost of 50 cents and provides coverage of local events in both Marshallese and English.

A few magazines and paperback books are available at local stores but the selection is poor, usually out of date, and the price is high.

The Majuro public library located in the Alele Museum building is small and limited. The College of the Marshall Islands makes its library available to anyone who would want to use it.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

Medical care in Majuro is not up to U.S. standards. The Majuro Hospital is staffed with doctors from many countries around the Pacific. There are no American doctors at this time at the Majuro Hospital. There is one private clinic operated by a doctor from the Philippines. The 177 Clinic is the medical facility serving those affected by the nuclear testing. At present, there is a doctor from the U.S. manning this facility. Although the 177 Clinic is there to serve this exclusive group of people, if scheduling permits you may be able to request an appointment with this doctor. The Youth to Youth in Health has a clinic in Majuro catering to the young community.

Obtaining medicine is often a problem. Many times the hospital is not able to stock an adequate supply, so they are frequently out of some of the most basic medicines. You cannot depend on being able to have a prescription filled here so bring regularly needed medications with you or make arrangements to have them sent from the U.S.

Routine laboratory work is available. More complicated tests are sent to Honolulu for evaluation.

Dental care is available for simple dental work, checkups, cleaning,

and x-ray but again, not up to U.S. standards. Majuro has no facilities for optical care. Bring spare eyeglasses, and sunglasses. Selections of contact lens solutions are limited.

Try to bring with you any medicine or medical supplies you anticipate needing on a regular basis. Simple things like bandages and antibiotic cream, aspirin, Motrin, Tylenol and cold medicines are usually obtainable from the two largest stores on the island. You cannot always count on finding your favorite brands so it would be a good idea to bring a small supply of your favorites to use until you find out if they are available here.

Community Health

Ebeye Island in Kwajalein Atoll, the second-largest population center in the Marshall Islands, has an expanding health center for its large population. All other outer island communities are served by 64 health centers staffed with modestly trained health assistants who utilize small dispensaries and are connected by marine high frequency radio to the main center in Majuro. Boats or planes evacuate medical emergencies from the outer islands to Majuro. In Majuro there is also a church based health clinic in Laura, a non-government operated clinic run by the Baptist Church and one run by Mission Pacific.

Common infectious and communicable diseases in the Marshall Islands include amoebiasis, conjunctivitis, diarrhea, gastroenteritis, gonorrhoea, influenza, leprosy, scabies, syphilis, and tuberculosis. Water supply, sanitation, personal hygiene and overcrowding are among factors related to the infectious and communicable diseases. Tests for HIV/AIDS in 1997-1999 found no positive cases. However, tests in 1996 detected one positive HIV case. With the increasing level of prostitution and the large number of foreign fishing boats calling at Majuro, the risk of HIV and AIDS being introduced to this area becomes more of a possibility each day.

The most prevalent noncommunicable disease in the Marshall Islands is diabetes, which is now a major health problem. Hypertension and heart disease are also on the increase. Poor eating habits, the consumption of large amounts of alcohol and tobacco, and the lack of exercise contribute heavily to these major health problems.

Preventive Measures

All should follow standard State Department immunization guidelines, including inoculation for Hepatitis A & B.

Sunburn is a problem year round. Everyone is urged to use sunscreen and wear sunglasses and protective clothing. Coral cuts are a common occurrence and no matter how small are slow to heal and susceptible to infection. Wounds should be cleaned, treated with antibiotic cream and kept bandaged until completely healed. Prevent cuts to feet by wearing shoes while in the water and out. Everyone is urged to drink plenty of fluid in order to stay hydrated.

Eating in major restaurants is safe. Be careful when eating at private or public events, because food is commonly not refrigerated properly and could be prepared in less than sanitary conditions. Most meats, fruits and vegetables are imported from the U.S., Australia and New Zealand and are safe. Local vegetables, pork, chicken and fish are also safe. Some reef fish contain toxins, and the varieties that are safe to eat vary from atoll to atoll. If you catch your own fish, check with a local fisherman to see if it is safe to eat. When purchasing products at any store be sure to check the expiration dates on the packages as it is common to find many that are still on the shelf long beyond their shelf life.

The normal tropical rodents and small lizards are present, but not in excess. Cockroaches and ants can become a problem. Flies and a few mosquitoes are a nuisance, but often the trade winds keep them away. The Majuro Water and Sewer

Company, which is government-owned, provides the water and sewer system in Majuro. The public water system relies primarily on a rainwater catchment system, which is located at the airport runway and in the wells in Laura. Public water is normally available three days a week for 14 hours per day. Individual homes must have their own catchment and storage tanks to provide round-the clock water.

A 1999 census reported that 61% of all households in the Marshall Islands used flush toilets and 25% used pit latrines or no toilet facilities at all. A great part of the population continues traditional customs, using the ocean and lagoon reefs for elimination and personal hygiene, contributing significantly to local pollution. Public garbage collection exists but unfortunately, vast amounts of trash are dumped oceanside or lagoonside by residents, creating, among other problems, unsightly pollution in many areas.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

- Jan. 1 New Year's Day
- Mar. 1 Memorial Day
- May 1 Constitution Day
- July
- (1st Fri) Fishermans' Day*
- Sept. 5 Labor Day
- Sept.
- (last Fri) Mani Day*
- Oct. 21 Independence Day
- Nov. 4 Thanksgiving Day
- Nov. 17 Presidents' Day
- Dec. 25 Christmas

*variable

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs & Duties

Travel to Majuro is via jet from Honolulu or Guam. Continental Micronesia arrives in Majuro from Honolulu on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. From Majuro the plane goes on to Kwajalein and then Guam with stops in Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Chunk. The plane returns to Honolulu from Guam on Monday, Wednesday and Friday with stops in Kwajalein and Majuro. Aloha Airlines flies from Honolulu to Majuro arriving in Majuro on Friday evenings. Aloha then flies on to Kwajalein and returns through Majuro on Saturday morning back to Honolulu.

Unaccompanied baggage takes about 3-4 weeks by air from the U.S. During peak passenger seasons, lack of freight space on incoming flights can cause delays. Surface shipments arrive in 2-3 months from the East Coast. Shipments are through Los Angeles or Honolulu from points east of the Marshall Islands. West of the Marshall Islands there are also good connections, with vessels coming from Guam, Manila, and Hong Kong.

Visas are not required for U.S. citizens. A valid passport, sufficient funds for a stay, and an onward/return ticket are required for stays up to 30 days (and may be extended for up to 90 days from the date of entry). A departure fee is required. A health certificate is required if arriving from infected areas. An AIDS test may be required for visits over 30 days. (U.S. test are accepted.) For further information on entry requirements for the Marshall Islands, please contact the Embassy of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, 2433 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008. The telephone number is (202) 234-5414. Also, please see the home page for the Embassy of the Marshall Islands at <http://www.rmiembassyus.org/>.

Americans living in or visiting the Marshall Islands are encouraged to register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Majuro. The U.S. Embassy does not have a street address in Majuro. The Embassy is located on the ocean-side of the island's road, near the Church of the Latter-Day Saints and Gibson's Express, "Long Island." The U.S. Embassy's mailing address is P.O. Box 1379, Majuro, MH 96960-1379. The telephone number is (692) 247-4011. The fax number is (692) 247-4012. The U.S. Embassy home page on the Internet is <http://www.usembassy.state.gov/majuro/>.

Pets

Importation of dogs and cats is allowed. However, there is a quarantine period for a minimum of 120 days. Animals are also required to have a health and rabies certificate, both for transiting Honolulu and to enter the Marshall Islands. Rabies is not present in RMI. Therefore, strict regulations must be followed. If pets are being sent unaccompanied, all airlines are obliged to deliver arriving dogs and cats to the Airport Animal Quarantine Holding Facility until their onward flight to the Marshall Islands. However, if the flight delay is over 24 hours (approximately), the pet(s) will be transported to the Animal Quarantine Branch facility in Aiea, Hawaii, where they will remain until their scheduled flight. (If the animal must be transported to the Aiea facility, there will be charges for this service to include a \$35 registration fee per animal. Additionally, one cannot pay by credit card or cash; a certified check must be sent to the facility prior to any boarding arrangements. If your pets will be detained in Hawaii, it is best to call the Animal Quarantine Branch for details: Tel: (808) 483-7145; Fax: (808) 4837161. The Marshall Islands have no kennels or veterinary services, so one must be prepared for any illnesses that their pet(s) may come down with.

The following requirements must be followed in importing pets into the country: A permit must be obtained

from the Department of Agriculture, Quarantine Section, which costs \$10. The permit is valid for one shipment only. A copy must accompany the shipment and be surrendered to a Quarantine Officer on duty upon arrival of shipment into the RMI. The importation of animals into the RMI requires presentation of an international animal health certificate, attesting that the animal(s): a) were examined within 48 hours of shipment, found to be in good health, and showed no sign of any infectious disease; b) have been effectively vaccinated against distemper, hepatitis, and canine Parvovirus at least 1 month and not more than 3 months before shipment; c) have been effectively treated against echinococcosis-hydatidosis, round, hook, and whipworms within 3 days of shipment; d) have been effectively treated against, and found on examination to be visibly free of, Ectoparasites within 3 days of shipment; e) showed no clinical sign of rabies on the day of shipment, and were kept from birth or for 6 months prior to shipment in the exporting country where no case of rabies was officially reported during the 2 years immediately preceding the importation of the animals concerned; f) have been vaccinated with an inactivated rabies virus more than 30 days prior to entry into the RMI; and g) for animals originating from a country where rabies occurs or is reported to occur or where rabies vaccination is routinely practiced, such animals must be confined for a period of not less than 120 days in an approved quarantine facility in a rabies-free area prior to entry to the RMI; or h) should meet the requirements of the State of Hawaii or the Territory of Guam.

Upon arrival in the RMI, imported animals shall immediately be taken under the control of a Quarantine Officer to the quarantine premises previously approved by the Chief of Agriculture where the animals shall remain until they are released by a Quarantine Officer.

Animals imported not in compliance with the permit requirements may be re-exported or destroyed upon arrival.

The quarantine Section of the Department of Agriculture can be contacted through the following: Tel: (692) 625-3206; Fax: (692) 625-3821; E-mail: rndadm@ntamar.com.

Firearms and Ammunition

Importation of firearms is officially prohibited. No opportunities for recreational firearm use exist in the Marshall Islands.

Currency, Banking, and Weights and Measures

The U.S. dollar is the official currency of the Marshall Islands. Credit cards are accepted at a few establishments. Travelers checks are acceptable, but ask before making purchases. Non-diplomatic passengers pay a US \$20 departure tax at the airport.

RECOMMENDED READING

The following titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country:

Carucci, Lawrence. *Nuclear Nativity: Rituals of Renewal and Empowerment*. Northern Illinois University, 1997.

Feeney, Thomas J. *Letters from Likiep*. S. J., D.D. Pandick Press: New York, 1952.

Hempensatall, Peter J. *Pacific Islanders Under German Rule*. Australian National University Press, 1978.

Hezel, Francis X. S.J. *The First Taint of Civilization*. University of Hawaii Press: Honolulu, 1983.

Hezel, Francis X. S.J. *Strangers in Their Own Land, Century of Colonial Rule*. University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1995.

Kluge, RE *The Edge of Paradise. America in Micronesia.* Random House: New York, 1991.

William Lay and Cyrus M. Hussey. *Mutiny on Board the Whaleship Globe.* Corinth Books: New York, 1963.

Micronesia: A Travel Survival Kit. Lonely Planet Publications: California, 1995.

Niedenthal, Jack. *For the Good of Mankind.* Micronitor Publishing 2001.

Oliver, Douglas. *The Pacific Islands.* University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1989.

Trumbull, Robert. *Tin Roofs and Palm Trees.* University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1977.

Weisgall, Jonathan M. *Operations Crossroads,* Naval Institute Press, 1994.

Internet Sites

Marshall Islands Visitors Authority
e-mail: tourism@ntamar.com

RMI Country Homepage:
www.rmiembassyus.org

Bikini Atoll Homepage:
www.bikini-atoll.com

Yokwe-Eok Marshallese Web site:
www.yokwe.com

Alele Museum: www.members.tri-pod.com/alelemuseum

PATA Micronesia:
www.patamicronesia.com

Robert Reimers Ent./Marshalls Dive Adventure: www.rreinc.com

Outrigger Marshall Islands Resort:
www.outrigger.com

Continental Micronesia:
www.flycontinental.com

Destination Micronesia Homepage:
www.destmic.com

Marshall Islands Stamp Center:
www.unicover.com/HPRLRMS.HT

MICRONESIA

Major City:

Kolonia

Other Cities:

Chuuk Atoll, Kosrae

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated March 1996. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

After forty years as a United Nations Trust Territory, the Federated States of Micronesia in 1986 emerged as a sovereign nation. The Embassy in Kolonia has the unusual opportunity of shaping this new diplomatic relationship and overseeing US Government activities across a broad expanse of the Pacific. The 607 islands that comprise the Federated States are among the most untouristed, unspoiled sites in the world.

MAJOR CITY

Kolonia

Kolonia, the capital of the state of Pohnpei, is a town of approximately

10,000 which occupies seven square miles at the northern end of Pohnpei Island.

Food

A basic selection of food is available, but high prices and very limited choices. Three fairly large supermarkets are operating in Kolonia along with a few small general stores whose food stocks vary with cargo ship arrival. The selection approximates that of a Seven-Eleven: basic canned goods, cleaning supplies, condiments, and some dairy products, frozen vegetables, and frozen meat and poultry. Locally baked bread is adequate and is supplemented by imported frozen loaves. Steak, hamburger, pork, and chicken are imported from the US, and while of lower quality than found in a normal supermarket, are fully acceptable if the purchaser takes care to inspect it for freezer burn or thawing/refreezing. Fresh tuna and small "reef fish" are for sale in the public market and mangrove crab is frequently offered. Some canned baby foods are available, but the selection is not large. The high humidity wilts crackers and cereals, although chips purchased in metal tins keep well.

Dairy supplies are improving. Imported butter and margarine are in good supply. Ice cream is very popular on Pohnpei, and the stores are careful to keep this in stock. No fresh milk is to be found, but there is an ample supply of California and

Australian ultra-high temperature (UHT) milk. A modest number of cheeses are in stock.

Kolonia has only a slim selection of fresh fruits and vegetables. Although Pohnpei is lush, cultivation of these crops is rare. Local agriculture revolves around yam, taro, banana and sakau cultivation (the popular local narcotic drink). Sweet potatoes, plantain, pineapple, and green onion can usually be found, while the only fresh green vegetables consistently available are cucumber, Chinese cabbage, bell pepper, and eggplant. Arrangements can also be made with local farmers and the Pohnpei Agricultural and Technical School (PATS) to provide fresh vegetables on a fairly regular basis.

Supply of soft drinks is very good, and Kolonia can boast a respectable variety of imported beers on the shelves. Wine is scarce and expensive, and is stored under inhospitable conditions.

The FSM permits import of fresh produce. Agriculture inspectors tend to admit without problem foods brought from the US mainland in the original packages, e.g. shrink-wrapped, plastic-packaged vegetables and meats. The traveler's assurance that the items originated in the US will usually suffice. Loose vegetables and fruits are usually confiscated. Meat and poultry



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Street in Kolonia, Micronesia

may be imported from the US mainland, Hawaii and Guam.

Clothing

Style of dress is very casual. Office attire for men is slacks, with a pull-over sport shirt or short-sleeve buttoned shirt. Women wear blouses and skirts or sun dresses. Micronesians consider exposure of women's thighs to be indecent, so short shorts and tight-fitting slacks should not be worn as everyday attire. Bermuda shorts are okay. Standards are changing, however, and expatriate women runners wear jogging shorts on the street without problems. Given the heat and humidity, we strongly recommend that personnel purchase light all-cotton clothing. Lightweight poplin pants and cool shorts are good purchases for casual wear. No dry cleaning nor professional laundry is available on island.

Footwear is also very casual, with sandals and plastic thongs the norm. Good cheap thick-soled

thongs can be purchased locally. Lightweight fabric and woven leather shoes are also good choices. The climate makes wearing of hosiery by women impractical.

Since there is little seasonal variation, the same type of attire may be worn year-round. Clothing supply in Kolonia is disappointing, and personnel should bring a full tropical wardrobe with them or plan on making purchases en route, in Honolulu or Manila. Colorful local embroidered skirts and a small but attractive selection of dresses from Bali are sold in local stores, so women will have better luck in local purchases than men.

Children's clothing can be bought locally, but prices are high and selection is poor.

Supplies and Services

Stocks vary from month to month with each arrival of a cargo ship. Store managers are not always consistent in their orders, and are not

inclined to maintain large inventories. Local stores sell sundries, cleaning supplies, and other household items, but the selection is very small and supply unpredictable. Prices for these items may be two to three times the US price.

A few pounds of boric acid will be an excellent investment in cockroach control. Pohnpei cockroaches have no immunity to insecticides, and any commercial spray will be effective. Mosquitoes are not a problem in Kolonia. Mosquito coils and netting (15-20 yards for two persons) will come in handy on trips to outlying islands.

Local dressmakers provide simple repairs and make curtains. Local laundromats are available but not a dry cleaning service. A few beauty shops are in operation.

Religious Activities

Catholic and Protestant services are held in English and Micronesian languages. Americans normally

attend either the Saturday evening English mass at the Catholic Mission or Sunday morning English nondenominational Protestant service. Individual Protestant denominations represented include Congregationalist, Baptist, Seventh Day Adventist, Jehovah's Witnesses, Assembly of God, and Mormon. The Mormon church is particularly well-represented in missionary activities. The Baha'i faith has a mission in Kolonia.

Education

The Seventh Day Adventist School offers kindergarten through high school instruction in English, and has well-kept facilities with US textbooks and US volunteer missionary instructors. Education is best in grades one through six; above that level, the school falls short of the facilities and faculty required to give students an American-equivalent education. Host country and expatriate children alike attend. Extracurricular activities, including sports, are a part of the program. Since places in the school are limited, it is advisable to contact the school in advance to reserve a spot. The Catholic Mission and the Baptist Church operate schools, and standards are said to be adequate. The public schools do not meet US standards. All dependent children currently at post are elementary school age or younger.

Special Educational Opportunities

Although Kolonia hosts the College of Micronesia-FSM, its facilities are poor and most classes are likely to be insufficiently rigorous for American students. The College also offers courses in Pohnpeian and Japanese. Programs for the handicapped are lacking.

Sports

Micronesia offers outstanding opportunities for divers and snorkelers. The marine life is unspoiled, and local dive shops give reasonable prices on equipment rental and air refills. Certification classes are offered only once or twice a year, so prospective divers should try to

become certified before arrival. Chuuk Lagoon, 425 miles to the west, is world-famous for its diving. More than 100 sunken planes, ships, and submarines are at the bottom of the lagoon, accessible to divers, the result of US Navy bombing raids in World War II. Tuna is abundant in waters off Kolonia, and game fish such as marlin and mahi-mahi are also to be found. Anglers should bring ocean rigs or handlines. Due to unpredictable, often slack winds, only a few sailboats are on the island.

Swimming in the warm, clear water is popular, but the absence of local beaches means that persons must take a boat out to the nearby reef.

For joggers Kolonia offers interesting terrain for early morning and evening runs. The heat of the day makes midday exertion difficult. A basketball league plays on Sundays in the winter months. Baseball is an island-wide passion, and volleyball is also very popular. There are two tennis courts on island, although the public courts are in considerable disrepair.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

The 800-year-old ruins of Nan Madol lie in the south of the island, amid a maze of man-made channels overhung with tropical foliage. The ruins are the remnants of the palace of the Saudeleurs, the ancient chiefs of Pohnpei, and is the island's most noteworthy site. Nan Madol is accessible only by boat. Kepirohi Falls, seventy feet high, is a beautiful sight with a fresh water pool at the base for swimming. Visitors take picnic lunches there and to Liduduhniap Falls, a short drive from Kolonia. Cross-island camping treks through the jungle-like interior are possible, led by guides. Never venture into the interior without a guide.

A favorite activity is spending the weekend on Black Coral or Hegs Island Villa (formerly Joy Island). These are tiny privately-owned islands just off Pohnpei's northern and southern coasts. For a small fee

per night, persons receive padded mats, kerosene lamp, and use of a covered wooden cottage. Cooking is by campfire. A small store on the island supplies some essentials, but visitors must bring food, beverages, and cookware. Six miles offshore is Ant Atoll, accurately described by a local writer as "the tropic isle of romantic novels." Permission can be obtained to camp on this palm-shaded island with its white sand beaches.

Entertainment

Kolonia has no movies, theaters, or concerts. A few well-stocked video rental stores are located in Kolonia, and this is the main form of entertainment.

Social Activities

Social life for travelers to Kolonia exists largely within the expatriate community, and consists of casual home dinners, Sunday brunch at the Village Hotel, and shared boating and atoll expeditions. For host-country nationals, socializing is primarily a family and clan event, and invitations to Americans are very rare. But a personable American will find that opportunities arise to become more familiar with the people and partake of generous Micronesian hospitality.

OTHER CITIES

CHUUK ATOLL is a collection of 15 large islands and 80 islets. The district center is on Weno, where visitors can experience island life and culture by browsing through the shop-lined streets. A lovely view of Weno and the lagoon can be seen from the Sapuk Lighthouse, built by the Japanese in the 1930s as a watchtower against the Americans. The abandoned houses of the lighthouse guards are still standing nearby.

Scuba divers wont want to miss a trip to the area, which includes the Truk Lagoon Underwater Fleet. More than 60 submerged vessels and several downed aircraft can be seen in this lagoon, which has

become known as the world's largest underwater museum.

Hiking enthusiasts will enjoy a number of trail locations. Tonachau Mountain Iras (229 meters) is believed to be the home of the god Souwoniras and his divine son. The area also contains the Wichon Men's Meeting House, where Weno chiefs are said to have met with Poomey, the eldest of the six brothers who were the first chiefs of Chuuk. The Wichon River and Falls include a bathing pool. Numerous petroglyphs are etched in the basalt above the falls. Nefo Cave is about 10 feet wide, 6 feet high and 78 feet long and contains a gun used by Japanese soldiers to guard entry to the north pass.

KOSRAE is a one of the least developed areas in the Federated States, and so offers a unique chance to enjoy the natural beauty and native culture of the area. The main island is about 42 sq miles with natural features including rainforest areas, a pristine coral reef, and a coast that includes sandy beaches and mangrove swamps. The Blue Hole in the Lelu harbor, traditionally used as a burial place for royalty, offers divers and snorkellers the chance to see coral heads, lionfish, stingrays and barracuda. Lelu Harbor also contains the remains of an American search plane, two Japanese boats and the remains of a whaling ship. Lelu Hill includes caves and tunnels used by the Japanese in WWII.

Hikers may enjoy Mt. Finkol, the highest peak in Kosrae (2,064 ft). The hike requires a guide and the hiker must be in good physical condition. The tour takes about seven to eight hours and offers a spectacular rainforest experience. The Mt. Oma hiking trails feature a wide variety of tropical fauna, flora and cascading waterfalls. Tours are offered for short hikes of about 45 minutes or longer trips of six or seven hours. The Menke Ruins hiking trails pass by the temple of the Goddess of Breadfruit, Sinlaku. Legends say that this is where she spent her last days before fleeing to

Yap, before the arrival of the missionaries in 1852. The story tells that Sinkalu saw a brilliant light coming over the horizon of the sea that frightened her, causing her to flee. The Christian missionaries arrived by ship the next morning. This story of the coming of "the light" was part of the early Christian conversion of the natives. A guided tour takes about two hours.

Two waterfalls worthy of note are the Sipyen and Saolong. Both offer bottom pools where swimming is allowed.

For the history minded, the Kosrae State Museum contains ancient artifacts and restored photos of Kosrae history and culture. The Lelu Ruins, the remains of the ancient capital city of the Kosrae rulers, include huge basaltic slabs arranged in 20 ft walls, and the remains of several street paths, living areas, and tombs.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The Federated States of Micronesia consists of four states, Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae, and covers a wide expanse in the Caroline Islands chain. FSM waters begin just north of the equator and stretch from 136°E to 166°E longitude. Palikir, the capital, is located on Pohnpei Island (previously known as "Ponape") in the Central Pacific at latitude 6° 54' N, longitude 158° 14' E. The post is 3106 miles from Honolulu, 2363 miles from Manila, and 1070 miles from Guam, the closest American territory.

"Micronesia" denotes "small islands," an apt description for the geography of the FSM. Although there are 607 islands within the one million square mile boundaries of the nation, total land area is a modest 270.8 square miles. Only 65 of the islands are inhabited. Pohnpei

Island, with 133 square miles of land area, is the largest island in the country and is the site of the U.S. Embassy. Geologically, Pohnpei readily shows its volcanic origins with many hills and cliffs, as well as striking basalt outcroppings such as Sokehs Rock at the entrance to Kolonia Harbor.

Pohnpei Island is lush and thickly forested with tropical foliage. Pohnpei is one of the wettest spots on earth, with an annual rainfall in Kolonia of 200 inches per year. The interior receives as much as 400 inches. January through March are the less rainy months, with steadier rain coming in the summer and fall. High winds may occur in the latter part of the year, but damaging tropical storms generally bypass Pohnpei. The temperature averages a pleasant 81 degrees year-round. Evenings are mild, in the low 70s, and daytime temperatures seldom exceed the upper 80s. Temperatures do not noticeably vary throughout the year. Humidity is high, averaging 89%, and causes rapid growth of mildew and mold in unair-conditioned environments. Air quality is excellent, free of pollutants. Some of the other islands of the FSM, such as Kosrae, are "high islands" like Pohnpei, characterized by hilly terrain and fertile soil. Many other islands are low-lying coral atolls a few feet above sea level covered with coconut palm and scrub vegetation.

As a tropical city, Kolonia has the expected complement of pests: ants, termites, roaches, and centipedes. All of these can be kept under control by regular cleaning and spraying. Geckoes populate the houses and provide a natural insect control service. The island has no venomous snakes, and is malaria-free and rabies-free. Wild deer live in the interior and are hunted by the local population.

Population

Estimated 2000 population of the Federated States is approximately 133,140. Pohnpei State has approx-

imately 34,976 inhabitants, 10,000 of whom reside in Kolonia.

Although most peoples of the FSM share a Micronesian heritage, languages and cultures differ among and within the different states. There are four major languages, Yapese, Chuukese, Pohnpeian, and Kosraean, all part of the Austronesian family. Eleven other languages and dialects are also spoken within the country, including two Polynesian languages. The many linguistic gaps are bridged by English, which is widely spoken and is the official language of the country.

The years of American administration have seen an influx of Western culture that has eroded the traditional cultures of the societies, although traditional leaders and cultural patterns still are influential, especially in the state of Yap. As a rule, the smaller "outer" islands away from the state capitals preserve traditional ways. Due to its scarcity, land is the ultimate denominator of social status in Micronesia. Parcels are passed down through the generations, thus reinforcing the importance of the family to Micronesian society. Social activity in Micronesia revolves around the family and the extended clan, to a degree difficult for outsiders to appreciate.

The Micronesian islands have been fertile fields for missionary activity, with the result that almost all FSM citizens are Christian. A full range of denominations is represented. Kolonia is served by Catholic, Protestant, Mormon, Jehovah's Witness, and Seventh-Day Adventist churches, as well as a Baha'i mission. Religion is an important part of the culture, and clergymen are well respected by the inhabitants.

The outside world had little contact with the islands until the mid-19th Century, when American whalers and missionaries entered the region. Spain claimed the Caroline and Mariana Islands in 1885 and retained them until 1899, when Germany purchased most of the island chains in the aftermath of

the Spanish-American War. Germany, in turn, lost its possessions to Japan in 1914 at the beginning of World War I. The League of Nations formally extended a mandate to Japan in 1920, thus confirming the Japanese conquest, and a new era of colonization. Intensive crop and copra production began, and the islands became exporters of many agricultural products. In 1945, control passed to the United States Navy, which administered the area until formation of the Trusteeship under UN auspices in 1947. The FSM, together with the Marshall Islands, Palau, and Northern Mariana Islands, comprised the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. On November 3, 1986, the Trusteeship era came to a close when the Trusteeship was terminated for the FSM and the Compact of Free Association came into effect. The FSM is now a fully self-governing, sovereign nation in Free Association with the United States.

Public Institutions

The terms of this relationship are contained in the Compact of Free Association, valid for 15 years. The Compact confirms the FSM's authority to manage its domestic affairs and conduct foreign affairs in its own right. The United States retains full authority and responsibility for security and defense issues. Other sections of the Compact outline governmental, legal, and economic relations between the two countries. The Compact is also in effect between the United States and the Republic of the Marshall Islands and as of October 1, 1994, between the United States and the Republic of Palau.

The Federated States governmental structure is modeled on the United States. The national government is headed by a President and Vice President; the President appoints cabinet members, who administer national affairs. The other two branches, Congress and the Supreme Court, function much as the American institutions, albeit with fewer personnel. The Congress is unicameral, and legislators serve

either two- or four-year terms. Two-year senators are elected from districts apportioned on the basis of population. Four-year senators are elected at large, one from each state. The President and Vice President are chosen from the ranks of the at-large senators by a majority vote of Congress. No political parties exist.

Each state is headed by a governor, elected for a four-year term, balanced by a state legislature and a state supreme court. Although this structure parallels the American system, the states have substantially more power than their American counterparts. Compact fund distribution reflects this: 87% of annual Compact assistance is earmarked for the states, the remainder to the national government.

Arts, Science, and Education

The FSM participates with other Micronesian nations and with US territories in the College of Micronesia. This is an umbrella organization which maintains individual institutions throughout the region. Kolonia is home to the College of Micronesia (COM-FSM). COM-FSM offers a two-year academic program leading to an Associate of Arts degree. The focus of its program is teacher training, but studies are offered in a number of other subjects. Outside of the formal educational structure, the FSM is host in any given year to several visiting researchers, particularly in the fields of anthropology, marine resources, and agriculture. Cultural and artistic institutions in the Western sense do not exist in Kolonia, although wood carving and choral singing are popular local forms of artistic expression.

Commerce and Industry

More than half of the population earns a livelihood from subsistence fishing and cultivation. Of those working within the monetized econ-

omy, 60% are employed by government. Palikir, as the national capital, has an even higher proportion of government employees, drawn from all four states. Micronesian technical and legal specialists are in short supply, so many professional positions are filled by American contract employees. One of the three Supreme Court Justices, the FSM Deputy Attorney General, and Pohnpei's Attorney General, for example, are United States citizens.

Estimated gross domestic product (GDP) was \$263 million in 1999, (per capita GDP = \$2,000).

The FSM is working to strengthen local production and exports in the Compact period. Currently, the business sector in the FSM is modest, and centers on small retail establishments selling imported goods. Potential for development of agricultural exports is good in the states of Kosrae and Pohnpei, which produce excellent citrus and world-renowned pepper, respectively. Yap and Chuuk have large fish transshipment facilities, and Chuuk and Pohnpei are exploring possibilities for canning plants. The untouched islands of the FSM are desirable tourist destinations, but this sector remains small in scale. The nation encompasses rich tuna fishing waters. Its multilateral fisheries pact with the U.S. and several bilateral fishing treaties provide a steady flow of tuna licensing fees.

The Compact of Free Association provides the Federated States with \$1.3 billion in US economic assistance over a 15-year period, in addition to a number of US federal programs and grants for which the FSM remains eligible. A \$20 million Investment Development Fund was also provided by the United States as a means of encouraging joint ventures. The national government has implemented an ambitious National Development Plan to enhance infrastructure and expand local production and social services.

Transportation

While taxis are available in Kolonia, a personal vehicle is essential. Twenty-five miles of road on the island are paved, thus daily driving presents few challenges. Outside of town, the roads are partially paved (21 miles). Most vehicles on island are Japanese. Reliable repair service is available.

Transportation between Kolonia and the other states and neighboring countries is by Continental Air Micronesia jet. Protestant Missionary Airlines runs weekly propeller flights to the nearby islands of Mokil and Pingelap. Travel to outer islands is also accomplished by government-owned "field trip" ships, which ply regular routes out of the state capitals.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

Telephones are available on Pohnpei Island. Connections with the United States are excellent and cost about \$2.50 - \$3.00 per minute (\$2.00 per minute on Sunday). AT&T calling cards are accepted in the FSM, but cost more than using the local service. Kolonia can be dialed directly from the United States, using the sequence 011-691-320- (local number). Telex communications are equally reliable, and are billed at about \$2.50 - \$3.00 per minute outgoing.

Radio and TV

A local AM and an FM radio station broadcast music and occasional news, primarily in Pohnpeian. A short-wave radio is needed to stay in touch with world affairs. Radio Australia comes in clearly, and Voice of America, Armed Forces Radio, and BBC are not hard to raise. Kolonia has a cable television company, which broadcasts copies of Los Angeles and San Francisco TV tapes with a one-week delay in addition to HBO, Disney Channel and VH-1 channels. They also broadcast CNN and ESPN live. Basic monthly rate is \$20.00 (\$10.00 extra for HBO or Disney). The broadcast system is

the same as the United States, so no special set is needed.

Newspapers, Magazines

The Guam Pacific Daily News is sold in one outlet; copies are received one to three days after publication date. No bookstores are found on island.

Health and Medicine

Medical facilities

Health care facilities in the FSM consist of hospitals on each of the four major islands and a few scattered clinics. These facilities sometimes lack basic supplies and medicines, and the quality of health care is variable. Doctors and hospitals may expect immediate cash payment for health services.

Community Health

While great improvements in the quality of the water supply were made from 1992-1994, individuals are cautioned not to drink the tap water. Local standards of community health are variable, and sanitation practices in stores and restaurants are in general far below American standards. Public health measures are few. Tuberculosis, leprosy, and venereal disease are common, but post personnel who have no intimate contact with the population have no cause for concern. There is no AIDS in Pohnpei, but two cases have been reported in other states of the FSM.

Preventive Measures

If you have no distiller, boil water for 10 minutes before drinking. Some Americans choose to take their chances with occasional gastrointestinal distress. No local milk is available, but there is a steady supply of potable ultra-high temperature (UHT) milk from California and Australia. Vegetables should be rinsed with treated water.

Travelers should have up-to-date immunizations. Since hepatitis B is endemic in the Pacific islands, some personnel have chosen to be vaccinated against this disease at their

own expense. This disease is transmitted solely by blood exchange and sexual contact; nonetheless, the possibility, however remote, of an emergency blood transfusion has prompted a few persons to seek out the vaccine. Gamma globulin shots are recommended. There are two pharmacies on island. The pharmacies can have refills shipped in. It is advisable that families bring a good supply of over-the-counter remedies, since local stores may fail to have even common items, or if available, sell them at high prices.

The island is free of malaria and rabies, as well as other insect-borne diseases. Pests encountered are seldom dangerous. Exceptions are venomous centipedes, which inflict painful stings, and jellyfish, which sometimes drift through local waters.

NOTE FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs & Duties

Proof of citizenship, sufficient funds, and onward/return ticket are required for tourist visits up to 30 days. Visits are extendible for up to 60 days total from the initial entry; this extension is sought after arrival in Micronesia. An entry permit may be needed for types of travel other than tourism; the necessary forms may be obtained from the airlines. There is a departure fee of five U.S. dollars. A health certificate may be required if the traveler is arriving from infected area. Travelers are advised to enter and leave the FSM on a valid U.S. passport. The U.S. Embassy in Kolonia does not issue passports; passports for persons living or traveling in the FSM are issued by the Honolulu Passport Agency. For more information about entry requirements of the Federated States of Micronesia, travelers may consult the Embassy of the Federated States of Micronesia, 1725 N Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20038, tel: (202) 223-4383 or via the Internet at <http://www.fsmembassy.org>. The Feder-

ated States of Micronesia also have consulates in Honolulu and Guam.

U.S. citizens living in or visiting the Federated States of Micronesia are encouraged to register at the U.S. Embassy in Kolonia, where they may also obtain updated information on travel and security within the country. The U.S. Embassy in Kolonia is located on Kasalehlie Street (the main downtown street). The mailing address is P.O. Box 1286, Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia 96941. The telephone number is (691) 320-2187. The fax number is (691) 320-2186.

Pets

The FSM permits imports of dogs and cats from the United States and other countries on the "rabies-free" list. For import of animals from other countries, write the mission for information. The dog or cat must have the following: certificate showing the animal's country of origin; certificate of rabies vaccination; certificate showing that the animal has been dipped for parasites within the past five days; certificate affirming that the animal is free from any signs of infectious or communicable disease.

If transiting Honolulu, the pet will have to be in quarantine for the stopover. Pet-owners should avoid Guam, which also quarantines pets, but which has no facilities or procedures for caring for them. Contact the airline for information on procedures and fees. Other animals may enter only upon issuance of a quarantine permit.

As of early 1995, two veterinarians reside in the FSM. Services, including spaying, can be performed. Owners should bring flea collars, worm medicine, vaccine if needed, and any other desired accessories.

Currency, Banking and Weights and Measures

The national currency is the US dollar. Kolonia has branches of the Bank of Hawaii and Bank of Guam. Weights and measures follow the American system.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan. 1 New Year's Day
 Mar/Apr. Good Friday*
 Mar/Apr. Easter*
 May 10 Constitution Day
 July 12 Micronesia Day
 Oct. 24 United Nations' Day
 Nov. 4 Independence Day
 Dec. 25 Christmas
 *variable

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MONGOLIA

Major City:

Ulaanbaatar

Other Cities:

Choybalsan, Darhan, Erdenet, Hovd, Shbaatar

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated June 1994. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

Genghis Khan's warriors galloped out of Mongolia's fertile grasslands and windswept deserts to sack both Peking and Moscow. But the far-flung empire they built crumbled, and Manchu overlords tamed the once ruthless horsemen by fostering Buddhist Lamaism. Half of Mongolia's males were monks when a Russian-aided revolution overthrew Chinese rule in 1921.

Today only two monasteries remain in operation. Other changes profoundly alter the nation's ways. Growing industry calls former herdsmen to new skills ranging from flour milling to movie making. In the developing nation, Russia and China vie for influence. But

most Mongols still wander north of the sandy Gobi with their herds of sheep, cattle, camels, and goats. They sleep in felt-covered tents, drink fermented mare's milk, and hold 30-mile cross-country horse races.

MAJOR CITY

Ulaanbaatar

Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia, is located in north-central Mongolia, some 420 miles (675 kilometers) from the Chinese border at Erlian (by train), and 180 miles (290 km) from the Russian border at Ulan Ude. Its altitude and continental location make Ulaanbaatar the world's coldest capital city.

Ulaanbaatar ("Red Hero") has been so named since the Socialist revolution in 1921. It was formerly called Urga and Ikh Huroo ("Big Circle") when it was the center of the government of its last non-Communist ruler, the living Buddha Bogda Khan. Of the many monasteries extant in 1920, only one remained open during the Communist period.

The present city of some 666,000 inhabitants is typified by wide streets, large, concrete government

structures, movie theaters, cultural facilities, and apartment buildings. The focal point of Ulaanbaatar is Sukhbaatar Square, which is surrounded by Government House, art shops, the new stock exchange, the central Post Office, and two cultural halls, as well as Ulaanbaatar's main thoroughfare, Enkh Taivan Gudumj (Peace Avenue). The Hotel Ulaanbaatar and the Ministry of Foreign Relations are close by. Sukhbaatar Square is dominated by a statue of this Socialist Revolutionary hero, who is buried in a tomb modeled on Lenin's Tomb in Moscow's Red Square. It is a popular place for wedding photos, and easily accommodates 100,000 people.

To the north and south lies the Bogda Khan mountain range, which is trisected in Ulaanbaatar by the Tuul and Selbe Rivers. Train travelers from Russia will pass through the valleys of the Selenge, which ends in Lake Baikal, and Orhon Rivers, passing through rolling steppe country, covered by wild flowers in the early summer, and larch trees in the valleys and hollows. Those traveling on to China by train will soon enter the Gobi Desert, a predominantly flat steppe of scrubby grassland and roving sheep and camel herds.

An average of 236 days of the year are sunny—blue skies and sunshine



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Gandan Monastery in Ulaanbaatar

make even the coldest temperatures seem pleasant.

Utilities

Severe fuel shortages and problems with central heating and electrical systems may cause seriously reduced heating levels and power outages in Ulaanbaatar and the cities of Darham and Erdenet during the winter months of November through April. Smaller towns in the countryside may have no heat or electricity at all during these months.

Food

Food supplies, such as imported canned goods, eggs, and meat can be purchased in local dollar stores on an irregular basis but are expensive. Local supplies of other food stuffs are limited.

Shipped foodstuffs available have included oranges, apples, bananas, grapes, potatoes, sweet potatoes,

eggplant, cabbage, carrots, tomatoes, onions, garlic, green beans, bell peppers, cucumbers, and watermelon.

Meat is available at the butcher shop at the Bayangol Hotel in downtown Ulaanbaatar.

Clothing

Because temperatures in Mongolia range from summertime highs of 90°F to wintertime lows of -30°F to -40°F, a wide range of clothing is necessary. Winter clothing needs are especially critical in order to avoid hypothermia. Every family member needs a warm coat, a warm hat, heavy gloves or mittens, a scarf, and boots. Fur coats, leather hats, cashmere sweaters and gloves, camel hair sweaters, cashmere scarves, and sheepskin lined boots are sometimes available in Ulaanbaatar. Quality varies. Summer rains warrant boots, umbrella, and a waterproof coat. Heavy snow is

uncommon in the city, but for trips to the countryside, arctic boots, moon boots, or “pacs” are highly desirable. Thermal underwear, sweaters, a down vest, down booties, wool socks, silk underwear, and wool socks should be brought. If traveling to Ulaanbaatar in the late summer, include some of these items in your airfreight.

A heavy wool topcoat or dress parka for winter and a lighter topcoat for spring and fall are desirable. Warm gloves, boots, and sweaters are essential. Some buildings are uncomfortably warm in winter, while others are barely warm. During unheated months, cold temperatures may still be a problem. Sweaters, vests, and lightweight long underwear that can be worn under daytime wear are all useful.

Plan on wearing the same clothing you would in Washington, D.C. Good shoes and nylons under skirts,

dresses, and suits are common. Although Mongolians tend to be formal dressers, a certain relaxation in styles is occurring in Ulaanbaatar. Slacks are increasingly common. Wool clothing for the winter, and cotton clothing for the summer are worn. A warm, fairly dressy overcoat (down or fur) and wool overcoat are sufficient for nonsummer seasons. Washable woolens and silks are recommended.

Bring clothing for outdoor activities, warm boots, thermal socks, warm gloves or mittens, and thermal underwear. For summer, bring sportswear and a bathing suit.

Bring warm, washable, sturdy playclothes. Zippered snowsuits, arctic boots, mittens, waterproof mitten covers, face masks, thermal underwear, warm socks, underwear, scarves, hats, rain boots, tennis shoes, warm slippers, sweaters, and waterproof pants are recommended. Bring warm pajamas and a robe. Summer clothing should include jeans, shorts, and extra sneakers. Babies also need winter clothing. It is difficult to purchase quality clothing for children in Ulaanbaatar.

Supplies and Services

Since nearly everything is unavailable in Ulaanbaatar, you should plan on bringing all products you normally use, such as toiletries, cosmetics, prescription drugs and medicines, paper products, and household and kitchen cleaning supplies. Bring a large supply of hand/face lotion, sunscreen, and lip balm. Detergent, dish soap, and bar soap made in China are usually available in dollar shops, but may not be acceptable by U.S. standards. Bring a large supply of items that can be given as gifts, as there are a great number of adult birthday exchanges, and gifts are freely exchanged at New Year's.

Local dry-cleaning facilities are inadequate for valuable items. Dry-cleaning may be taken to Beijing.

Men and women use the local hairdressers and barbers. Patrons provide their own hair care products.

The two operating hotels and the Cultural Palace have public restaurants. Privately owned restaurants are also in business. A restaurant offers cultural programs of folk singing, dancing, and music on a monthly schedule. Two of the restaurants will cater events both on and off their premises.

Religious Activities

There are a number of Buddhist monasteries, and informal Christian services are held weekly.

Education

Several foreign schools are now operating in Ulaanbaatar. A new International School opened in September 1992 with grades kindergarten through grade 3. The school plans to add a grade each year.

Sports

No sports facilities are available for unlimited use by post personnel. There are three tennis courts operated by the Mongolian Government, but they have not been used, except by special invitation. The Sports Hall has a Universal Machine and the Lenin/St. Petersburg Club has weights. Several pools are available in Ulaanbaatar.

Members of the international community sometimes organize hikes, fishing trips, and picnics on an ad hoc basis.

Horseback riding is possible for members of the Mongol Horse Society (membership fee is approximately \$10 a year). Some American students attending the university in Ulaanbaatar have joined a swimming club at an indoor pool.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

During the warmer months (May to October), tours may be taken to other parts of Mongolia. These trips are usually arranged through Zhuulchin, the Mongolian tourist bureau. A trip to the Gobi costs about \$200 round trip for transportation and about \$180 for a night's stay in a ger. Each ger will accommodate 1 to 3 people. A trip to the

tourist camp outside Ulaanbaatar, Terelj, costs \$100 for the hotel per person. By special request, Zhuulchin will attempt to make the 160 km round trip to Terelj and back in 1 day.

Ulaanbaatar offers a variety of museums and sites that may be visited. These include the Gandan monastery, Bogda Khan palace, the winter residence of Mongolia's last khan, the Central Museum with its dusty but outstanding collections of dinosaur bones, and the Fine Arts Museum, in which exquisite panel embroideries are on display.

Weekends are nice for trips to the country, where you can walk, climb rocks, birdwatch, fish (a license is necessary), picnic, and enjoy the fresh air. With proper clothing, outdoor activities can be enjoyed all year. The country has nearly limitless areas for camping. In summer months, it is wise to wear long pants to avoid flea bites. Fleas that infest the Mongolian marmot are known to carry bubonic plague.

Excellent cross country skiing and sledding are possible about 20 km from Ulaanbaatar. Because of the dryness and extreme cold, there is not much snowfall in the vicinity of the capital. Fishing, kayaking, and boating (small rubber boats only) may be done on the Tuul River near Ulaanbaatar.

Big game hunting is available in Mongolia, but it must be arranged through Zhuulchin Tours and is expensive.

Photographers find the extraordinary light and exquisite scenery make Mongolia an excellent place to enjoy their hobby. Color film is available locally, but is quite expensive.

Entertainment

Excellent ballet, opera, and symphonic programs are presented in Ulaanbaatar, both by local companies and by visiting performers. The folk song and dance troupe performs three times a week. The Mongolian Circus has a permanent venue



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View of Ulaanbaatar Mongolia

where visiting circuses may be seen. Tickets are inexpensive and easy to obtain. One of the local restaurants offers cultural programs on a monthly schedule.

Movie theaters show films dubbed in Mongolian. TV programming has been in Mongolian and Russian; some English programming may also be available, as USIA has installed a World Net link at the TV station.

Social Activities

Social life is generally casual, with most informal entertaining done at home. Picnics and holiday activities are popular.

An International Club, established in 1991, occasionally sponsors activities. Visitors to Ulaanbaatar are able to attend functions on a temporary basis. An International Women's Club was established in May 1992. It meets the first Tuesday of each month.

Special Information

While tugriks are used for some transactions, hard currency may be used in most shops and in the Sunday market. Hard currency may be hard to come by, however, so travelers should bring cash and coins to Post. American Express or Barclays' Travelers Checks can be cashed at the Central Bank. Although banks, restaurants, and hotels will accept travelers checks and sometimes Diners Club and Amex credit cards, you will not be able to obtain a cash advance against a credit card. Currency can be exchanged by cashing travelers checks at the bank or at the dollar shops using the "parallel exchange rate." U.S. dollars may be transferred to a personal account at the Central Bank of Mongolia through its associated bank, American Express Bank, or through Chase Manhattan Bank in New York.

OTHER CITIES

Located approximately 390 miles (625 km) east of Ulan Bator, **CHOYBALSAN** is one of Mongolia's major industrial cities. Choybalsan, known as Sainbeisn Hree until 1923, was once an important religious center. The city also benefited greatly from its location on Mongolia's main trading route with Manchuria, Siberia, and China and quickly became a major trading center. The town was renamed Bayan Tmen in 1923 and given its present name in the early 1940s in honor of revolutionary war hero, Horloyn Choybalsan. The city has roughly 39,000 residents. Today, Choybalsan is eastern Mongolia's leading industrial center, producing about 50% of the region's gross industrial output. The city has a diverse industrial base that includes a flour mill, a meat-packing plant, and a wool-scouring mill. Other factories in the city produce foodstuffs, building

materials, and carpets. A coal mine near Choybalsan produces nearly 600,000 tons of coal a year. Most of this is consumed by the city's large electric power plant. Choybalsan is easily accessible by a major east-west highway which links the city with Ulan Bator and the western city of Hovd. An eastern branch of the Ulan Bator Railway links Choybalsan with Borzya, Russia.

The city of **DARHAN** (also spelled Darkhan), located 136 miles (219 km) northwest of Ulan Bator, is Mongolia's second largest city. Darhan is situated in a valley near the Hor Gol River and is nearly surrounded by mountains. The average mean temperature in Darhan is approximately 28°F (-2°C). In 2000, Darhan had a population of 90,000. Darhan is a relatively new city, financed and constructed in 1961 by the former Soviet Union and several Eastern European nations. The city quickly became a major industrial center specializing in the production of construction materials such as reinforced concrete, bricks, synthetic fibers, and wood and steel products. Other factories in Darhan produce consumer goods, carpets, foodstuffs, clothing, sheepskin, and textiles. The city's industries remain productive due to the ample reserves of coal, marble, limestone, sand, and clay located near Darhan. A huge power plant, fueled by coal from the Sharin coal mine, provides energy for the city's industries. In addition to industry, Darhan is the site of an important science institute. This institute, the Research Institute of Plant Growing and Land Cultivation, is dedicated to the improvement of agricultural production and farming techniques in northern regions of Mongolia. Cultural entertainment in the city is provided by the Darhan Music and Drama Theater.

ERDENET, with an estimated population of 58,200 (2000) is located in a mountain valley 230 miles (371 km) northwest of Ulan Bator. The city was founded in 1976 following the construction of a huge copper-molybdenum processing plant. This plant, funded by both the former

Soviet Union and Mongolia, is the largest of its kind in Asia and produces 90% of Mongolia's total mining output. In addition to copper and molybdenum processing, several factories manufacture carpets, foodstuffs, and processed timber. Erdenet is connected via railway with Ulan Bator and is also accessible by air and a paved highway.

With a population of roughly 27,900 (1999 est.), **HOVD** is the major economic center of western Mongolia. The city is located on the Buyant River and is nearly surrounded by the Mongolian Altai Mountains. The origins of the city date back to the early 1800s when Hovd served as a strategic outpost for Mongolia's Manchu rulers. Merchants, eager to trade with the Manchu, soon arrived in the city. Over a span of one hundred years, Hovd developed into a thriving trading center for agricultural products, butter, and wool. These products are still actively traded today. During the twentieth century, several factories were built in Hovd. These industries include a woodworking factory, a food processing plant, and a wool-scouring mill. An agricultural college is located in Hovd and, in the past, the school has hosted international geological expeditions. One of Hovd's major attractions is the Local History Museum, which provides exhibits illustrating the ethnic groups and natural resources of Mongolia's western region.

The small city of **SHBAATAR** (also spelled Schbaatar or Skhbaatar), located near Mongolia's northern border with Russia, is 160 miles (258 km) north-northwest of Ulan Bator. Named for revolutionary war hero, Damdiny Sukhbaatar, Shbaatar is home to several small industries. These industries produce distilled beverages, matches, flour, and building materials. The Ulan Bator Railway connects Shbaatar with Ulan Bator and Naushki, Russia. In 1999, Shbaatar had 22,900 residents. A more recent population figure is unavailable.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Mongolia, a large, sparsely populated country located between China and Russia, has an area of just over 600,000 square miles—slightly smaller than the combined area of Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, and Louisiana. The capital, Ulaanbaatar, is over 4,000 feet above sea level. Because of the elevation and distance from any ocean or sea, Mongolia has a continental climate. Marked seasonal, even daily, changes in temperature, numerous high pressure systems, and severe cold occur during much of the year.

The country is divided into three basic zones: the Gobi, a vast, dry grassland in the east and south; the low Hangai mountains of the north; and the high Altai mountains of the west and northwest. Mongolia's largest lake is in Hovsgol Aimag, in the Altai, where elevations range up to 15,000 feet. There are three major river systems: the Tuul, which runs through Ulaanbaatar; the Orhon, into which the Tuul flows and which, in turn, flows into Lake Baikal; and the Selenge, in the northeast.

Population

One-fourth or more of Mongolia's roughly 2.7 million people live in the capital city—many in "ger tent settlements" around the outskirts of Ulaanbaatar. Other cities are Erdenet, the site of a large copper mine, and Darhan. Both cities are north of Ulaanbaatar and served by the rail line that runs from Beijing to Moscow through Mongolia.

About 33% of the population is under the age of 15. The literacy rate is high, but unemployment has become a problem, particularly for young men.

Most Mongolians living in Mongolia belong to the Khalka Mongol ethnic

group. A number of smaller, Mongol ethnic groups reside in scattered areas of Mongolia. About 3 million other Mongols, primarily of the Chahar ethnic group, reside in the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region of China. Buryat Mongols live in north Mongolia and in the Buryat Autonomous Region of Russia, east of Lake Baikal. Another Mongol ethnic group resides in the Kalmyk Autonomous Republic of Russia. Kazaks make up about 6% of the population and live mainly in the far west.

Public Institutions

Mongolia has 18 "aimags" (provinces) and three autonomous cities (Ulaanbaatar, Erdenet, and Darhan).

A new constitution, signed in February 1992, provided for a reorganization of the local government structure.

The primary legislative body, the State Great Hural, was elected in June 1992. A unicameral body, it has 76 members elected by secret ballot of the citizens for 4-year terms. The Hural will enact, amend, and supervise the implementation of laws; determine fiscal policies; set dates for elections of the Hural and the President; appoint the Prime Minister and other officials; and engage in other activities.

The President, subject to direct election for a maximum of two 4-year terms, is the head of State. He has veto power over legislation; he can propose, in consultation with the majority party or parties, names for Prime Minister; he can propose dissolution of the government, or instruct the government and issue decrees, which must be signed by the Prime Minister; he represents Mongolia in foreign relations, may enter into treaties subject to ratification by the Hural; he may propose legislation; and he serves as commander-in-chief and heads the National Security Council.

The State Great Hural appoints the Prime Minister who heads the gov-

ernment. If the Prime Minister resigns, the government is dissolved.

Independent judges are nominated by a General Council and confirmed by the President, and, in the case of Supreme Court judges, the State Great Hural. There are specialized courts for criminal, civil, and administrative matters, which are not subject to Supreme Court review. The Supreme Court does have power to act as court of first instance for certain criminal and other actions, examine lower court decisions by appeal, examine questions transferred to it by the Constitutional Court or Prosecutor General, provide official interpretations of all laws, except the Constitution, and make judgments on other matters assigned by law. Trials are open, in the Mongolian language, and with right to counsel.

The Constitutional Court's members are appointed by the State Great Hural for 6-year terms. The nine members are nominated by the Hural (3), the President (3), and the Supreme Court (3). The Court interprets the Constitution, acting upon the request of the President, Prime Minister, Hural, Supreme Court, Prosecutor General, or on its own motion. In addition to reviewing the conformity of treaties and legislative acts with the Constitution, the Court may invalidate any that are not in conformity with the Constitution. It may also examine breaches of law by the President, Prime Minister or other Minister, the Prosecutor General, and members of the State Great Hural or Supreme Court.

Aimags each have local legislative hurals in 4-year terms. Each aimag enjoys some rights of self-government. Governors for aimags and Ulaanbaatar City will be appointed by the Prime Minister, and will, in turn, appoint governors of the "soums" (subunits of the aimags, roughly equivalent to counties), and various districts of Ulaanbaatar. Local hurals will legislate local issues.

The new constitution was the outgrowth of earlier events. In the first half of 1990, Mongolian citizens held mass demonstrations in the capital, demanding an end to 70 years of Communist rule and the Socialist system. The government acquiesced, and the first free elections were held in July 1990. Although the Communist Mongolian Peoples' Revolutionary Party (MPRP) won the majority of seats in the national legislature, the reform movement gathered strength. Together with the MPRP, it formed a unity government, which undertook political and economic reforms, culminating in the new constitution described above. In February 1992 to symbolize the changes, the star at the top of the Mongolian flag was removed, and the state seal was changed to a modernist flying horse design.

Mongolia now claims 13 political parties, including the Mongolian Democratic Party, the Social Democrats, the Party of National Progress, the Free Labor Party, and the Green Party, as well as the MPRP.

Arts, Science, and Education

Eight years of education are compulsory, although dropout rates have recently increased. The literacy rate is about 97%.

In addition to the schools operated by the state, private schools are now permitted. In 1991, seven graduate institutes, one trade school, and one technical school began holding classes.

Commerce and Industry

Formerly, most supplies for Mongolian industry were obtained from the various republics of the former U.S.S.R. and members of COMECON. Following the cataclysmic changes in the U.S.S.R. and Mongolia, the quantity and diversity of many supplies, particularly explo-

sives, petroleum and petroleum products, wheat and other food-stuffs, have been insufficient.

Mongolia's own industries include production of cashmere, skins and leathers, furs and animal hair, coal, copper and minerals, and other raw materials.

Natural resources include coal, copper, molybdenum, iron, phosphates, tin, nickel, zinc, wolfram, fluor spar, gold, and uranium. Joint ventures with Western companies in oil exploration and gold mining are under negotiation.

The growing season for this high, dry, northern country is quite short, but wheat, oats, barley, fodder, and some vegetables are grown. The principal industry, however, is livestock production, in which about 45% of the population is engaged.

One major problem Mongolia faces in expanding trade ties with foreign countries is the shortage of bulk transport facilities. One railroad line traverses the country, having a broad Russian gauge track, which necessitates the substitution of wheels at the Chinese border. This rail route allows for shipments to Tianjin, China, in one direction, and to Moscow or Vladivostok in the other. Both Russian and Chinese rail lines are subject to lengthy delays in shipment. International air routes are via Beijing and Moscow, but the amount of freight that may be forwarded by this method is limited by space and high shipment costs.

Mongolia is actively seeking trading partners in the West and receives aid through a group of donor countries known as the Mongolian Assistance Group. A stock exchange recently opened in Ulaanbaatar, and privatization of publicly held companies and the establishment of private businesses should improve Mongolia's prospects for earnings over the middle term.

Transportation

Local

Ulaanbaatar and its environs are served by buses and trolleys. Prices are low, but the buses are generally very crowded and pickpockets are a problem.

Driving in the capital city of Ulaanbaatar can be extremely difficult due to poorly maintained streets, malfunctioning traffic lights, inadequate street lighting, and a shortage of traffic signs. There has been a dramatic increase in the number of vehicles on the road in recent years, but the knowledge and skills of the driving population has not kept pace with the influx of automobiles. There are few taxis in town and there is no regulation of the industry. Most people simply wave down a vehicle and negotiate a price with the driver. There are no car rental companies currently operating in Mongolia, but it is sometimes possible to hire a car and driver. A small donation (US\$1-US\$2) to the driver is expected.

There are few paved roads outside of the capital and driving can be hazardous, particularly after dark.

Regional

Transportation to other cities is by train for communities that abut the tracks, or by air and long-distance bus. Occasionally, you can rent automobiles.

Road conditions in Mongolia vary greatly. One major highway is predominantly paved, but the narrow road has no lane markings. Other roads are dirt. In most rural locations, there are no roads, but tracks across country. Rain makes many routes impassable.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

Telephone service in Ulaanbaatar is fair. Busy lines and crossed lines are common, and phones may ring when no one is calling. A call may be made to any location within Ulaanbaatar at no charge. An account

must be established to book calls outside of Ulaanbaatar.

Phones for international calls are available at the Central Post Office and at the Ulaanbaatar Hotel. Delays of 2-12 hours are common in completing international phone calls. Improved international service occurred in late 1993. The country code for Mongolia is 976 and the city code for Ulaanbaatar is 1. Direct dial to the U.S. is available from some phones, but is still difficult.

Radio and TV

BBC, VOA, and Radio Moscow programming are somewhat available, although reception can be affected by weather and sunspot activity. Local programming is in Mongolian and Russian, but some English-language programming is offered occasionally. Mongolian TV programming is SECAM.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

An English-language newsletter, the *Mongol Messenger*, is published weekly. It has news of ongoing events, cultural opportunities, and interviews with Mongolian officials. No international English-language newspapers and periodicals are currently available locally.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

Local hospital facilities may be used for a fee, but often the most basic medicines, equipment, and supplies are unavailable, and sanitation standards do not meet U.S. specifications. The U.S. Embassy recommends that health problems be treated outside Mongolia—either in Beijing or Hong Kong.

Community Health

No unusual health problems or hazards exist. Tap-water may be rusty and is boiled and filtered for drinking and cooking, but dishes may be washed without ill effect. In warm months, flies and mosquitoes are a nuisance. Avoid flea bites in the

summer by wearing long pants and socks in the country (fleas may carry plague germs). The German Embassy maintains a list of blood donors from the international official community.

Preventive Measures

Rabies, hepatitis B, gamma globulin, typhoid, tetanus, and Japanese B encephalitis immunizations are recommended. Boil water for 10 minutes and filter before drinking or cooking.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs & Duties

Most Americans visiting Ulaanbaatar travel through China and on to Ulaanbaatar by train or airplane. It is possible, but not recommended, to travel via Moscow. A short stay in Beijing is recommended, to allow for a break, especially important for train travelers, who face another 40 or more hours in transit before arriving in Ulaanbaatar. Winter train travelers should carry warm clothes, a cup and spoon and instant soup mixes, and one or more good books to enjoy on the train. A "mini booklight" is also a good idea. Five flights are offered between Beijing and Ulaanbaatar each week by Mongolian Airlines (MIAT) and Air China (CAAC). Flight time is about 2 hours.

Bring warm clothing with you. Snowflakes have been seen in the air, even in July. Airfreight from the U.S. can take up to 4 months to arrive due to limited space on flights from Beijing.

A valid passport and entry/exit visa are required. While it is recommended that visitors obtain the appropriate entry/exit visa prior to travel, visas may be obtained at the international airport in Ulaanbaatar and at train stations on the Russian and Chinese borders. Two photographs and a US\$50 processing fee are required. Visitors planning to stay in Mongolia for more

than 30 days are required to register with the police at the Citizens' Information and Registration Center. Visitors who stay longer than the time permitted by their visa may be stopped at departure, denied exit, and fined. A departure tax must be paid at the airport on departure. For current information on visa issuance, fees, and registration requirements, travelers should contact the Embassy of Mongolia at 2833 M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20007, telephone: (202) 333-7117 or <http://www.MongoliaNet.com>.

Travelers arriving or departing Mongolia through China should also be aware of Chinese visa regulations. American citizens are not permitted to transit through China without a visa. For more information, see the Consular Information Sheet for China or contact the Embassy of the People's Republic of China, 2300 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008, Tel: (202) 328-2500 or <http://www.china-embassy.org> or the Chinese consulates general in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, New York City, and Houston.

U.S. citizens residing in or visiting Mongolia are encouraged to register with the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy, located in Micro Region 11, Big Ring Road, Ulaanbaatar, and to obtain updated information on travel and security within Mongolia. The telephone number is (976)-1-329-095, and the Embassy web site is <http://www.us-mongolia.com>.

Pets

No quarantine period is required for cats and dogs in Mongolia. Bring a health certificate and proof of vaccinations. If the pet weighs less than 16 pounds, including carrier, it may be brought into the passenger compartment on most flights. Pets are not accepted for baggage compartment travel on flights from Beijing to Ulaanbaatar. Arrangements must be made for the Beijing tran-

sit, since pets are not allowed in Chinese hotels.

Neither adequate veterinary service nor pet food is available in Ulaanbaatar. Bring all grooming aids and a supply of commonly used animal medicines. There is a Department of Health where a health certificate may be obtained upon departure for reentry into the U.S.

Be cautious about taking your dog into the countryside. Local fleas may carry bubonic plague.

Currency, Banking and Weights and Measures

The local currency is the Mongolian tugrik. There are two exchange rates, the "official" rate, used by diplomatic missions and foreign businesses, and the "parallel" rate, used by individuals. The parallel rate is more favorable. U.S. dollars are generally accepted in most hotels and restaurants in Ulaanbaatar and other major tourist locations, despite an existing law that requires all commercial transactions to be conducted in tugriks. Some places even refuse to accept tugriks. Travelers may find it useful to carry some cash in tugriks, and visitors to areas outside of Ulaanbaatar should certainly do so. Traveler's checks denominated in dollars are accepted at some hotels and may be converted to dollars or Tugriks at several banks. Credit cards can be used at a variety of hotels, restaurants, and shops, almost exclusively in Ulaanbaatar. Cash advances against credit cards are available at one commercial bank, and international bank wire transfers are also possible.

Banking services are available at the State Bank of Mongolia and at the Trade and Development Bank. Individuals may open foreign currency or tugrik accounts. Exchanges from tugriks to dollars may be limited by frequent shortages of hard currency.

Mongolia uses the metric system.

The U.S. Embassy is located in Micro Region 11, Big Ring Road,

Ulaanbaatar. The telephone numbers is (976-1) 329-095. Americans who register at the U.S. Embassy may obtain updated information on travel, security, and health problems within the country.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan. 1	New Year's Day
Feb.	Tsagaan Sar (Lunar New Year)*
Mar. 1	Women's Day
Mar. 18	Men's Day
Mar. 18	Soldiers' Day
June 1	Mother and Child Day
July 11-13	National Naadam Festival (Independence Days)
Nov. 26	Constitution Day/ Proclamation Day

*variable

RECOMMENDED READING

These titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country. The Department of State does not endorse unofficial publications.

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Yangon, Myanmar

MYANMAR

Union of Myanmar

Major Cities:

Yangon, Mandalay

Other Cities:

Amarapura, Bassein, Bhamo, Henzada, Mogok, Moulmein, Myitkyina, Pyè, Sandoway, Sittwe, Tavoy

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report 2001 for Myanmar. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

For over half a century Myanmar (formerly Burma) has been bloodied and bowed by dictators, militia governments, and rebel factions. Successive dictators have tried (but failed) to extinguish any notion of democracy by arresting entire parliaments, suppressing any dissenting voices, and by using forced labor to prop up a failing economy.

As Myanmar moves into the 21st century, it is attempting to abandon its isolationist and socialist politics for economic pragmatism. The ruling junta is trying to perfect the juggling act of wooing foreign investment while simultaneously maintaining its vice-like grip on power. Revolutionists are split

between maintaining the revolutionary rage and settling for food on the table.

The 11th-century Burman kingdom of Bagan was the first to gain control of the territory that is present-day Myanmar, but it failed to unify the disparate racial groups and collapsed before a Tartar invasion in 1287. For the next 250 years, Burma remained in chaos, and the territory was not reunified until the mid-16th century.

In 1852 Burma became a part of British India, and the British built a colonial infrastructure and developed the country into a major rice exporter. Indians and Chinese arrived with the British to complicate the racial mix. In 1937, Burma was separated from British India, and there was nascent murmuring for self-rule. In 1948, Burma became independent and almost immediately began to disintegrate as hill tribes, communists, Moslems, and Mons all revolted.

In 1987, massive confrontations between prodemocracy demonstrators and the military resulted in a military coup. The new leader promised elections in 1989, but the junta prevented the elected party leaders from taking office.

The Union of Burma was renamed the Union of Myanmar in 1989 in order to reflect the multi-racial make up of the country.

Agitation for reform and real democracy is still being fought on the streets of Yangon. Old guard revolutionists insist that independence can only be won through maintaining embargoes and upholding the sanctions on tourism, whereas more practical proindependent supporters find themselves agreeing that "opposing foreign aid and investment and opposing tourism is like breaking the rice bowl of the man on the street."

Because of the government's clampdown on outside influences, it is one of the least Western-influenced countries in the world. Many people mistake this for quaintness, but no one should be blinded to the political realities that created this situation.

Myanmar has some magical sights, incredibly friendly people, and offers a glimpse of a bizarre Orwellian society that has withdrawn from contact with the late 20th century.

MAJOR CITIES

Yangon

Yangon (formerly Rangoon) is a British and Indian creation. Although Myanmar villages existed near the great Shwedagon Pagoda for many centuries, modern Yangon dates from about 1852, when it was designated the capital for British-held Lower Myanmar. British firms were brought in to develop the economy of the new colony, and Indian workers and business representatives followed in great numbers. The Myanmar remained a minority in Yangon until after independence in 1948, and even today Yangon's atmosphere is far more multiracial than that of other Myanmar cities. Yangon's population is a mixture of Myanmar, Indians, Karens, and Chinese, with a few non-Myanmar ethnic groups.

The golden Shwedagon Pagoda, dominates the Yangon skyline and landscape. Located within the city are Royal Lake and Inya Lake, the shorelines of which are dotted with large, handsome houses in varying states of repair. Many of Yangon's public buildings are attractive. Streets were widened and public parks spruced up after the 1988 military takeover.

Utilities

Electrical power in Myanmar is 220v, 50-cycles. Brownouts, blackouts, and voltage fluctuations are common. Telephone service is sporadic.

Food

Imported canned goods are sold locally. Supplies are not reliable, and prices are extremely high. Fresh beef, lamb, pork, chicken, and seafood are sold but must be carefully prepared. Most fresh food items are bought in the local market. Excellent crab, shrimp, fish, and pork are available year round. Fresh vegetables available include cabbage, string beans, carrots, potatoes, squash, beets, spinach, onions, okra, eggplant, cucumbers, toma-

atoes, lettuce, cauliflower, and sometimes broccoli and snow peas. Some people bring seeds for home vegetable gardens. Excellent rice is available and inexpensive. Avocados, watermelons, mangoes, papayas, pineapples, pamelos, mangosteens, strawberries, oranges, sweet limes, and tangerines can be purchased in season. Bananas and limes are sold year round.

Many items can be bought in Bangkok while out of the country, but they can be expensive and airfare is high.

Clothing

Clothing should be light, summer type fashion and washable. Very few items of Western clothing are available in shops. Bring what you need with you and use mail orders for replenishment. Bangkok is the only nearby source for ready-made clothing and footwear. Tailor made wear of excellent quality is available in Bangkok and Hong Kong. Yangon has a few acceptable dressmakers, and a limited selection of Myanmar silk and cotton is available. Those expecting to participate in sports such as golf and tennis should bring appropriate clothing and footwear with them. Bring swimwear.

Men: Most wear shirts without ties or safari suits to the office. Occasional "informal" receptions call for a business suit. Social functions are "casual," with sport shirts and slacks prevailing.

Women: In the evening, dresses and skirts are worn for both casual and informal social functions. What is appropriate for social events in the U.S. will be suitable in Myanmar, except for short skirts and dresses.

Around Yangon, skirts and modest attire are expected. Some women wear nylon hose in the cooler season. Hats are not worn. Light evening wraps, shawls, or sweaters are occasionally needed during the cool season or for trips to Upper Myanmar. Umbrellas are necessary

for the monsoon season and are sometimes used for sun protection. Raincoats are not practical in the tropical heat.

Children: Although the international school has no uniform dress code, dress, in general, should be in line with the Myanmar sense of modesty. Girls wear dresses, skirts, slacks, jeans. Boys wear long pants, jeans, and shorts. Shorts are needed for physical education by both boys and girls.

In high school, girls are not allowed to wear shorts to school except for physical education. They wear dresses, skirts, slacks, and jeans. Boys are allowed to wear the longer length shorts plus slacks and jeans. Sneakers, sandals, and thongs are common footwear; bring a good supply of children's shoes along with you.

Supplies and Services

Local dressmakers and tailors are satisfactory. Services are reasonable, and quality ranges from fair to excellent. Local sewing supplies such as thread, elastic, zippers, buttons, snaps, and interlining are of poor quality, and the supply is limited.

Laundry is usually done in the home by a maid. Good dry cleaning is available. Some personnel carry their dry cleaning along on occasional trips to Bangkok, Singapore, or Hong Kong and have it done there.

A few hairdressers are available, but styling, cutting, and cleanliness are below par. Bring any special preparations needed for hair care. Electrical appliance repair is poor; spare parts are not available.

Domestic Help

Servants' wages are reasonable. For a family, the staff usually includes a cook/bearer who cooks, serves meals, and cleans; a wash nanny to do washing and ironing; and a gardener. A driver is also helpful, particularly if children must be taken to school. A family with small children may also need a nanny to care



Cory Langley. Reproduced by permission.

Swedagon Pagoda with gilded stupas in Yangon

for the children. The employer traditionally assumes responsibility for the health and welfare of servants, and often of their families.

Religious Activities

Yangon has Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Methodist, Armenian, and Seventh-day Adventist churches, a Jewish synagogue, and a Jehovah's Witnesses Assembly Hall. English services are conducted regularly.

Education

The International School of Yangon (ISY) is a private, coeducational day school that offers an educational program from prekindergarten through grade 12 for students of all nationalities. The curriculum is that of a standard college preparatory U.S. elementary, middle, or high school. Students at the elementary level (grades 1 to 5) have daily classes in English (reading, writing, speaking, and listening), mathematics, social studies (geography, history, and social science), and science. These classes are usually

taught by the homeroom teachers. Students at the middle-school level (grades 6 to 8) begin a transition to high school. They study the same subjects as in elementary school, but may be taught by different, subject specialist teachers. Students at the high school level (grades 9 to 12) earn credits each semester in order to accumulate at least 21 credits over 4 years and earn a high school diploma. Music, art, computer studies, and physical education are offered at all grade levels. English-as-a second-language, is offered to students in grades 3 to 12.

Students in the upper grades have the opportunity to study French and Spanish as foreign languages. The testing program includes the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (grades 3-8) and the Tests of Achievement and Proficiency (grades 9-11). The PSAT, SAT, and TOEFL exams are regularly offered.

College Entrance: 95% of ISY graduates attend a 4-year college.

Recent graduates have matriculated at Bradley University, University of San Francisco, King's college, Ithaca College, Duquesne University, Syracuse University, Tufts University, Purdue University, Colorado School of Mines, Texas' Women University, University of Houston, State University of New York, Hamilton College, Fordham University, Queen's University, McGill University, Carnegie Mellon University, Duke University, Cornell University, Bucknell University, University of Pacific, Tulane University, Colorado College, University of California Santa Cruz.

ISY is fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and by the East Asia Regional Council of Overseas Schools.

There were 46 full-time and 3 part-time faculty members at the beginning of the 1999-2000 school year, including 30 U.S. citizens, 15 host country nationals, and 4 third-country nationals.

Enrollment at the beginning of the 1999-2000 school year was 342 (pre-kindergarten through grade 12), including 40 U.S. citizens, 108 host country nationals and 194 children of other nationalities.

The school is governed by a 9-member Board of Management. Eight members are elected for 2-year terms by the Parents Association, the sponsors of the school. Membership in the association is automatically conferred on the parents or guardians of children enrolled in the school. One member of the Board of Management represents the U. S. Ambassador. ISY is in practice sponsored by the U.S. Embassy. The school is nonprofit and nonsectarian. It is unofficially permitted to operate by the Myanmar Government.

The school consists of six buildings on a 4-acre site in a residential area of Yangon. It has a well-equipped library, two music rooms, 2 art rooms, 2 computer rooms, 2 science laboratories and a multipurpose room. All indoor facilities are air-conditioned. There is a playground, a playing field, and 2 basketball/volleyball courts. No boarding facilities are available.

Annual tuition rates for 2000-2001 are as follows: prekindergarten; \$1,706, kindergarten; \$5,640, and grades 1 to 12, \$7,890. These fees are payable in U.S. dollars only. There is a registration fee of \$1,000, payable by each new student. In addition, a capital fee of \$4,000 per new student (grades 1-12) is levied. The capital fee for kindergarten is \$1,000. If a child has paid \$1,000 in kindergarten, he/she will be asked to pay the remaining \$3,000 when he/she enters first grade. Fees are payable by semester.

The school year is divided into two semesters. In 2000-2001, the dates are August 9-December 22 and January 15-May 30. Classes meet Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. After-school activities often extend the day to 3:30 p.m. or later.

Special Educational Opportunities

Art classes are available by excellent Myanmar artists, but bring your own supplies. Local special meditation centers accept foreigners as students. Private tutoring can also be arranged for various foreign languages and for piano and guitar lessons. Inexpensive guitars are available locally but are of poor quality, and pianos can be rented but their quality ranges from fair to poor.

Burmese-language classes are available as are private tutors are available.

Sports

Yangon's climate and facilities make outdoor sports possible and enjoyable except during the 2-3 months of heavy monsoon. Almost every sport is available in Yangon.

From November to March, softball is a major part of the sports scene. The AERA sponsors a slow-pitch league with men's and women's divisions, and the international and Myanmar communities field teams. There are also T-Ball and softball leagues for children ages 5-13. Bring shoes, gloves, and caps. Metal cleats are not permitted. The leagues play their games on the weekends and provide a spectator sport for the whole community.

In May, volleyball succeeds the softball season at the AERA Club. The game is enjoyed by most of the American and international community.

Tennis is very popular among the American and international community. Tennis is played mainly at American homes or compounds with courts. Good tennis racquets are sold locally. Tennis shoes wear out rapidly on the cement courts. Excellent instruction is available at reasonable fees.

Two 18-hole golf courses, the Myanmar Golf Club and the Yangon Golf Club, are located 10 miles and 16 miles, respectively, from downtown. Clubs, gloves, and bags are not

available, but golf balls are sold occasionally at the course. Golfers should bring umbrellas, canvas shoes, and moisture-proof shoes as the courses are very wet during the rainy season. Instruction is inexpensive and good.

The Yangon Sailing Club on Inya Lake provides small sailboats, 12-foot Sharpies and 14-foot Raters, for members. Old hands are willing to help beginners. Races are held weekly.

The Yangon Riding Club is located at the Kyaikkasan Grounds about 3-4 miles from downtown Yangon. English riding instruction is available from Myanmar riding masters. The horses and livery are not the best however. Another riding Club is situated downtown by the Mingala Market. It is not recommended for beginners as the horses are not well trained.

Myanmar travel regulations severely limit available hunting areas, and permission to import firearms is extremely difficult to obtain. Bird watching opportunities are good, but vary seasonally and by location. Despite travel restrictions in more remote areas, dry-season viewing is good at the Moyhingyi bird sanctuary, Hlawgar Reservoir near Yangon, at Pagan, and at the Botanic Gardens at Maymyo, among other places.

Individual hobbies and interests are more important here than in the U.S. A quilting and sewing group of ladies gather on a regular basis. Bring all hobby supplies as little is available locally. The International School has a good library for a school of its size; the British Embassy library also has some children's books. Families should include a supply of children's books in their effects. Bring along a TV and VCR (VHS type) for additional home entertainment.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Travelers, except those on tourist visas, who wish to tour up country must submit their plans to the Min-



Temples atop a mountain in Mandalay

Cory Langley. Reproduced by permission.

istry of Foreign Affairs 10 workdays in advance. Government approval can sometimes be obtained and arrangements made for large groups to rent riverboats for a day's trip.

Because Yangon is not typical of Myanmar, visits to other points of interest are recommended. Mandalay, the last capital of the Myanmar kings, still retains historical and cultural interest. It is reached by plane (55 minutes). Air schedule reliability varies. Travel by car to Mandalay takes 14-16 hours over poor roads. It is a 14-17 hour trip by overnight train—the rail bed is rough.

Many places of historic, cultural, and artistic interest are in Mandalay or within easy driving distance. Ancient and modern pagodas dot the landscape, particularly in Sagaing, across the Irrawaddy River, and Ava and Amarapura, all former Myanmar capitals. Photography buffs can find many interesting scenes.

Maymyo, a British hill station and summer capital before independence, is in the mountains 42 miles northeast of Mandalay and provides a welcome relief from Mandalay heat. Maymyo has an excellent 18-

hole golf course, and tennis is also popular in the area.

Pagan, the ancient capital during the golden era of Myanmar history (C.E. 10th-13th centuries), is the site of hundreds of pagodas, many in ruins, but many still preserved as religious and cultural monuments. It may be reached by a daily flight from Yangon (1-1/4 hours). For hardy adventurers, Pagan can be reached by river steamer from Mandalay (12 hours).

The other hill station of Kalaw and the Shan Plateau town of Taunggyi have cooler temperatures than Yangon and Mandalay and offer lovely mountain scenery and colorful market/bazaars. Taunggyi may be reached by plane (1 hour, 20 minutes) from Yangon, plus a 45-minute bus ride. Kalaw, approached on the same plane ride, requires 2 hours by bus. Inle Lake lies slightly to the south. Its villages and pagodas, which are built on the lake are a favorite tourist spot. Sandoway, on the Arakan coast, is Myanmar's finest accessible beach and is popular with both Myanmar and Westerners. Regular flights, 4 days a week, are available to Sandoway (45 minutes). However, during the beach season the Tourist Agency makes a special arrangement with the Air-

ways Corporation to accommodate passengers, and flights are available daily but schedules are irregular.

Another seaside resort is Chaung Tha in the Bassein District. This place is conveniently accessible by road. One can drive in either private or rented vehicles. The journey takes approximately 7 hours and is open daily during the summer season. During the rainy season the road is rough. This seaside beach was recently opened by the host government and is popular with Myanmar and foreigners. Accommodations are available and fairly modest.

Regional places of interest outside Myanmar include Bangkok, Penang, Angkor Wat, Kuala Lumpur, Bali, Cameron Highlands, Jakarta, Singapore, Calcutta, New Delhi, and Kathmandu. Sightseeing in Yangon should include the numerous pagodas as well as local shops and bazaars and the various artisans who hand-fashion Myanmar goods. Children enjoy the zoo. An interesting circular train trip around Yangon takes 2 hours.

During the year several colorful festivals are held, such as the Festival of Lights and the 4-day Water Festival (when everyone gets drenched). Other interesting cultural events are the Indian fire-walking ceremonies, the Myanmar pwes (plays), Myanmar dancing, and puppet shows.

Myanmar is a Buddhist country, and visitors are expected to show respect to the Buddhist pagodas and Buddhist monks, easily identified by their saffron robes. Visitors to pagodas must remove shoes and socks before entering roofed walkways on grounds leading to the pagodas.

The photographer will find many interesting scenes in Myanmar. Local processing of black and white and color film is good. Batteries and other camera accessories are not normally available locally.



Cory Langley. Reproduced by permission.

A street scene in Myanmar

Entertainment

Six movie theaters in Yangon feature Myanmar, Indian, European, Chinese, Japanese, and American films. Projection equipment is good, but theaters are hot and uncomfortable, and the doors are locked during the shows, which in case of fire, would be extremely dangerous.

Social Activities

The American community in Yangon consists mainly of Embassy personnel and teachers at the school and their dependents. A few Americans are assigned to Myanmar by various U.N. agencies and NGOs. The total American community, including children, does not exceed 180.

Much of the community's social life centers around the AERA Club facilities, the Australian Club and the British Club. Numerous hotels around town also offer an alternative to the Clubs. These facilities are supplemented by extensive home entertaining.

Yangon's two golf clubs and the sailing club provide pleasant surroundings for meeting Myanmar and third country nationals. The International Cultural Group, an organization of Myanmar women and Embassy wives, sponsors a wide

spectrum of activities with an international flavor. The U.N. Women's Association offers a way to make contact with a wide variety of expatriates and local women.

Mandalay

Mandalay was founded as a new royal capital (replacing Amarapura) in 1860, and the picturesque palace walls and side moat still are near the heart of the city. Even though Mandalay did not long endure as the last royal capital—it was taken over by the British when they annexed all of Upper Myanmar in 1886—it remains a major center of the country's cultural and religious life.

Moreover, with its location on the Irrawaddy River near the geographic center of Myanmar, and its urban population which is close to 535,000, Mandalay, Myanmar's second largest city, is the most important administrative, commercial, and political city in the northern section of the country. Situated over 400 miles north of Yangon, the climate is both hotter and drier than that of the capital. Mandalay was heavily damaged during World War II, when shelling destroyed the royal palace and several pagodas.

Life is relatively relaxed in Mandalay, more attuned to the pace of the horse cart than to the automobile. Few Westerners live in the city. There are no bright lights, but for people who can forgo some of the Western amenities and adjust to its slower tempo, Mandalay has a certain quiet charm and hospitality. It provides an intimate glimpse into an Asian society.

There are many places of historic, cultural, and artistic interest in Mandalay or within easy driving distance. The city is noted for the Arakan pagoda, which is built around an ancient shrine. Ancient and modern pagodas dot the landscape, particularly in Sagaing, across the Irrawaddy River, and in Ava and Amarapura, which were all former royal capitals. Photography buffs can find many interesting scenes. A group of sacred buildings called the Seven Hundred and Thirty Pagodas was built during the reign of King Mindon, 1853–1878. Maymyo, a British hill station and summer capital before independence, is in the mountains 42 miles northeast of Mandalay, and provides a welcome relief from Mandalay's heat. Maymyo has an excellent 18-hole golf course, and tennis is also popular in the area.

Modest accommodations in hotels or government-owned circuit houses are available at some tourist spots. Trips to other parts of Myanmar, and overnight stops between Yangon and Mandalay or Kalaw present some difficulties.

OTHER CITIES

AMARAPURA is located on the Irrawaddy River in central Myanmar, just south of Mandalay and 325 miles north of Yangon. Founded in 1782, Amarapura was the capital of Myanmar from 1783 to 1823 and, again, from 1837 to 1860, and is considered one of the country's oldest centers of civilization. The city's royal palace, magnificent temples, and fortifications are in ruins. Today, with an estimated popula-

tion exceeding 150,000, Amarapura is a silk-weaving center with various handicraft industries.

BASSEIN is located in southern Myanmar, about 85 miles west of Yangon. Situated at the western edge of the Irrawaddy Delta, it is accessible by large vessels and is one of Myanmar's chief ports. A rice-milling and export center, with 145,000 residents, Bassein also handles teak and bamboo. A fort was established here by the British in 1852. The city was occupied by the Japanese during World War II.

BHAMO, situated in northeastern Myanmar on the Irrawaddy River, is the head of navigation on the river. Important for its ruby mines, Bhamo is also the market town for the surrounding hill region. Located 175 miles north of Mandalay, Bhamo was historically significant as a center for overland trade with China. During World War II, the Stillwell Road linked Bhamo to Ledo, India. The population is estimated at more than 25,000.

HENZADA is the capital of Henzada District, 75 miles northwest of Yangon. It is connected by rail with Bassein. Henzada is the center of rice and tobacco cultivation.

MOGOK, about 65 miles north of Mandalay, is a small town known as the centuries-old center of the country's ruby trade.

MOULMEIN, the country's third largest city, is located in southeastern Myanmar almost directly across the Gulf of Martaban from Yangon. Moulmein has a population of 220,000 and, as a river port and commercial center, it has shipyards and teak mills. The chief town of British Myanmar, Moulmein is one of the few places where trained elephants are still used in lumber mills.

MYITKYINA is located on the Irrawaddy River in northern Myanmar, near the Chinese border, and about 240 miles north of Mandalay. The most important town in northern Myanmar, Myitkyina is a trade



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Local restaurant in Yangon

center for teak and jade, as well as the extreme northern terminus of a railroad line from Yangon. It was captured by Allied troops in August 1944 after a 78-day siege, marking a turning point in Myanmar's liberation from the Japanese. The population is estimated at more than 20,000.

PYÈ (also called Prome) is located on the Irrawaddy River in south central Myanmar, about 240 miles south of Mandalay and 150 miles north of Yangon. Pyè is one of the oldest cities in Myanmar, founded in the eighth century; it became part of British Myanmar in 1852. Today, Pyè has an estimated population of more than 80,000, and is a commercial town and port, with railroad connections to Yangon. Visitors can see the ruins of ancient Pyè near the modern city.

SANDOWAY, on the Arkan coast, is the finest accessible beach in Myanmar, and is popular with both the Myanma people and Westerners. Daily flights are available during the tourist season, which usually lasts from November through May.

SITTWE, formerly called Akyab, is located on the Bay of Bengal, 325 miles northwest of Yangon. Originally a small fishing village, it

became a port for exporting rice after being occupied by the British in 1826. Sittwe has a population of approximately 108,000. Sittwe is an important port and rice-milling center.

TAVOY, situated on the left bank of the Tavoy River, is about 160 miles west of Bangkok, Thailand. The city is an important port and exports tin ore.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Myanmar (also known as Burma), with an area of 262,000 square miles (slightly smaller than Texas), is the largest country in mainland Southeast Asia. Yangon (also called Rangoon), the capital (population about 5.5 million), is Myanmar's largest city. Mandalay (population 700,000) is second. Myanmar's population is about 49 million.

Yangon is Myanmar's most important port for both domestic and foreign trade. Located on the Yangon River, 30 miles north of the Gulf of Martaban, it serves not only ocean-

going freighters and tankers but also river steamers and country craft that ply Yangon's major waterways. The city is built on flat lowland bounded on three sides by the Pazundaung Creek and the Yangon and Hlaing Rivers. The surrounding countryside consists of rice paddies, patches of brush, and occasional rubber plantations.

Located in the Southeast Asian monsoon belt, Yangon has a tropical climate with three distinct seasons: monsoon, cool, and hot. During the monsoon season, mid-May through mid-October, Yangon receives most of its 100-inch plus average annual rainfall. Temperatures are moderate (75°F-90°F), but relative humidity is high. During the monsoon, dampness and mildew can cause serious damage to clothing, furniture, books, records, electrical appliances, and leather goods.

In mid-November, after a brief period of warm, humid weather, the cool season begins from then until March, weather is pleasant (60°F-90°F) with lower humidity and almost no rain. Days are sunny and clear; nights are cool. In March, temperatures and humidity rise until the monsoon begins in mid-May. During the March-May hot season, the weather is hot and humid, usually rising in the day to over 100°F. As at most tropical posts, insects and snakes are numerous year round.

Population

Most of Myanmar's 42 million people are ethnic Myanmas. Shans, Karens, Kachins, Chins, Mons, and many other smaller indigenous ethnic groups form about 30% of the population. Indians and Chinese are the largest foreign groups. Although Burmese is the most widely spoken language, other ethnic groups have retained their own languages. Many people in Yangon speak English. The Indian and Chinese residents speak various languages and dialects of their homelands: Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, Bengali, Mandarin, Fukienese, and Cantonese. The variety of racial

types, languages, customs, and other cultural manifestations creates a cosmopolitan atmosphere. About a hundred non-U.S. Government Americans and 60 U.S. Government employees and dependents live in Myanmar. Yangon's diplomatic community includes employees of the U.N. and its specialized agencies and officials from 26 embassies.

Public Institutions

The Union of Myanmar consists of 14 states and divisions. Administrative control is exercised from the central government at Yangon through a system of subordinate executive bodies.

The people of Myanmar continue to live under a highly repressive, authoritarian military regime. The international community widely condemns that regime for its serious human rights abuses. The State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), Myanmar's ruling military junta since 1997, has made no significant changes in the governing policies of its predecessor, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), which seized power in 1988. Elections for a civilian government were held in May 1990. Although the National League for Democracy (NLD) won over 80% of the parliamentary seats, the military refused to cede power to the civilian government. Instead the SLORC and the SPDC have attacked the coalition of winning parties and their leaders through intimidation, detention and arrests. The military government appears determined to ensure a dominant role for the military services in the country's future political structure.

Arts, Science, and Education

The population of Myanmar includes seven major ethnic groups and a number of smaller groups. Almost 70% are Burmese, a Tibeto-Mongolian people. The myths, traditions, and religions derive largely from India and have mixed with folk

traditions of Myanmar's varied peoples to form a unique Myanmar culture. The merger of Hindu and Buddhist influences is seen in the ruins of Pagan and in the dramatic fine arts of today, which include music, dance, puppetry, painting, tapestry, and sculpture.

Myanmar's long and continuing isolation has degraded its scientific resources and capacity. Although medical schools continue to produce medical personnel with basic knowledge, the public health system has deteriorated because of under funding and neglect. Two major technical universities (plus a military science and technology school) have engineering programs, but facilities and resources are old and outdated.

Myanmar has 105 institutions of higher learning, including 16 universities, 4 professional institutes, 9 degree-granting colleges, 10 intermediate colleges, and 19 education colleges under the Ministry of Education. Other ministries administer institutes of medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, nursing, animal husbandry and veterinary science, agriculture, and forestry. Many of the universities and colleges, however, have been closed for lengthy periods during the 1990s. More than two thirds of the university population is now in distance learning programs. Instruction is in English or Burmese, depending on the subject. Few foreigners attend Burmese institutions of higher learning. Those who are admitted generally attend the University of Foreign Languages and study some aspect of the Burmese language. A university for the propagation of Theravada Buddhism has opened and encourages enrollment by foreigners interested in Buddhism.

Commerce and Industry

Myanmar is a resource-rich country with a strong agricultural base. It also has vast timber and fishery reserves and is a leading source of gems and jade. Tourist potential is great but remains undeveloped because of weak infrastructure and Myanmar's pariah state international image, due to the junta's

human rights abuses and oppression of the democratic opposition.

Long-term economic mismanagement under military rule has prevented the economy from developing in line with its potential. Myanmar experienced 26 years of socialist rule under Dictator General Ne Win from 1962-1987. In 1988 the economy collapsed and prodemocracy demonstrators took to the streets. The military junta that assumed control, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), violently put an end to the civil unrest and pledged to move toward a market based economy. Although significant economic reforms resulting in strong private sector growth were enacted in the early 1990s, the state remains heavily involved in economic policy and additional, much needed reforms have not been forthcoming. The benefits of economic liberalization have not been widely shared. The vast majority of Burmese nationals subsist on a standard of living not much different from 10 years ago. Also, rampant inflation caused primarily by public sector deficit spending has eroded economic gains for many persons.

After the military junta disavowed the results of the 1990 parliamentary election, which was won overwhelmingly by the National League for Democracy led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the U.S. imposed a host of broad-reaching sanctions against the regime. The U.S. opposes the extension of international financial assistance to Myanmar, prohibits military sales, suspended economic aid and commercial assistance programs, banned the issuance of U.S. visas to members of the military elite, and downgraded our representation in Yangon from Ambassador to Charge. In 1997, by Executive Order, the President banned new U.S. investment in Myanmar. In addition to Federal sanctions, 26 state and local governments have enacted selective purchasing laws that penalize companies doing business in Myanmar. A number of other countries, including the EU, Canada, Australia, Japan and

Korea have enacted some form of sanctions against the regime.

Myanmar remains a primarily agricultural economy with 43% of GDP derived from agriculture, livestock and fisheries, and forestry. Manufacturing constitutes only 9% of recorded economic activity, and state industries continue to play a large role in that sector. Services now constitute nearly 19% of GDP. According to official figures, GDP growth averaged over 5% annually throughout the 1990s. However, inflation exceeded 30% in many of those years. Myanmar runs a growing annual trade deficit, and foreign exchange reserves are in short supply.

The government continues to monopolize key sectors, including international rice and timber sales. Efforts to privatize state industries have been largely halted in recent years. In the past few years, the military has strengthened its hold over the economy through the activities of Myanmar Economic Corporation (MEC) and Myanmar Economic Holdings Ltd. (MEHL). These two military conglomerates control a large portion of private sector activity, including a number of key joint venture corporations. The military suspended independent audits of MEC and MEHL in 1999.

Under the military junta (renamed the State Peace and Development Council in 1997), the move to a market economy appears to have favored crony capitalism. A handful of companies loyal to the regime have enjoyed policies that promote monopoly and privilege among few. For example, the National Entrepreneurs, about 20 construction companies that signed on to develop farmlands, were given special vehicle import permits and discounted interest rates on commercial loans in FY 98/99. Companies not in league with the military leadership have found it preferable to keep a low profile.

Economic growth slowed considerably after FY 96-97. Foreign investment approvals declined by 98% in

FY 98-99, due in part to the effects of the Asian financial crisis. The economy continues to suffer from severe macro-economic imbalances due primarily to faulty economic management. The official exchange rate overvalues the Burmese kyat by 54 times the market rate, causing serious distortions in economic accounts and official data. The government maintains a loose monetary policy, cutting the interest rate three times in the past 2 years to prime the economy despite rampant inflation. Interest rates are sharply negative in real terms. General Maung Aye, Commander in Chief of the Armed Services, has executed growing control over trade and regulatory policy via the Trade Policy Council, an extraministerial committee overseeing economic policy. Since 1998, trade policy has become more restrictive. Due to various disagreements with Thailand, the Myanmar-Thai border has been shut down for months at a time on several occasions.

During the past 10 years of military rule, socioeconomic indicators have shown scant improvement. According to the World Bank, per capita income is about \$300. The number of families in absolute poverty is nearly 23%. Only 60% of the population have access to safe drinking water. Malnutrition, infant and maternal mortality all remain miserably high. The military government has dedicated fewer and fewer resources to health and education. Government expenditures on these two sectors combined total only 1.2% of GDP. In contrast, 40% of the government ministries budgets is dedicated to defense.

Singapore is the largest investor in Myanmar, with concerns concentrated in hotels and tourism and light manufacturing, such as beverages and tobacco. Thailand is another large investor. Western investment in Myanmar has focused largely on the extractive industries of oil and natural gas, and mining. The single largest foreign investment in the country is the \$1.2 billion Yadana natural gas pipeline from the offshore Yadana

natural gas reserve to Thailand. That investment is operated by Total Fina of France, and is jointly owned with UNOCAL of the U.S., PTT of Thailand, and Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE). A second offshore natural gas pipeline to Thailand, the Yetagun pipeline, is still under construction. It is operated by Premier Petroleum of the UK and is coowned by a consortium involving Nippon of Japan, PTT of Thailand, Petronas of Malaysia, and MOGE.

Myanmar exports primarily commodities, with pulses and beans, prawns and seafood, teak and hardwoods, sesame seeds, corn and rubber accounting for 50% of annual export earnings. In recent years, the production of pulses and beans, a largely free-market crop, has soared. Rice production and trade, which is heavily regulated by the state, has not shown similar gains. Uncut teak logs remain a top export.

Foreign trade has expanded since most trade was privatized and cross-border trade was legalized in late 1988, but Myanmar continues to operate a large trade deficit. Myanmar's chief trading partners are Singapore, Japan, Thailand, China, and Bangladesh. The U.S. has a minor trading relationship with Myanmar. However, Myanmar's exports of garments and textiles to the U.S. has more than doubled in the past 2 years, reaching \$186 million in FY 98/99.

Labor unions have been forbidden since the 1988 military takeover. Myanmar is under investigation by the International Labor Organization (ILO) for its forced labor practices.

Transportation

Automobiles

Cars older than 10 years may not be imported. Smaller cars and four-door cars have a better resale value. Fuel-injected vehicles are not recommended. Air-conditioning is a must. Cars shipped to Myanmar

should have good tires and a good battery, since replacements are difficult to find, take time to receive, and are costly to ship.

Those shipping a car should bring a factory handbook and a supply of spare parts, including spark plugs, fan belts, ignition kits, oil and air filters, wiper blades, and a carburetor kit. Repair parts are not always available in Yangon but can be ordered or obtained from Bangkok, Singapore, Tokyo or the U.S. Local mechanics vary in ability from poor to good. Many are skilled in "make do" repairs that keep vehicles operating when parts are not available.

Local

Buses are unsafe and overcrowded. Taxis are available, not necessarily safe, and rates must be negotiated.

Regional

Mingaladon Airport, about 13 miles (30 minutes) from the Embassy in downtown Yangon, has domestic and international flights. Airlines servicing Myanmar are Myanmar Airways (UB), Thai Airways (TG) and Silk Air (MI), plus 4-5 smaller airlines with regional flights. UB and TG have daily flights to and from Bangkok, but flight confirmations usually cannot be made from the U.S. because of the lack of a computer system.

Internal air service is available but risky. Only Mandalay Air and Yangon Air are approved for USG travelers. Travel by car and train is possible in the dry season, but roads and rail tracks are subject to wash-out in the rainy season. Gasoline available outside of Yangon is leaded and 80-82 octane.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

International, in-country and local telephone service in Myanmar is unreliable and expensive. For example, an International call to the U.S. ranges between \$4.50-\$7 per minute depending where the call is made, i.e., hotels charge the most to make a call. Calls to neighboring

Asian countries average \$2.00 per minute. However, the general condition of the country's outdated telecommunications infrastructure is poor, and desperately needs upgrading to meet the demands of a capital city. The current system that services Yangon barely copes with current demand. Additionally, the heavy monsoon rains that fall between May and September only make matters worse. Unfortunately, there are no known plans by the government to modernize its telephone infrastructure to improve telephone service within Myanmar.

However, according to the government-controlled Myanmar Times, GSM cellular telephone service is scheduled for implementation. This same newspaper article reads that Myanmar Public Telephone (MPT), will be selling the cellular handsets for approximately \$1,500 each. Airtime is not included.

Facsimile service is available at major hotels. Fax service has proved relatively reliable considering the condition of the telephone transmission lines. International fax messages are charged the same rates as an international call.

E-mail service is available locally for home or business use for roughly \$2 per hour. The initial cost for E-mail in one's home or office is roughly \$250. This fee includes modem and software.

Mail

The international mail system is slow: 2 to 3 weeks for letter mail, plus pilferage and censorship are common.

Radio and TV

Shortwave radio reception in Myanmar is satisfactory. Multiband portable receivers can pick up VOA, BBC, Radio Australia, and other international broadcasts. Radio Myanmar is the only station in Myanmar. It broadcasts in English 2-112 hours daily and is limited to brief international news and music.

Myanmar has limited TV service with broadcasting of about 5 hours

each night, and on weekends, an additional 2 hours in the morning, and 3 hours in the afternoon. Locally produced programming is in Burmese, with a short satellite news segment and a feature entertainment program in English. Broadcasting is in the U.S. NTSC system and usually in color.

Videotapes are very popular in Yangon and there are numerous video stores eager for your business. However, the tape quality from these shops is poor, but the tapes are inexpensive to rent. Tapes from the Local rental shops use both NTSC and the PAL format.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

One English-language daily newspaper, The New Light of Myanmar, offers limited international news, highly censored local coverage, and much propaganda. The Myanmar Times and Business Report is published weekly and offers thinly veiled propaganda and some economic, cultural, and social news. The monthly Today magazine provides stories and information useful for foreign visitors and residents in Myanmar. The International Herald Tribune, Time, Newsweek, Far Eastern Economic Review, and Asia Week are sold locally for hard currency at a few selected locations, but are occasionally censored when stories refer to Myanmar.

Yangon has a few used book shops, which carry outdated English-language books and periodicals. The American Center Information Resource Center has a collection of historical books on Myanmar and materials on the U.S. The British Council and Alliance Française also have libraries. Unfortunately, Internet is still not available in Myanmar, so online ordering is not possible.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

Yangon hospitals are crowded. Sub-optimal in sanitation, physical plants are in poor condition and emergency equipment is sparse and primitive in nature. Regional evacuation points are Bangkok and Singapore depending on severity of patient's condition.

There are two expatriate clinics in Yangon:

(1) SOS International is situated at The New World Inya Lake Hotel, #37, Kaba Aye Pagoda Road. It offers the following core services: 24-hour alarm center; family medicine practice and outpatient facility; pharmacy; X-ray facility; specialist consultations and referrals; 24-hour emergency medical unit; emergency medical evacuation. It is staffed by one expatriate doctor and three local doctors. Recently, however, SOS International has advised that they are reducing operations and cutting staff.

(2) Pacific Medical Center is situated at #81, Kaba Aye Pagoda Road. They also have a pharmacy; Lab; X-ray facility and dental clinic. It is staffed by three local doctors and specialists for consultation when required. It opens for 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. from Monday to Saturday.

Dental care is available in Yangon, but in general, it is substandard. Significant dental problems for which treatment cannot be delayed are sent to Bangkok. Travel and minimum per diem are provided when justified. A recent exam and all necessary dental work should be completed before arrival in Yangon. Yangon has two dental clinics run by a foreign-trained orthodontist.

Community Health

Local sanitation and health conditions are poor. All water must be boiled and filtered to make it potable. Fecal-oral disease transmission is a major public health concern in Myanmar.

Local dairy products are not considered safe. Most Americans buy canned or powdered milk from the commissary. Local fruits and vegetables should be scrubbed and soaked in a Clorox solution. Local restaurants do not maintain U.S. levels of sanitation.

The health of servants is important in maintaining family health. Pre-employment physicals, immunizations, and constant health supervision are strongly recommended.

Preventive Measures

The only required immunization for entry into Myanmar is yellow fever, and then only if coming from endemic areas of South America or Africa. Immunizations recommended for Myanmar (in addition to those given in the U.S.) are: hepatitis B, Japanese B encephalitis, typhoid, rabies, and Hepatitis A. All can be received at post.

Bacillary and amoebic dysentery are prevalent. A variety of intestinal roundworms and other parasites commonly infect people. Careful food preparation, strict personal hygiene, supervision of the cleanliness and health of servants, and avoidance of local restaurants help reduce opportunities for infections.

Myanmar's increasing prevalence of tuberculosis (a result of overcrowding and taxing of public utilities), makes use of public transportation, movie theaters, restaurants, etc., unduly hazardous. Increased contamination during the early part of the very heavy monsoon season gives rise to increases in many diseases each June and July. Because of the presence of several varieties of poisonous snakes and endemic rabies (beware of stray dogs), antivenom and rabies vaccines are available in the Medical Unit.

Malaria is a serious problem in the rural areas of Myanmar, but transmission occurs very rarely in Yangon. No drug prophylaxis is necessary in Yangon or most of the usual tourist sites in the country. Prophylaxis is necessary in some

areas. Dengue, another mosquito-borne disease, occurs throughout the country, including Yangon, and protective measures to avoid mosquito bites should be used. The peak season of dengue hemorrhagic fever is June-July and again in November-December. Health Unit supplies mosquito nets, repellents and Malaria Prophylactic Medications.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan. 1	New Year's Day
Jan. 4	Independence Day
Feb. 12	Union Day
Mar.	Full moon of Tabaung*
Mar. 2	Peasants' Day
Mar. 27	Armed Forces Day
Apr.	Thingyan (Water Festival)*
Apr. 17	Myanmar New Year
Apr/May	Full Moon of Kason*
June/July	Full moon of Waso*
July	Buddhist Lent begins*
July 19	Martyrs' Day
Sept/Oct.	Full Moon of Thadingyut*
Oct.	Buddhist Lent ends*
Oct/Nov.	Full moon of Tazaungmon*
Nov.	Tazaungdaing (Full Moon festival)*
Nov. 13	National Day
Dec. 25	Christmas Day
.	Diwali*
.	Id al-Adha*
.	Id al-Fitr*

*variable

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs & Duties
Most arrive in Yangon by air. American carriers must be used for as

much of the journey as possible. The most commonly used transfer point is Bangkok, where an overnight stop is usually necessary. Only Thai Airlines and Myanmar International Airways fly to Yangon from Bangkok.

Travel to, from and within Myanmar is strictly controlled by the Government of Myanmar. A passport and visa are required. Travelers are required to show their passports with valid visa at airports, train stations and hotels. There are frequent security roadblocks on all roads and immigration checkpoints in Myanmar, even on domestic air flights.

Upon entry into Myanmar, tourists are required to exchange a minimum of \$200 (U.S.) for Foreign Exchange Certificates (FEC). The FEC office is located between Immigration and Customs. The face value of the FEC, issued in denominations from one to 20 dollar equivalents, is equal to the U.S. dollar, but its actual value fluctuates. Any amount over \$200 (U.S.) may be exchanged back to U.S. dollars. The first \$200 (U.S.) cannot be exchanged back into U.S. dollars. These procedures are subject to change without notice.

The military government rarely issues visas to journalists, and several journalists traveling to Myanmar on tourist visas have been denied entry. Journalists, and tourists mistaken for journalists, have been harassed. Some journalists have had film and notes confiscated upon leaving the country.

Information about entry requirements as well as other information may be obtained from the Embassy of the Union of Myanmar, 2300 S Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008, telephone 202-332-9044/6, or the Permanent Mission of Myanmar to the U.N. 10 East 77th St., New York, N.Y. 10021, telephone 212-535-1311. Overseas inquiries may be made at the nearest embassy or consulate of Myanmar (Burma).

Unrestricted travel exists to the main tourist areas of Pagan, Inle Lake and the Mandalay area. The military government restricts access to some areas of the country on an ad hoc basis. Those planning to travel in Myanmar should check with Burmese tourism authorities to see if travel is permitted. However, some tourists traveling to places where permission is not expressly required have reported delays due to questioning by local security personnel. Reportedly, 10 of the 14 Burmese states and divisions are polluted with anti-personnel land mines.

Customs officials may confiscate prohibited items such as firearms (including air-powered guns and toy guns), ammunition, and certain books, photographs and magazines that might be considered offensive.

On all outgoing shipments, the number of boxes/vans and weight is checked against the same information listed in the documents when a traveler entered the country. Discrepancies either up or down, which cannot be explained, may result in your outgoing shipment being delayed in customs.

Permits are required for export of teak/rattan furniture, antique lacquerware or wood carvings, and jewelry. Itemized lists and receipts for such purchases should be retained.

U.S. citizens living or in or visiting Myanmar are encouraged to register at the U.S. Embassy and obtain updated information on travel and security within the country from the Embassy. The U.S. Embassy is located at 581 Merchant Street, Yangon, tel. (95-1) 282055 and (95-1) 282182; fax (95-1) 256018

Pets

Pets are not quarantined if accompanied by a health certificate and proof of rabies vaccination. Pet food and supplies are available most of the time in local supermarkets. Local veterinarians are sometimes competent but often lack medicines; when supplied, they are of unfavourable quality.

miliar brands. E-mail consultations with a stateside vet are invaluable. Clipping service is not available; dog owners should bring their own clippers.

Currency, Banking, and Weights and Measures

There are two Burmese currencies, Kyat (pronounced "Chat" (rhymes with Shot)) and Foreign Exchange Certificates (FECs). Kyat are the most prevalent and widely accepted, with the value fluctuating on a daily basis. FECs are essentially "dollar equivalency" currency and are valued at a fixed rate of one FEC/\$1.00.

There are no restrictions on the amount of dollars, traveler's checks or other foreign currency brought into Myanmar.

Local currency checking accounts cannot be opened by foreigners in Myanmar. Business transactions are generally on a cash basis. Not all major credit cards can be used in Myanmar, and generally only large international hotels in Yangon and Mandalay accept them. There are no automatic cash machines in the country to access currency from overseas, and it is not possible to cash a personal check drawn on a foreign bank.

Although money changers sometimes approach travelers to offer to change dollars into Burmese kyat at the market rate, it is illegal to exchange currency except at authorized locations such as the airport, banks and government stores.

Foreign Exchange Certificates (FEC) are required by foreigners for the payment of plane tickets, train tickets and most hotels. Burmese kyat are accepted for most other transactions. It is possible to purchase FEC with some credit cards at the Myanmar Foreign Trade Bank in Yangon or any place that exchanges foreign currency.

In Myanmar, the weight utilized for gold is called tical. One tical equals 58 ounces, or 1 ounce equals 1.72 ticals. At the local market all foodstuffs are weighed in viss and ticals.

One viss equals 3.6 pounds, and there are 100 ticals to a viss. Liquid capacity for gasoline (Burmese call it petrol) is measured by the U.K. gallon. One gallon equals 4.5 liters

Special Information

Burmese authorities require that hotels and guesthouses furnish information about the identities and activities of their foreign guests. Burmese who interact with foreigners may be compelled to report on those interactions to the Burmese Government.

Taking photographs of people in uniform or any military installation is discouraged by Burmese authorities, and it could lead to arrest or the confiscation of cameras and film.

RECOMMENDED READING

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NAURU

Republic of Nauru

Major City:

No official capital; government offices in Yaren District

INTRODUCTION

The original inhabitants of **NAURU** came from a mixture of people from Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia. Nauru remained fairly isolated until the early 19th century, when it became a base for American whalers. In the late 19th century the island came under German administration, which discovered the island's immense phosphate reserves and developed them. In 1914 Nauru was surrendered to Australia. Nauru was made a League of Nations mandate of the British Empire in 1919, and was occupied by the Japanese and bombed by the Allies during World War II. In 1947 it became a trust territory of the United Nations, administered by Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. Nauru became the world's smallest independent republic on January 31, 1968. Nauru's economy relies entirely on exports from phosphate mining. A century of mining, however, has left the landscape barren, and phosphate reserves are all but exhausted. Profits from the phosphate industry have been invested abroad for when the phosphate runs out. Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom have agreed to compensate Nauru with \$73 million for the loss of the island's topsoil that occurred from phosphate min-

ing during the years of the League of Nations mandate and United Nations trusteeship.

MAJOR CITY

Since it is so small, Nauru has no major city. The **YAREN DISTRICT**, on the southwest part of the island, is the main distribution area for goods and the center of the island's government. In 2000, the estimated population was 10,000. Many residents go shopping in Yaren once a week. The government-owned Nauru Phosphate Corp. is the primary employer. Others work in public administration and education. There is a marina. Nauru's own airline, Air Nauru, has scheduled flights to Australia (Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane), Pohnpei and Guam in Micronesia, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Fiji and Manila in the Philippines.

Recreation and Entertainment

Nauru lies in the middle of some excellent fishing grounds, with water depths rapidly plunging to 2,000 feet just off the edge of the island's shores and reefs. The island's waters are becoming popular with Australian anglers, who come looking for marlin, sailfish, wahoo, yellowfin tuna, and dolphin-

fish. The ocean floor's precipitous dropoff makes it possible to catch large game fish within 1,000 feet from the shore. The best months for fishing are from April to December.

Nauru has virtually no tourism. There is only one hotel in the country, the Menen Hotel, which is perched on the edge of the ocean. For many years the hotel has served as the meeting place for residents and visitors. The hotel was recently renovated and expanded to international standards, and now features bars and restaurants, a gaming room, and tennis courts. The Parliament House, the seat of Nauru's government, is in the Yaren District.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Nauru is an oval-shaped coral island with an area of just under 8.2 square miles in the southwestern Pacific Ocean. Nauru is one of the smallest nations in the world, and its nearest neighbor is the Kiribati island of Banabar, some 180 miles away. The island has a coastline of about 18.6 miles.

There is a relatively fertile belt of soil 500–1,000 feet wide that encircles the island. From the lowlands, coral cliffs rise to a central plateau some 200 feet above sea level. Buada Lagoon, in the southern end of the central plateau, covers 300 acres and is a permanent (often brackish) lake.

Nauru's position just 37 miles south of the equator gives the island a hot and humid tropical climate, but the landscape is arid and desolate.

Population

The population of Nauru is approximately 12,000 (2001 est.) Most Nauruans live along the coastal fringes in one of the traditional districts. The majority of the inhabitants are Nauruans, a mixture of Micronesian, Melanesian, and Polynesian origins. The remainder are Chinese and immigrants from Kiribati and Tuvalu, Australian and New Zealander employees, and some Filipino contract workers. The majority of the population is Protestant, while over one-third is Roman Catholic. Nauruan is the predominant language, but English is widely spoken and understood.

Government

Nauru adopted its constitution on January 29, 1968, and amended on it on May 17, 1968. The country was established as a republic with a parliamentary system of government. The president is head of state as well as head of government. The president is elected by the parliament from among its members every three years. The president serves as prime minister, appointing four or five members of parliament to form the cabinet. Cabinet ministers, including the president, take charge of the various government departments and are held accountable by parliament. The unicameral parliament consists of eighteen members, who are elected every three years by resident Nauru citizens over the age of twenty. A speaker and a deputy speaker are chosen from the parliament's mem-

bers. A Supreme Court was established by the constitution and a District Court and a Family Court also operate. In most cases, the highest court of appeal is the High Court of Australia.

Nauru's flag has a blue background divided horizontally by a narrow gold band, symbolizing the equator. Below the band is a white 12-pointed star, representing the island's 12 original tribes.

Arts, Science, Education

Education is compulsory between the ages of 6 and 16. The government subsidizes the schools, and some schools are run by the government while others are operated by the Roman Catholic Church. The government provides higher education through competitive scholarships to attend university overseas, usually in Australia. There is also an extension center of Fiji's University of the South Pacific.

Commerce and Industry

Despite the lack of agriculture, the per capita income of Nauru is among the highest in the world, and the standard of living is much higher than on other Pacific Islands. Nauru's economy has been based on the export of phosphates (a mineral used to make fertilizers). Nauru is the only remaining producer of the three historic phosphate-producing islands of the South Pacific. The other two were Banaba (in the Gilbert Islands of Kiribati) and Makatea (French Polynesia). Phosphate exports have given Nauruans one of the highest living standards in the world. There are no naturally-occurring fruits and vegetables, just a few coconut palms and scrub bushes imported by visitors. Food is not scarce, however, and plenty of fresh fish is caught on the island to make up the dietary mainstay along with canned meat and vegetables.

Transportation

Nauru International Airport is located about half a mile northwest of Yaren District's center. Traffic moves on the left in Nauru. The main road circling the island is paved, but the remaining roads are unpaved. Animals and pedestrians walking in the road make night driving on unlit secondary roads hazardous. There are fewer than 2,000 motor vehicles, and a school bus service is the only form of local transport. The only railway is a 2.4-mile shuttle used to carry phosphates.

Communications

A ground satellite station has provided telecommunications service with the outside world since 1975. There is also a local telephone exchange to handle local calls. Radio Nauru and Nauru Television are operated by the government. The *Central Star News* is a private newspaper published twice a month. *Nauru Bulletin* is a weekly published by the Department of Island Development and Industry.

Health

Nauru has two hospitals, with over 200 beds, and about ten resident physicians. Tuberculosis, leprosy, diabetes, and vitamin deficiencies have been the main health problems, partly due to a Westernized diet. Cardiovascular disease is a major cause of illness and death.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan. 1	New Year's Day
Jan. 31	Independence Day
Mar/Apr.	Good Friday*
Mar/Apr.	Easter*
May 17	Constitution Day
Oct. 26.	Angam Day
Dec. 25	Christmas
Dec. 26	Boxing Day

*variable

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

A passport, visa, onward/return ticket, and proof of hotel bookings (or sponsorship from a resident of Nauru) are required for tourists. Tourist visas are issued for a maximum of thirty days. Travelers transiting with valid ticket/onward destination do not require a visa, provided that the first connecting flight departs within three days of arrival in Nauru. Business visitors must have a visa and a local sponsor. Nauru collects a departure tax that must be paid in cash and in Australian dollars. For more information on entry/exit requirements,

travelers may wish to contact the Nauru Consulate General in Melbourne, Australia at telephone (613) 9653-5709, fax (613) 9654-4738.

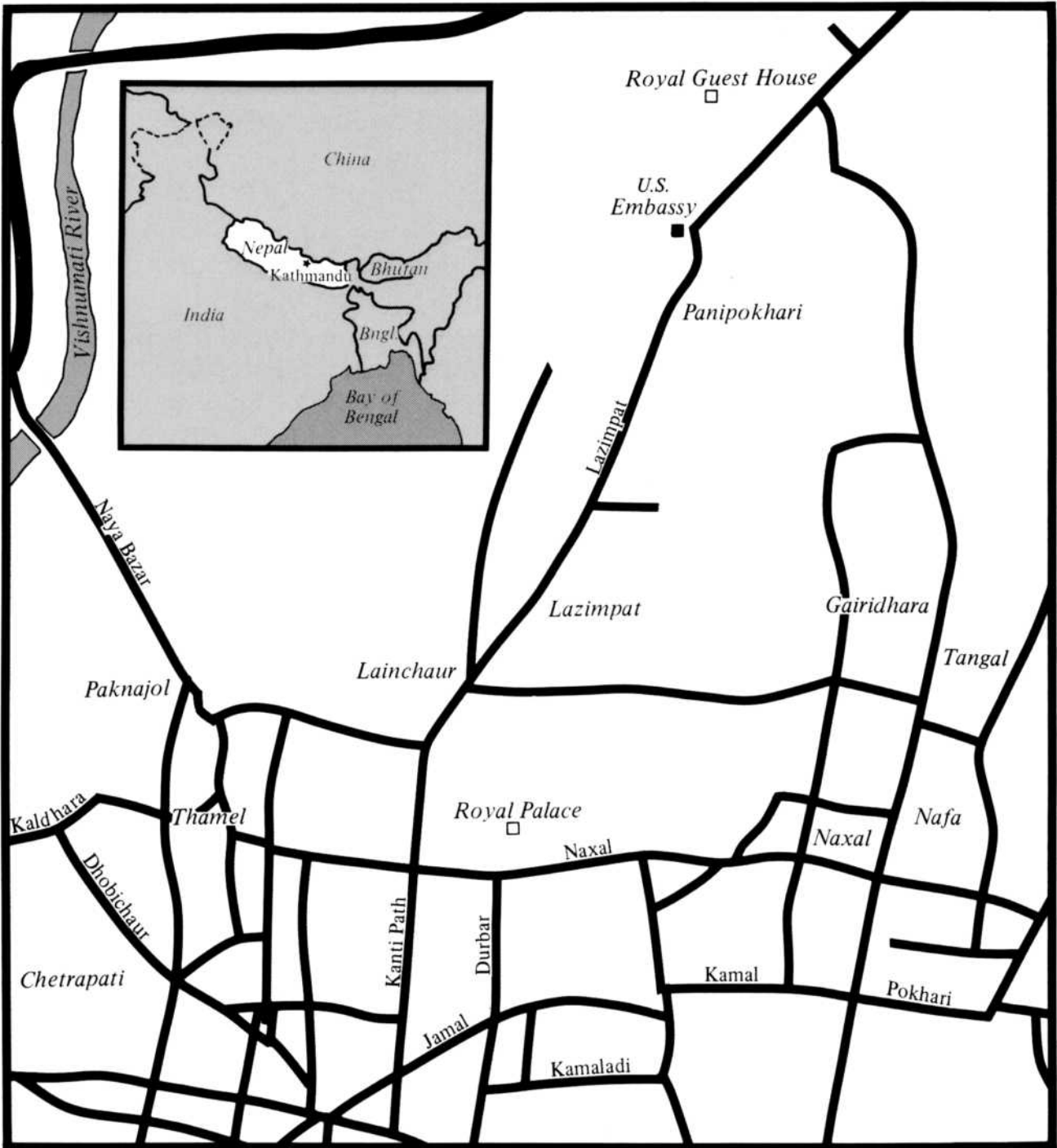
Nauru's customs authorities may enforce strict regulations concerning temporary importation into or export from Nauru of items such as foodstuffs, animals, and pornographic materials. It is advisable to contact the Nauru Consulate General in Melbourne, Australia for specific information regarding customs requirements.

There is no U.S. Embassy or diplomatic post in Nauru. Assistance for U.S. citizens in Nauru is provided by the U.S. Embassy in Fiji, which is located at 31 Loftus Street in Fiji's

capital city of Suva. The telephone number is (679) 314-466; the fax number is (679)300-081. Americans may register with the U.S. Embassy in Suva, Fiji and obtain up-to-date information on travel and security in Nauru from the Embassy. Information may also be obtained by visiting the Embassy's home page at <http://www.amembassy-fiji.gov>.

RECOMMENDED READING

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Kāthmāndu, Nepal

NEPAL

Kingdom of Nepal

Major Cities:

Kāthmāndu, Pokharā, Hetauda, Tulsipur

Other Cities:

Bhairawa, Bhaktapur, Birātnagar, Birganj, Lumbini, Paṭān, Rampur

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report 1999 for Nepal. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

The mosaic of Nepal's history and culture was protected for centuries from the forces of change that defined the world's international relationships. Its resources began to develop to meet the demands of modern nationhood only after 1951, when the borders were opened to foreigners. The U.S. has played a major part in assisting this development and continues to influence the course of progress in a relationship of mutual respect and cooperation.

Politically, Nepal is neutral in most of the world's disputes, and its foreign policy reflects the position of a small and landlocked country located between two giants, India and China.

Challenges to Nepal's development are formidable and unique, given its high mountains, fast and flooding rivers, undeveloped natural resources, and its previous isolation.

Impressive changes have occurred nonetheless in the fields of transportation, communications, education, and commerce. Nepal must accommodate its enormous geographic and ethnic diversity while managing economic development. Its rapidly growing population is deeply and genuinely attached to ancient customs and traditional attitudes.

The central government is committed to the concept of development and is encouraging growth of a national consciousness and pride in the nation's heritage. A major challenge of the American Mission in Nepal is to assist the country's efforts to become a modern nation while retaining its unique cultural heritage.

A visit to Nepal not only is an introduction to a land of centuries-old cultures relatively untouched in many ways by the outside world but is also an opportunity to explore ancient kingdoms in the shadow of the world's highest mountains.

MAJOR CITIES

Kāthmāndu

Kāthmāndu, the nation's capital, is situated in a beautiful valley of about 225 square miles, at an altitude of nearly 4,500 feet, and at the confluence of two rivers. The city is completely surrounded by high hills and, during much of the year, the snow-covered Himalayan peaks can be seen. The valley was once a lake bed and the soil is extremely fertile. Where sufficient water is available, the soil can produce three crops a year.

Kāthmāndu was originally known as Kantipur, or City of Glory. Its modern name is derived from an important temple, Kath Mandir, built in the heart of the city, reportedly with the wood of a single tree. Some of the principal landmarks are the royal palace; the Tundikhel, a large parade ground; and Durbar Square, a fascinating collection of intricately carved temples.

The historic 17th-century Hanuman Khoka Palace and its temple complex, once the residence of the Malla Kings, dominates the old city. Several of the palace's courtyards are open to the public, as is the nine-story Basantapur Tower, with

magnificent views of the city. The palace has a gallery and a museum that contains relics of former royal dynasties.

Typical Kāthmāndu houses are of three- or four-story brick construction, many with ornately carved wood trim. The bazaars are a typical Asian assemblage of people, vegetable stalls, tiny shops, and free-roaming cattle.

Utilities

Kathmandu's electric power is 220v, 50cycle, AC. Power fluctuations and failures that can damage electrical appliances occur often. Transformers are required for 110v appliances. Bring extra transformers to meet your equipment needs. Transformers available on the local market are expensive.

As electrical power is 50 cycles, many U.S. appliances with electric motors such as tape decks (with DC motors) and vacuum cleaners will not operate properly even with a transformer, because the motor speed will be reduced. Some 60-cycle appliances can be modified to work at 50 cycles. Consult your owner's manual or a service representative. Heating appliances such as griddles or coffee makers are not affected by cycles and will work fine with a transformer.

The municipal water is not potable and must be filtered and boiled prior to drinking. Most houses have both a ground-level water storage tank and a roof-mounted supply tank. Water pressure is low by American standards, as the water supply is gravity fed. Water shortages occur during the dry season, and water delivery is available on an as-needed basis from Mission sources.

Food

A variety of fresh meats, fruits, and vegetables is available locally. Meats include pork, poultry, buffalo, and goat. Beef, fresh and frozen fish, and seafood from India are sold in Western-oriented "cold storage" stores. Rice, potatoes, and eggs are plentiful. Fresh fruits and veg-

etables are available seasonally. Fruits include apples, bananas, oranges, tangerines, papayas, mangoes, watermelon, grapes, coconut, pineapple, and grapefruit. Vegetables include asparagus, green beans, broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, radishes, cucumbers, tomatoes, peas, onions, eggplant, various squashes, lettuce, local spinach, and fresh spices.

A good selection of canned goods, oils, butter, flour, sugar, and other baking items is available in the markets.

Most breads and pastries are made at home, but a number of good local bakeries are here. Although respectable Indian brands of ice cream are sold locally and are safe for consumption.

Clothing

Summer clothing is worn from April to November. Lightweight tropical suits are worn in the office and women wear short-sleeved or sleeveless cotton or other lightweight washable dresses, skirts, or pantsuits.

During winter, woolen clothing is needed, especially at night. Good use can be made of stoles, sweaters, slacks, and warm long-sleeved dresses. By midday it is often warm enough to shed an outer garment, although at night some choose to wear a heavy winter coat. Warm sleeping wear is essential during the winter months. Flannel sheets and down comforters are popular winter bedtime accessories.

Limited suitable ready-made clothing is available in Kathmandu. Bring clothing for tennis, swimming, and hiking. A lightweight raincoat and umbrella are needed during the monsoon season (June-October).

Women dress simply and informally. Appropriate dress for luncheons, dinners, and informal receptions is required. A few full-length summer and winter dresses are needed.

Bring a generous supply of shoes. Unpaved, rough, and muddy surfaces cause shoes to wear out rapidly. If you intend to hike, bring a pair of good-quality hiking shoes and socks. (Most camping and hiking equipment is available for rent in Kathmandu, and local reproductions of Western-manufactured equipment are for sale.) Good-quality dress shoes for men and women are hard to find in Kathmandu, and the larger sizes are impossible to find. Bring a good supply of children's clothing for warm and cold weather. Include sweaters, flannel pajamas, and a heavy jacket for winter.

Supplies and Services

Kathmandu has several good beauty- and barbershops. Most Westerners patronize the major hotels for this purpose. Excellent facials and massages are offered at major hotels at reasonable costs.

Drycleaning is available. Laundry almost always is done at home by a servant. Local tailors are frequently used. The results usually are acceptable after you have found a tailor to your liking. Woolen and cotton materials are available in Kathmandu, mostly of Indian and Chinese manufacture, though some of British origin also are available. Choice of colors and prints are sometimes limited. Some ready-made clothing is available (usually of Indian, Hong Kong, Japanese, or Thai manufacture, but sometimes European), but styles and sizes are limited. Several quality boutiques cater to Western tastes, and prices in these markets usually are comparable to those in the U.S.

Both large and small supermarkets carry a variety of local goods and imported items. You can find almost anything, including sports equipment and electrical appliances (expensive), cosmetics, nylons (bring your own), clothing, fabrics, children's toys, cassette tapes and CDs (all kinds of music, but as usual, quality varies), and much more.



Susan Rock. Reproduced by permission.

Kathmandu Valley monastery and snowcapped Himalayas

Since most imported items are more expensive than in the U.S., bring enough of those items you use most.

Kathmandu has a limited number of experienced and trained repair people; available spare parts for cars, trucks, appliances, radios, and phonographs also are limited.

Local bookstores are reasonably stocked with English-language books, including recent novels, many of the classics, histories (mostly regional), travel book, and trekking guides, photographic essay; on Nepal, how-to books, folk tales, anthropology, politics, philosophy, religion, and a growing number of children's books, games, and puzzles. The American Women of Nepal (AWON) operates a 6,000-volume public library.

Domestic Help

Household servants are commonly employed in Kathmandu. Staff may include a cook, housekeeper, gardener, nursemaid (for babies and young children), driver (if you do not wish to risk the local traffic yourself), and day guard. Finding good cook is particularly difficult. In addition to basic wages (currently \$50-\$80, month for an experienced cook, less for housekeepers, gardeners, or nursemaids), extras include

uniforms (usually some form of local dress), a food allowance, a bonus equivalent to 1-month's salary before the Dasain holidays (the largest Hindu celebration of the year, usually in October), medical expenses, transportation, and various other discretionary benefits. It is common for servants to request loans from employers. Employers do not universally agree and repayment arrangements vary for those that do.

Religious Activities

Although traditionally religiously tolerant, Nepal is officially a Hindu state. The law forbids proselytizing and conversion of Hindus to other religions. Christian missionaries, first admitted in 1950, are involved in medical and educational work.

A full-time ordained minister serves the interdenominational Protestant community. Sunday worship services, Sunday school classes, and auxiliary fellowships are available. Roman Catholic Masses are conducted by American Jesuit and Mary knoll priests at least once daily and several times on Sunday at various locations in Kathmandu. Anglican/Episcopalian Holy Communion Services are held about six times a year at the British Embassy. A small, international Baha'i com-

munity holds regular meetings and conducts children's classes. No organized Jewish community exists in Kathmandu, and no regular Jewish services are conducted, but the Israeli Embassy holds occasional holiday services. Other religious groups do not have formal facilities, although occasionally ministers of other faiths visit Kathmandu. Some religious groups gather informally in homes, depending on members present in Kathmandu.

Education

Lincoln School, a private coeducational day school founded by USAID in 1954, provides an educational program from kindergarten through grade 12 for students of all nationalities. Enrollment averages 250 students and usually represents more than 30 nationalities. Approximately a third of the students are American and up to a quarter Nepali or Tibetan.

The school is governed by a nine-member board of directors elected for 2-year terms by the Lincoln School Association, which is made up of all parents and faculty. The school is administered by an American-recruited and -trained principal who directs 30 full- and part-time teachers, 20 Nepalese teaching assistants, and several native language teachers. Facilities include 21 classrooms, an auditorium, gymnasium, library/instructional center, computer center, music room, outdoor reading areas, and a 2½ acre athletic field.

The school year extends from late August to mid-June.

The Lincoln School curriculum is based on the U.S. public school system of education but more recently encompasses an internationalized curriculum to reflect the needs of the diverse student body. Instruction is in English. Kindergarten is a comprehensive school preparation program. Grades 6 to 8 are departmentalized, with students moving from one subject teacher to the next for languages, mathematics, social studies, science, and computers. A variety of

extracurricular activities also are offered, either by teacher specialists or regular staff. The high school students follow a similar program but are even more mobile according to their broader curriculum needs. Nepal studies, including language and culture, is offered, and the trek program takes students in grades 5 to 12 into mountain villages for up to 14 days in the fall or spring. Students in all grades bring their lunch from home, as the school does not have a kitchen.

Lincoln School has an extensive Advanced Placement (AP) academic program in the high school in English, U.S. and world history, math, numerous sciences, and art. Students who successfully complete these courses and score a 3 or better on the final examination receive college credit for their work. Lincoln does not offer an International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma.

Kathmandu has a British school, a French school, and a Norwegian school for those who do not wish to enroll their elementary schoolchildren in Lincoln School. There also are a number of preschool or nursery school options available at any time.

Special Educational Opportunities

Several international language schools offer language training in Nepali, while other embassies and missions sponsor training in French, German, Japanese, and Chinese. Private instructors give courses in history and culture, as well as private lessons in music and Nepali dancing. Lecture programs and cultural tours are provided on a regular basis by International Community Service (ICS), a British expatriate support organization. Several American colleges offer programs in Kathmandu.

Sports

The pleasant year-round climate of Kathmandu, combined with the social and cultural climate of an international community, permits a variety of both indoor and outdoor activities.

The Phora Durbar recreation center, situated on several acres of land in the center of town, in addition to swimming offers three hard-surface tennis courts, an outdoor basketball court, baseball/softball diamond, and volleyball court. The snackbar serves breakfast and lunch every day, dinner many evenings, and pastries, popcorn, and other snacks throughout the day. The facility also houses a video club.

Kathmandu has a few private tennis courts and two golf courses (bring your own equipment). Golf memberships are expensive.

Private and hotel health club memberships also are available. Major hotels offer summer "sauna-and-swim" packages to families and individuals, as well as year-round exercise opportunities.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

The Kathmandu Valley is a sightseeing fantasy land, but the dirt and garbage in the larger towns and cities can interfere with otherwise pleasurable experiences. Tourists can visit the seven national museums scattered throughout the Valley, a small national zoo, botanical gardens, and local art galleries; or wander through Kathmandu's old city and shop at the colorful markets and experience the Newari architecture and temples up close. The other two main cities of the Valley, Patan and Bhaktapur, are marvels of traditional Newari architecture and were once home to kings of the Malla Dynasty. For more organized and in-depth cultural queries, ICS offers lectures, music programs, and hikes through outlying towns and villages to view places and faces mostly unchanged over the centuries. On the hills ringing the Valley are many foot trails that lead to breathtaking views of the Himalayas just north of the Valley.

Sightseeing outside of the Valley might take you north on a trek, organized by one of the many competent local agencies, into the middle hills (6,000-10,000 feet) if you

want to meander gently under the Himalayas, or high up into the mountains themselves. Treks suited to all tastes, abilities, and incomes are available, many of which you can organize independently at very little cost. It is an excellent way to experience Nepali village life. If you plan to trek, it is best to bring your own camping equipment (tents, sleeping bags, mats, hiking shoes, rucksacks, canteens). All types of equipment are available for rental or (except for tents) purchase from the many local shops, but buyers must remember that in most cases the items were manufactured in the back room or around the corner. Bring your own shoes, as locally available ones do not last.

If you opt to go south to the warmer jungle climate of Nepal's Terai, you might visit one of the jungle camps located in the Royal Chitwan National Park, a Government of Nepal-sponsored wildlife preserve, where the one-horned rhinoceros co-exists with the Royal Bengal tiger, the leopard, the elephant, and the tourist. Hunting is severely restricted. Licenses are required for firearms. Excellent fishing is available in the Narayani and Rapti Rivers in the Terai. Permits are not necessary, but bring your own equipment.

Another choice for adventure sightseeing could take you rafting gently down one of Nepal's rivers during the winter months or over some of the wildest white-water routes during the wet months.

Countless local agencies will arrange the rafting/camping trip most suitable for you. Nepal's many festivals offer a colorful and lively change of pace throughout the year and are a delight for the photographer. Photographic supplies, including black-and-white and color print and slide film, cameras, and lenses are available in the local photo shops. One-hour developing services are abundant, and many are quite good.

Kathmandu is a gardener's paradise. Things grow well here and

quickly, even through the winter season when night temperatures often fall below freezing. If you enjoy a garden, you will have great personal satisfaction in Kathmandu. Although most households employ a gardener, you can continue your pursuits (less the heavy work) at your leisure. Gardening tools are available in Kathmandu but are Nepali style. Seed catalogs are available, and local seeds are excellent for local varieties of flowers and vegetables.

Many people in Kathmandu own personal computers. Several good computer hardware stores repair and clean equipment and sell paper, disks, and software, but bring enough parts and extras to fit your own computer. A number of computer schools offer short-term courses in programming, spreadsheets, and word processing. Internet and e-mail is commercially available through local servers. Prices are higher than in the U.S. but are decreasing almost monthly.

Entertainment

Many cuisines are available for those who enjoy dining out, from Nepali, Tibetan, and Indian, to Italian, Thai, Korean, Japanese, Chinese, and American. Quality varies. Prices except for liquor are reasonable. Many restaurants offer live and local entertainment (traditional dances, instrumentals, and Nepalese/Indian ghazals). Others offer beautiful garden settings or views of the Himalayas.

Kathmandu nightlife offers several discotheques, hotel restaurants with dancing and live entertainment, and the occasional visiting cultural program. Several casinos offer to separate you from your money 24 hours daily.

Many Americans participate in an active amateur dramatic group, the Himalayan Amateurs (HAMS), providing periodic dinner/drama entertainment.

Local movie theaters feature only Nepali- and Hindi-language films. Video rentals (PAL system) are

available throughout Kathmandu in English, although quality varies.

Social Activities

Because the Nepalese are so friendly and the international community is so accessible, it is easy to meet Nepalese and third country nationals. International contacts can be made through the International Club, membership in which is available to all duty-free personnel in Nepal, and at such organizations as the Lions, Rotary Club, Junior Chamber of Commerce, church groups, the amateur theater group, and by volunteer work at hospitals or charitable organizations.

Another place to meet people is at Phora Durbar, the American Mission Association recreation facilities. Membership includes third-country diplomats and others with duty-free status in the Kingdom. The recreation area sponsors community tournaments for tennis, volleyball, and other games.

Volunteer work through the Active Women's Organization of Nepal (AWON) is a rewarding way to meet people of all nationalities and to participate in social development activities in Nepal. The organization manages a thrift shop, a health clinic for the poor, a 6,000-volume public library, and a girl's scholarship program. Profits are contributed to local charities.

Parents of Lincoln School students automatically are members of the Lincoln School Association, which brings parents together for various school activities throughout the year.

Entertaining at home is a pleasant and often used way to meet people and see friends in a casual atmosphere.

Pokharā

Pokharā, with a population of over 46,000, is situated 96 miles from Kāthmāndu and is connected by air as well as by two land routes. The old Rajpath Highway is a 12 hour

drive (via Hetauda and Butwal), while the road via Mugling takes six to eight hours. Daily flights connect Pokharā with Kāthmāndu, except during monsoon season when schedules depend on the weather; it is a 25 minute flight. Pokharā, the third largest city in Nepal, is the center of trade between the high mountain and middle hill people. The skyline of the town is dominated by the 23,000 foot Machapuchare ("the fish-tail mountain").

The Pokharā valley is one of the picturesque spots of Nepal. The beauty of the valley is enhanced by such famous lakes as Phewa, Begnas, and Rupa, which have their perennial source in the glacial region of the Annapuran range of the Himalayas. During the dry months of the year, Pokharā offers spectacular views of the Himalayas. Pokharā is a major departure point for treks into the Himalayan foothills.

Several very good hotels are available in Pokharā at reasonable prices; running water and electricity are available year round. From March to September, the temperature ranges from 69°F to 95°F with occasional showers. The monsoon rains begin about mid-June and last until September. From October to February, the temperature ranges from 35°F to 68°F with clear weather.

Pokharā has limited shopping facilities. Food, clothing, and other necessities are available, although in less variety than in Kāthmāndu. There is a missionary-run hospital with several doctors, but most Americans are treated in Kāthmāndu.

Communications are provided by international mail and cable. In an emergency, Nepalese Government facilities are used to relay messages by radio. Telephone lines connect Pokharā and Kāthmāndu, but calls must be made through telephone exchange offices.

Many tourists visit Pokharā, either to stay and enjoy the scenery or in passing when going on treks into

higher elevations or on the way to India.

Hetauda

The population of Hetauda is more than 40,000. The city is located on a major paved road connecting Kāthmāndu with the Indian border, close to a jungle area. Hetauda is a one-hour drive from Raxual, India, which serves as the primary entry surface point into Nepal.

Royal Nepal Airlines serves the Sumira airstrip, 40 minutes from Hetauda, daily. Service can be very irregular during the monsoon season. Travel time by the old Rajpath Highway to Kāthmāndu is about five hours. Travel to Kāthmāndu can also be made via Narayanghat and Mugling on a longer, but paved, route and requires only four hours.

A government hospital is located at Hetauda and a missionary hospital is located at Raxual at the Nepal/Indian border. Communication is by international mail, telephone, and Government of Nepal cable facilities.

Hetauda is situated above the Terai and, although summer is hot, that season is milder than on the plains. Winters are very mild, with flowers blooming year round. The entire Himalayan range, including Mt. Everest, is visible.

Some hunting is available in the nearby jungle. There is an elephant camp in the Chitwan district, and many opportunities for fishing and trekking exist.

Tulsipur

Tulsipur is located in Dang district in the Rapati Zone of western Nepal. Tulsipur is accessible by road from the Indian border and from Nepalgunj in the far west all year. With the completion of the Tulsipur-Ghorahi-Lamahi road (paved) in 1982, access is easy and assured. The East-West Highway provides year-round access to Kāthmāndu by road (12–13 hours). Com-



Himalaya Mountains near Pokhara

Susan Rock. Reproduced by permission.

mercial flights from Tulsipur to Nepalgunj and to Kāthmāndu are generally reliable, except during monsoon season.

In spite of this isolation, and concomitant logistics problems, most basic commodities (rice, kerosene, salt, sugar) are normally available. Tulsipur bazaar has an ever-increasing variety of fresh fruits and vegetables in season, and meat and poultry are generally available. Canned, packaged, and bottled goods suited to American tastes must be brought in from either Kāthmāndu or India.

Running water is normally available for living quarters the year round. Electricity is available and is run by generator. Residential arrangements are adequate by American standards, but are by no means luxurious.

No recreational facilities other than trekking, horseback riding, and possibly volleyball are available in the town. Most health problems requiring diagnosis and treatment are done in Kāthmāndu.

March through September are extremely hot months in Tulsipur, with monsoon rains bringing some relief during July and August. Octo-

ber through to March brings a pleasantly warm climate, with cool nights.

OTHER CITIES

BHAIRAWA is located in the central Terai, close to the Indian border. Roads connecting Bhairawa to Pokharā and Kāthmāndu are occasionally closed because of rock slides during the monsoon season. There is air service to Kāthmāndu. Bhairawa has adequate health facilities, but most medical treatment of Americans is done in Kāthmāndu. Communications are provided by international mail and cable. In an emergency, Nepalese Government facilities are used to relay messages by radio. Radio communication has been established between the Agricultural Farm and the Department of Agriculture, Kāthmāndu.

BHAKTAPUR (also called Bhadgoan) is one of the oldest cities in the Kāthmāndu Valley. Located nine miles from the capital city at the eastern end of the valley, Bhaktapur is known as a center of medieval art. Its five-story Nyatapola Temple is an excellent example of Nepalese architecture. The temple's stairway is flanked by a series of

animal pairs, humans, and gods, each supposedly 10 times as strong as that below it. In the center of the old city is the art gallery, which contains Buddhist and Hindu tantric art; the 15th-century Royal Palace; and a replica of the 15th-century Pushupatinath Temple. Adjoining the art gallery is the Golden Gate of Bhaktapur. Near the city is the ancient Pujahari monastery; its central courtyard contains rich wood carvings and a noteworthy peacock window. This enclosure has been renovated and restored. Bhaktapur (which means “the city of devotees”) was founded in the ninth century, according to legend. Its industries include pottery and weaving. The city’s population is over 130,000.

BIRĀTNAGAR, situated in southeastern Nepal about 150 miles from Kāthmāndu, is one of Nepal’s important manufacturing cities. Furniture, stainless steel, processed rice, and oilseeds are produced here. The population is more than 130,000.

BIRGANJ is located in the Terai on the Indian border, about 105 miles south of Kāthmāndu. The city has a population of over 43,000 and is a market town for agricultural products. It is also a manufacturing town producing textiles, sugar, flour, jute, and shoes.

LUMBINI is situated in a remote area south of Pokharā, in the western Terai. This is supposedly the birthplace of Buddha, and there are many religious shrines here. The broken Ashokan Pillar, remnants of a monastery, and images of Buddha’s mother are among preserved areas. Extensive excavation work is being conducted in Lumbini.

PAṬĀN is located three miles southeast of Kāthmāndu and, with a population of more than 117,000, is the second largest town in the Kāthmāndu Valley. Once called Lalitpur, meaning “the city of beauty,” it was the capital of the independent Malla kingdom. Today, Paṭān is a major center of Buddhist art and craftsmanship; many craft shops

are in the market area. The old section of Paṭān provides visitors with many examples of temple architecture, most dating from the 17th century. Krishna Mandir, Bhimsen, Taleju, and Shiva are some of the temples that may be seen in this area of the city. The old royal palace is also open to tourists. Nearby is Hiranya Varna Mahabihar, one of the most ornately decorated Buddhist temples in the country. The five-storied temple of Kumbeshwar is also interesting; ritual bathing takes place in the courtyard yearly. The spring water here is said to originate in the sacred lake of Gosainkund and the Mahabouddha Temple.

RAMPUR is located in a valley some 140 miles from Kāthmāndu. Royal Nepal Airlines offers regular commercial service to Bharatpur, seven miles from Rampur, over an all-weather road. Rampur has no doctors or hospitals, although both can be found in Bharatpur. Most medical treatment is obtained in Kāthmāndu. No telephone lines connect Kāthmāndu and Rampur. International mail and local telegraphic services are available, but are unreliable. Rampur has virtually no shopping facilities; the nearest bazaar is in Narayanghat near Bharatpur. Clothing, some food, and other necessities must be purchased in Kāthmāndu. Because of the extremely poor road conditions in the area, only four-wheel-drive vehicles should be used. The climate is pleasant from October to March, ranging from the mid-40s(F) at night to the 60s during the day. From April to June, it is extremely hot with occasional rains, and during the monsoon season (June to October), it is hot and humid. The Tiger Tops jungle resort is only 15 miles from Rampur, and is accessible by road except during the monsoons.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The Kingdom of Nepal is roughly the size and shape of Tennessee, with an area of about 55,000 square miles. The country is wedged between China to the north and India to the south, east, and west.

Nepal’s geography is perhaps the most varied of any nation in the world. From the plains and lowlands of the south (about 150 feet above sea level), the terrain rises in a mere 100 miles to the dramatic heights of the world’s highest mountain range, the Himalayas, which include Mount Everest (Sagarmatha) at 29,028 feet. Ten other mountains exceed 24,000 feet, and more than 200 peaks exceed 21,000 feet.

Geographically, the country may be divided into three roughly parallel strips, each running generally east and west. The Terai region, the southernmost strip about 15 miles wide, covers about 20 percent of the total land area. It is an extension of the Gangetic Plain of north India—flat open country blending to forested hills, and once noted for its heavy jungles and big game, including tiger, rhinoceros, elephant, wild boar, and crocodile. The central region, sometimes called the “hill area,” is about 60 miles wide, ranges from 3,000 to 12,000 feet above sea level, and covers approximately 60 percent of the land area. It includes the Valley of Kāthmāndu, with its encircling “hills” up to 9,000 feet in height. The northern region consists of the high mountain area, 12,000 to 29,000 feet, forming the majestic panorama of the perpetually snow-covered Himalayan range. The region is about 25 miles wide and accounts for nearly 20 percent of the total land area.

The climate in Kāthmāndu, the capital, is generally pleasant. During the fall and winter season (October

to March), temperatures range from 28°F to 75°F. This season is characterized by morning fog, sunny days, and cold nights. It may rain occasionally, but Kāthmāndu has had no snow since 1939.

The spring season (March through May) has a temperature range from 40°F to 90°F, with intermittent rain, warm days, and usually comfortable nights. Near the end of the spring season and before the rainy season begins, dust gathers heavily throughout the Kāthmāndu Valley, covering everything with its film and creating a haze that obscures the mountains.

The monsoon season begins in June and continues until late September. Temperatures in the rainy season range from 55°F to 90°F, rainfall is from 30 to 60 inches. Rain showers occur daily.

Population

Nepal's population of 23 million is growing at an annual rate of 2.5%. Approximately 45% of the population live in the Terai Region on 20% of the total land area, and the remaining 55% live in the central or hill regions. The Kathmandu Valley, home to the nation's capital, is growing rapidly and is the most densely populated area, accounting for about 10% of the total population (or 2 million), with Kathmandu proper at about 800,000.

Agriculture absorbs 90% of the economically active workforce and includes animal husbandry, forestry, and fishing. The remainder are occupied in business, industrial, and service sectors. Per capita income is approximately US \$210.

Nepal is a multiracial, multilingual country. Major ethnic groups that make up Nepal include Newar, Tamang, Sherpa, Rai, Limbu, Thakali, and Tibetan. Within the different groups, people are further differentiated socially by caste or occupational group. In the hill and Terai regions, people of both Indo-Aryan and Mongoloid stock can be found, and many are a mixture of

the two. The northern mountain region is inhabited by the Sherpas of mountaineering fame, as well as by large numbers of Tibetans.

The official language is Nepali, although more than 18 other languages and many dialects are spoken throughout the country. Nepali, derived from Sanskrit, is related to the Indian languages of Hindi and Bengali. The written script (Devnagari) is the same as Hindi. Nepali is spoken by most Nepalese in the Kāthmāndu Valley. The Newars, the original inhabitants of the Kāthmāndu Valley, still constitute over half of the Valley's population and work as artisans, business people, professionals, government officials, and farmers. The old cultural and architectural monuments of the Valley are almost entirely of Newar origin. The Newars have their own language, Newari, a Tibeto-Burman language not related to Nepali; however, most Newars in the Valley also understand Nepali. Many government and business people speak English.

Most Nepalis profess Hinduism, the official religion. The King is believed to be a manifestation of Lord Vishnu, the Protector and Preserver. Religion is important in Nepal, and the Kāthmāndu Valley alone has more than 2,700 religious shrines, some more than 2,000 years old. Temples, stupas, and pagodas vary in size and type, with some of austere simplicity and others of rich architectural beauty. A significant Buddhist minority lives peacefully with the Hindu majority, so that Hindu temples are sacred to Buddhists, and Buddhist shrines are important to the Hindus. Buddhist and Hindu festivals are occasions for common worship and rejoicing.

Public Institutions

For about 100 years, up to 1951, Nepal's Government was in the hands of hereditary Prime Ministers of the Rana family, and the King was a figurehead without real power. After 1947, the people of Nepal, in part sparked by India's

independence movement, began to show open resentment to the autocratic Rana rule. Agitation increased for a government more responsive to changing times.

Relations between King Tribhuvan and the Rana Prime Minister deteriorated, and in November 1950, the King escaped from his palace prison and took asylum in India. An armed revolt to overthrow the Rana regime then flared throughout the country, with an armistice being signed the following February. King Tribhuvan returned amid popular rejoicing, and non-Ranas for the first time assumed key positions in the government. Shortly thereafter, the last Rana Prime Minister resigned, marking the end of Rana rule.

The late King Mahendra approved a new constitution in February 1959, under which Nepal's first multiparty parliament was elected. After a brief period of parliamentary rule, the King proclaimed in December 1960 that the experiment in parliamentary democracy had failed. He took full personal control of the government, dissolved the parliament, and banned political parties.

In 1962, the government proclaimed a new constitution, which established a "partyless panchayat system" of government consisting of various councils (panchayat) of increasing power, with ultimate power vested in the King. Subsequently, the constitution has been amended several times in response to the country's developing political demands. King Bihendra in 1979 ordered a referendum to decide whether to retain the panchayat system with suitable reforms or to reintroduce a multiparty system, following widespread discontent spearheaded by university students.

The panchayat system won a disputed election by 2.4 million votes to 2.1 million, and the constitution was amended to establish the direct election of members of the Rastriya Panchayat (national legislature) and expand freedoms of speech, publication, and assembly. In 1990,

in response to nationwide agitation for a return to a multiparty system of government, King Bihendra agreed to lift the ban on political parties; to further revise the constitution; and to hold general elections. These elections took place in May 1991, constituting the first free multiparty elections under the new constitution. In all, there have been three free elections in the first 9 years of this constitution.

Arts, Science, and Education

Nepal in 1950 had 321 primary schools enrolling about 8,000 students; 11 secondary schools with 1,500 students; and one small college and a technical school with a combined student body of 250. The country then had no educational facilities for girls, and the few who were educated were either privately tutored or had studied in India. Literacy was negligible.

When Rana rule ended, Nepal undertook to establish a system of universal primary education, greatly supported and developed through USAID efforts. The most recent statistics, from 1994, indicate that 40% of the Nepalese adult population is literate (male: 55%; female: 25%). Approximately 65% of the Kāthmāndu Valley population is literate. The figures reflect the increased importance attached to education: 21,100 primary schools with 3,195,000 students (of whom 1,260,000 were girls) and 81,500 teachers; 4,800 lower secondary schools with 680,000 students and 15,750 teachers; 2,200 secondary schools with 414,000 students and 11,100 teachers; and a higher education system of 10 institutes comprising Tribhuvan University. The University directly administers and supports 65 campuses, approximately half of which are outside the Kāthmāndu Valley. The total number of students of all university campuses is approximately 100,000. The University has four research centers: the Center for Nepal and Asian Studies; the Center for Economic Development and Adminis-

tration; the Research Center for Applied Science and Technology; and the Center for Educational Reforms, Innovations, and Development.

Severe strains developed within the educational system with such a rapid expansion. In 1970, the Palace appointed a task force to redesign the education system, resulting in the National Education System Plan (NESP) that came into effect in 1971. The educational structure was reorganized in accordance with the NESP to broaden the availability of education to the rural areas, increase its access to women, and meet manpower requirements. In 1975, primary education was made free (but not compulsory), including the provision of classrooms, teachers, and educational materials. Private schools are permitted and have been expanding rapidly.

Under the new plan, Nepal's educational structure is divided into two levels, the school level and the higher education level. Institutes in each subject of higher education have been established under the supervision and control of Tribhuvan University.

The widespread desire for education puts great pressure on the government to increase the number of schools and teachers. In spite of the NESP, quality varies widely, with higher quality schools located in population centers. Under the NESP, however, intense efforts have been made to equalize educational opportunity. Although Nepal is still a long way from universal education, great strides are being made.

In the arts, Nepal, and particularly the Kāthmāndu Valley, is a living museum. Pagoda-style architecture may have originated in Nepal and moved northward to China and Japan. Hundreds of temples are ornately carved; old Nepalese bronzes are exquisite; and older, elaborately carved wooden Newari homes reflect the skills of the Valley woodworkers. The King has established a Royal Nepal Academy, where traditional Nepalese dance

and music performances may be seen. Occasional exhibitions of paintings by the country's artists are held at the Nepal Association of Fine Arts. In the past few years, several galleries have opened that regularly exhibit local artwork.

Science is in its infancy in Nepal, although Tribhuvan University has graduate departments in chemistry, zoology, physics, and botany. As a step toward the development of science education, in 1983 His Majesty's Government constituted the Royal Nepal Academy of Science and Technology to promote the study and research of science and technology. Fulbright and National Science Foundation scholars are helping to improve science and mathematics education.

Commerce and Industry

Nepal remains one of the poorest countries in the world, with more than 40% of the population below the Government's poverty line, and little industrialization or private sector growth. Some progress has been achieved with technical and economic assistance, principally from India, Germany, Japan, China, the U.S., the World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank. Malaria is under control in the fertile lowland areas, thereby increasing the potential for agricultural productivity. Roads, although in poor condition, link Kāthmāndu to India and Tibet, and additional roads are being constructed linking major urban centers. Several hydroelectric projects have been completed, and more are being proposed and built. A national and international communications network, including a satellite earth station, has been completed, and small industries such as cotton and jute textiles, cement, cigarettes, and shoes have been operating for years. Commercial attention is directed at development of Nepal's major economic resources: hydroelectric power and tourism.

The economy is essentially agrarian. Agriculture provides about two-thirds of the country's income, with rice the main food crop and jute now grown as the main export crop.

Foreign trade plays a key role in the economic development of Nepal. Currently, Nepal has trade agreements with 16 countries and trade relations with about 60 others.

One-third of Nepal's exports—mainly agricultural products and timber—go to India, and a third of Nepal's imports come from India—mostly textiles and other manufactured goods. Nepal signed a trade agreement with India in 1996, which effectively places it within a free trade area with India. Increased exports of ready-made garments have made the U.S. one of Nepal's leading export markets. Carpets

account for about half the exports, going mainly to Europe. Tourism is also a major industry.

Transportation

Automobiles

A personal vehicle is strongly recommended but not absolutely necessary. Toyota and Mitsubishi have the largest dealership systems in Kathmandu; Nissan, Honda, and Subaru are represented but have more limited direct dealer service available. If you ship a car from the U.S. or Japan, consider spare parts. If you ship a used vehicle, make sure it is in excellent condition and has a new or good battery and new tires, since these are expensive and hard to obtain in Nepal. Current Nepali law forbids the import of a car more than 5 years old by anyone who is not on the diplomatic list.

Do not bring large American cars because of the narrow streets of Kathmandu, and because spare parts for American cars are not readily available. Consider a four-wheel-drive vehicle for most travel outside the Kathmandu Valley. Do not bring a vehicle with low ground clearance, even for strictly local driving within the Valley. A right-

hand drive vehicle is best for safety reasons, as Nepalis drive on the left in the British and Japanese manner, but U.S.-style, left-hand drive vehicles are permitted and used without serious problems by assigned employees.

A Nepalese drivers license is required in Nepal and may be obtained on presentation of a valid U.S. drivers license.

Local

The Kathmandu Valley has hard-surface roads but also has many dirt roads and jeep tracks. Most streets and roads are narrow and bumpy with blind corners, and congested with ever-increasing numbers of pedestrians, porters, carts, cows, buses, taxis, trolleys, pedicabs, bicycles, and motorbikes. Foreign residents seldom use buses as taxis, and pedicabs are plentiful and convenient, except after dark. Indian and Chinese bicycles are widely used and can be purchased locally at reasonable cost. Used Western-made mountain bikes sometimes can be purchased, although many prefer to bring their own bikes. Air pollution has increased dramatically in the last several years due to the substantial increase in motor vehicles and brick factories within the Valley. Air-filter breathing masks, therefore, are becoming increasingly popular among bikers and walkers.

The national road system linking the major towns within Nepal is improving but still limited, with some of the fewest miles of paved and improved hardpacked road; compared to population density of any country in the world (about 5,000 miles in 1997). Most of the primary internal Nepali destinations such as Pokhara, Biratnagar, Birgunj, and Janakpur are connected to the capital by paved road. The East-West Highway provides a good paved road throughout the Terai, except west of Nepalgunj. Most of the more famous mountain trekking destinations are accessible only by plane, as are some of the more remote lowland destinations.

It is necessary to go on foot to reach many places in rural Nepal. Use of porters is a traditional and practical method of transporting goods to and from many places in the country.

Kathmandu is connected to the Indian border by two all-weather roads. Another, mostly fair-weather road, links the capital with Tibet. Tourists should check the current regulations regarding travel to Tibet, as they are subject to frequent change. Tourists in 1997 could travel to Tibet by obtaining a visa at the border.

Regional

Royal Nepal Airlines Corporation (RNAC) has an extensive route structure within Nepal, encompassing more than 30 airfields nationwide. RNAC is a government-owned corporation. Several private airlines also operate domestic routes. They use smaller (and newer) planes and frequently offer lower prices for similar trips. Air travel is the only practical means of transportation (save walking) to many areas these airlines service. For domestic routes, RNAC depends on Avro, Twin Otter, and other STOL (short takeoff and landing) aircraft. In the tourist season (October–April), RNAC and domestic private airlines offer a 1-hour "Mountain Flight" from Kathmandu and Pokhara that gives a close-up view of the major Himalayan peaks, including Mount Everest.

Ten regional or international airlines serve Kathmandu as of June 1999. These include RNAC, Singapore Airlines, Indian Airlines, Thai International, Biman Bangladesh, Burma Airways, Pakistan International, Druk Air, Air Qatar, Dragonair, and Austrian Air. Kathmandu enjoys three times a day service to and from New Delhi, daily service to and from Bangkok, 6 days a week service to and from Calcutta, and 3 days a week connections with Singapore. Kathmandu also is linked to Dhaka, Rangoon, Karachi, and Hong Kong with several flights a week. Connections for ongoing international flights to Europe and the U.S. are made generally through

Bangkok or New Delhi. RNAC flies from Kāthmāndu to London via Dubai, as does Air Qatar through Doha. Bangkok, Hong Kong, and Singapore are the gateways for flights to Japan and the U.S. west coast.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

Kāthmāndu has an automatic telephone exchange. The cost is modest, and service is generally good, as are long distance connections within Nepal. International telephone service is available via satellite, and direct-dial calls to the U.S. and elsewhere are routine. A call to the U.S. costs about \$4.50 per minute. Cellular telephones became available in 1999 but are very expensive.

Facsimile service in Nepal is available locally in all major hotels.

Internet access and e-mail service is available through local commercial sources. Rates generally are higher than in the U.S. but are coming down.

Radio and TV

Kāthmāndu has 20-channel cable TV service available in many, but not all, parts of the city. Stations broadcast a mix of English and Hindi programming. Service accessibility is increasing continuously. Set-up minimum charges and monthly rates are quite reasonable by U.S. standards, usually about \$25-\$40 and \$5, respectively. CNN, BBC, HBO, ESPN, Cinemax, Star Movies, and Star Sports are among the English offerings. TV satellite dishes can be purchased locally.

Cable and local TV broadcasts are on the PAL system. Videotapes available for rent at the American Recreation Center are NTSC, while the British Library next door offers PAL tapes. Bring a multisystem TV and VCR, as local equipment is quite expensive. Radio Nepal broadcasts in English at certain times daily. Reception of VOA, BBC, Indian, and Pakistani stations, and

some from the Far East, sometimes is possible with a shortwave radio.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

Several English-language daily newspapers are published in Kāthmāndu. The Rising Nepal and The Kāthmāndu Post are read widely. A total of 450 vernacular newspapers circulate in Nepal. English language Indian newspapers also are available, as are international editions of Time and Newsweek. The international editions of the International Herald Tribune, USA Today, The Economist, and The Asian Wall Street Journal can be purchased locally or are available by subscription from Singapore.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

It is also recommended strongly to have mail-in prescription service in your personal medical insurance.

If you wear glasses, bring at least two pairs and a copy of your current prescription. Contact lenses can be worn here, although only limited local replacements are available.

Although a number of well-trained, excellent Nepali physicians are in Kāthmāndu, local hospitals are poorly equipped and considered inadequate by Western standards. Therefore, for anything but the gravest emergency, serious medical problems requiring hospitalization demand evacuation; in some cases, this may be to the U.S. Kāthmāndu is considered medically inappropriate for obstetrics either complicated or routine.

There are several private clinics used by the international community in Kāthmāndu with doctors and medical staff trained in Europe or in the U.S.

Dental health care is available through a private dental clinic. The dental clinic is staffed by two American dentists and a hygienist and is operated on a fee-for-service basis

with a fee structure similar to that in the U.S. Orthodontic care is available.

Community Health

The general lack of basic public sanitation and sewage management poses major health problems in Kāthmāndu and all parts of Nepal. This leads to many illnesses within the Nepali community and is, potentially, a source of disease transmission to the expatriate community. Understanding the problem, however, and taking necessary precautionary measures, such as water purification and proper food handling techniques, help to ensure personal good health. The opportunities for outdoor physical activities in this pleasant climate also contribute to good physical well-being. Air pollution contributes to respiratory problems in the Kāthmāndu Valley.

Preventive Measures

Infectious diseases are a major health problem in Nepal, whether it is a simple respiratory infection, parasitic bowel infestation, or a more serious medical problem such as tuberculosis. Common medical problems among Americans include respiratory infections, allergies, diarrheal diseases, and skin diseases. Although some malaria (falciparum and vivax) still is present in the lowlands (Terai), the government's malarial control programs since the 1960s have transformed an area that once endured the reputation of being one of the worst malarial areas in the world to one where people work and play in relative safety from the malarial parasite. Antimalarial prophylaxis still is necessary for those living in the Terai, or those visiting during most of the year, however. To date, chloroquine-resistant strains of falciparum have not been identified, and chloroquine (Aralen) is the recommended prophylactic. As Kāthmāndu is at 4,500 feet, malaria is not a problem in the city or valley, nor is it a problem anywhere in the middle hills or mountain areas.

Have your immunization status current before departing. Recom-

mended vaccinations (in addition to the usual childhood shots such as DPT, polio, MMR, and HIB) include: rabies (human diploid cell), typhoid, meningococcal (A and C) bivalent vaccine, Hepatitis A and B, and Japanese-B Encephalitis.

All water must be filtered and boiled before consumption. All fresh vegetables, whether purchased in the local market or grown at home, must be soaked and sterilized using a chlorine bleach solution. Iodine is not as effective for protection against parasites and other intestinal agents. Local milk must be boiled before use.

The many pharmacies in Kāthmāndu carry a wide range of pharmaceuticals (most available without prescription), although few American-manufactured drugs are available. Most drugs are manufactured by Indian subsidiaries of European or American pharmaceutical firms and have not passed the rigorous quality controls of Western-manufactured drugs. Bring those brands or items you prefer or arrange for a supply from the U.S.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

The normal route from the U.S. east coast to Kāthmāndu is over the North Pole via Tokyo to Bangkok, then to Kāthmāndu after an overnight stay caused by airline connections. The adventuresome still can cross the Atlantic and pass through Europe to India, but connections between India and Nepal can be troublesome. Flights routinely are canceled and New Delhi Airport accommodations are spartan.

Travelers occasionally report immigration difficulties in crossing the Nepal-China border overland in either direction. U.S. citizens planning to travel to Tibet from Nepal may contact the U.S. Embassy in Kāthmāndu for current information on the status of the border-crossing

points. Travelers may also wish to check with the People's Republic of China Embassy in Nepal for current regulations for entry into Tibet.

Passport and visa required. Tourist visas can be purchased upon arrival at Tribhuvan International Airport in Kāthmāndu and at all other ports of entry. All foreigners flying out of the country must pay an airport exit tax, regardless of the length of their stay. Travelers may obtain further information on entry/exit requirements by contacting the Royal Nepalese Embassy at 2131 Leroy Place, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008, telephone (202) 667-4550 or the Consulate General in New York at (212) 370-3988. The Internet address of the Embassy of Nepal is http://www/newweb.net/nepal_embassy/

Americans living in or visiting Nepal are encouraged to register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Nepal and to obtain updated information on travel and security within Nepal. The U.S. Embassy is located at Pani Pokhari in Kāthmāndu, telephone (977) (1) 411179; fax (977) (1) 419963. U.S. citizens may also register by e-mail by accessing the U.S. Embassy's home page at <http://www.southasia.com/USA>. The home page also provides updated information regarding security in Nepal, Embassy services, and travel in Nepal.

Pets

Nepal has no quarantine requirements, but Customs does require a current rabies shot and a certificate of health. Get the full range of inoculations to protect your pets. Veterinary service is available in Kāthmāndu with several licensed veterinarians.

Firearms and Ammunition

Only diplomatic-list personnel may import firearms to Nepal.

Currency, Banking and Weights and Measures

The unit of currency is the Nepali rupee, divided into 100 paisa. One

rupee equals about 1.6 cents. The abbreviation for rupee is Rs. before the sum, or often NC after the sum to distinguish from Indian currency, which is sometimes expressed as IC. The official rate of exchange in December 1999 was US\$1=Rs68.5, but it can fluctuate daily. Nepali currency notes are issued in denominations of Rs. 1,000, 500, 100, 50, 25, 20, 10, 5, 2, and 1. Nepali coins range from 5 rupees down to 1 paisa.

Nepal has its own system of weights and measures, but the metric system is widely used in Kāthmāndu.

Disaster Preparedness

Nepal is an earthquake-prone country. General information about natural disaster preparedness is available via the Internet from the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) at <http://www.fema.gov>.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

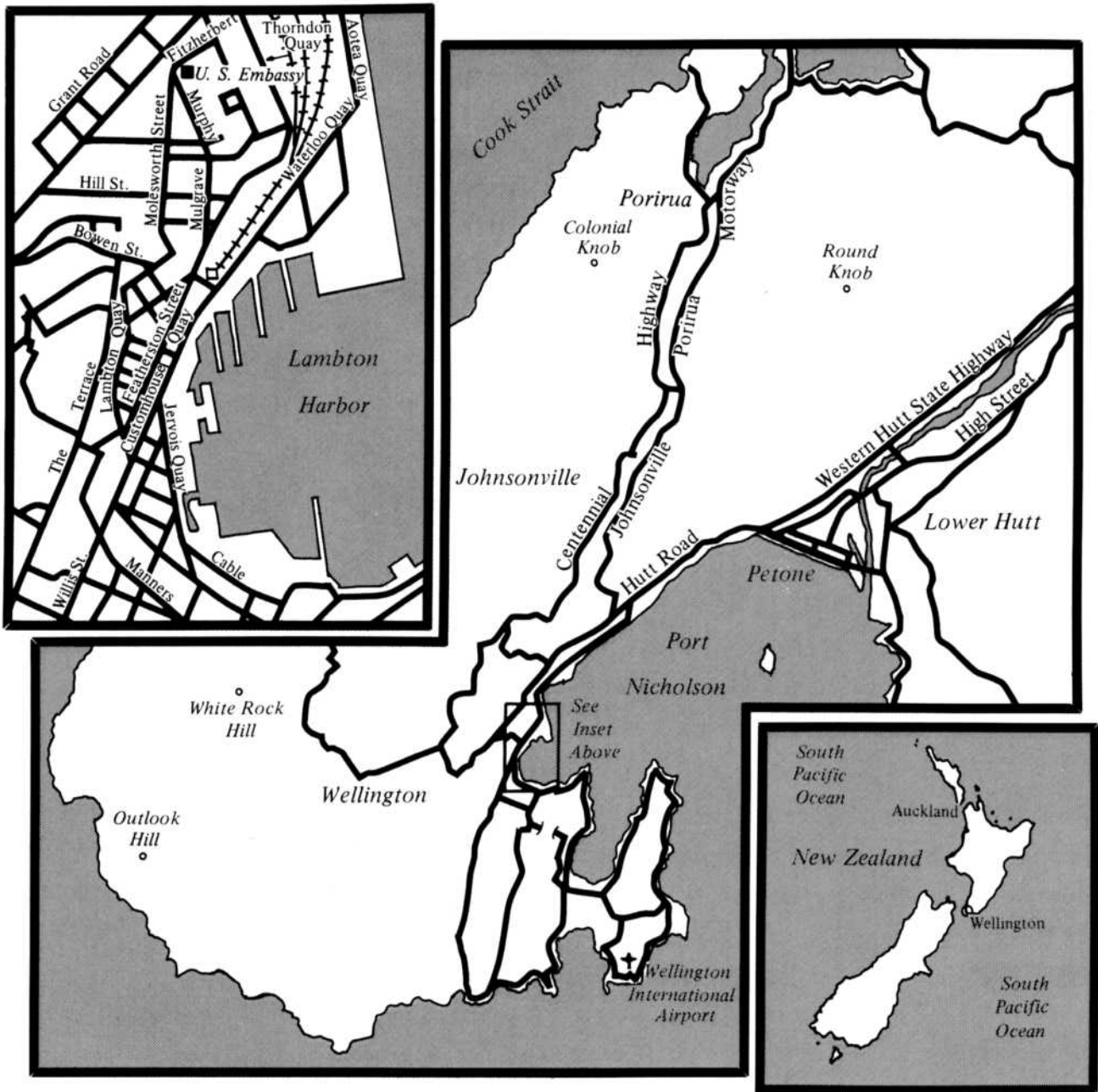
Jan. 11	Unity Day
Jan. 29	Martyrs' Day
Feb/Mar.	Shivaratri*
Feb. 19	Democracy Day
Mar.	Holi*
Mar. 8	Women's Day
Mar. 9	Fagu Purnima
April	Varshaprati- pada (New Year)*
May	Buddha Jayanti*
Aug.	Teej Women's Festival*
Oct.	Asthami Jayanti*
Oct 17.	Armed Forces Day
Nov. 8	Queen Aishworya's Birthday
Dec. 16	Constitution Day
Dec. 28	HM the King Birebdra's Birthday Diwali*

*variable

RECOMMENDED READING

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Wellington, New Zealand

NEW ZEALAND

Major Cities:

Wellington, Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin

Other Cities:

Gisborne, Hamilton, Hastings, Invercargill, Napier, Palmerston North, Rotorua, Timaru, Whangarei

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated March 1993. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

NEW ZEALAND, which lies in the South Pacific just west of the international date line, is a fresh and vigorous country that delights the senses with its towering mountains and swift, clear rivers, its green pastures and deep lakes, and its glaciers and geysers and hot springs. The splendid scenery is one of the most rewarding aspects of this South Pacific nation.

Although New Zealand participated in the Paris Peace Conference that resulted in the Treaty of Versailles, and ratified the treaty on September 2, 1919, it is comparatively new on the stage of world affairs. Until 1935, the view was held that, in foreign policy, the British Empire

should be regarded as a unit and that, ideally, it should speak with one voice. From 1936 onward, however, New Zealand began asserting an independent position on matters of international concern. New Zealand is a member of the United Nations and other international organizations. Since 1985, the country has maintained an anti-nuclear stance. All nuclear powered or armed ships are prohibited from entering New Zealand ports.

MAJOR CITIES

Wellington

Wellington is a city of superb views whose motto, *Suprema a Situ* (Supreme by Situation), is apt. Many Americans find it somewhat reminiscent of San Francisco or Seattle. It has a population estimated at 326,000 (2000). Located where the North Island tapers to its end in the Cook Strait, Wellington's land has been pushed up and twisted into a pattern of ridges and gullies. Settlement dates from 1840, when the first shiploads of settlers arrived under the auspices of the London-based New Zealand Land Company. The city was named for the Duke of Wellington and became New Zealand's capital in 1865. Well-

ington's Port Nicholson Harbor has many moods, but when the sun is shining and the air is still, it is breathtakingly beautiful. The city and its suburbs extend like a huge amphitheater across the green hills surrounding Port Nicholson.

Wellington's aggressive terrain has a climate to match, and the threat of earthquakes is ever present. Windy Wellington is a term of abuse applied by some visitors unprepared for the city's gales but a term of affection from residents who have long since come to terms with the vagaries of the local weather.

Except for a small area of flat land in the city center, most of it reclaimed, Wellington clings to the steep hillsides. There is no room for expansion, except upwards. Residential areas spread across the hillsides, providing many residents with spectacular views of the city and harbor below. The downtown area is dominated by many modern commercial office buildings and by the Parliament Buildings, especially the Executive Wing of Parliament known as the Beehive.

Located near the geographical center of the country, Wellington is a principal overseas shipping terminal, even though it has direct international air connections only with Australia. Wellington houses the

head offices of all government departments and many national organizations.

Food

You can purchase most familiar foods in Wellington. Although Wellington has several fairly large supermarkets that resemble those of American chains, visits to the smaller stores and specialty shops, such as the greengrocer, the butcher, and the delicatessen, are often desirable.

Staple items are in adequate supply, but items such as canned goods and imported food items are expensive. Fresh meats are abundant and relatively inexpensive. Some Americans buy fresh meat from butchers.

Dairy products are excellent and cost less than in the U.S. Fresh pasteurized milk is completely safe for infants, and you can buy it in dairy stores and supermarkets or through home delivery. Skim milk and cow's milk substitutes are also available.

Fresh fruit and vegetables are plentiful and reasonably priced if bought in season. Some supermarkets have good supplies of these items, but greengrocers usually have better selections, although at higher prices. Frozen fruits and vegetables are usually limited and are more expensive than in the U.S. New Zealand laws prohibit the importation of frozen, refrigerated or uncooked meat, poultry, eggs and egg products, and of pet food containing raw lamb or sheep meat.

Clothing

You can wear warm clothing comfortably most of the year.

Men wear springweight suits about 3 months of the year and heavier suits the rest of the time. Temperatures may occasionally call for a topcoat, but a raincoat is essential. A topcoat with a zip-in liner is useful. Umbrellas are sometimes impractical because of Wellington's high winds but are highly useful at other times. You may purchase shirts, suits, topcoats, raincoats, and sport coats locally, and, with the current

exchange rate, they are reasonably priced. However, selections may be limited by quality and/or size.

The selection of women's clothing is not as limited as menswear. In Wellington, summer cottons are practical for only 2 or 3 months of the year. Long-sleeved dresses of any weight, suits, heavier dresses, slacks, sweaters, and skirts are comfortable the rest of the time. Good rain gear is essential, and the same types of coats suggested for men are recommended. Wellington evenings are cool, and women need wraps or stoles most of the year. Even when the weather permits the wearing of lightweight apparel, most women carry a light wrap or sweater to guard against sudden temperature changes. Skirts with a variety of dressy blouses and tops are useful for dinner parties.

Clothing for children and infants is expensive and limited. School uniforms that must be bought here, satisfy much of the clothing needs of most school-age children. Boys and girls at all secondary schools and most private primary schools wear uniforms that include a raincoat, shirt or blouse, pants or skirt, cap, socks or stockings, sweater (jersey), and blazer. Some public primary schools (ages 5–12) do not require uniforms. Away from school, children and teenagers wear essentially what they would wear in the U.S.

Bring a good supply of play clothes and dress clothing. For boys up to 12 years old, you can combine white shirt, tie, and sweater with school pants for dressy events. During most of the year, a jacket and a lightweight coat are useful. Children need cardigans or sweaters and warm pajamas for winter.

Supplies and Services

Most toiletries and cosmetics are available, but imported perfumes and cosmetics are expensive. Common first-aid medical supplies and medicines, miscellaneous household items, e.g., cleaning equipment, repair materials, clothespins, tools, etc., are readily available.

Some American cigarette brands, including some filter-tipped brands, are sold locally. New Zealand is a wine-producing nation and produces some excellent wines. New Zealand brews excellent export beers. You can obtain a few brands of American wine, bourbon, and beer from local suppliers, but choice is limited.

Barbers and beauty shops are plentiful and do good quality work; prices are comparable to those in the U.S. Appointments are necessary at most shops. Tipping is not customary.

Dressmakers and tailors are skilled but are heavily booked and quite expensive.

Some dry-cleaners use American equipment and methods, but their work may not always be good, especially on suede and leather. Commercial laundries are adequate but hard on clothes. Doing your own laundry is preferable.

Religious Activities

Virtually all religious denominations can be found in the Wellington area. There are Anglican, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, Jewish, and Latter-day Saints congregations, as well as smaller groups.

Education

Like the U.S., New Zealand's public school system is secular. Children start school at age 5 and must attend until age 15. Tuition is free in public schools, but charges are made for some books and supplies. In schools requiring uniforms, the cost may be as much as NZ\$300–NZ\$500 per child. Students who commute by bus pay a reduced fare.

Most private schools are usually denominational (Anglican, Roman Catholic, or other). About one in nine New Zealand schoolchildren attends private school. Tuition, uniforms, and other charges vary, and at some schools, children must buy books and other supplies.

Kindergartens are available for pre-schoolers. Subsequent school levels are designated Primer 1–4 for students 5–6 years old; Standard 1–4 for ages 7–10; and Form I–VII for ages 11–17. Primer 1 through Standard 4 are primary grades; Forms I and II, intermediate; and Forms III–VII, high school or college.

At the end of Form V, students take nationally administered school certificate examinations in as many as six subjects. If successful, they then go on to Sixth Form.

A University Entrance Examination for students completing Form VI was conducted for the last time in 1985. Beginning in 1986, each secondary school issues a diploma on the basis of internal assessment. Students who scored well on the UEE (1985) or were awarded diplomas (1986 and thereafter) may, after completing Form VI, go directly to a university or remain in the secondary system for Form VII, at the end of which they take the Bursary or Scholarship Examination. Success in those examinations entitles a student to a government stipend during his or her university career.

Because of specific prerequisites for entry into U.S. universities, American students may have to supplement their New Zealand high school courses. A few American students have felt that New Zealand schools discourage individual initiative and have chosen to finish their high school work in the U.S.

The standard of education at universities in Wellington, Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin, Hamilton, and Palmerston North is similar to that in the U.S. through the BA level. However, facilities for graduate study are not equal to those in the U.S.

The typical university undergraduate takes six courses a year and earns a bachelor's degree after 3 years, although some courses of study are longer. Unsupervised individual study is the norm. Courses may vary from those

offered by average American universities.

The school year differs from that in the U.S. For primary and secondary schools, the year begins in early February and ends in mid-December with a 2-week vacation in May. In late August, primary schools have a 2-week vacation and secondary schools, a 3-week vacation. Except for upper-level classes at Victoria University of Wellington, universities do not operate on the semester system but treat the full academic year as a single unit. Opening in late February or early March, universities have essentially the same vacations as secondary schools. Formal lectures at most universities end in mid-October, but exams extend well into November.

In grading, examinations are emphasized over daily classwork. A passing grade is 50, and marks above 70 are rare. Numerical grades thus cannot be taken as equivalent to U.S. grades.

New Zealand schools strongly emphasize sports and usually have excellent athletic facilities.

Special Educational Opportunities

Special education services are available for pupils whose educational requirements cannot be met by an ordinary school. The policy in New Zealand is to educate these pupils in ordinary classes as far as possible and to provide separate classes and schools only where necessary. Most students enrolled in the special education services are primary pupils aged 5–12, but emphasis is now being placed on developing services for preschool children and secondary pupils.

Selected schools provide special classes for students who are intellectually and physically handicapped, visually handicapped, hearing impaired, or emotionally disturbed. Classes are run in hospitals, and speech and reading clinics offer part-time tuition for selected pupils. Special day schools are provided for intellectually handicapped

and some physically handicapped students.

The Department of Education administers six residential schools for pupils who cannot be cared for in special classes—two for hearing impaired, two for mentally handicapped, and two for maladjusted pupils. The Department also has an advisory service on special education for hearing impaired children and a psychological service. The Department maintains a close association with voluntary groups such as the Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind and the Intellectually Handicapped Children's Society.

Recent experience has indicated that special education services in Wellington are not comparable to those available in the Washington area for either primary or secondary level pupils.

Sports

New Zealand is a sportsman's paradise. Golf courses are plentiful and popular. Tennis and squash courts are accessible and inexpensive. Four indoor tennis courts are available in Wellington. Because Wellington offers only four indoor tennis courts to the public, most players join private clubs that are less expensive than in the U.S. Jogging is very popular among men and women. A Marathon Clinic is available. New Zealand is the current amateur world champion in men's and women's softball, and softball clubs for all skill levels abound.

Sports attire for general outdoor activity is similar to that in the U.S., except that on the golf course, women wear skirts rather than slacks. Shorts worn with knee socks are acceptable for male golfers. Whites are often mandatory for tennis and squash at private clubs. A wide variety of sports equipment is available, including golf clubs, tennis rackets, and scuba gear, but at higher prices than in the U.S.

For hunters, the following animals are found in varying degrees of abundance: wapiti (elk); chamois

(Austrian antelope); thar (Himalayan mountain goat); red, fallow, Virginia, sambur, and sika deer (Japanese); wild pig; goat; and opossum (Australian marsupial). Except for wapiti, game can be killed year round. A license is not needed, but permits are required to hunt on most lands. Upland game shooting, which requires a license, is available. Commercial hunting and farming of big game animals has drastically reduced the once-abundant herds. However, successful hunts are possible for those willing to walk into deep forests under difficult conditions.

Deep-sea fishing is good; trout fishing is popular. Rainbow and brown trout were introduced into New Zealand in 1877 from California and have flourished in many lakes and streams. Fishing season in most districts opens October 1 (earlier for some South Island areas) and extends to April 30 in most South Island and North Island areas. Fishing is allowed all year on Lakes Rotorua and Taupo. A limit of 10 fish, minimum length 14 inches, is imposed at Lake Taupo. Fishing is permitted from 5 am to 11 pm. Some areas are open to fly casting only.

Skiing is popular, despite the fact that the nearest slope is 220 miles from Wellington. Both the North and South Islands have good skiing most years. Although the facilities are adequate, they are not what many U.S. skiers are accustomed to.

Rugby football is New Zealand's national game, and the New Zealand team, known as the All Blacks, has earned international respect for its ability over more than 60 years.

New Zealand has gained international recognition in cricket, soccer, golf, lawn bowls, track and field, rowing, sailing, motor racing, and distance running.

The largest spectator sport is horse-racing, and hundreds of race meetings are held each year in various towns and cities throughout the country. New Zealand-bred horses

are known throughout the world for their strength and stamina and are much sought after as breeding stock in other countries.

All water sports are popular in New Zealand. Within an hour's drive north of Wellington are a half-dozen sandy beaches used in summer for sunbathing and swimming. During summer, water temperatures are slightly warmer than at beaches on the Oregon, Maine, or northern California coasts, but much cooler than beaches on the southern California or South Atlantic coasts.

New Zealanders have a keen interest in pottery making and weaving. Day and evening classes are available.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Flowers blossom in the garden year round and grow in profusion in spring and summer. Camelias, rhododendrons, fuchsia, azaleas, and roses flourish, as well as many native New Zealand, Australian, and South African species.

New Zealand's natural scenery is a most rewarding aspect of the country. The North Island is justly proud of its mountains, bays, and farm country. And the South Island, with its Alps, fjords, lakes, waterfalls, and glaciers is equally but differently scenic.

Hiking and walking possibilities abound on both islands. Several hiking (tramping) clubs in Wellington sponsor outings on weekends and holidays. Many excursions by bus (or bus and air) are offered at reasonable prices. The cost includes meals and lodging.

Four times daily a ferry carries passengers and cars on a 3-hour trip across Cook Strait from Wellington to the South Island. Return fare for an adult passenger is around NZ\$60 and for a medium-sized car is NZ\$250. Air service is frequent and expensive. The South Island exhibits spectacular mountains and beautiful coasts along its 1,500-mile

periphery, most of which are accessible by car.

Entertainment

Public entertainment and night life are limited. Most restaurants and hotels usually stop serving dinner between 10 pm and 11 pm. Reservations are necessary in most restaurants; relatively few places cater to the walk-in public.

Some restaurants not licensed to sell alcohol have Bring Your Own (BYO) licenses. BYO restaurants provide wine glasses and charge a NZ\$1–NZ\$2 corkage fee per bottle. The sale of alcoholic drinks, including beer, at public bars is prohibited after 10 pm or 11 pm. Licensed hotels may serve liquor after hours to *bona fide* hotel guests. Tipping is not customary in hotels and restaurants.

Cabarets, which sponsor dancing, have no other attractions, except for a few that also offer dining. During winter, many business, charitable, and professional groups sponsor annual balls. Many are open to the public.

American, Australian, British, and occasionally other foreign films are shown in Wellington's theaters and are a principal source of entertainment.

Professional theater productions are staged during the season. Touring companies sometimes feature American musicals. Several intimate repertory theater groups, and many amateur theatrical organizations also perform. Concerts by the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, chamber music groups, and soloists are frequent. The New Zealand Opera Company offers several productions each year; performances are often superior.

Social Activities

The Association of American Women (AAW) is open to women employees and dependents.

The New Zealand-American Association (NZAA), an organization consisting primarily of New Zealanders

with particular ties to the U.S., has a wide variety of activities, including holiday celebrations, sports events, lectures, and cultural events. The NZAA Ladies Auxiliary invites women employees and dependents to its monthly ladies' coffee mornings.

Many voluntary groups providing aid to the handicapped either solicit or are receptive to help from Americans, particularly those with special qualifications or experience. Scout activities are available for boys and girls. These groups are also receptive to offers of assistance.

Auckland

Auckland is located on a narrow isthmus between two harbors that opens into the Pacific Ocean and the Tasman Sea. With a population of over 1 million (for the metropolitan area), it is the commercial and industrial center of New Zealand and a main port of entry for ships and planes. Auckland is home to many immigrants and visitors from Pacific Island nations and has been described as the world's most populous Polynesian city.

Auckland's International Airport is at Mangere, 13 miles from the Consulate General. Bus and taxi service is available to the center of town. Overseas ships dock in downtown Auckland.

Downtown Auckland is modernizing rapidly. A large number of office buildings and several large hotels of international standards have been built in the last few years. The downtown area is surrounded by many attractive residential areas and many satellite cities and boroughs. Most homes are not modern by U.S. standards either in architecture or in equipment, but most are comfortable, and many have magnificent views. North Shore homes are newer; many have been built since 1961 when the harbor bridge was completed.

Auckland offers education, medical care, and a standard of living comparable to those in Wellington.

Auckland's temperatures are cool in winter and warm in summer. Average annual rainfall is 50 inches; hours of sunshine per year average 2,140. Occasional storms are accompanied by fairly high winds, but they are not a great hazard. Because of high humidity and dampness in most houses, mildew is a threat, especially to leather goods. During summer, flies, mosquitoes, and other insects are troublesome, because most houses are unscreened. Moths and silverfish are a threat to woolens.

About 6,000 Americans reside in this U.S. consular district, and as many as 900 American visitors are in the consular district at any given time.

Food

Meat and dairy produce, including pasteurized milk, are abundant. Many fresh fruits and vegetables are also available. Supplies of frozen and canned vegetables are limited. Since canned baby foods are expensive, a blender is useful in making baby food at home. A meat grinder is also useful. Coffee and tea is sold in various grades and blends.

A few prepared meals are available. Local flour, vegetable shortening, and yeast are different from American products. Local breads are good. Items that are not sold include certain herbs and seasonings, double-action baking powder, Karo syrup, American tomato ketchup and chili sauce, meat tenderizers, Bisquick, and Sanka. The selection of such items as cake mixes is not as widespread as in the U.S. Local mayonnaise does not suit American taste.

New Zealand wines have improved dramatically in the last few years and are generally quite acceptable as table wines, particularly white wines. If you wish to serve American wines, which are seldom available, you must arrange to import them.

Clothing

Auckland winters are not so severe as those in most parts of the U.S. In the Auckland metropolitan area, it

never snows or freezes. However, the wind chill factor frequently offsets moderate temperatures. Few homes are centrally heated, but most are insulated. Summer temperatures seldom reach levels that most Americans would consider hot, but conditions are often warm enough to require summer clothing. Summer evenings can be quite cool.

Clothing sizes, qualities, and prices in New Zealand differ from what most Americans are accustomed to.

Men do not require a heavy overcoat but do need a light topcoat and especially a good raincoat. Medium-weight suits are usually sufficient for winter, and lightweight suits are sufficient for summer.

New Zealand shirts are cut differently from American shirts. They offer a normal range of neck sizes but few sleeve lengths. Lightweight wash-and-wear suits are not available. A few good hand tailors are available. New Zealand men seldom wear hats. Men should bring clothing for the sports that interest them, including tennis whites and lightweight waders for fishing. Local athletic equipment and footwear are limited and expensive.

Mediumweight wool dresses, especially with long sleeves, and knitted and tailored suits are worn from fall through spring. A fur cape or stole or an evening sweater or shawl is necessary. A good supply of light summer clothes is desirable.

Bring clothes for informal, leisure, sports, and formal evening wear. Formal day occasions require hat and gloves, and formal evening functions can require long dresses. Lingerie, hosiery, and accessories are available. A raincoat, or several for variety, is essential. Bring a warm woolen or quilted dressing gown.

A wide range of good imported woolen, silk, and American cotton fabrics is available, but some accessories for dressmaking, such as seam and sleeve boards, are in limited supply or different from Ameri-

can types. A few good dressmakers are available.

Footwear should include several pairs of crepe-soled shoes for use during rainy weather and a good pair of walking shoes.

Uniforms are worn in most schools and must be bought here. Boys of up to high school age wear short trousers above the knee. Ready-made clothes, especially for children under 8 years, are expensive and limited in variety and supply.

Supplies and Services

Supplies: Most cosmetics and toilet articles, including some American brands made in New Zealand or Australia, are available but are expensive.

Medical and household supplies are generally available.

Such basic services as dry-cleaning, laundry, shoe repair, beauty shops, appliance repair, and other repair services are often less than adequate and are expensive. Mail, milk, and newspapers are delivered daily. Trash is collected weekly.

Auckland is covered by a regional bus service that extends to the outlying suburbs and satellite towns. Service is good during the morning and evening rush hours but is not frequent at other times. A ferry service operates frequently between the foot of Queen Street in downtown Auckland and Devonport across the harbor. Commuter train service is limited. Although the cost of gasoline is high, more than 60% of New Zealand's work force use private transportation to commute to work. An automobile is indispensable in Auckland.

Religious Activities

Most religions and sects are represented in Auckland; there are Church of England (Anglican), Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, and Jewish congregations.

Education

Schools are available from kindergarten through university level. Children may attend kindergarten several half-days a week from the age of 3. Kindergartens usually have a waiting list of at least 8 months. Children may begin school at age 5 and are automatically accepted at primary school. School is compulsory between ages 7 and 15. Some private and public schools provide transportation for day students. Facilities for athletics and other activities are adequate in all schools. Private schools vary considerably; public schools are free, but parents must buy books and school supplies.

The University of Auckland offers degrees in arts, science, commerce, law, and medicine. Music and art classes are provided in private schools, and art classes are provided in public schools at primary and secondary levels.

Special Educational Opportunities

The University of Auckland, Auckland Technical Institute, and many secondary schools conduct extensive programs of adult education in commerce and the trades for hobbyists and those who work about the home. Auckland's public libraries and the library of the University of Auckland provide a good if limited coverage of all major fields.

Sports

Aucklanders spend much of their time outside, and opportunities for outdoor activity abound. Most homeowners take pride in maintaining their lawns and gardens.

Many fine beaches are in and near Auckland. The city has five large swimming pools. Heated pools offer year-round activity.

Waitemata Harbor, with its irregular coastline and many islands, is a paradise for boating enthusiasts. About 4,000 sailboats of all classes participate in the Anniversary Day Regatta races.

The area offers several excellent golf clubs and two public links.

Grass and asphalt tennis courts are located in all sections of the city. Except for a few courts at schools, all are either private or club owned. Organized midweek tennis for women is available at all clubs. Squash is popular.

Waitemata Harbor and Hauraki Gulf have numerous fish. The Bay of Islands, Coromandel Peninsula, and Tauranga, in the Bay of Plenty, are centers for big game fishing. Lake Taupo and several other lakes are noted for their abundance of rainbow trout, and fishing is permitted year round. Many trout streams and rivers exist. Although trolling is permitted in the lakes and spinning in some sections of the major rivers, only fly casting is allowed in the streams.

Many places in New Zealand provide hunting for deer, wild pig, duck, and rabbit. Slide-action (pump) and semiautomatic shotguns must have magazines pinned (not plugged) to limit total capacity to two rounds, one in the magazine and one in the chamber. This regulation is now under review, however, so owners of such guns should inquire before shipping them. Firearms owners and users are licensed by the police.

Good hiking trails are found in the mountains (particularly the Waitakere Ranges) near Auckland. Hiking or tramping clubs are popular. Rain gear is essential; good quality, reasonably priced, and lightweight gear is available locally. Heavy-duty shoes are less useful than medium- or lightweight shoes. Other camping gear (tents, bags, etc.) is available but expensive.

Bowling on the green is a popular sport, and clubs exist in all parts of the city. Currently, only four American-style bowling alleys are available in New Zealand (one is in Auckland).

Halfway between Wellington and Auckland at Mount Ruapehu, snow skiing occurs through the winter.



Skyline and harbor of Auckland

Susan Rock. Reproduced by permission..

Auckland offers ample opportunities for water-skiing and surfing.

Many good potters exist, and dyeing and weaving are popular.

Principal spectator sports include horse racing, autoracing, rugby, soccer, cricket, and tennis.

Sports attire for men and women is similar to that worn in the U.S., except that New Zealanders adhere more closely to the traditional forms of sports dress. Sports equipment is available but expensive.

Entertainment

Auckland offers many first-class movie theaters downtown and many suburban ones. Most films are American or British, with French, Italian, and Swedish films shown occasionally.

Auckland has a professional repertory theater. Occasional plays or musicals are staged by touring over-

seas companies. The Grand Opera Society usually features one or two productions a year. The New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, the Auckland Regional Orchestra, and various other groups perform frequent concerts and recitals.

The city has a museum containing many interesting relics of Maori and European life and an art museum.

Local events of interest include an annual agricultural and pastoral show, gymkhanas, and Maori concerts. The 3-week Auckland Festival held each May offers plays, concerts, recitals, art exhibitions, and a film festival.

Many good restaurants and one or two nightclubs exist; most are closed on Mondays. Several hotels offer good meals. Traditionally, tipping is not practiced.

Radio reception is good and local stations offer a fairly broad selec-

tion of programs. American and other rock music is popular with local disc jockeys. Each of Auckland's two TV channels, both government enterprises, broadcast 10-12 hours per day, 7 days a week.

Social Activities

Auckland's American community is not so cohesive as those in some countries. Most American residents have been here for many years and have integrated into New Zealand society. However, many Americans do belong to the American Club and/or the American Women's Club. They are composed almost equally of Americans and New Zealanders who have lived in or have an interest in the U.S.

Christchurch

Christchurch, the capital of the Canterbury Provincial District on South Island, is the center of New Zealand's most productive wheat and grain region. It is situated on

the east coast of South Island on the Avon River, at the base of Banks Peninsula. Christchurch was founded in 1850 by a group of Anglicans, and named for the old Oxford College attended by John Robert Godley, the leader of its first settlers. It now is an industrial city of 307,000 (urban area), and a center for many large businesses, including tanneries and meat-packing plants.

Christchurch Cathedral (Anglican), a Gothic structure built over a period of 40 years, from 1864 to 1904, and the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament (Roman Catholic), of Classic Revival architecture, are among New Zealand's most outstanding ecclesiastical buildings. The city is also the site of Canterbury College (founded in 1873), and the noted School of Arts, dating to 1882. Queen Elizabeth II Park in Christchurch was the site of the 1974 Commonwealth Games and the 1981 World Veterans Games—it is a large complex of sports grounds, pools, and athletic courts. The Town Hall, acknowledged as the finest in New Zealand, opened in 1972, and provides extensive conference facilities for South Island.

Other notable places in the city are Canterbury Museum; the Botanic Gardens, laid out more than one hundred years ago; and McDougall Art Gallery. The Bridge of Remembrance, built as a First World War memorial, crosses the Avon River. Also near the river are the Canterbury Provincial Government buildings, dating from the mid-19th century, and the only remaining administrative structures of their kind in New Zealand.

Hagley Park, the largest area of public grounds, extends over many acres of woodlands and formal gardens. Together with the city's Victorian buildings and lawn-fringed houses, it intensifies Christchurch's reputation as "the most English town outside of England."

The airport at Christchurch, which gained international status in 1950, was opened in 1936 as the first

municipal airport in the Southern Hemisphere.

There are recreational facilities throughout the city, both public and private. Much of Christchurch's social activity centers around club life.

Christchurch serves as a natural gateway for touring South Island. A combination fly-drive tour of the area might include a visit to a nearby sheep farm; the resort town of Queenstown, situated on the north shore of Lake Wakatipu in a mountain setting; and the small town of Te Anau located at the entrance to Fjordland National Park. One of the fjords—Milford Sound—is the foremost attraction on South Island, with more than 300,000 tourists visiting annually.

Dunedin

Dunedin, New Zealand's fifth largest city, was founded by Free Church of Scotland (Presbyterian) settlers in 1848. They laid out the city around an octagon, rather than the traditional square, and this central area is a major point of interest even today. Known as the "Edinburgh of the South," Dunedin is famous for its late 19th century architectural styles and its Scottish festivities.

Dunedin was the base for the ships of Admiral Richard Byrd's Antarctic expeditions between 1928 and 1935, and a memorial stands here in his honor.

The city is situated at the head of Otago Harbor, a Pacific Ocean inlet, and is the major port for the Otago area. A South Island urban center with a population of 109,500, Dunedin produces chemicals, soap, furniture, and fertilizers; shipyards and breweries are also among its industries. Wool and dairy products are shipped from here in large quantities.

Otago University, with respected medical and dental schools among its many departments, was established in Dunedin in 1869. It is

among the several points of interest on both city and peninsular tours; others include the Queen's Gardens, Larnach Castle, the Cenotaph, Glenfalloch Woodland Gardens, Prospect Park, and Lookout Point.

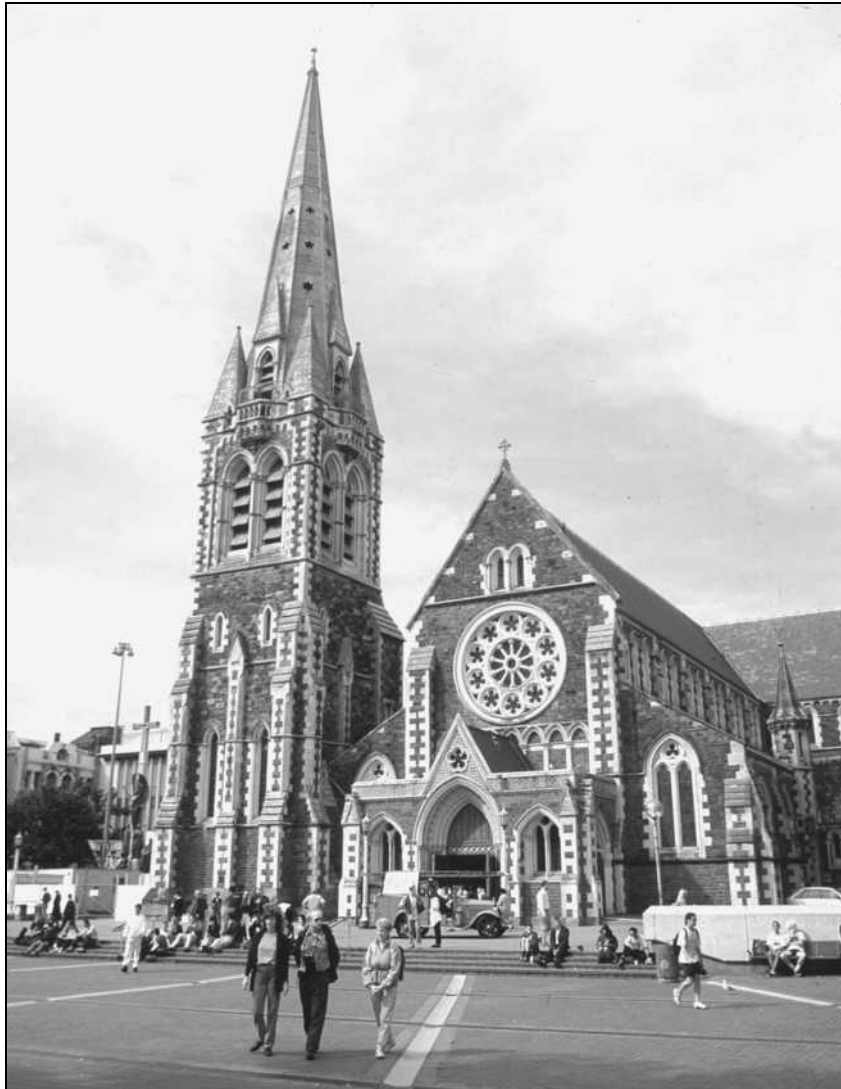
OTHER CITIES

GISBORNE is a seaport city of more than 30,000 residents on the eastern shore of North Island. Lying on Poverty Bay in the East Cape area, it is known for its fine beaches and beautiful scenery, and is fast becoming a popular resort. Grapes, maize, and citrus fruits are grown in abundance around Gisborne.

HAMILTON is New Zealand's largest inland city. It lies on the banks of the Waikato River in central North Island, and is the hub of a prosperous dairy farming and sheep-raising area. With a population of over 170,900 (2000 est.) in its urban area, it ranks sixth in population in the country. The University of Waikato was established here in 1964.

HASTINGS is a city of more than 36,000 near Napier, and the district which encompasses both cities and the area in between is generally considered one urban center. The total population of the combined area has grown to approximately 108,000. Hastings proper is the commercial center of a pastoral region. Orchards, vineyards, and grazing flocks add to the singular beauty of the surrounding landscape.

INVERCARGILL, the southernmost city in New Zealand, is situated on an estuary of Foveaux Strait, the channel which separates South and Stewart islands. It is a busy, modern city of 48,000 (1987 est.), with a well-defined Scottish atmosphere—many of its streets are named for the rivers of Scotland. Invercargill, founded in 1856, is the administrative center of Southland Province. Queen's Park, Rose Gardens, Waihopi Scenic Reserve, and



Christchurch Cathedral

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Bluff Harbor are among its scenic areas.

NAPIER, on the east coast of North Island, is a modern seaside city of over 50,000 residents. After a devastating earthquake in 1931, the town was rebuilt in the Art Deco style. The city is noted for its beautiful, two-mile-long Marine Parade, an esplanade lined with Norfolk pines. The Kiwi House on the parade exhibits the wingless kiwi bird, the national emblem of New Zealand. The botanical gardens and Napier proper can be seen in panorama from Bluff Hill overlooking Hawke Bay—this lookout is one of the city's interesting tourist spots.

PALMERSTON NORTH, with a population of about 75,800 (2000 est.), lies on the Manawatu River on North Island, about 80 miles north-east of Wellington. Although the center of a dairy farming region, it also produces pharmaceuticals, electrical equipment, and knitted goods. Massey University, a well-known agricultural school, was founded nearby in 1964.

ROTORUA, where many of New Zealand's noted Maori settlements are located, is a city of 54,900 residents on Rotorua Lake in north-central North Island. Often called "New Zealand's Yellowstone," it is one of the nation's most famous resorts,

featuring thermal springs, deep craters, caverns, the legendary Mokoia Island, exotic pine forests, hunting and fishing and, especially, the New Zealand Maori Arts and Crafts Institute, with its fine examples of carving and other arts and crafts. Of particular interest are the Maori concerts and traditional *hangi* (pit-cooked meals) held nightly at several locations.

The port city of **TIMARU**, with a population of approximately 28,000, lies on the east coast of South Island, about 90 miles southwest of Christchurch. Timaru is a commercial hub, whose exports include frozen foods.

WHANGAREI, with a population of over 40,000, is one of New Zealand's fastest-growing cities. It is situated about 85 miles north of Auckland, on North Island, and is the urban center of a livestock-raising area. The waters of its harbor are noted for deep-sea fishing, and among its scenic spots is beautiful Whangarei Falls. The city's Clapham Clock Museum contains over 400 clocks from around the world. To the north are the extensive Kauri forests and the picturesque Bay of Islands, as well as Kaitaia, the far north's principal city.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

New Zealand is located in the South Pacific, some 1,200 miles southeast of Australia. The country consists primarily of three islands that extend nearly 1,000 miles from north to south. New Zealand's total area, 103,736 square miles, is slightly smaller than that of Colorado. All but 1% of its area is in the two main islands: the North, 44,281 square miles, and the South, 58,093 square miles that are separated by Cook Strait. Stewart Island, south

of the South Island, covers 670 square miles.

Although it has several large plains, New Zealand is mainly a mountainous country, with many rivers and lakes. The highest peak, Mount Cook, rises over 12,000 feet in the Southern Alps, a massive range stretching almost the length of the South Island. The North Island has several intermittently active volcanoes.

New Zealand lies in the Temperate Zone and has a generally mild, invigorating climate. The surrounding ocean tempers the climate, with the result that seasons do not vary as much as in most of America. Spells of cool, damp weather occur in the summer from December through February. Rainy winter days of June, July, and August are interspersed with days of brilliant sunshine and crisp, clear air. The chart shows statistics on climatic ranges for New Zealand's three main centers: Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch.

Areas outside the main islands are: the Chatham Islands, located 500 miles off the east coast of the South Island; several sub-Antarctic groups with no permanent habitation; and the Three Kings, a small, uninhabited group off the northernmost tip of the North Island. Farther away are the Cook Islands and Niue, two self-governing associated states, and Tokelau, a group of three atolls that New Zealand administers. New Zealand claims the Ross Dependency in Antarctica, but the U.S. does not recognize this claim.

In addition to the U.S. Embassy in Wellington, the U.S. has a Consulate General in Auckland and a Consular Agency in Christchurch. The U.S. Naval Support Force Antarctica/Detachment Christchurch—better known as Operation Deep Freeze—has a permanent complement of about 60 Navy and Air Force personnel and about the same number of New Zealand staff. It provides extensive logistic support to the U.S. Antarctic Research Program operated by the National

Science Foundation that also maintains an office in Christchurch. Five civilian astronomers employed by the U.S. Naval Observatory in Washington operate an astrometric observatory on Black Birch Mountain near Blenheim on the South Island.

October, November, and December are usually particularly windy months. Winds of 60 mph are not unusual, especially in the Wellington area, and on rare occasions they exceed 100 mph. Earth tremors are sometimes noticeable but rarely cause damage. New Zealand lies in an area of active earthquakes and volcanism ringing the Pacific Plate. A major fault line runs through Wellington.

Population

New Zealand's population in 2000 was estimated at 3,700,000. Maori, descendants of the early Polynesian settlers, make up about 10% of the population. Most of the balance is of British descent, and immigrants continue to arrive in modest numbers from the U.K., Australia, Europe, North America, some of the Pacific Islands, and Asia.

About 75% of New Zealand's population lives on the North Island, and Auckland's urban area, with 1 million inhabitants, is the largest population center. The population of the greater Auckland area is more vast than that of the entire South Island. Wellington, including the Hutt Valley and other adjacent areas, is the next largest and numbers 326,000. The Christchurch area, population 307,200, is third largest and is followed by Dunedin, 109,500; and Hamilton, 149,000.

Throughout New Zealand, the influence of the Maori culture is evident in the names of streets, towns, rivers, and mountains, as well as in art, literature, and music. Historically, Maori have accommodated reasonably well to the European culture that arrived after them and quickly dominated the country, but recent years have seen a resurgent Maori identity characterized by

increased assertion of Maori rights guaranteed under the Treaty of Waitangi that ceded sovereignty from the Maori chiefs to the British Crown. The Waitangi Tribunal has been charged with hearing disputes over land and resource rights and recommending settlements to the government.

Public Institutions

New Zealand is a parliamentary democracy based on the British model but with important modifications. The Governor General performs the ceremonial role of head of state, representing Queen Elizabeth II. Parliament consists of one Chamber, the House of Representatives, with 97 Members: 93 representing the general population and 4 Maori members representing those who claim to be Maori by descent and have asked to be included on the Maori electoral rolls. The highest vote winner in each of the 97 electorates is elected to Parliament. The parliamentary term is 3 years; an election may be held at any time, but only two early elections have been held since World War II. Voting is not compulsory, but all voters must register at age 18. About 90% of the electorate has voted in general elections held since World War II. New Zealand has had universal male suffrage since 1879 and women's suffrage since 1893.

The executive branch of the government is the Cabinet, led by a Prime Minister as head of government. The current Cabinet includes 18 other ministers, each of whom oversees one or more ministries or departments of government. Each of these is headed by a career civil servant who usually bears the title of chief executive officer.

Two political parties, the National Party and the Labour Party, have dominated Parliament and the nation's political life since 1935. The present National Party Government was elected in October 1990. The Labour Party originated with the trade union movement. Its support is strongest in urban areas. It gov-



Downtown Christchurch viewed from post office

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erned from 1935 to 1949, from 1957 to 1960, and from 1972 to 1975. The National Party's traditional strength has been in the rural areas, but it has been successful at times in appealing to urban-based workers and business leaders.

Minor parties occasionally attract substantial numbers of votes, but traditionally have obtained little representation in Parliament. The New Zealand Democratic Party, the New Zealand Party, the Christian Heritage Party, and the New Labour Party all receive about 1 to 2% public support each.

New Zealand communist parties are legal but are riven by ideological fissures. They enjoy little popular support and have never been represented in Parliament. Several leaders of the Socialist Unity Party, a small pro-Moscow Communist group, hold leadership positions within the trade union movement.

New Zealand is a unitary state whose government at Wellington makes and directs all national policy. Provincial (or state) administrative entities do not exist. Some 540 local bodies, including city, borough, and county town councils; regional authorities; and boards that deal with electric power, harbors, pest

control, and other special functions, are being replaced with a smaller number of united councils and regional authorities.

New Zealand is a comparatively new country on the stage of world affairs. Although New Zealand participated in the Versailles Conference and was a founding member of the League of Nations, successive governments until 1935 held the view that in foreign policy the British Empire should be regarded as a unit and that, ideally, the Empire should speak with one voice. From 1936 onward, however, New Zealand began to assert an independent position in foreign affairs. In 1942, New Zealand's first diplomatic mission was opened in Washington, followed by one in Ottawa later that year and another in Canberra in 1943. An American Legation was opened in Wellington on April 1, 1942. A Department of External Affairs was created in 1943 to manage New Zealand's relations with foreign countries.

New Zealand now has diplomatic or consular posts in more than 30 countries and has accredited representatives to more than 60 countries and to the U.N., European Economic Community (EEC), and the Organization for Economic

Cooperation and Development (OECD). Strong ties of tradition and sentiment link New Zealand with the U.K. and the Commonwealth. New Zealand is an active participant in Commonwealth affairs and also a strong supporter and active U.N. member.

The U.S. suspended its security guarantees to New Zealand under the ANZUS mutual security treaty when the latter barred visits by nuclear-powered or armed warships to its ports. The treaty remains in effect but is now active only between the U.S. and Australia, the third party to the agreement. New Zealand works closely with the U.S. in scientific research in Antarctica and on international trade issues.

Arts, Science, and Education

New Zealand's larger cities offer a great deal of activity in the visual and performing arts, both amateur and professional. Instrumental and choral groups hold frequent dramatic and operatic performances and concerts. Overseas artists often visit the country. Officers and their dependents have many chances to participate in amateur artistic activities. The larger centers also have art galleries (mostly private), museums, and zoos.

The government is an important source of support for the arts. It maintains such institutions as the National Art Gallery in Wellington and does much to promote music through the government-owned Radio New Zealand (RNZ). RNZ administers and supports the National Symphony Orchestra and arranges tours that bring its music to the most remote parts of the country.

Scientific activity is largely in the hands of the universities and Crown Research Institutes, which have a large and varied program. Many scientific associations are active, including the New Zealand branch of Britain's famous Royal Society.

The primary school system is satisfactory. Although secondary schools are of high quality in some respects, they may not prepare some children adequately for American universities. The U.S. Embassy has prepared a comprehensive comparative analysis of the New Zealand and U.S. secondary education systems, which is available from the Embassy and also from the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) and the Family Liaison Office (FLO) in the Department of State.

Universities at Wellington, Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin, Palmerston North, and Hamilton offer undergraduate facilities comparable to those in the U.S. The normal undergraduate program leading to a bachelor's degree lasts 3 years. Several teacher-training colleges and technical and business schools exist. Most universities offer evening courses at the university level as well as adult education classes.

Commerce and Industry

A remote island nation, New Zealand is heavily dependent on foreign trade. But the pattern of New Zealand's export commodities is changing. The largest contributors to annual growth are expected to come from forestry & logging, financial & insurance services, communications, construction, non-metallic mineral products and electricity, gas & water.

The U.K. was for many years New Zealand's principal market. With Britain's entry into the European Community, however, New Zealand was obliged to diversify its export markets and has succeeded to a considerable degree. The U.S. is New Zealand's largest export market.

Apart from an aluminum smelter, a steel mill, an oil refinery, and a growing forest-products industry, most industry is classified as light. A wide variety of consumer goods is manufactured, mainly for the domestic market. Manufactured

exports, mostly to Australia, have shown encouraging growth. Exports of forest products and mineral sands have also increased. There are several energy-based industries, including a synthetic gasoline plant that uses natural gas from the Maui field. Despite active exploration, petroleum has only been discovered in small quantities.

The government plays a direct role in economic life. Railways, electric power, airlines, and communications systems are nationalized. Marketing of meat and dairy products is subject to the control of boards with government participation. Approximately 65% of the labor force is involved in service sectors, 25% are in industry and 19% in agriculture.

Per capita GDP is estimated at \$17,700 (2000 est), which translates into a reasonable standard of living for New Zealanders. Income is evenly distributed, with no extremes of poverty and wealth. Systems of social security, national health, and old-age benefits are comprehensive.

Transportation

Local

Ample public transportation serves residents of New Zealand's larger cities. Buses and taxis are available at reasonable fares. Commuter trains run from Wellington to Lower Hutt and Tawa.

New Zealand generally has good main roads. Two-lane paved surfaces are common in well-traveled areas. Secondary roads, especially in farming or isolated areas and on the west coast of South Island, are often not paved.

Regional

International airports are in Wellington, Auckland, and Christchurch, although Wellington cannot accommodate 747 model aircraft. All in-country service is provided by Air New Zealand and small local carriers. International airlines

serve New Zealand from many countries.

Train service between Auckland and Wellington takes about 12 hours. Trains make several stops along the 400-mile route, allowing passengers a chance to relax and eat. Car rental companies in New Zealand charge an average daily rate of about NZ\$86, plus 21¢ per kilometer for a medium-sized vehicle.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

Local phone service is good. Phone calls to the U.S. need not be booked in advance, except at Christmas. You can dial most areas in the U.S. direct, and connections are usually excellent. A 3-minute call to the U.S. costs about NZ\$9.18 plus NZ\$8 per call (person to person) or NZ\$9.18 (station to station). Special rates are available in the late evening (New Zealand time) and all day Saturday. International service to other parts of the world is equally good.

Fax service to and from the U.S. is excellent; commercial fax services are widely available.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

American magazines appear at local newsstands several weeks after publication, and the *International Herald Tribune* is available by mail—5 days late. The Pacific edition of *Time* is printed in New Zealand and that of *Newsweek*, printed with *The Bulletin*, in Australia.

The USIS library in Wellington and Auckland carry a good stock of U.S. periodicals, the Singapore edition of the *International Herald Tribune*, and several U.S. newspapers, plus the usual supply of books and reference materials.

In the principal cities, morning and evening newspapers are published 6 days a week, except on certain holidays. Three national newspapers are published on Sunday. Local

news coverage is good, but international coverage is limited.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

New Zealand has a socialized medical system, and, although medical services are considered excellent by world standards, they are not equivalent to those in the U.S. Americans are accustomed to more intensive diagnostic testing and to easier access to specialists. Some of the latest techniques and medicines are not yet available in New Zealand due to the high cost of equipment. Medical costs range from nil to minimal (currently about NZ\$27 for a visit to a general practitioner). Prescriptions are filled at nominal cost.

One of the primary differences between the U.S. and New Zealand medical systems is that in New Zealand it is almost impossible to see a specialist without a referral from a general practitioner.

Hospital facilities for surgery and inpatient care are considered adequate. For normal pregnancies, obstetrical care is provided by a general practitioner with follow-up care provided by nurses from the Plunket Society, a voluntary agency subsidized by the New Zealand Government, which cares for mothers and children.

Public hospitals have only a few private rooms.

Dental care is adequate. Orthodontists are located in Wellington and in Auckland. New Zealand orthodontists use treatment methods and techniques that differ from those of their U.S. counterparts, making it difficult to continue treatment begun in the U.S. Periodontic treatment is available.

The services of opticians and oculists are satisfactory and available at reasonable rates.

Community Health

Except for Hepatitis B no endemic diseases exist. All preschool children in New Zealand are vaccinated against Hepatitis B.

New Zealand's damp climate may trouble persons suffering from asthma, arthritis, rheumatism, and sinusitis. Colds and flu are frequent, partly as a result of frequent weather changes. BCG vaccination (against tuberculosis) of all 13-year olds is performed in the majority of North Island schools but is voluntary. Because the vaccine will cause a positive reaction when tine tests are administered, parents may wish to have their children exempted from vaccinations.

Preventive Measures

Milk is pasteurized. All urban water supplies are chlorinated, and it is safe to eat raw fruits and vegetables. Inoculations are not required for entry into New Zealand. Except for the pre-exposure rabies and Japanese B Encephalitis vaccines, you can obtain all other shots required for travel to points outside New Zealand. Oral polio vaccine is available locally.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan. 1 & 2	New Year's
Jan. 22	Anniversary Day (Wellington)
Jan. 29	Anniversary Day (Auckland)
Feb. 6	New Zealand Day
Feb. 6	Waitangi Day
Mar/Apr.	Good Friday*
Mar/Apr.	Easter*
Mar/Apr.	Easter Monday*
Apr. 25	ANZAC Day
June 4	Queen's Birthday
Oct. 22	Labor Day
Nov. 16	Canterbury Anniversary
Dec. 25	Christmas Day
Dec. 26	Boxing Day
	*variable

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs & Duties

When traveling from the Northern Hemisphere, remember that the seasons are reversed in New Zealand so pack accordingly. When coming to New Zealand from the west coast of the U.S., travelers lose a day crossing the international dateline. For instance, a passenger who leaves Los Angeles by air on the evening of April 14 will arrive in Auckland on the morning of April 16. For air travel from the U.S., a rest-stop may be arranged in Honolulu.

U.S. citizens eligible for a visa waiver do not need a visa for tourist stays of three months or less. For more information about visa waivers and entry requirements contact the Embassy of New Zealand, 37 Observatory Circle, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008, telephone (202) 328-4800, the Embassy's home page at <http://www.nzemb.org>, or the Consulate General of New Zealand in Los Angeles, telephone (310) 207-1605.

New Zealand's customs authorities may enforce strict regulations concerning temporary importation into or export from New Zealand of certain items, including firearms and agricultural products. Handguns may not be brought into the country, and a permit for other firearms must be obtained from the New Zealand police immediately after arrival. Tourists have also faced police inquiries as a result of importing or brandishing toy weapons. The Ministry of Agriculture of New Zealand has stringent requirements for the entry of food and agricultural products. Travelers are required to declare any items that come under agricultural quarantine restrictions as stated on the customs form at the port of entry. Heavy fines have been levied against those attempting to bring in undeclared prohibited items. For more information, contact the New Zealand Customs Service at <http://>

www.customs.govt.nz and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry at <http://www.maf.govt.nz>. It is also advisable to contact the Embassy of New Zealand in Washington, D.C. at (202) 775-5200, or one of New Zealand's consulates in the United States, for specific information regarding customs requirements.

New Zealand Ministry of Agriculture officials board many incoming international flights and spray the cabins with a nontoxic insect spray before passengers disembark. This is a routine procedure.

Agricultural inspectors will question new arrivals and may examine their luggage to ensure against the entry of agricultural diseases and pests. Everything made of wood, paper (including books), leather, and straw will be inspected carefully and may be held for disinfecting.

Under New Zealand law, all arriving passengers are required (without exception) to complete an agricultural questionnaire, which is contained in the Passenger Declaration Form.

All footwear in your baggage should be soil-free, especially if the footwear has been worn on farms or in areas where animals are held.

To guard against the accidental introduction of pests and diseases, some agricultural items are restricted from entry into New Zealand.

Americans living in or visiting New Zealand are encouraged to register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Consulate General in Auckland by mail, phone, fax or in person, where they can obtain updated information on travel and security.

The U.S. Consulate General in Auckland is located on the third floor of the Citibank Centre, 23 Customs Street East, between Commerce and Queen Streets. The telephone number is (64)(9) 303-2724. The fax number is (64-9) 366-0870. See also the Consulate Gen-

eral home page via the Internet at <http://www.usembassy.org.nz>.

The U.S. Embassy is located at 29 Fitzherbert Terrace, Thorndon, Wellington; the telephone number is (64)(4) 462-6000. The fax number is (64)(4) 471-2380. The Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Wellington closed on May 15, 1996. All routine consular services and most emergency services are provided by the Consulate General in Auckland.

Pets

You may import dogs and cats only via Australia and the U.K. The quarantine requirements of those countries are:

Australia

4-month quarantine in Hawaii followed by 1 month's residence then 4-month quarantine in Australia.

U.K.

6-month quarantine followed by 3 month's residence.

Imported dogs and cats are not quarantined in New Zealand.

You may import aviary birds from Australia only.

Currency, Banking and Weights and Measures

New Zealand dollar is broken down into 100 cents. Coins in circulation are 5¢, 10¢, 20¢, and 50¢ pieces. Bank notes in use are \$1, \$2, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50, and \$100.

The New Zealand Government's foreign currency regulations do not permit currency transactions on the open market. However, you may purchase local currency with dollar instruments at banks, hotels, and certain stores. Only banks are permitted to reconvert local currency into U.S. dollars. Banks require a 1 day's notice for such transactions.

New Zealand uses the metric system of weights and measures.

Disaster Preparedness

Some heavily populated parts of New Zealand are located in an area

of very high seismic activity. Although the probability of a major earthquake occurring during an individual trip is remote, earthquakes can and will continue to happen. General information regarding disaster preparedness is available via the Internet at <http://travel.state.gov/crisismg.html>, and from the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) home page at <http://www.fema.gov>.

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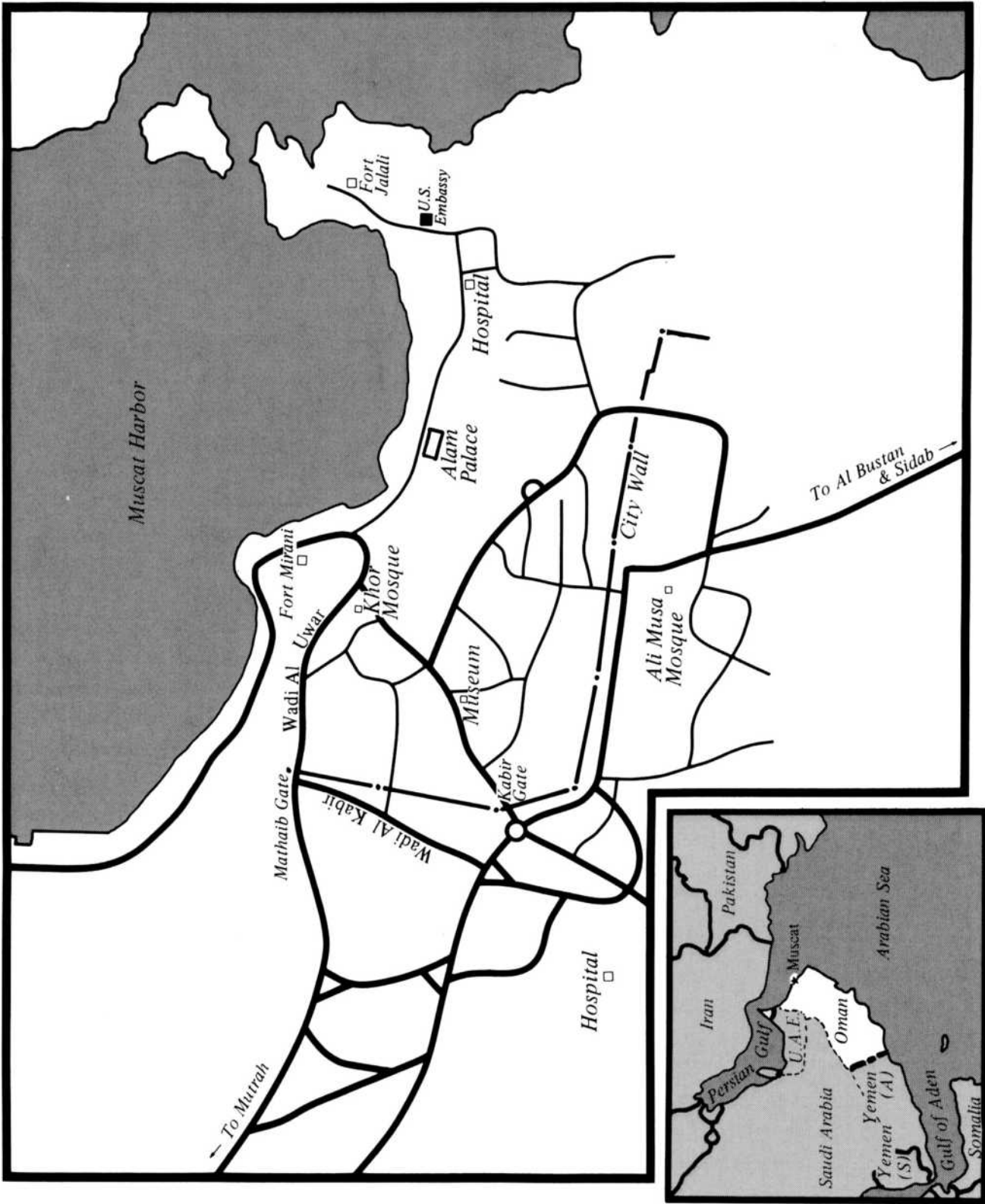
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Muscat, Oman

OMAN

Sultanate of Oman

Major City:

Muscat

Other Cities:

Matrah, Salālah

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated July 1994. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

OMAN, known as Muscat and Oman before 1970, was once the most powerful of all the Arabian states. At the beginning of the 19th century, it controlled Zanzibar and much of the coast of Persia and Baluchistan, and it was only in 1958 that the last of its vast holdings, the town of Gwadar, was ceded to Pakistan. It does, however, maintain control of the Strait of Hormuz, through which flows much of the oil for the West.

The early history of Oman is obscure, but it is known that it was one of the first countries converted to Islam by Amir ibn al-As in the seventh century, during the lifetime of Mohammed (or Muhammad). In 1508, the Portuguese conquered

parts of Oman's coastal region, and that country's influence dominated the sultanate for more than a century (with a short interruption of Turkish seizure). Oman today is an absolute monarchy, which has survived periods of insurgency and tribal revolt, and which is intent on developing its economy and upgrading its social and educational standards. It maintains close relations with Great Britain, and is a reliable ally of the United States.

MAJOR CITY

Muscat

The Muscat (Masqat) capital/commercial area (including the cities of Ruwi and Qurum), with an estimated population of 635,000, consists of a series of towns and neighborhoods strung along the Gulf of Oman for more than 50 miles. Only one of these is old Muscat, the original seat of government and still the site of one of the sultan's palaces.

Old Muscat lies between the sea and stark, brown cliffs that rise to a height of 1,500 feet. The harbor is dominated by Forts Mirani and Jalali, built by the Portuguese in the 15th and 16th centuries. The wind-

ing streets and the wall surrounding the old city have retained much of their medieval style and flavor.

About three miles from Muscat is Oman's retail commercial center, the city of Matrah. It is also the site of the country's major seaport, Port Mina Qaboos.

Just beyond Matrah is Ruwi Valley. Because of Muscat's limited land area, most government ministries and commercial enterprises have established themselves here. This section also has become the site of much residential construction.

The expansion of the capital area in recent years has brought rapid development to places beyond Ruwi as well. The suburbs of Qurum and Madinat Qaboos are becoming important residential areas. Many ministries are located in the latter.

Despite new road construction and the opening of a limited-access highway from Qurum to Matrah, congestion is a problem in the capital area and, during peak hours, traffic often slows or comes to a halt.

Food

Numerous grocery stores in Oman offer a reasonably wide range of products, although seasonal variations and occasional shortages occur. Quality and freshness are



View of Muscat

© Wolfgang Kaehler. Reproduced by permission.

generally below U.S. standards; food is relatively expensive.

Clothing

Cotton summer clothing can be worn throughout the year. However, blends of cotton and polyester retain heat, and are comfortable only in the cooler season. One or two outfits for occasional cool winter evenings are recommended.

Although more items are becoming available locally, do not expect to buy needed clothing here, especially shoes. Some Americans have been successful in locating local tailors, but get recommendations before trying one.

Westerners find that lightweight slacks with shirt and tie (skirts and blouses for women), or single-knit safari suits are appropriate for office wear. Lightweight suits are needed for some business events or evening wear.

Women wear caftans, street-length cotton skirts, dresses, or dressy slacks to social functions in the evenings. The caftans and skirts are also recommended for *souk* shopping or beach cover-up, and simple cotton versions may be purchased locally at reasonable prices. Only a limited supply of appropriate footwear is available. Children's cloth-

ing, particularly shoes and swimwear, is in extremely short supply.

Omani men commonly wear a long straight robe called a *dishdasha*, usually white but sometimes pastel. For ceremonial occasions, the *dishdasha* is worn with a decorated belt adorned in front with a large, curved knife in an ornate, silver sheath called a *khanjar*. Affluent Omanis wear the *dishdasha* with a gold-trimmed black robe called a *bisht*. The head covering is either a small, embroidered cap or a loosely wound turban (*musarr* or *emama*).

The women of Oman generally wear brightly patterned blouses and pantaloons, covered by long, head-to-toe black capes. Some of them wear the traditional face veil, but most use no face covering. A face mask, common to women of the Batinah coast, is rarely seen in the capital area. Jewelry, usually silver, is worn in profusion.

A few Omani social customs involving dress include swimwear being worn only at hotel pools; women should wear skirts of reasonable length and avoid shorts, sundresses, and sleeveless outfits; and men should wear slacks and shirt to work and in public, never shorts or shirtless.

Supplies & Services

Most toiletries, cosmetics, nonprescription drugs, and household and entertainment items are available. However, specific brand names may not be available.

Several women's hair stylists and a few barbers are satisfactory. One or two dry cleaners do acceptable work, but shoe repair facilities are limited. The cost of services generally compares to, or exceeds, U.S. prices.

Education

The American British Academy, founded in 1987, is a coeducational day school sponsored by the American Embassy. Grades are from pre-kindergarten to grade 12.

The curriculum is designed to meet the needs of both British and American academic programs. The school offers the International Baccalaureate program, which is recognized in many countries for university entrance.

Several private English-speaking nursery schools accept children from three years of age. Space is limited and the schools usually have waiting lists, but most parents have been able to place their children in a satisfactory school.

Recreation

With the exception of outings sponsored by the Historical Association, few organized touring and sight-seeing activities are available in Oman. However, the country's interesting archaeological, historical, scenic, and cultural sights appeal to photographers and artists. Many towns have fortresses in excellent condition. Interesting sights within a day's drive of Muscat include the ancient capitals of Rustaq, Nizwa, and Sohar. Colorful Arab bazaars, called *souks*, are found in all but the smallest villages.

Four first-class local hotels have swimming pool facilities open to nonresidents for a yearly fee. Among other facilities offered at the hotels are lighted tennis courts and air-conditioned squash courts. One hotel has a bowling alley, another

has six; some have a sports club with an equipped gym and a sauna.

Soccer and field hockey are the only organized sports which Omanis regularly play. The most popular form of recreation is water sports. Swimming, snorkeling, water-skiing, windsurfing, and skin diving are available. Collectors are rewarded with an abundance of beautiful sea shells. Many beaches lie along the coast, and others are accessible by boat.

Oman offers both deep-sea and surf fishing. The sea abounds in a wide variety of fish, both large and small.

Camping and hiking are also popular; the hot weather eliminates the need for tents, particularly if mosquito netting is used.

Entertainment

Europeans and Americans frequent restaurants at the airport and at the large hotels. There also are numerous Indian restaurants as well as two Chinese, an Italian, a French, and a few Arab restaurants where Westerners meet. The hotels often provide entertainment and music for dancing.

Local movie theaters feature Indian films. Omani television has one or two English programs a week, and occasionally presents an English film.

The American Women's Club meets monthly, offering a wide range of social activities to its members. An amateur drama group occasionally produces plays, and the Muscat Singers give concerts.

For the American and European community in Muscat, the main social activity informal dinners or gatherings, primarily with other members of the non-Omani community, as well as taking advantage of the "specials" frequently offered at the major hotels. Omanis attend both formal and informal gatherings, but most Omani men are not accompanied by their wives.

The Department of Tourism is part of the Ministry of Commerce and

Industry. The mailing address is P.O. Box 550, Muscat, Oman.

OTHER CITIES

MATRAH (also spelled Mutrah and Muttrah), just west of Muscat on the Gulf of Oman, is the country's principal port and commercial center. There is an important fish market in the city, and shipbuilding is significant. Caravans to the interior begin here, carrying commodities such as fruits and fish. Oman's oil terminal is located three miles outside of town; the city opened its modern port facilities in the late 1970s. The population is more than 129,000.

SALĀLAH is the trading hub of the Dhofar area in the south, about 80 miles east of the border with the Republic of Yemen. The explorer Marco Polo (1254–1324) depicted Salālah as a prosperous city in the 13th century. It had been renowned since ancient times for its frankincense. The sultan of Oman took over the vicinity in the 1800s. Government construction has included a hotel and a hospital. A paved road links the city to the north; there also is an international airport, completed in 1978. The population in Salālah is approximately 10,000.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Oman occupies the southeastern corner of the Arabian Peninsula. It is bordered on the north by the United Arab Emirates, on the northwest by Saudi Arabia, on the southwest by the Republic of Yemen, and on the southeast by the Gulf of Oman. With an area of slightly more than 100,000 square miles, it is about the size of Colorado.

Oman has three distinct topographical features. The first consists of

two flat, relatively fertile coastal strips up to 20 miles wide—one in the north stretching from Muscat to the border with the U.A.E. (United Arab Emirates), and one surrounding the southern coastal town of Salālah. The second feature includes two mountainous regions—one in the north, with elevations ranging from several hundred feet to the craggy peaks of Jebel Akhdar at 10,000 feet, and the other bordering the Salālah plain in the south. Both are deeply scarred throughout with dry stream beds called *wadis*. The third feature is sandy wasteland, mainly in the Rub'Al Khali (the Empty Quarter) along the border with Saudi Arabia; this area is almost devoid of inhabitants.

Oman's climate is one of the hottest in the world. Temperatures reach 130°F in summer months, from April to September, and rarely drop below 65°F in the cooler season, from October to March. Rainfall averages only four or five inches annually, and occurs from December to March or April. Nevertheless, humidity averages 65 to 80%. Summer monsoons create a more tropical climate in the south.

Population

Oman's population numbers over two million, of whom 1.6 million are Omanis. Omanis are a people of two dominant ethnic stocks—the Qahtan, immigrants from southern Arabia, and the Nizar, from the north. Its long history of trading, and its former colonies on the coasts of Africa and the Indian subcontinent have produced a population of extraordinary range and diversity. Arabs predominate, but communities from India and Pakistan also inhabit Oman.

Arabic is the official and most widely spoken language, but Hindi, Urdu, Swahili, and local dialects are also used. English is spoken by many officials in the Omani Government and by the majority of merchants dealing with the expatriate community.

Most Omanis are Ibadhi or Sunni Muslims, and there is a small but influential Shi'a minority. There is also a small Hindu population.

More than 50% of the population is engaged in fishing or subsistence farming. Literacy is about 35%.

Omanis are reserved, but friendly. They have a strong sense of hospitality and often share coffee, tea, dates, or *halwa* (a sweet, honey-colored dessert) with guests. Although many Omanis observe prohibitions against alcohol and tobacco, they are seldom offended by their offer. Most abstain from eating pork.

A number of social customs are observed in Oman including using only the right hand when eating, never asking questions concerning another's family members, always dressing in modest attire, and never allowing the sole of the foot to be exposed towards a host. It is polite to accept the refreshments offered to visitors, which is a national custom.

Government

The Sultan of Oman, Qaboos bin Said, is an absolute monarch who rules with the aid of his ministers. The sultanate has no constitution, legislature, or legal political parties, although an appointed Consultative Council was formed in October 1981, and in 1991 he replaced that body with one whose members were nominated by traditional leaders from each district of the country.

Except for decrees from the sultan and recently established police and commercial courts, the legal system is based almost exclusively on the Shari'ah (The Koranic laws and oral teaching of Muhammad). Jurisdiction is exercised by *qadis* (men versed in the religious code). Petty courts have been established to deal with minor matters such as traffic offenses. In less populated areas and among the Bedouin, tribal custom often is the only law, although a system of primary courts is making inroads into the interior. In 1987, a "flying court" service was initiated to serve these isolated areas.

For administrative purposes, the country is divided into *wilayats* (districts). These are presided over by *walis* (governors), appointed by the minister of the interior, who oversees all administrative tasks in the area and provides the main link between the people and the central government.

Oman is one of the Gulf region's most stable countries and Sultan Qaboos has proven an able and popular monarch. While maintaining a low profile during the Persian Gulf War, the country allowed Western military organizations use of its air bases.

Oman became a member of the United Nations in 1971. The country is also a member of the Arab League, Gulf Cooperation Council, World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and several other international bodies.

The flag of the Sultanate of Oman is red, white, and green. The vertical red band on the staff is embossed with a white emblem consisting of a sheathed dagger superimposed on crossed swords, and the rest of the flag has horizontal bands of white and green divided by a red stripe.

Arts, Science, Education

The Omanis have long been renowned for their craftsmanship in everything from silver- and goldsmithing to boatbuilding. Oman is perhaps most famous for its national symbol, the *khanjar*—an ornate, curved dagger embossed in silver and still worn in the interior and on special occasions. Other handicrafts include weaving, pottery, and boat-building, with the famous Omani *dhows* still being handmade in Sur.

Traditional art forms such as singing and dancing are seen mostly in the interior. Western culture has made inroads, mostly in the capital area, but Islamic and Omani culture and customs still prevail.

Oman has greatly stressed the importance of scientific and technical advance, especially since the accession of Sultan Qaboos in 1970. In 1986, Sultan Qaboos University opened its doors to both men and women students. There are five colleges within the university: Education and Islamic Sciences, Agriculture, Engineering, Science and Medicine, and Arts. It boasts modern facilities and a highly qualified staff, including American and European professors. Many Omanis also go abroad each year to further their education, often to the U.K. or U.S.

Education is not compulsory. Students may start primary school at six years of age and finish at age 12. Six years of secondary education follows. Less than 25 years ago, Oman had 16 primary and no secondary schools. By 1998, there were 411 primary schools with about 313,000 students. Teachers are primarily Egyptian, Jordanian, and Sudanese.

Commerce and Industry

Although Oman is a relatively small oil producer at 850,000 barrels of crude per day, oil revenues account for 90% of the nation's total export revenues, and 77% of total government revenues (2000 est.). Oman was the last of the Arab Gulf states to become a major producer of oil for export; it is also not a member of Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), but has complied with OPEC policies.

However, analysts have predicted that Oman's oil reserves will last for only about 18 years. With this in mind, the government hopes to diversify its economy by developing natural gas sales.

Since the accession of Sultan Qaboos in 1970, Oman has concentrated on development of an infrastructure. The country now has an excellent highway system, modern airports at Seeb and Salalah, and deep-water ports at Mina Qaboos and Raysut. Large industrial

projects underway include a copper mining and smelting operation, an oil refinery, and cement plants. An industrial zone at Rusail will be the showcase for a variety of new light industries. At the same time, the government is seeking to develop the agriculture and fisheries sectors, from which about 60% of the Omani population still derive their livelihood.

Oman's prosperity was originally concentrated in the area surrounding Muscat, but an increasing number of government services are available to the inhabitants of the interior. Virtually everything in the Omani economy is imported. The U.S. trade relationship is minor. The United Kingdom and the United Arab Emirates are Oman's most important import sources; major export destinations are Japan and South Korea.

Like other countries in the region, Oman relies on imported labor to carry out its development plans. The expatriate work force is estimated at over 400,000. The majority of foreign nationals in Oman work in construction, trade, or agriculture; and the majority of expatriates are Indian or Pakistan nationals. The government has made a substantial investment in education and as a result Omanis are now employed in occupations once held only by expatriates.

In recent years, the government has attempted to diversify the economy and to emphasize private industry. Because of its limited population (and therefore a small market for goods), the intent is for industry to provide materials for export. A number of incentives have been provided by the government and foreign investment is being encouraged. While there continue to be large numbers of British and subcontinental technical advisers and managers, some Americans are finding positions in both the government and the private sector.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry can be reached at P.O. Box 550, Muscat; the Chamber of Com-

merce and Industry, at P.O. Box 4400, Ruwi, Muscat.

Transportation

Oman's major general-cargo port is the 1.5-million-ton capacity Port Mina Qaboos, located in Matrah. Although Oman does not receive direct service from American shipping lines, it does receive regularly scheduled foreign-flag service from the U.S. east coast. Port Mina Qaboos has far less congestion than other ports in the Gulf.

Seeb International Airport is served by 18 international carriers. British Airways, Kuwait Airways, UTA, Pakistan International, Air India, Saudia, Gulf Air, MEA, KLM, Air Lanka, Thai International, Sudan Airways, Biman Bangladesh, Air Tanzania, Egyptair, Kenya Airways, Royal Jordanian, and TWA provide service to many major cities. British Airways and Gulf Air provide direct flights to London. The other carriers connect Muscat with Africa, Asia, and major Middle East cities. Connecting service is available from New York and Washington, DC on Gulf Air and TWA. An international airport also is located at Salalah. Gulf Air and Oman Aviation operate daily domestic routes to serve other towns in the country. Permission to fly to Salalah must be obtained from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Bus service is available for the 25-mile trip from Muscat to Seeb Airport, and to Sohar, Nizwa, Rustaq, and several other towns in the interior. The bus trip from Muscat to Salalah takes about 12 hours.

There are taxis at the airport and at the larger hotels in Muscat. Finding an unengaged taxi at other locations in the city can be difficult. Fares are generally high; there are no meters so fares should be negotiated in advance. Most taxi drivers do not speak English. Omanis and third-country workers reduce the cost by sharing taxis with other riders.

Local bus service is available, but public transportation routes operate only along major thoroughfares

and none go into the area where most Americans and Europeans live. Fares are based on distance traveled. Women seldom use local buses. Visitors should not use the bus system.

Cars may be rented by the day or week. Both an international and valid national driver's license are necessary.

Private cars provide the only practical and dependable means of transportation within the country. Because the city is spread out over a large area and public transportation is inadequate, a car is a necessity. Air conditioning is a necessity.

Oman's more than 3,000 miles of paved roads include four roads from the capital area to the U.A.E. (United Arab Emirates) border, and others to Nizwa, Ibra, Rustaq, Salalah, Sur, and other interior towns. An additional 750 miles of graded roads may be traveled by standard passenger cars, but all other roads and trails require four-wheel-drive or high-wheel-base vehicles. Driving is on the right. Right-hand-drive vehicles are not allowed to be registered. There is no railway system here.

Communications

International telephone and telegraph facilities are available, although delays occur. International direct dialing is available. The local telephone system is quite good. Depending on the area, new subscribers may wait up to three months for telephone installation. Telex service is available at major hotels and at the Public Telex Office in Ruwi. Fax is widely used in place of mail service.

International airmail is generally reliable, and arrives in five to eight days from the U.S. However, newspapers and magazines are subject to censorship—mainly to restrict entry of pornography and items considered politically offensive—and may take considerably longer for delivery.

The local FM radio station broadcasts in English from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Standard broadcast-band reception is limited mostly to nearby Arab countries broadcasting in Arabic, but also includes about six hours a day in English from the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in London, relayed from Masirah Island in the Arabian Sea, off the coast of Oman. A shortwave receiver is the only way of ensuring regular Voice of America (VOA) or other English-language reception. A wide range of receivers may be bought locally.

Television programs, most of them in color, are aired from 3:00 p.m. to about 11 p.m., but often run beyond midnight. Most programming is in Arabic, although a few American TV programs and one movie with Arabic subtitles are shown weekly on an irregular basis. A 15-minute English-language news program airs daily at 8 p.m.

English-language periodicals that are regularly available a few days after publication are *Time*, *Newsweek*, *The Economist*, *Events*, and *Middle East International*. London daily newspapers, such as the *Express* and the *Times*, are available in Oman about three to four days after publication. The *International Herald Tribune* arrives between one and three days after publication.

The *Oman Daily Observer* and the weekly *Times of Oman* (both in English) can be bought at newsstands. Also available is the daily *Khaleej Times* from the U.A.E.

Health and Medicine

Most resident Americans in Muscat use Al Khoula Hospital (surgical/maternity) or Al Nahdha Hospital (medical) for emergencies or for simple treatment. Those with serious ailments usually go for treatment in Europe. The Royal Hospital has recently opened and is available for obstetrical/maternity care, as well as other types of treatments. There

are several private clinics (one staffed with Swedish physicians, a second with British) that resident Americans also use for medical care.

For minor problems or treatment, Oman has several qualified physicians with advanced training in the U.S. or in the United Kingdom. These doctors, however, have long hours and a heavy work load in the Omani Government hospitals, and are not always available.

Some local medical facilities that have modern equipment often lack qualified personnel. Hygiene, in many cases, is inadequate. Oman's dental facilities generally fall below U.S. standards. However, Oman has two qualified dental facilities: a French facility that provides routine care and a British facility that provides care comparable to U.S. standards. Orthodontic care and oral surgery are available.

Oman's sanitation level is low by American standards. Incidence of bacillary dysentery, infectious hepatitis, and intestinal worms exists, although the frequency has diminished sharply in recent years, especially in the capital area.

Malaria exists; there is a 5% chance of contracting malaria in the capital area; 20% in other areas of Oman.

Many Omanis also suffer from poliomyelitis, meningococcal infection, trachoma and tuberculosis. Dust conditions aggravate respiratory ailments. Typhoid is still common.

Oman has no municipal sewage system, and the roughly constructed septic tanks are a constant threat of contamination to the water supply. Garbage is collected regularly from open cubicles in various locations throughout Muscat. Flies are somewhat controlled by periodic spraying. Mosquitoes and other insects, especially cockroaches, are common, as are rats in some areas.

Americans are strongly advised to maintain inoculation schedules for typhoid, tetanus, and poliomyelitis

prevention. Gamma globulin also is recommended. Malaria suppressants (Chloroquine) should be started two weeks before arrival, and continued for the duration of the stay and for four weeks after departure, and ending with a final two week course of Primaquine. Drinking water should be filtered and boiled, and uncooked vegetables and fruits soaked in water containing bleach or Milton (available locally). Close supervision of domestics' hygiene and kitchen routines is necessary.

Sanitation standards at the leading restaurants catering to expatriates, and in the restaurants of major hotels, appear to be adequate.

Most drugs are available locally, but often not the American equivalent. A six-month supply of regularly prescribed medication is advised for long-term visitors.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs and Duties

A valid passport and visa are required. Omani embassies and consulates issue two-year, multiple-entry tourist and/or business visas to qualified American citizens. "No objection certificates" for entry into Oman may also be arranged through an Omani sponsor. Certain categories of visitors may qualify to obtain a visa upon arrival at a port of entry. Evidence of yellow fever immunization is required if the traveler enters from an infected area. For further information on entry requirements, contact the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman, 2535 Belmont Road N.W., Washington, D.C., telephone (202) 387-1980, 1981 or 1982.

Travelers entering Oman may not carry with them, or bring into the country in accompanied baggage, firearms, ammunition, or pornography; all are subject to seizure if found. No more than one bottle of liquor is permitted per non-Muslim

adult. Unaccompanied baggage and shipments of household goods are subject to inspection. Books, videotapes, and audiotapes may be reviewed prior to being released to the owner. A copy of the packing list is required to clear effects through customs. It is advisable to contact the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman in Washington for specific information regarding customs requirements.

Omani employers often ask that expatriate employees deposit their passports with the company as a condition of employment. Although customary, this practice is not required by Omani law. The U.S. Embassy in Muscat advises Americans to exercise caution in agreeing to employer confiscation of passports, since this operates as a restraint on travel and could give undue leverage to the employer in a dispute.

U.S. citizens living in or visiting Oman are encouraged to register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy and obtain updated information on travel and security within Oman. The U.S. Embassy in Oman is located on Jameat A'Duwal Al Arabiya Street, Al Khuwair area, in the capital city of Muscat, P.O. Box 202, Medinat Al Sultan Qaboos 115, Sultanate of Oman, telephone (968) 698-989, fax (968) 699-189. The Embassy's e-mail address is aemctns@omantel.net.om, and its web site can be visited at <http://www.usa.gov.om/>.

Pets

Pets entering Oman require an import permit from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Department of Animal Health, before shipment. Forms may be obtained from the Ministry through one's sponsor and must be submitted with a copy of the pet's rabies vaccination record and a health certificate. Vaccination against rabies is required no less than one month and no more than six months before the travel date. There are additional vaccination requirements for dogs and cats less than 30 days old. A second health certificate dated 48 hours

before the pet travels is also required. Pets may be subjected to a six-month quarantine, although this is usually not required when importing the pet from a rabies-free country. Pets must be manifested as cargo on an airway bill when transported by air.

Currency, Banking and Weights and Measures

The unit of currency is the Omani rial, divided into 1,000 baizas. The rial is pegged to the American dollar. American and American-affiliated banks include Citibank, Grindley's (Citibank), National Bank of Oman (Bank of America), and the Bank of Oman, Bahrain, and Kuwait (Chemical Bank).

The metric system of weights and measures is used. Highway signs are in both Arabic and English, and give distances and speeds in kilometers.

The time in Oman is Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) plus four.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

- Jan. 1 New Year's Day
- Nov. 18 National Day
- Nov. 19 Birthday of HM Sultan Qaboos
- Id al-Adha*
- Hijra New Year*
- Mawlid an Nabi*
- Lailat al Miraj*
- Ramadan*
- Id al Fitr*

*variable, based on the Islamic calendar

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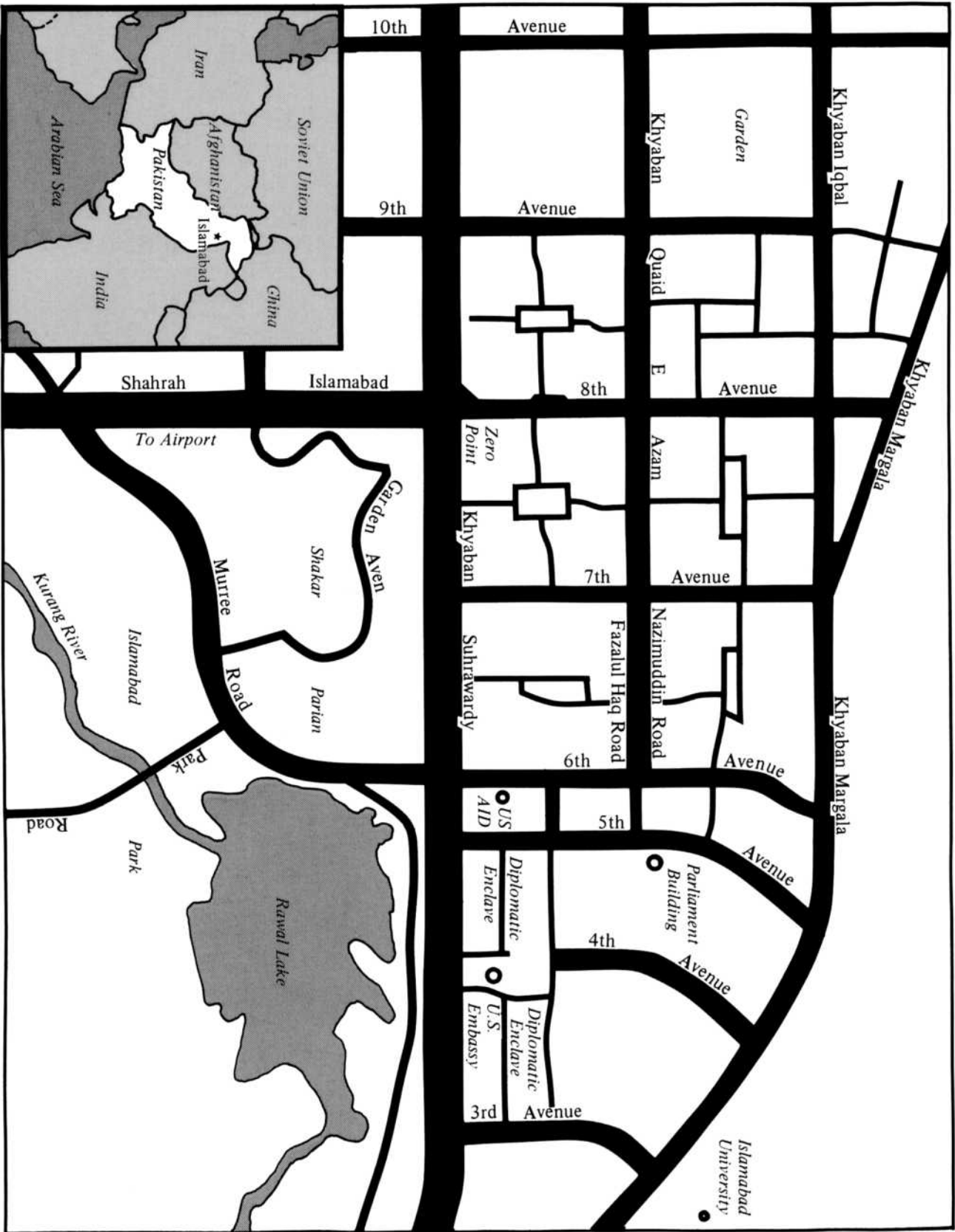
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Islamabad, Pakistan

PAKISTAN

Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Major Cities:

Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar

Other Cities:

Bahawalpur, Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Hyderabad, Multan, Quetta, Sargodha, Sialkot, Sukkur

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report 1999 for Pakistan. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

For 3,000 years, the trade routes that cross the Indus Valley linking the Middle East, India, and the Orient have attracted countless invaders and settlers from as far away as Greece and Mongolia. In one way or another, they all have contributed to the rich cultural diversity of the country that for five decades has been known as Pakistan. In 1947, millions of Muslims from India made their way to a new homeland. Since then, the heritage of Islam has been the cohesive factor enabling this ethnographic amalgam to survive and grow. Pakistan's fascinating culture is complemented by a spectacular and variegated landscape stretching from the second highest peak in the

world to the shores of the Arabian Sea. The spectacular mountainous areas are a result of the collision of the Indian subcontinent with Asia.

MAJOR CITIES

Islamabad

Islamabad is a new capital, built on a specially selected site near the older cantonment town of Rawalpindi. It consists primarily of government offices, foreign diplomatic missions, and residential areas for senior government servants and employees of foreign missions, and has a population of some 350,000. The busy bazaars and back streets common in other South Asian cities are absent, but the loss of local color is offset by Islamabad's convenient layout. Broad avenues, many lined with trees, divide Islamabad into self-sufficient quarters, each with a central shopping area and a few neighborhood markets. Islamabad is considerably greener, quieter, less crowded, and dusty than most cities in this part of the world.

Rawalpindi, 10 miles away and still the major city in the capital area, is typical of the cantonment towns built by the British in India and Pakistan during the mid-19th cen-

tury. These towns served as residential and operations centers for the British Army. Rawalpindi, located on the Grand Trunk Road that ran from Kabul to Calcutta, developed as a transportation, communications, and administrative center. The city remains an important military base and is the site of the General Headquarters of the Pakistani Army and Air Force. Rawalpindi has many narrow back streets that wind through bustling bazaars as well as the broad, tree-lined thoroughfares established by the British.

Until recently, Rawalpindi's importance rested on its strategic location for military operations. Aryan-speakers fought over it in 1400 B.C., and Alexander the Great arrived in 326 B.C. It was completely destroyed by the Mongol invasion in the 14th century. The area was part of the Moghul Empire in the 16th and 17th centuries. Later, the Sikhs conquered and controlled the area, establishing the largest Sikh military cantonment at Rawalpindi in the 18th century. The Sikhs laid down their arms in 1849 to the British 53rd Regiment, which then established its northern command headquarters in Rawalpindi. The town became one of the largest cantonment stations of the British Empire. In 1960, Rawalpindi became the interim capital of Paki-

stan until Islamabad was constructed and government offices moved there.

Utilities

Since electricity in Pakistan is 220v, 50 cycles, all U.S.-made appliances require transformers. Adapters to convert U.S.-type plugs to fit Pakistani outlets for dual voltage appliances or lamps can be purchased on the local market.

With in-town housing there are frequent power outages, especially in period of "load shedding" during winter and summer months. There are also frequent fluctuations in voltage. Therefore, voltage regulators are recommended for sensitive equipment such as personal computers, stereos, TVs, VCRs, and microwaves. They are available locally.

Pakistan's power requirements for TV sets are also 220v, 50 cycles and 625-line PAI European standard. Quality TV sets (PAI or multi-system) of English, Dutch, and Japanese origin, comparable to those in the U.S. are available for purchase in Islamabad and in Peshawar. Only PAL and multi-system TVs and VCRs can be used with tapes available at local video rental shops.

Electric typewriters may need cycle adaptation. It is easier to bring a battery operated clock than to adapt an electric one. Many 220v appliances, can be purchased in Islamabad and Peshawar. The price of items in these stores is less than those found on the open market.

Water in Pakistan is not potable.

Food

Most newcomers miss some American food items but find a fairly large range of quality food available in Islamabad supermarkets. Locally grown fruits and vegetables are of high quality and are cheaper than in the U.S. Many imported goods are available in Islamabad, although sometimes higher in price than similar items found in the Islamabad commissary. Pakistan is a Muslim country and pork and alcoholic

products cannot be found in local markets. Wild boar is available locally, if you prefer a "gamey" taste to your pork. There is one local brewery in Pakistan which sells an "export" quality beer for Christian Pakistanis and foreigners.

Many Americans shop in local markets and stores for chicken, beef, veal, lamb, mutton, goat, seafood, eggs, fresh fruits, and vegetables. Some local meats such as beef do have a "gamey" taste and may be slightly tougher than that to which Americans are accustomed. Local chicken is almost always tougher than that found in the U.S. Meats including chicken may be bought locally at prices cheaper than those in the commissary. Bakeries sell a variety of baked goods, croissants, pastries, French bread, sliced wheat or white sandwich breads, and oversized hot dog and hamburger buns. Fresh milk is never available, but long-life (UHT) milk is available locally. Yogurt and tofu are also available on the local market. Locally bottled soft drinks are both cheap and available, but the quality is uneven and the taste is sometimes not good.

Quality and availability of fruits and vegetables vary according to the seasons. Bananas, apples, mangoes, plums, cherries, pomegranates, strawberries, peaches, plums, citrus fruits, lychees, grapes, raisins, prunes, and watermelons are of good quality but seasonal. Lettuce and tomatoes are found seasonally, and when grown locally they are very good. Other local vegetables found in season are carrots, cabbages, eggplants, turnips, cucumbers, cauliflower, artichokes, parsley, green beans, green peas, onions, potatoes, spinach, bean sprouts, mushrooms, scallions, Chinese cabbage, pumpkins, peppers, and mustard and turnip greens. The variety of vegetables tend to diminish during the rainy season.

Produce is inexpensive in season, yet the duration of the season is limited. Some employees and family members have brought canning equipment and supplies and some

people freeze freshly squeezed orange juice, which is cheaper in season than the frozen varieties available in the commissary. Kitchen gardens are common here, so vegetable and flower seeds should be brought along with gardening supplies. Local seeds produce well, but U.S. varieties of herbs, lettuces, radishes, peppers, and greens fare even better.

Poor refrigeration and unhygienic handling of meat, seafood, produce, and other food items continue to be of concern in Islamabad. Most seafood is transported by air from Karachi in baskets filled with ice. Oftentimes these baskets are left to sit outdoors, allowing the ice to melt and the seafood to thaw. It is more difficult to guarantee good seafood during the summer months and care should be taken to purchase food items from established shops. All produce should be washed thoroughly and meats should be fully cooked.

Paper products bought in the local markets, including toilet paper, disposable diapers, feminine sanitary products, personal care products, and other paper items, are considerably higher in price than those found in the U.S. American tobacco products are available locally and usually at lower prices than in the U.S.

Clothing

Islamabad's weather is basically of two types: 6 months of hot summer (100°F, half dry and half monsoon rains) and about 4 months of winter (temperatures sometimes near freezing at night and 40°-60°F in the daytime). In between these seasons are about 2 months with warm days (about 80°F) and cool nights (about 40°F). As a result, you need a larger supply of light clothing than warmer winter wear, but both are necessary.

Acceptable dress for the workplace is similar to that in the U.S. For a woman, however, the necessity to wear modest clothing should be considered. During the winter months (mid-December to mid March), most

men wear long-sleeved shirts and tie. During the warmer summer months, however, short-sleeved shirts are worn.

The national dress is called a “shalwar kameez” and is a long tunic top worn over a pair of Pajama-type pants. It takes about 5-1/2 yards of material to make a shalwar kameez. Pakistani men, women, and children all wear this outfit. A good number of American women also follow this custom, especially in the hot summer months. Local tailors will make the shalwar kameez for about \$5-7.

A good tailor can copy Western clothing even from a photograph, but most tailors cannot sew from a pattern. Lightweight cottons are available in colorful profusion in summer and there is a limited supply of somber-colored light wool, sturdier cotton, and polyester in winter. Not all the local fabrics are colorfast though, and calicos, stretch fabrics, felt, and knits are unavailable. Imported silks are available. Cotton clothing is advisable for summer, as synthetics are often sticky in the hot, humid weather. Light wool and polyester is best for winter.

It is difficult to find shoes to fit American feet or tastes, although some people have been pleased with shoes they've had copied from shoes brought from home. Shoe repair is unpredictable. Bring an adequate supply of all types of shoes. This is especially important if you plan to take part in the many available sports activities. If hiking is a hobby, a good pair of hiking boots is a must.

Clothes that require dry-cleaning are not recommended. Although dry-cleaning facilities in Pakistan are improving, they are still largely unsatisfactory. While some people consider it inadvisable to send clothes made of silk or delicate fabrics to be dry-cleaned in Pakistan, others have had no problems.

Winter jackets and accessories are useful for trips to northern areas.

Many Americans in Islamabad make at least one trip to Murree during the winter to play in the snow.

Bring an adequate supply of lingerie, underwear, nylons, socks, washable sweaters for winter, sport clothes (e.g., tennis outfits). Do not forget washable lightweight raincoats, umbrellas, and swimwear (suits, goggles, caps, etc.).

However, one can find in Pakistan a large quantity of export quality ready made cotton clothing available in Islamabad and Lahore stores at prices considerably lower than U.S. department store prices. These include jogging suits, casual shirts, tops for women and children, as well as cotton, gabardine, and denim pants for boys and young men.

Men: In Pakistan men dress conservatively. Men do not wear shorts in public (although some men do while jogging), nor do they appear without a shirt. Even small boys will be embarrassed by the stares and titers they receive if they go shirtless in public.

Women: Women should not bring an abundance of halter tops, sundresses, shorts, etc. Pakistan is a Muslim country and these types of clothing are not acceptable in public. Women must dress modestly in public (including inside your own house if you have male servants). Women do not wear short skirts, shorts, or sleeveless or low-cut blouses. In addition, dress codes vary depending on the city. Islamabad is somewhat liberal in its acceptance of Western dress. When shopping at the bazaars in Rawalpindi, however, women are expected to dress modestly and usually wear the shalwar kameez with the dupatta (the long scarf draped over the shoulders).

Children: Bring plenty of clothing for babies and children, as local Western-type clothing is expensive and not always sturdy. This will, then, allow you time to determine which local suppliers are trustwor-

thy. Children's sleepers are nice for the winter nights. School dress in Pakistan is casual, similar to that worn in the U.S. except that there is a dress code based on Muslim sensibilities. Skirts for girls, and shorts for both boys and girls, must be at least knee length and shoulders must be modestly covered (e.g., no sleeveless tops, but short sleeves are acceptable). This dress code affects only the middle and high school-aged children. However, more mature-looking elementary girls are expected to adopt this dress. Jeans, casual slacks, and sweatsuits are staples in winter, and they are available locally. Girls, however, may wish to purchase these items in the U.S., since the Pakistani varieties do not always fit well. Students at ISI celebrate Halloween by wearing costumes and U.N. Day by wearing their national dress. If there is a style of dress typical of your region of the U.S., bring it with you.

Supplies and Services

Don't replace 110v appliances if you think you want to buy 220v here. Indeed, some people continue to use their American appliances exclusively. Most items can be found locally or can be ordered from the U.S.

Car parts are expensive locally, if they are available at all. Bring common extra parts. Slow delivery time for mail orders makes it important to have enough baby and children's clothes. Shoes are also difficult to find locally.

Children's toys and games sold locally are rudimentary and may be unsafe by American standards. Plastic dolls, balls, simple puzzles, etc., are easy to find. Elaborate games and educational toys are not. Imported toys such as Barbie dolls or Transformers are expensive. A limited selection of children's books are available. Local handicrafts make nice gifts, particularly for women and girls. Embroidered clothes, purses, scarves, jewelry, brass and copper articles, marble and inlaid work are all popular.



Staffan Widstrand/Corbis. Reproduced by permission.

Aerial view of Karachi, Pakistan

Bring useful miscellaneous items: bicycles (available locally but expensive and, except for the Chinese-made, of poor quality), parts and tires for U.S./European bikes.

Since most families have their washing done at home by a "dhobi" (laundryman), there is no need for commercial laundry facilities in Pakistan.

Color film can be developed and printed in Pakistan (usually with 24-hour service for prints and 7-day service for transparencies or enlargements) at prices below those in the U.S. The quality of processing varies but is generally good. It should be noted, however, that slide development in Pakistan is limited to Fujichrome and Ektachrome. Bring Kodachrome mailers from the U.S. Black and white film is available locally but printed on matte-finish paper only. B&W glossy prints are not available.

Domestic Help

Most American households employ at least one domestic employee, with the majority of families employing two or three. The quality of domestic staff in Pakistan varies depending on the length of service and the prior contact the domestic

has had with expatriates. Most domestics who have worked with foreigners have a working knowledge of English. Many claim that they are English speakers but experience has proven that they do not always understand instructions. Pakistan's labor force is extremely rigid. A cook will cook, and a dhobi washes and irons. (However, the latter will not sew on a button nor notify the employer when a button has been removed.) Most domestics will do only what they are asked to do and nothing more. Most domestics require instruction and close supervision until they have become familiar with their new employer.

The following types of domestic employees are available: a cook or cook-bearer who does the shopping, cooking, serving, some cleaning, and general supervising of the house; a nanny (ayah) who cares for young children; a bearer, who does most of the housework, helps with serving, and washes dishes; a sweeper who cleans bathrooms, verandas, walks, and driveways (usually part-time, but necessary because most indoor servants will not clean outside areas, floors, or bathrooms, as these are considered low-class chores); a gardener (mali); and a twice-a-week laundryman (dhobi).

Average monthly salaries for domestic employees are: cook - \$135; bearer - \$90; cook-bearer - \$110; dhobi - \$36; sweeper - \$30; mali - \$40; ayah - \$105. (These are U.S. Dollar equivalents, but domestics are paid in rupees.) In addition to their salaries, domestics are usually provided living quarters (at least for the main employee), a bed (charpoy), uniforms, tea, sugar, and milk (or tea money), time off (average 4 days a month), and an annual bonus (sometimes split into two bonuses). Most employers pay for medical examinations and routine medical expenses. Workmen's compensation for domestic staff is available locally at low rates.

Religious Activities

Pakistan is 97% Muslim, but religious minorities are free to practice their faiths. Proselytizing is subject to restrictions. Pakistan has about 1.6 million Christians, many of whom live in the Punjab. A number of Embassy employees also have Christian servants, especially cooks. Christian congregations may be a mixture of foreign nationals and Pakistanis. Services are in both Urdu and English.

Islamabad has an Apostolic Nunciature, a Roman Catholic church, and two interdenominational Protestant churches: The Protestant International Church (PIC), and St. Thomas (Church of Pakistan) which has an Episcopalian format. Rawalpindi has a Catholic cathedral and other Protestant congregations. Also in Islamabad is a Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormon). Jewish services are held in private homes available in the area. International Bible Study groups also meet in homes.

Education

The International School of Islamabad (ISI) is sponsored by the Department of State. ISI offers an enriched American curriculum to students of all nationalities in grades K-12. The school also has a nursery program for children who are four years of age. The school is fully accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and

Schools. ISI is divided into elementary (grades K-5), middle school (grades 6-8), and high school (grades 9-12).

Total Americans in the school are 30%, Pakistanis are 18%, and nationals of 44 other countries comprise the remaining 52% of the school's population. The school year is based on a semester system which begins in the third week of August and ends the first week of June. ISI offers Advanced Placement courses but there is no IB program at ISI.

The elementary program includes specialists in art, music, PE, and host nation cultural studies. The secondary program offers instruction in science, math, social studies, foreign language (French or Spanish), English (including English as a Second Language), and electives (art, technical drawing, accounting, computer science, debate, publications, creative writing, choir, band, drama, photography). Advanced placement courses are offered in English, biology, chemistry, American history, mathematics, French and Spanish, and independent study may be arranged. Three computer labs containing approximately 60 Apple Macintosh computers and an excellent library housing almost 22,000 books, magazines, and periodicals form the backbone of the instructional program.

Full-time teachers at ISI number 49. Most of the teaching faculty are educated in the U.S., hold U.S. certificates, and have many years of teaching experience in the U.S. and/or other overseas schools. Of the 14 full-time high school teachers, 12 hold master's degrees. There are 11 Americans on the high school faculty.

The \$3 million, 20-acre ISI campus (composed of three red-brick classroom quads, a gymnasium, and auditorium) was completed in 1986 and is located in the educational sector of the city between Islamabad and Rawalpindi, about ten miles from most employee residences in Islamabad. The campus also

includes an open-air theater, a physical education center, swimming pool, track, tennis and squash courts, playing fields, music room, science labs, cafeteria, and separate libraries for elementary and secondary school. A full hot lunch program is offered. The school has several buses, and children are bused to and from school.

The ISI American High School diploma is awarded at the end of grade 12 to students who have satisfactorily met the course requirements and total of 23 credits. The following credits must be completed: English (4), math (3), science (3), social studies (4) - including 1 credit each in U.S. and world history, physical education (2), foreign languages (2), electives (5), and students must demonstrate computer literacy. A student is required to have a minimum of six classes per day. The school day is divided into eight periods, with one period for lunch.

Activities are held within the school day and after school. Included are drama, photography, student council, pep club, National Honor Society, National Junior Honor Society, Model U.N., French Club, Key Club, and a yearly trek in the mountains of northern Pakistan. In addition, the ISI supported Satellite Center organizes a variety of after school and weekend activities. Active Scouting programs also attract many ISI students.

Athletic activities include basketball, soccer, field hockey, swimming, track, volleyball, and intramural activities. ISI students participate in four sports conventions or tournaments and one cultural convention with other international schools from Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Nepal.

ISI's music program, including both band and chorus, is open to students in grades nursery to 12. Several musicals and plays are presented annually by the school's music department.

Children who have attained the age of five years by October 1 are eligible for admission to the kindergarten. Children with birth dates between October 1 and December 31 may be admitted if the school determines that the child is ready.

ISI administers the PSAT, NMSQT, SAT, ACT, and Achievement Tests of the College Board. The SAT mean scores for the Class of 1995 were as follows: entire class - verbal 452, math 547; native English - verbal 459, math 478. Some 98% of the Class of 1996 are attending 4-year colleges and universities. Some students of the Classes of 1995, 1996 and 1997 are currently attending The Johns Hopkins University, Northwestern University, Cornell University, Hofstra University, Babson College, Michigan State University, University of Texas, Luther College, Queens College, Marymount College, Smith College, Richmond College, The George Washington University, California Institute of Technology, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and The College of William and Mary.

The International School of Islamabad's local address is Sector H 9/1, Post Box No. 1124, Islamabad, Pakistan. From the U.S., use this address: Superintendent's Office International School of Islamabad (ISI), Unit 62202, APO AE 09812-2202.

Some American children attend other schools. A nursery school at the British Embassy compound is used by some Americans. There is usually a waiting list.

Some other private nursery schools in Islamabad are used by Americans (including a Montessori nursery). These are less expensive than ISI and closer to residences, but they do not offer transportation, nor can they offer the range of facilities and specialists, such as music and PE teachers, that ISI can offer.

Some Americans also choose the British School for their elementary age children. The school offers education only up to age 10, after which



Parliament Square in Islamabad, Pakistan

AP/Wide World Photos, Inc. Reproduced by permission.

the British usually opt for boarding schools in England. Bear in mind that the school, educational philosophy, and vacation schedules are somewhat different from American schools.

Islamabad also has a small French school and a Japanese school.

Special Educational Opportunities

Few formal educational opportunities for adults are available. However, an Asian Study Group has monthly meetings on such topics as Asian literature, religion, music, dance, carpets, films, etc. In addition, the Asian Study Group sponsors many lectures, films, and cultural programs and frequently organizes trips to points of historical interest. The hiking and photography groups are very active.

Sports

The USEA operates the American Club in Islamabad located on the U.S. Embassy compound. For those Americans not employed by the U.S. Government or who are citizens of other nations, membership is available with some limitations and fees.

The American Club has four tennis courts (two clay and two hard) with two full-time tennis instructors, an

Olympic-size swimming pool, a children's pool, a Universal equipped exercise/weight room, a volleyball court, a basketball court, a softball diamond, a soccer field, a children's playground, and a circumferential path used as a track. Also, there is a community and youth center which is reserved for various activities. It has a pool table, a foosball table, a ping pong table, VCR, and TV.

The tennis courts are lit for night use and tournaments are held throughout the year, both within the club and in the international community. Bring your own tennis equipment and clothes. The club sells tennis balls and restrings rackets. Rackets and balls are available on the local market, tennis shoes are generally inexpensive but of low quality (unless imported).

In the hot weather the pool is a favorite place to relax and enjoy meals poolside or in the Terrace Cafe. Swimsuits are not available here and sunblock is available only in the Commissary. The pool is open for the warm summer months, usually March to late October.

The American Club sponsors softball leagues for adults and youths which are very popular. A snack bar operates at the ball field during

games. Bleachers are covered for spectators. Indoors, the International community has a weekly dart league.

The Islamabad Club offers an 18-hole golf course, tennis and squash courts, and horseback riding. Membership fees are reasonable. Capitol Stables offers horseback riding and lessons (bring a helmet, riding pants and boots - British type).

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Hunting for wild boar is available, while partridge, grouse, pigeon, and duck are scarce in the area.

Fishing is possible at nearby lakes. Trout fishing is enjoyed primarily in the northern locations, such as the Kaghan Valley. The best trout streams seem to be a long drive away over poor roads and require at least a long weekend. However, the scenery is always a reward in itself. Bring your own tackle. Rawalpindi has one tackle shop with a limited supply of equipment.

Pakistan has no developed Alpine ski areas nor is there ice skating or ice hockey. Hiking and bird watching on weekends are popular in the nearby Margalla Hills. Trails abound in these rugged hills at the edge of the city. The Asian Study Group organizes hikes with varying degrees of difficulty. Within the city, international running groups have a weekly "hash" that is both social and athletic.

A number of interesting car trips are possible from Islamabad. The old British hill stations of Murree and Nathiagali have snow in winter and are cool in summer. Murree at 7,500 feet above sea level is a 2 hour drive on a winding road. The altitude offers some relief from the hot summer weather in Islamabad. Accommodations at the few hotels may be hard to obtain during the tourist season, and are far below U.S. and European standards, except for the new five-star Pearl Continental at Bhurban. It takes another hour to reach Nathiagali at 8,200 feet. Fine views of snow-

capped mountains are possible from many points.

For the adventurous, the valleys of Swat and Kaghan have mountain streams with good fishing. Hiking and climbing are excellent in all the hill locations. A few hotels and rest houses may be found. Because of the distance from Islamabad, a long weekend is generally needed.

Camping may be prohibited in some areas, but it is often possible to tent on the grounds of a rest house. Get permission to camp wherever you stop. Always bring food and water, as local supplies may not be acceptable. You should not camp alone in any part of the country.

Near Islamabad it is not difficult to drive into the Margalla Hills and to Taxila, one of the subcontinent's most important archeological sites. The ancient city sites, only 25 miles from Islamabad, were inhabited more than 2,000 years ago. The museum at Taxila has fine examples of Gandhara sculpture from the Buddhist period.

Entertainment

The movie theaters in Islamabad usually show Urdu-speaking films.

A limited amount of entertainment is available in Pakistan, since many Pakistani activities center around the family. The Folk Heritage Center has a yearly festival, Lok Mela, that is well worth attending. Occasional meena bazaars and industrial exhibitions may be interesting. There are a number of restaurants in Islamabad and Rawalpindi, serving Continental, Pakistani, Chinese, Afghan, Tex Mex and Persian cuisine.

The Pakistan Arts Council and foreign missions sponsor musical performances and plays. The Rawalpindi Amateur Theatrical Society (RATS), an international group, has one or two productions a year and sponsors periodic play readings. The plays and musical events of the International School are well attended.

The Asian Study Group also conducts trips within Pakistan. This group has evening meetings of cultural interest, covering carpets and textiles, religion, archaeology, and other aspects of life in the subcontinent.

Apart from schools, most children play at other children's homes. There are few external facilities for youth recreation. The aforementioned is also true for teens.

Social Activities

Social life is informal and centers around the home or the American Club. Informal dinners and buffets are the most common entertainment. Parties within the American community are frequent, especially around holiday seasons. Traditional parties at Christmas, New Year, and Independence Day and for special occasions are sponsored by the American Club. Musical groups give performances during the year.

The American Women's Club (AWC) is open to all American women, women who are married to Americans, and women from the British, Canadian, Australian and New Zealand communities. The AWC offers a chance to meet Americans and other women outside the diplomatic community. The AWC sponsors social service projects, and along with other diplomatic groups, supports the Diplex, a small thrift shop.

Many Pakistanis enjoy entertaining Americans and appreciate return invitations. It is not unusual for a husband to attend without his wife, and it should not disturb the host if no advance warning is given. Should you visit a home where women are secluded, it is important for the female guests to pay their respects by visiting the women's area of the house. If you receive an invitation to a wedding celebration, you may want to ask for details as to what you will encounter. A city wedding may be an elaborate affair in a hotel, but a country wedding could mean a long walk on rough paths to a village.

Rawalpindi

Rawalpindi, 10 miles away from Islamabad and still the major city in the capital area, is typical of the cantonment towns built by the British in India and Pakistan during the mid-19th century. These towns, with a few broad tree-lined streets and sturdy brick buildings, served as residential and operational centers for the British Army along the Grand Trunk Road, that ran from Kabul to Calcutta. Rawalpindi developed as a transportation, communications, and administrative center. The city remains an important military base and is the site of the General Headquarters of the Pakistani Army and Air Force.

Besides the main thoroughfares established by the British, Rawalpindi has many narrow back streets that wind through bustling bazaars. About 928,000 Pakistanis live in Rawalpindi, a large proportion originally from other parts of the country. In the city today are locomotive works, an iron foundry, oil refinery, and textile mills.

Until recently, Rawalpindi's major importance rested on its strategic location for military operations. Aryan-speakers fought over it in 1400 B.C., and Alexander the Great arrived in 326 B.C. The city was completely destroyed by the Mogul (also written Moghul and Mughal) invasion in the 14th century. Later, the Sikhs conquered and controlled the area, only to lay down their arms (1849) to the British 53rd Regiment, which then established its northern command headquarters in what was to become one of the world's largest cantonment stations. Rawalpindi became primarily a civilian city in 1960, when it was chosen as the interim capital of Pakistan. The American Embassy moved here from Karachi in 1966, and remained until quarters were established in Islamabad in 1973.

The majority of American children in the capital area attend the International School of Islamabad, which is supervised by an American and staffed by qualified American, Paki-

stani, and third-country national teachers. Its curriculum, from nursery through grade 12, parallels that of U.S. schools.

Karachi

Karachi is Pakistan's largest and most cosmopolitan city. As the center of Pakistan's economic, commercial, and communications activity, it links areas inside the country with the rest of the world through both its port and its busy international airport.

Located northwest of the mouth of the Indus River, Karachi separates the blue waters of the Arabian Sea from the brown sands of the Sindh Desert and is the gateway to the fertile region of the Punjab, the historic Northwest Frontier, and to Afghanistan. A four-lane highway connects Karachi with Hyderabad, located 2 hours northeast on the Indus River, and continues as a narrow road 800 miles north to Lahore (a 2-3 day trip).

Karachi's excellent harbor is the source of both business and pleasure. It serves as the center of Pakistan's seaborne trade, which consists largely of textile goods, and also as a place to boat and fish. Unlike other Pakistani cities, Karachi has a short history. A hundred years ago, it was a small fishing village with a ditch called "Karachi joku." When the Suez Canal opened for international shipping in 1865, the British needed a nearby seaport. They developed the harbor and built the fishing village into a city of close to 300,000 people. However, up to partition in 1947, Bombay, now in India, served as the major harbor for the eastern region of former British India. Following independence, Karachi, as Pakistan's only major harbor, took on new significance and rapidly expanded to its present population of about 10 million people. Though Karachi has few of the architectural and historical attractions that distinguish Lahore, Peshawar, or other areas, it is the main commercial, financial, and industrial center in Pakistan. Teeming with the undisciplined traffic of

a variety of vehicles, Karachi is a vibrant place in which to live and work.

Utilities

Pakistan's electric power is 220v 50 hertz, but fluctuations between 200v and 250v are common. Voltage spikes and power outages are frequent and irregular. Appliances made for U.S. current will require a step-down transformer, and some appliances with DC motors or requiring specific rpm output, such as some tape recorders, record players, and clocks, will require conversion to 50 cycles. Parts for such conversion are scarce in Karachi. Residential power outlets vary. Common varieties include the British three-prong, grounded or the round, two-prong, ungrounded style. Parts and labor for rewiring plugs are more readily available than adapters. Water supply is frequently inadequate.

Food

Food stores in Karachi sell dry and frozen goods but are not up to Western standards of quality or variety. Imported goods are available in uncertain quantities at higher prices.

Local dairy products such as milk, yogurt, and ice cream have occasionally been found to be contaminated. Many employees use long-life products from the commissary and make home-made yogurt and ice cream.

Fresh meat, including lamb, mutton, goat, beef, and veal, is available in local markets at very reasonable prices. American cuts are not available, however, and quality is below Western standards. Local meat must be cooked thoroughly to prevent parasitic infection. Seafood is readily available. Snapper, king mackerel, promfret (a pan or grill fish), shrimp, and crab are relatively expensive staples.

Clothing

Local taste and tailoring in men's clothing are similar to that in the U.S. Coats and ties may be worn year round in the office, although

they are not required. During the long, hot summer, entertainment is usually casual and either short-sleeved or sport (bush) shirts are worn.

Women's dress is similar to that in the U.S. but more modest. In the office, within the Western community, and at social affairs with Western-educated Pakistanis, anything which would be acceptable in the U.S. would be appropriate. On the street, however, and in the bazaars or in rural areas, women are advised to wear skirts with hemlines below the knees and to avoid low necked or sleeveless dresses, or tight, revealing pants. Shorts are not appropriate. More suitable bazaar or street wear is pantsuits, slacks, or calf-length skirts; arms and shoulders should be covered. Cocktail dresses or pants outfits are worn for evening entertainment.

Karachi's winter is delightful, but unfortunately, lasts only about 8-10 weeks. From December to late February, temperatures vary from 50°F at night to 80°F in the daytime.

Summer weather is quite hot and humid and usually lasts from the end of February to November. A larger supply of light clothing is needed than in Washington. All cotton and drip-dry fabrics are the most comfortable; synthetic fibers are sticky in the hot, humid weather.

Because the winter is short and not very cold, winter suits, dresses, and coats are rarely worn, but a sweater or evening wrap is useful. Attractive shawls are available locally and are often used to keep the chill off during winter evenings. The most practical winter fabric is washable synthetic knit, but regular wash-and-wear and summer clothing may be worn throughout the year.

Except for locally embroidered things for women and children, local ready-made clothing is not satisfactory. Local dressmakers and tailors can make better clothing to order for women and girls than for men and boys, although men's casual

wear or "bush suits" are well made and attractive. Tailoring and dress-making services are available to make, alter or repair clothing. Quality of work varies, but with a little trial and error you can usually find a good tailor. Some tailors can copy from pictures, but a few have Western-style patterns and most do best by copying an existing piece of clothing. Fabrics available locally include plain wash-and-wear, washable woolen and cotton prints, and silks, all of which must be checked for color fastness.

In any case, bring an adequate supply of lingerie, underwear, hose, socks, washable sweaters, and bathing suits and caps. Bring baby supplies such as rubber pants, diapers or Pampers, underwear, and pajamas. Get as many washable things as possible, and avoid "dryclean only" clothing if possible.

Bring an adequate supply of shoes. Locally made sneakers and sandals are cheap and reasonably good. Other shoes are available, but many find the style, fit or quality unacceptable. Some people have had trouble finding properly fitting children's shoes.

Supplies and Services

See Islamabad.

Domestic Help

The comments on domestic help covered under Islamabad apply to Karachi, except that rates run somewhat higher in Karachi.

Religious Activities

Christian churches in Karachi include: Holy Trinity Church, Brooks Memorial, and St. Andrew's (all Protestant); and St. Patrick's Cathedral, St. Anthony's Church, Christ the King, and Stella Maria Chapel (Catholic). All have Sunday and Friday services and school (Saturday for Seventh Day Adventists). No Jewish services are held in Karachi.

Education

Virtually all American children attend the Karachi American

School (KAS), which offers nursery and kindergarten, elementary and junior and senior high school education. The school is accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools based on American teaching methods and curriculum. The school has 48 full-time teachers, 31 of them Americans, and uses U.S. materials. The student body of approximately 360 includes roughly equal numbers of Pakistanis, third-country nationals and Americans. Parents of new students to KAS should be aware that the academic program is rigorous and that pupils coming from other school systems have found it challenging. There is no special education program. The Karachi American Society, a parent organization, elects a seven-member Board of Directors who develop school policy. The school year runs from mid August through May.

New students should have a thorough physical examination within six months prior to admission and should bring with them all previous school records.

Address questions (official mail only; must be 16 oz. or less) about the school to: Superintendent, American Consulate General/KAS Unit 62403, APO AE 09814-2403 Tel. (92) (21) 433557 FAX: (92) (21) 437305.

The Convent of Jesus and Mary offers instruction by Roman Catholic nuns for boys and girls in the primary grades and secondary level schooling for girls only. The school year is July-December and January-May, and studies are patterned on the English school system. The British Overseas School offers instruction in the nursery and primary grades. It admits a limited number of non-British students.

Karachi Grammar School, using the British curriculum, is one of the oldest day schools in the subcontinent, and caters to English-speaking students. It has about 1,500 pupils of many nationalities - most Pakistani, but a few Americans, and its three departments (kindergarten,

primary, and secondary) cover ages 5-18. The secondary department prepares students for the entrance requirements of English and American universities. Its school year consists of three terms: mid-January through mid-May; mid-June through mid September; and mid-September through mid-December.

The Karachi American School preschool starts at age four, the British Overseas School (BOS) accepts 3-year-olds and the Alliance Francaise (English Program) accepts two-year-olds. The BOS program is 4-1/2 hours long; KAS is three; and the Alliance Francaise is 2-1/2. All are daily morning programs. The BOS and Alliance Francaise are located in Defense and Clifton, respectively. The Goethe Institute runs a German language nursery and the Alliance Francaise also has a French language school. Other local nursery schools exist, including numerous Montessori schools.

Adult education is unavailable at the university level. Foreign language programs are available at the Goethe Institute, Alliance Francaise, and Friendship House.

Sports

Saltwater bathing is excellent throughout the year, except during the June-August monsoon, when surf at nearby beaches rises dangerously, undertow is powerful, and poisonous jellyfish abound. Some consider it a bit cold for bathing during the short winter months. Beach huts (less than an hour's drive from town) may be rented on Hawkes Bay or Sandspit beaches by people who have the time and patience to find a suitable but and go through the negotiating process.

Freshwater pools are available on a membership basis at the Sindh Club, Gymkhana Club, the Pearl Continental Hotel, the Avari Hotel, KLM pool at Midway House near the airport, the Marriott, and the Sheraton. The Karachi Recreation Association (pool, tennis courts, squash courts, walking/running course, gymnasium and weight

room) operates out of Karachi American School and is open to Americans for membership, whether they have children in the school or not.

Small boat sailing is good most of the year and especially in the summer with the monsoon winds. The Karachi Yacht Club offers excellent small boat sailing opportunities. This private club races primarily fourteen foot Enterprises, but similar size boats partake as well. Because of the club's roughly 40% ex-pat membership, there is usually a boat for sale at any given time. Boat prices run \$3,000 and up but can be paid for on monthly installments or simply rented by the day.

A 27-hole course is available at the Karachi Golf Club, although the membership cost is high.

Entertainment

The Pakistan American Cultural Center (PACC) occasionally puts on an English language play. Infrequent music concerts are sponsored by local choral groups and the various cultural centers. Occasionally, the latter import professional artists. Most Americans bring or import tape recorders, record players and accessories, and borrow or dub each other's tapes. VCRs have become a popular source of entertainment. Video rental shops are located throughout the city, but quality varies. A multi-system VCR is suggested, as U.S. tapes are usually VHS format while locally available tapes are UK-PAL format. Those wishing to take advantage of this source of entertainment should ship a VCR and compatible TV in their household effects.

Karachi has a moderate variety of restaurants, concentrated around the major hotels and the boat basin. The American Club caters to the American palate.

Lahore

Lahore is a city of 5 million people, 800 miles north-northeast of Karachi (1-1/2 hours by jet), and 170

miles south-southeast of Islamabad (35 minutes by jet). Lahore lies 17 miles west of the Indian border, 700 feet above sea level, in the middle of the Great Punjab Alluvial Plain. It is Pakistan's second largest city after Karachi.

Lahore has been the capital of several empires in the subcontinent, with a history going back at least 1,000 years. The old city and its environs have many examples of the art and architecture of the Moghul empire, such as the Lahore Fort, Badshahi Mosque, Emperor Jahangir's Tomb, and the Shalimar Gardens. The city was the capital of the Sikh empire in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. One pleasant legacy of British rule (1849-1947) is Lahore's wide, tree-lined streets. Extensive suburbs have repeated this pattern.

Today, Lahore is the capital of Pakistan's largest and most populous province. The Punjab, heartland of Pakistan, produces 69% of Pakistan's agricultural output. It is a major governmental, political, media, cultural, and economic center. Two of the country's largest engineering firms are located in Lahore, as is the headquarters of the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) and the Pakistani railway system. In addition, hundreds of industrial firms produce textiles, steel products, carpets, processed food, shoes, electric motors, and a wide variety of consumer goods. Lahore has the country's two largest printing plants; newspaper circulation is the largest in the country. Six English dailies and two English weeklies are available.

Lahore has two major universities: the University of the Punjab and the Pakistan University of Engineering and Technology, along with many training institutions. The private Lahore University of Management Sciences is a leading business school. The Lahore Museum, the oldest in the country, has outstanding examples of the nation's heritage.

The city is on the Ravi River, one of the five great rivers from which the Punjab (Persian for "five rivers") takes its name. The climate is delightful from November to April. December and January are dry and almost cold with night temperatures occasionally dropping to near freezing.

Summer starts with dry, very hot days in May and becomes humid from June through August, with daytime temperatures regularly reaching 100°F for weeks and occasionally soaring to 114°F. Activities slow down markedly during summer. Monsoon showers give some relief from the hot summer breezes and dust storms, but increase the humidity to uncomfortable levels. Temperate weather returns at the beginning of October. Air quality is noticeably affected by industrial pollution, dust, and pollen in summer and smoke in winter.

Utilities

Electric power failures and scheduled outages occur frequently in Lahore. In the winter, "load shedding" is scheduled daily. The power may build up to 250-280v, and the usual step-down transformers offer U.S.-made appliances limited protection. Voltage regulators with automatic cutouts should be used for VCRs, stereos, and small appliances. These regulators are available locally in a wide variety of models. Telephone service is erratic; wrong numbers and crossed lines are frequent. Calling the U.S. direct is possible if the telephone has that facility or, if not, by booking a call via the operator.

Food

With the exception of chicken, meat is not sold in shops or restaurants on Tuesday or Wednesday in Lahore. Meat and meat cuts are different from those in the U.S. Meat must be well cooked, since markets often have no refrigeration.

High quality seasonal fruit and vegetables are available, including bananas, oranges, grapes, tangerines, mangoes, pomegranates, apples, peaches, melons, apricots,

potatoes, green beans, carrots, onions, tomatoes, green peppers, broccoli, okra, ginger, cucumbers, eggplants, and peas.

Clothing

Dress in Lahore outside the office is much more conservative than in Islamabad. American women generally wear Western clothes to work. Conservative Western dress is often acceptable outside the office, but many foreign women feel more comfortable in a shalwar kameez (Pakistani national dress) or slacks with a loose, thigh-length, long-sleeved blouse with a high neck. Either western or Pakistani dress is acceptable at evening functions, except that long dresses or skirts are rarely worn. Clothing for social functions, particularly weddings, is sometimes quite dressy. Sandals are popular for daytime and evening wear.

All-cotton clothing, including underwear, is most comfortable in hot weather. Dry cleaning service is unreliable, and clothing wears rapidly due to the need for frequent washing. Women should be well covered all year round. Tight-fitting or low-cut clothing, sleeveless or halter tops are not acceptable in Lahore. Western style ladies wear is not available in local stores, nor is there variety in children's clothes.

If you intend to use local tailors, bring a supply of buttons, interfacing, zippers, thread, and especially elastic. Locally made items of this type are often not satisfactory. Tailoring is cheap but not always of good quality. Tailors usually do not follow patterns, but can copy clothing. A woman's blouse costs about \$10 to make, pants \$15. Men's pants can be made for \$20 and a suit for \$70 to \$90.

Domestic Help

Help is plentiful, but good servants are scarce and becoming more expensive. Current monthly estimates are: cook \$100-120; bearer \$80; gardener \$60-70; laundryman \$20-30; nursemaid \$80.

Religious Activities

English-language religious services are readily available at Anglican, Roman Catholic, and Seventh-Day Adventist churches. The International Christian Fellowship, an interdenominational English language congregation that meets in the Chapel of Forman Christian College, also conducts services. Also, there is a Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormon). No Jewish services are available in Lahore.

Education

Most American children attend the Lahore American School (LAS) operated by the Lahore American Society. LAS has about 450 students in all grades, divided among American, Pakistani, and third-country students. It is fully accredited and certified by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. It follows a standard American curriculum and calendar (mid August to end of May) for kindergarten through grade 12. A nursery class is also available. The majority of faculty is American. The high school program is college preparatory, with 25 credits required for graduation: 4 credits of English, 3 of science, 2 of foreign language, 3 of social studies, 3 of mathematics, 3 of physical education (including health), and 7 credits in electives. The college placement record of LAS is excellent. For specific information write to: Superintendent, Lahore American School, c/o Principal Officer AmConsul Lahore Unit 62216, APO AE 09812-2216. Tel. 870895/873603.

The French and German Cultural Centers in Lahore offer language instruction.

Sports

Facilities for sports include golf, swimming, riding, tennis, squash, hunting, and fishing. Two local clubs offer combinations of golf, tennis, and swimming. Membership fees vary, but membership is not required to play golf. English riding instruction is offered at the Lahore Polo Club, and men's rugby by the Lahore Rugby Football Club. Amer-

icans may use the Lahore American School's pool and basketball courts for a nominal charge whenever school sports are not scheduled. Spectator sports include cricket, field hockey, world-class polo, and rugby.

Some sports equipment, when locally available, is reasonable in price, but not always of high quality. Excellent locally made squash rackets may be bought here but bring a supply of golf and tennis balls. Hobby materials are generally unavailable or expensive.

Entertainment

Dinners and parties in private homes are the most common form of entertainment.

Lahore is often said to have the best restaurants in Pakistan, offering Continental, Chinese, and Pakistani cuisine.

Ample opportunities exist to study area history and culture and to acquire folk products and art objects. Shopping, especially for Oriental/Pakistani rugs, is a favorite event.

Local cinemas are rarely attended by Americans. Video cassettes in the PAL mode, of varying quality, are readily available for rent at reasonable prices on the local market. If you decide to bring a VCR, the most suitable is the VHS-type that can show three systems (PAL, SECAM, and NTSC). The American, British, and French Cultural Centers regularly show films.

PTV, the Lahore government-run television station has a 10-minute nightly news program in English. There may also be a rerun of an English or U.S. program. A second, privately owned and operated channel began operation in 1991. STN runs many U.S. and British reruns and several hours of CNN programming around the clock. Pakistani television is on the PAL system which is not compatible with the standard U.S. system. Indian television may also be viewed in Lahore. No local FM radio exists, and

English language short-wave reception is only fair. Pre-recorded cassette tapes are readily available. CDs are difficult to obtain.

The American Women's Club is active and provides opportunities for meeting people as does the International Women's Club.

In 1977 the Government of Pakistan passed legislation dramatically restricting the consumption of alcoholic beverages. Some hotels have "bars" where foreigners and non-Muslims with the proper permits can purchase a limited selection of alcoholic beverages, but at exorbitant prices.

Peshawar

Peshawar, an ancient city in the heart of the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP), lies 15 miles east of the famous Khyber Pass, 35 miles from the Afghanistan border, and close to the Pakhtun tribal agencies. Peshawar is a city of approximately 1,000,000 and is situated on a flat plain surrounded on three sides by mountains. The city is divided into three parts: the Old City, Cantonment area, and University Town. The Old City is a typically crowded central Asian town, with a colorful bazaar teeming with people and every kind of moving vehicle. Houses of mud bricks line the narrow twisting streets. By contrast, the Cantonment has a suburban atmosphere with spacious houses set back from quiet, tree-lined avenues. Much of the Cantonment area is occupied by military installations of the Pakistan Army and Air Force. University Town, to the west of the airport and south of the university campus is the modern section of the city, with development dating from the late 1950s. The NWFP and Peshawar host well over a million Afghan refugees, many of whom have established businesses in the Old City.

Pakhtun Culture

Pakhtuns are the dominant ethnic group of the NWFP. Although cultural mores are slowly changing,

particularly in Peshawar, Pakhtun culture is conservative, religious, and largely concerned with the notion of honor. The "Pakhtun Code of Honor" (Pakhtunwali) is usually defined in terms of three basic, and much romanticized, concepts: "melmastia" - hospitality to every guest, not only providing food and shelter but also protection; "badal" - revenge under any circumstances; and "nanawati" - obligation to protect or forgive an offender when he submits himself at the doorstep of the man from whom he is seeking forgiveness. However, Pakhtunwali is a much wider code than these three concepts. Any action taken to protect the honor, as seen by Pakhtuns, is a part of Pakhtunwali. Consequently, Pakhtun men are greatly protective of their women and their women's honor. Although education is slowly preparing Pakhtun women for a more public role, few Pakhtun women work outside of the home or participate actively in public affairs. The Pakhtun Code of Honor is especially strong in the tribal areas, the western third of the province that is not under provincial administration and where traditional rules of tribal justice are applied.

Food, Clothing, Supplies and Services

Fresh meat (no pork products), vegetables, and fruits are available year round. Frozen meat is also available locally, although a greater variety is found in Islamabad. Frozen fish and seafood is also available through local vendors.

Local tailoring shops produce western-style clothes and dresses at reasonable prices. Locally purchased thread is not strong or preshrunk; a supply of good quality thread is recommended for those who plan to sew or have garments made. Quality, durable shoes and hiking boots are not available locally.

The electrical current is 220v, 50 Hz. Computers, stereo components, VCRs, radios, televisions, and other sensitive electronic equipment require voltage regulators (available locally) due to frequent voltage fluctuations.

Laundry, dry-cleaning, film developing, and barber and hair dressing facilities are available in Peshawar. Slide film is not locally available, nor is slide developing reliable. Several book stores sell office supplies, maps, magazines, and a wide variety of hard cover and paperback English books.

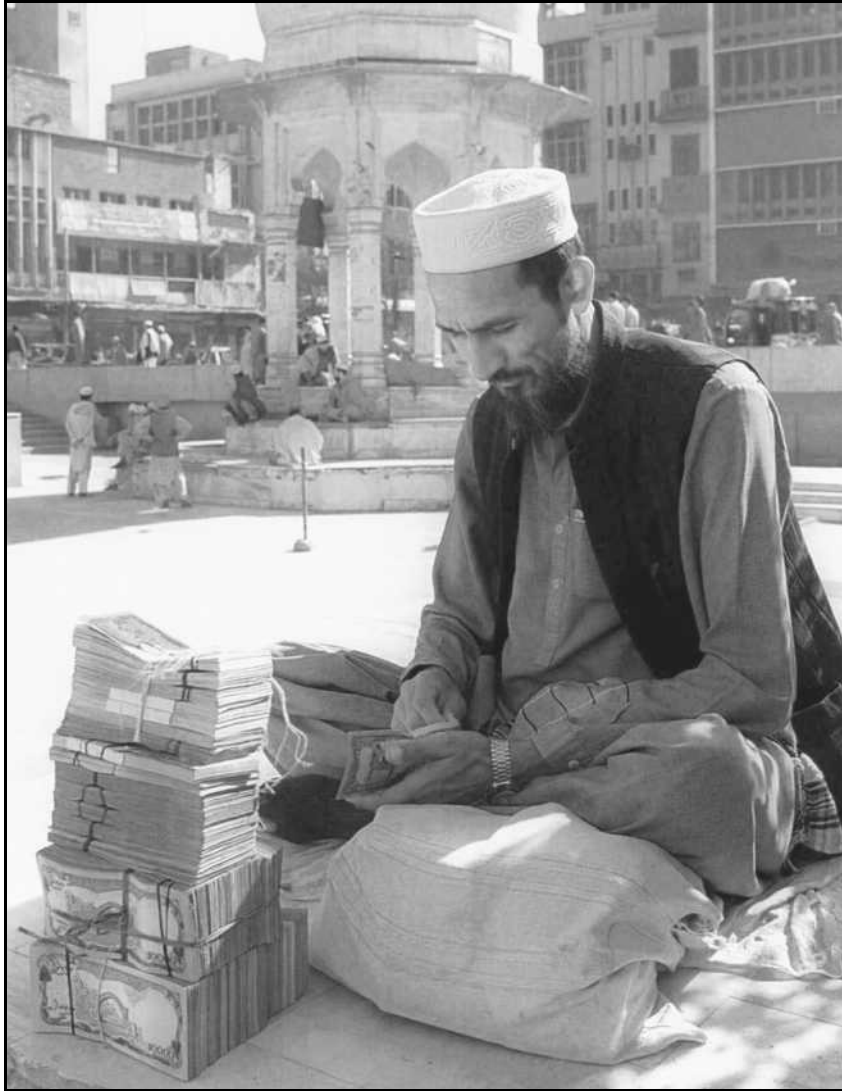
Religious Activities

Peshawar has Protestant and Catholic churches but no synagogues. Services are conducted in both English and Urdu. Numerous mosques serve the Sunni, Shia, and Ismaeli communities.

Education

The International School of Peshawar was established in 1987. Offering classes from kindergarten through grade 8, ISP enrollments currently average 60 students a year from the American and European expatriate communities. All classes are taught in English by certified teachers, and standard American textbooks are used for all subjects. The school year begins mid-August and ends the last week of May. Classes are conducted Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., with a 2-1/2-week mid-year break at Christmas. The American school has no boarding facilities nor special education programs.

Other children have commuted to Islamabad to attend the International School of Islamabad (ISI) or the Murree Christian School, located 30 miles northeast of Islamabad. Murree provides boarding facilities for children of all ages and has been used extensively in the past by foreign families in Peshawar. ISI does not have boarding facilities and attendance at this school requires the cooperation of an American family in Islamabad to board the child during the week. Other possibilities include the Woodstock School about 150 miles north of Delhi, in Mussoorie, India, U.S./European boarding schools, or various home study programs as used by a number of families.



Currency dealer in Peshawar, Pakistan

AP/Wide World Photos, Inc. Reproduced by permission.

Sports

Peshawar has three clubs: the Peshawar Golf Club with an excellent 18-hole course; the Peshawar Club with its swimming, squash, and year-round tennis on grass courts; and the Peshawar American Club with two clay tennis courts, a swimming pool, as well as basketball and volleyball courts. The single international class hotel in Peshawar recently has opened a health club and also has a pool. A variety of other sports or exercise activities, including volleyball and aerobics classes, have been organized by volunteers in the expatriate community and are generally available to interested participants. Places for hunting, fishing, and

trekking are available in nearby Swat and Chitral. Arrangements can also be made for horseback riding.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

The Khyber Pass, a romantic, historical landmark 15 miles away on the main road to Afghanistan, is the pass through which conquerors of the subcontinent have come and fought over for centuries. Tourists can take advantage of a periodically scheduled steam train safari to the Khyber Pass after obtaining the required permits. The village of Darra Adam Kehl, 25 miles from Peshawar, is the site of "tribal gun factories," where handmade rifles

and shotguns are manufactured by and for the Pakhtun tribesmen. Ten miles beyond the factories is the Kohat Pass, less well-known, but more spectacular than Khyber. Currently, visits to these tourist areas are restricted because of armed conflict in nearby Afghanistan and tribal unrest.

Chitral, the northernmost mountain district in the NWFP, is accessible by scheduled air service from Peshawar, and by Jeep for about 6 months a year. Chitral offers dramatic views of 26,000-foot Tirich Mir (the "King of the Hindu Kush"), fine trout fishing, interesting visits to the exotic Kalash mountain valleys, and native polo matches among a friendly, hospitable people. Other scenic areas include the Swat and Kaghan valleys, northeast of Peshawar, where trout fishing is also available.

The Northwest Frontier Province is also home to a number of significant archaeological sites related to the 2,400-year-old Buddhist Gandhara civilization. Most important is the Buddhist monastery at Takht-I-Bhai, near Mardan, a site still revered by Buddhists. The Peshawar Museum houses what is considered the finest collection of Gandhara civilization statuary, including the famous "Starving Buddha."

Entertainment

Few English films are shown publicly and most foreigners do not frequent local cinemas. The American Club, however, has a large number of NTSC VCR movies for rent. Several local video shops rent PAL videos. VHS VCRs using the PAL, SECAM, and NTSC systems are recommended. Tapes in the Beta format are limited and not available at the Peshawar American Club.

Restaurant selection is limited to one or two good Pakistani restaurants, two Chinese restaurants, several Afghan establishments, and the Pearl Continental and Khan Club Hotel restaurants, which serve continental cuisine. The Peshawar American Club has the most popu-

lar restaurant in town among the foreign community and, perhaps, the liveliest members-only bar in Pakistan. In accordance with local law, however, Muslims and Pakistani citizens may not be served alcohol. Recommended hotels in Peshawar are the Pearl Continental and several good guest houses that have recently opened in University Town. Rooms are sometimes available at the American Club for official travelers, and the Golf Club has recently opened a limited number of rooms for guests.

Peshawar is famous to shoppers of the world for its Afghan carpets, tribal jewelry, lapis, and furniture. More than a hundred Afghan carpet stores offer a wide variety of Afghan carpets, kilims, and other woven products. In the Old City Sarafa bazaar, one can find tribal jewelry, old coins, war medals, lapis, and other semi-precious stones, as well as modern Pakistani gold jewelry. Peshawar's furniture makers craft excellent wood furniture to order at relatively inexpensive prices. Several outlet stores are operated by the volunteer agencies marketing handicrafts made by Afghan refugees.

The two main shopping areas in Peshawar are the Saddar Bazaar in the Cantonment and the various bazaars found in the Old City. Although Saddar has several gift shops and carpet stores, most visitors to Peshawar prefer to shop in the colorful, exotic environs of the Old City. Shops usually open between 9:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. and remain open until dark. Except for a few meat and grocery shops, businesses remain closed on Fridays.

Special Information

The people of Peshawar and the NWFP observe conservative social standards. Both men and women should dress modestly. Men should not wear running shorts and T-shirts in public. Women should cover up and, in particular, not wear shorts, tight clothing, sundresses, etc., in public. Women should avoid eye contact with men passing them

on the streets. Behavior around mosques, especially during prayer time, should be discreet.

Peshawar and the surrounding tribal areas can be fraught with unexpected dangers to uninitiated newcomers. Visitors should travel only with U.S. Government Agency officials, volunteer agency representatives, or with a reputable travel guide. Personal information and trip schedules should be given only to authorized government and hotel officials. The Government of Pakistan must approve all visits to Afghan refugee camps and tribal areas, including the Khyber Pass. Such visits are normally limited to daylight hours, and special permits are required. Do not leave vehicles unattended while traveling in the NWFP. Night travel on NWFP roads can be hazardous and is not recommended. Although the indiscriminate bombings which were a hallmark of terrorist campaigns in Peshawar at the height of the Afghan conflict have largely disappeared, Afghan-related violence in the city continues to be a problem and could threaten the security of expatriate residents and visitors.

OTHER CITIES

Ruled by the Afghans in the early 19th century, **BAHAWALPUR** joined Pakistan in 1947. It is situated about 225 miles southwest of Lahore, near the Sutlej River. The city trades in soap, cotton, and pottery. The population here is over 400,000.

FAISALABAD (also known as Lyallpur) is located in a cotton and wheat growing area about 175 miles southeast of Islamabad. With a metropolitan population of over 1.9 million, Faisalabad is an important commercial center, particularly for grains and cloth. Manufactures include textiles, textile machinery, bicycles, hosiery, flour, sugar, vegetable oil, soap, and pharmaceuticals. Founded and named for Sir James Lyall in 1892, but now usually called Faisalabad, the city is the

site of Punjab Agricultural University (founded in 1961), several colleges affiliated with the University of Punjab, and numerous experimental farms and cattle-breeding stations.

The capital city of Gujranwala District, **GUJRANWALA** has a population of approximately 1.2 million. It is situated 42 miles north of Lahore. The city trades in grain, and manufactures copper and brass utensils. Formerly the capital of Sikh power in its early period, Gujranwala is the birthplace of Ranjit Singh.

HYDERABAD, with a population of more than one million, is located in southern Pakistan on the Indus River, near the Indian border. Long known for its silk, gold, and silver embroidery, and its enamelware and pottery, Hyderabad is now an industrial city with chemical engineering, food processing, cotton, cement, cigarette, glass, and match factories. Founded by Ghulam Shah Kalhora in 1768, the city was designed by his son, Sarfaraz Khan in 1782. Hyderabad was the capital of the emirs of Sind and was occupied by the British East India Company when Sind became a British protectorate in 1839. The University of Sind, founded in 1947, is located here; there are also several other colleges in the city. Numerous mosques, palaces, and the arsenal are found in the city's fort. Umarnot, a town in the Thar Desert near Hyderabad, was the birthplace of the Mogul emperor Akbar.

MULTAN, situated on the Chenab River in east central Pakistan, is about 280 miles south of Islamabad. The city is an important road and rail junction, an agricultural center, and a market for textiles, leather goods, and other products. Industries here include metalworking, flour and oil milling, and the manufacture of cotton textiles, shoes, carpets, and glass. Pottery and enamelwork are some of the city's noteworthy handicrafts. Multan is one of the Indian subcontinent's oldest cities, deriving its name from an idol in the temple of the sun god.

Multan is thought to have been conquered by Alexander the Great about 325 B.C., and visited by the Chinese Buddhist scholar Hsüan-tsang in 641. The city was taken by the Arabs in the eighth century, captured by Muslim Turkish conqueror Mahamud of Ghazni in 1005, by Tamerlane in 1398, ruled by the emperors of Delhi from 1526 to 1779, and by the Afghans until 1818. In 1818, Multan was seized by Ranjit Singh, leader of the Sikhs. The British held Multan from 1848 until Pakistan achieved independence in 1947. Landmarks include a surrounding wall and fort enclosing the tombs of two Muslim holy men, and an ancient Hindu temple. More than a million people live in Multan.

QUETTA is located in west-central Pakistan, near the Afghanistan border and about 450 miles southwest of Islamabad. The city is situated on a plain enclosed by high mountains at an altitude of 5,500 feet, and has a population of close to 600,000. Quetta's name comes from the Pushtu word for fort—*kawatah*. The city commands the entrance through the strategic Bolan and Khojak Passes into Afghanistan, and is a trade center for Iran, Afghanistan, and much of central Asia. Chief items traded here include fruits, vegetables, hides, and wool. Cottage industries in the city produce textiles, foodstuffs, and carpets. Coal and chromite are also mined nearby. Historically, Quetta was occupied by the British during the First Afghan War, 1839–1842, and following the Second Afghan War in 1876. It became prominent as the seat of British resident Sir Robert Sandeman, and was a strongly fortified British military station. In June 1935, a severe earthquake nearly destroyed Quetta, but the city has since been rebuilt. Quetta has a military staff college, founded in 1907, and a geophysical observatory. It is also known as a summer resort town.

SARGODHA is located in east Pakistan, about 105 miles northwest of Lahore. The metropolitan area has a population of approxi-

mately 455,000. A railroad and industrial hub, Sargodha produces soap, flour, textiles, and chemicals. There is a grain market here.

The birthplace of philosopher-poet Muhammad Iqbal, **SIALKOT** is in eastern Pakistan 120 miles from Islamabad. A rail junction and a major trade and processing center, Sialkot has a population of about 420,000. Bicycles, surgical instruments, sporting goods, rubber products, and ceramics are manufactured here. Textile weaving is also an important industry. Landmarks include a fortress built in 1181 by Muhammed of Ghor and the mausoleum of Guru Nanak, founder of the Sikh religion, who died in 1538.

The city of **SUKKUR** lies in a hot, desert region, about 240 miles northeast of Karachi, near the Indus River. It is a commercial hub, manufacturing leather, cement, cigarettes, and textiles. Barley, rice, wheat, and millet are grown nearby. Major trade is conducted with neighboring Afghanistan. The town was built up by the British in 1843 when they established a garrison. Sukkur's population exceeds 300,000.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Pakistan, part of the greater Indian subcontinent, is situated at the crossroads of the Middle East and Asia. The country covers an area about the size of the states of Washington, Oregon, and California combined. It is bordered by Iran and Afghanistan on the west; China on the north; the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir on the northeast; India on the east; and the Arabian Sea on the south. Pakistan lies between latitudes 24 and 37 degrees north (e.g., from the southern tip of Florida to the southern border of Virginia).

The major political divisions of the country are the Provinces of Sindh, Balochistan, Punjab, Northwest Frontier, and the federally administered Northern Areas, Tribal Areas, and Azad Kashmir. The provinces roughly correspond with the country's major geographic, ethnic, and linguistic regions.

There are five distinct geographic regions: The Thar Desert and Lower Indus Valley, located in the southernmost province of Sindh, consists largely of arid valleys and rocky hills that extend into neighboring India. Farming is successful only in the irrigated areas nearest to the Indus River.

The Balochistan Plateau is a broad, arid tableland that lies between 1,000 and 3,000 feet above sea level in the western province of Balochistan. The plateau is encircled by rugged mountains and covers nearly one-half of the country's territory.

The Indus Basin features the largest contiguous irrigation system in the world. "Punjab," the name of the province in which much of the basin is located, means "five waters" in Persian, referring to the five major rivers (Indus, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, and Sutlej) in the basin. The province of Punjab comprises the northeastern quarter of Pakistan.

The Northwest Frontier is a region of barren mountains sheltering rich irrigated valleys. The provincial capital of Peshawar is situated on an ancient trade route that leads through the Khyber Pass and into Afghanistan.

The Far North offers Pakistan's most spectacular scenery with towering snowcapped mountains, deep narrow valleys, and glaciers. The world's second highest mountain, K-2, is located in the Far North, as are a dozen other peaks of more than 25,000 feet elevation, including Nanga Parbat, Gasherbrun, and Rakaposhi.

Seasonal temperatures vary widely in these five regions. With the

exception of the Far North, summers are hot throughout the country with temperatures ranging from 90°F to 120°F and little nighttime relief. Trade winds provide some relief during the hot and humid summers in Karachi and a brief cool season comes between December and February. In Lahore, Islamabad, and Peshawar, a distinct winter season brings daytime temperatures of 60°F or less and cold nights. Islamabad and Peshawar may have light frosts. Spring and fall are delightful seasons in these three cities. Altitude governs climate in the Far North, with pleasant summers in the lower regions and perpetual snow in the higher mountains.

The average annual rainfall varies from 6 inches in Karachi, 15 inches in Peshawar, and 18 inches in Lahore, to about 30 inches in Islamabad. Most rain falls during the summer monsoon from July to September, although parts of the Punjab and the Northwest Frontier experience a moderate winter rainy season as well.

Population

Pakistan is a relatively poor country with a rapidly growing population. Annual per capita income is approximately \$470. The population is currently estimated at 135 million, making Pakistan the seventh most populous country in the world. Conservatively estimated to be growing at an annual rate of 3.0 percent, one of the highest rates in the world, Pakistan's population could double in 27 years.

One of Pakistan's major problems is illiteracy; only 38% (1994) of the adult population is literate with the rate being significantly lower for women than men. About 47.5% of Pakistan's labor force is engaged in agriculture, while 10.9% works in industry. Pakistani society traditionally assigns a subordinate role to women with the result that 65% of boys ages 6 to 11 and only 33% of girls attend primary school. Women are reported to be only 13.1% of the labor force, but this does not include

the large number of women engaged in agricultural and household work. Substantial disparities exist in living conditions between urban areas and the countryside where over two-thirds of Pakistan's people live.

Pakistan's population is unevenly distributed throughout the country. More than 1.5 million Afghan refugees have sought refuge in its borders while employment abroad has taken 2 million Pakistanis away. Population density in parts of Sindh and Punjab is well above the average distribution of 381 persons per square mile. The barren uplands of Balochistan is the least inhabited area of the country.

Internal migration, particularly from rural to urban areas, has begun to alter the ethnic and linguistic character of each of the Provinces, but it is still generally true that Sindh is the home of the Sindhis who speak Sindhi; Balochistan is the traditional home of the Balochi-speaking Baloch; Punjabi is the language of the Punjab, home of Pakistan's largest and most influential ethnic group; and the Northwest Frontier is the tribal homeland of the Pushtu-speaking Pathan. The most notable exception to this pattern is seen in the urban areas of Sindh. Immediately after independence, a significant number of Muslim "muhajirs" or refugees of various ethnic backgrounds poured into these areas from India. More recently, internal migration has brought many job-seeking Pathans to Karachi. In addition, the movement of large numbers of Pathans and some Punjabi farmers into Balochistan over the past decades has made the Baloch a minority in their own Province. The remote valleys of the Far North are inhabited by a few smaller ethnic groups, such as the Gilgitis, Kashmiris, and the people of Hunza.

Urdu is the official language of Pakistan. Although it is the first language of only 7% of the total population and 25% of the urban population, educated Pakistanis are usually conversant in Urdu. The status of English has declined some-

what as a result of "Urduization" efforts by the government, but it is still used extensively in business and government.

Although geographically, ethnically, linguistically, and socially Pakistan is the picture of diversity, its religious homogeneity is an important unifying factor. Members of the Sunni sect constitute the largest number of the Muslims in Pakistan; most of the rest are Shia Muslims. Several hundred thousand Ismaelis live in Karachi and the northern areas. Religious minorities include Christians (1.6 million, 80% of whom live in Punjab), Hindus (1.6 million, 80% of whom live in Sindh), and Parsis (7,000, most of whom live in Karachi).

Public Institutions

The land that is now Pakistan is the site of one of the world's oldest civilizations. As a western gateway to the Indian subcontinent, this area has seen successive waves of people move down through the passes from central Asia and the Iranian Plateau, bringing new ethnic strains and a wide variety of cultural contributions. Over the past 3,000 years, it has been ruled or invaded by Aryans, Persians, Greeks, Kushans, Mongols, Afghans, Turks, Moghuls, Sikhs, British and others.

Pakistan came into being in August 1947 as a result of the Muslim League's determination, once the British rulers departed, to have its own state in the Indian subcontinent, separate from the Hindu majority. The partitioning of British India led to the migration on a massive scale of Muslims to Pakistan and Hindus to India. In the process, hundreds of thousands died and the legacy of partition remains a source of bitterness between India and Pakistan to this day.

In 1947, Pakistan faced a unique and ultimately unsolvable problem of ethnic and geographic division. The new nation was divided into two parts more than 1,000 miles from each other and on opposite sides of the Indian subcontinent.

Slightly less than half the people inhabited West Pakistan (present-day Pakistan) and the rest occupied East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) in the humid delta region of the lower Ganges in East Bengal. The two halves of the country differed greatly in language, customs, and daily life and were held together only by a common religion and mutual distrust of the Hindu majority in India.

In its early years, Pakistan faced frequent political crises. The death in 1948 of its founder and first Governor General, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, and the 1951 assassination of Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan deprived the country of two of its most able leaders. From 1951 to 1958, a succession of unstable governments did little to improve internal conditions. In 1958, the Army Commander-in-Chief, General Mohammed Ayub Khan, overthrew the civilian government and seized power as president. Ayub governed Pakistan for 10 years, first under martial law, and after 1962 under a constitution that provided strong executive powers and limited representative government. Ayub relinquished the presidency in early 1969 to Commander-in-Chief General Mohammed Yahya Khan, who dismissed the government, abrogated the constitution and ruled under martial law. In December 1970, however, he permitted Pakistan's first free nationwide elections to select members for both the National Assembly and provincial legislatures.

The election results profoundly affected the future of Pakistan. In the West, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto gained a majority. In the East, The Awami League of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman scored an overwhelming victory, one so great that the party gained a majority of all seats in both East Pakistan and in the National Assembly. A period of intense political maneuvering followed, with the main issue being the degree of autonomy to be accorded East Pakistan. This period ended abruptly in March 1971, when the

Army arrested Mujibur Rahman in Dhaka and attempted to suppress his followers. Resulting disorders in East Pakistan grew into a widespread insurrection, during which 10 million refugees fled into neighboring India. Growing tension between Pakistan and India over developments in East Pakistan led to the outbreak of war in December 1971. India invaded East Pakistan and after a short campaign, West Pakistan's forces in the East surrendered. Then the former East Pakistan became the independent nation of Bangladesh.

From 1971 to 1977, Bhutto was in power, first as president, and then, following the construction of a new constitution in 1973, as prime minister in a parliamentary system. Following national election, in early 1977, a major confrontation emerged between Bhutto's PPP government and a multi-party coalition called the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA). Subsequently, Prime Minister Bhutto was removed in a bloodless coup led by Chief of Army Staff, General Zia-ul-Haq. Bhutto was eventually convicted of conspiracy to commit murder and hanged.

From 1977-1985, Pakistan remained under martial law with Zia serving both as President and as Chief Martial Law Administrator. Finally, in response to domestic and international pressures, Zia allowed a return to democracy. Non-party elections to the National and Provincial Assemblies were held in 1985. The new government, led by Prime Minister Mohammed Khan Junejo, enjoyed the support of legislators associated with the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) who provided Junejo comfortable majorities in the National and Provincial Assemblies. Groups of independents and opposition forces were also formed. Local elections were held in 1987 under civilian government auspices.

In August 1988, growing tensions between President Zia and PM Junejo led Zia to dismiss Junejo's government and call for new non-

party elections. Zia's death in a plane crash, along with U.S. Ambassador Arnold Raphel later that month, however, altered the political environment. Senate Chairman Ghulam Ishaq Khan assumed the presidency and guided the nation through the elections in November of that year. The election was won by the Pakistan People's Party led by Z.A. Bhutto's daughter, Benazir Bhutto, which assumed power in December, 1988.

Although the largest party in Parliament, the PPP lacked a majority. Bhutto's administration struggled for most of its tenure and on August 6, 1990, the President, acting under the constitution, removed the Bhutto government. A caretaker regime held national and provincial elections in October 1990 which brought a coalition to power under the leadership of Nawaz Sharif, who became Prime Minister in November 1990.

Sharif's government was dismissed in April 1993 by President Ghulam Ishaq Khan, but it was later restored by the Supreme Court. The resulting constitutional crisis was resolved by the resignation of both the Prime Minister and the President. In elections held in October 1993, the PPP-led coalition won and Benazir Bhutto became Prime Minister again.

In November 1996, President Farooq Leghari dismissed Bhutto's government on the grounds of corruption and abuse of power. In the February 1997 elections, the PML won a two-thirds majority in the National Assembly and Nawaz Sharif once again became Prime Minister.

In October 1990 U.S. military assistance to Pakistan was halted and new economic aid was suspended after President Bush was unable to certify to Congress that Pakistan did not possess a nuclear explosive device. This prohibition, still in effect, is the result of the Pressler Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act. One of the results of the suspension is a significant reduc-

tion in assistance and U.S. military direct-hire and contract personnel in Pakistan.

Arts, Science, and Education

An Islamic presence in the subcontinent introduced new outside elements of creativity. The period of Moghul rule, particularly, was marked by great achievements in architecture, examples of which are still world famous. In Lahore, the palace-fortress called the Red Fort, begun at the time of Emperor Akbar, and the Badshahi Mosque (one of the largest in the world), erected during the reign of Emperor Aurangzeb, are fine examples of Moghul buildings. Also at Lahore is Shalimar, the Garden of Bliss, a good example of a formal Moghul garden.

Because Islam prohibits pictorial likeness of the human form in art, representational art did not develop substantially among the Muslims in the subcontinent until the Mid-20th century, when declining Moghul influence and increasing Western contact resulted in less restrictive art forms. Abstract paintings and designs more in keeping with Muslim sensitivities have always been prevalent and are still popular today.

Recently, Pakistani artists, usually the young, have begun experimentation in many different media. As a result, art shows in most of the larger cities are becoming more common, and a new interest, especially in painting, is increasing. Most notable artistic expression is found in Pakistani handicrafts. The feeling for form, design, and color is best displayed in pottery, carpets, hand-woven textiles, articles made of marble, inlaid woodwork, and brass, copper, and silverware.

Strong literary traditions exist in Urdu as well as in the regional languages (Sindhi, Punjabi, and Pushtu). The largest share of popular academic and standard literary publications are in Urdu, the

national language. Technical subjects and more advanced writings in the social sciences are in English.

A wide variety of music, ranging from folk to classical to Western popular styles, is enjoyed throughout Pakistan. Pakistani folk music, particularly melodies and rhythms of mountain tribes and rural areas, is most appealing to Westerners. Country-Western, jazz and rock, although not encouraged, are also gaining popularity, especially among young people. The Government of Pakistan patronizes and encourages artistic expression, intellectual pursuits, and Islamic culture through radio, television, universities, art councils, art galleries, and academic and professional associations (Pakistan Historical Society, Pakistan Philosophical Congress, Association for the Advancement of Science, Pakistan Writers' Guild, etc.). The government-sponsored National Council of the Arts aims at coordinating all cultural, artistic, literary, and intellectual activities in the country.

The government of Pakistan works continuously to improve the quality of the country's educational system, but reform efforts are hampered by lack of financial resources and qualified personnel, outdated instructional materials and techniques, and a reluctance among some elements of Pakistani society to participate fully in the education of the nation's youth. In general, education is controlled by the provincial governments, with strong inputs from the Federal government.

The Federal and Provincial governments are working together to combat illiteracy, which is one of the most serious obstacles to economic and social development. According to comprehensive 1991 figures, the most recent available, the overall literacy rate was 34.8% (male 47.3% and female 21.1%). It has been estimated that by 2000 the overall literacy rate will have improved to 43.6% (male 56.2% and female 29.8%). Education planners consider this improvement insufficient

and are developing new programs to reduce illiteracy. These include model programs in each province and in the Capital district, and another program, called "User of Koranic Literacy for Promotion of Female Literacy," which takes advantage of the ability of many women to read the Koran in Arabic as a tool to learn to read Urdu.

Urdu is the national language and is emphasized in the official curriculum, although regional languages are used in primary school classrooms in some areas. Government authorities have stressed that English should receive prominence as a second language. English is taught at the upper levels and in private schools, and excellent knowledge of English is required for the top levels of government service and the study of science and medicine. Students also study Arabic and regional languages such as Sindhi, Punjabi, Pushtu, and Baloch.

The government is accelerating the universalization of primary education, and encouraging private sector involvement in the educational system. Improvements are also underway in technical and vocational education. In the fields of secondary and higher secondary, greater emphasis has been placed on scientific and technical education. Although expansion is under way at all levels, the educational system is not able to cope with rapid population growth. Enrollment levels are low, compared to other countries at Pakistan's stage of development. Similarly, the proportion of the budget allocated to education is very low. By the year 2002, the government expects to enroll all children in primary education (up from 73% at present) and half the children in secondary education (up from 32%).

Universalization of free primary education is being accelerated, and the private sector's participation in educational development is encouraged. Many Pakistanis who can afford the cost of private schools choose to send their children to these institutions, rather than public schools. In some areas, private

institutions are setting a standard of high quality which the public schools have yet to attain. The Government is attempting to make improvements in technical and vocational training facilities. In secondary and higher secondary education, greater emphasis is being placed on science and technical education, and many schools are introducing computers into their instructional programs.

There are 24 universities in Pakistan. Some of the more prominent private universities are the Agha Khan Medical University and Hamdard University in Karachi, and the Lahore University of Management Sciences in Lahore. The prestigious Quaid-i-Azam University in Islamabad conducts all its programs at the graduate level. The Allam Iqbal Open University, also in Islamabad, offers courses through radio, television, and correspondence. Universities are monitored and financed by the University Grants Commission. Several universities follow the American semester system. Tuition at the public universities is negligible and meets virtually none of the cost of higher education. The private universities, on the other hand, charge high fees, but also offer financial assistance to deserving students.

It must also be emphasized that during any given year there are approximately 10,000 Pakistani nationals studying abroad at American colleges and universities.

Commerce and Industry

Pakistan's per capita income of U.S. \$470 is the highest in the subcontinent, but it is still a poor country by world standards. The relative prosperity of the industrialized regions around Karachi and Lahore contrast sharply with the poverty of semi-arid Balochistan and the mountainous Northwest Frontier Province. The largest sector of the economy is service, which constitutes 49% of the gross domestic product (GDP). The economy also

relies heavily on the agricultural sector, which contributes about 24% of the GDP. Agriculture employs over half of the work force, and provides, directly or indirectly, over half of the export receipts. Cultivation of the rich alluvial soil of the Indus River Basin has always been the chief economic activity of the country. The major crops are wheat, cotton, rice, and sugarcane. However, despite developments in agriculture Pakistan still must import many major food items including wheat, consumable oil, and sugar.

Growth in the industrial sector, which accounts for about 18% of the GDP, has declined in recent years largely due to inconsistent economic policies of successive governments. However, significant progress has been made in diversification of manufacturing. Major industries include cotton textiles, fertilizer, cement, food processing, vegetable ghee, sugar, and steel. Although significant quantities of natural gas are present in Pakistan, and several major dams on the Indus River system provide a good deal of hydroelectric generating capacity, the country continues to rely on massive levels of imported oil to meet its energy requirements. In recent years, periodic power blackouts known as "load shedding" have been considerably reduced by sizable foreign investment under the Government's Private Power Policy.

Pakistan's balance-of-payments position remains weak. In recent years the dollar value of exports has stagnated at U.S. \$8.5 billion level. Substantial inflows from abroad, not only in the form of remittances from Pakistanis working in the Persian Gulf and in Europe, but also foreign assistance, have contributed to easing the imbalance. Chief exports include rice, leather goods, carpets, and cotton yarn and textiles. Major imports are petroleum, machinery, consumable oil, wheat, iron, and steel. Pakistan's principal trading partners are the U.S. and Japan.

Transportation

Automobiles

Since driving is on the left-hand side of the road, right-hand drive cars are safer, although both left-hand and right-hand drive vehicles are used. Islamabad, with its wide avenues and four lane roads, lends itself to the use of left-hand-drive vehicles. However, in other areas, because of heavy congestion and narrow streets, use of a left-hand drive car can be dangerous. A number of road hazards, both animate and inanimate, place great reliance on sound suspension, horns, and good brakes. Persons whose cars have the new small emergency spare tire should consider investing in a full size rim and spare tire. Flats are frequent and reliable repair facilities are not always close at hand.

Car maintenance is adequate. Except for Japanese vehicles, spare car parts are scarce and expensive. Cars most commonly found in Pakistan are Toyota Corollas, Coronas, Cressidas, and Land Cruisers; Honda Accords and Civics; and Mitsubishi Pajeros (though Pajeros are not recommended for Karachi where they are a favorite target of thieves).

It is possible to order a new car from Japan. These cars are right-hand-drive vehicles, which cannot be imported into the U.S. without costly safety and emissions alterations because they do not meet U.S. standards. The good news is that they cost at least 40% less than an equivalent model that is manufactured for the U.S. market.

To receive a Pakistani driver's license, you must have a valid U.S. driver's license. Temporary licenses are not sufficient. International driver's licenses are not recognized by the Government of Pakistan. Legal driving age in Pakistan is 18 years for any type of vehicle.

Local third-party liability insurance is mandatory. Costs vary depending on the size of the engine: up to 1,000 cc, the premium is about \$16 a year;

1,000-2,000 cc, about 21 a year; and over 2,000 cc, about \$24 a year. Comprehensive and collision insurance is also recommended, available locally, and less expensive than in the U.S. Bring a certificate from your U.S. insurance company, or from another country, showing a 5-year claim-free record to obtain substantial premium reductions. Some keep their U.S. insurance or, if possible, insure with an overseas specialist (Lloyds or Clements). Arrange for transit insurance, marine and rail policy, to include final destination when shipping your car.

Gasoline and diesel are available throughout the country and the price is fixed by the Pakistani Government. Octane ratings lower than in the U.S. allow low-compression, six-cylinder engines to run better. Regular gasoline averages 80 octane, and super gasoline averages 87 octane. Occasionally, 100-octane gasoline is available. Regular gasoline lacks additives that make U.S. gasoline more efficient in high-compression engines. Presently, the price of "super" gasoline is about 42¢ per liter, and diesel prices are about 21¢ per liter.

Local

Public transportation includes buses, vans, taxis, horse-drawn tongas, and motor scooter rickshaws. Buses are overcrowded, of questionable safety, and are generally not used by Westerners. Taxis are unsafe due to the poor conditions of the vehicles and the unsafe driving practices of the drivers. Motor rickshaws are available in most cities except Islamabad. They are slow, poorly protected from the weather, and dangerous because of erratic driving habits. Most public transportation is not suitable for official Americans.

Regional

Pakistan is served by Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) and a number of international carriers. However, no U.S. carriers offer service to or from Pakistan although United Airlines recently entered into a "code share" arrangement

with several other international carriers. Karachi maintains the nation's largest airport with service to and from a variety of destinations on both PIA and other international airlines. Air service is more limited in Islamabad with flights on only three carriers: PIA, Saudi, and British Airways. British Airways offers thrice weekly direct service from London. Inter-country travel is facilitated by PIA which flies to all major cities in Pakistan. However, these flights are often crowded and overbooked so take care to confirm your flight in advance.

Rail travel is also possible, though not advised. An express train from Karachi to Lahore takes about 20 hours; Rawalpindi is an additional 6 hours. Train travel can be dangerous due to a high accident rate and frequent incidents of crime.

Road transportation between major points is possible, but roads are usually crowded and in poor repair. Travel by car from Karachi to Lahore takes 2 days. However, travel outside of Karachi and into the Sindh interior must have prior approval of the Government of Pakistan due to severe law and order problems. Travel by land is therefore not advised. The drive from Lahore to Islamabad normally takes 4 hours on the modern express Motorway which was inaugurated in December 1997. The drive from Islamabad to Peshawar takes about 3 hours. Again, driving is dangerous on main trunk routes, with few clean rest stops available.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

Telephone service in Pakistan is adequate. Direct-dial service connects all major cities in the country, and international direct dial service is available from Pakistan to most foreign countries including the United States. Phone bills should be monitored closely to assure that you are billed only for calls placed from your phone.

Station-to-station calls to the U.S. cost Rs. 52 (U.S. \$1.26) per minute. International direct-dial may be accomplished from your residence. International calls may also be booked with the local operator, but it takes time and the call is limited. During the rainy season the telephones are sometimes out of order; however, service is normally restored within one day.

E-mail and Internet services are also available at reasonable rates. FAX service to the U.S. costs Rs. 52 per minute.

Mail

International airmail service to and from the U.S. is available and many use international aerograms.

Radio and TV

There are two television stations in Pakistan: Pakistan Television (PTV) is countrywide, and Shalimar Television Network (STN) is available in Lahore, Karachi, and Islamabad/Rawalpindi. PTV carries news, musical programs, documentaries, dramas, and sports in Urdu or other local languages. It also carries old American sitcoms and movies from time to time. News in English is broadcast at 7 p.m. daily. PTV is not regarded as an entertainment or recreation source for Americans. STN has started partial productions, airs acquired programs from many sources and carries CNN broadcasts for 8 hours per day. Acquired programs include British and American sit-coms, Urdu and English films, and Public Diplomacy-supplied documentaries on science, art, and wildlife. All programs on PTV and STN are censored to remove anything which might be objectionable.

Satellite dishes have become common here. With a dish, one can pick up CNN, Star (Hong-Kong based system featuring, BBC, MTV, sports and entertainment), and several Chinese and Arabic channels. Dishes and receivers are readily available and reasonably priced (currently from \$150 to \$500).

All television programming in Pakistan is 625 PAL standard. The American Club in Islamabad maintains a wide variety of movies in NTSC format for rental. Audio tapes are widely available in local stores but are also of uneven quality. CDs are readily available, but selection is still limited and prices are cheaper than in the U.S.

Quality English, Dutch, or Japanese television sets can be bought on the local market, but prices are sometimes higher than in the U.S. The most satisfactory sets are multi-system sets which can handle PAL and NTSC signals. Personnel can purchase multi-system VCRs at reasonable prices in Pakistan, especially in Peshawar. Prices are comparable to those available in the U.S. Converting NTSC systems to PAL is not advisable.

Most Americans bring a VCR and TV from the U.S. A multi-system TV which handles PAL as well as NTSC is advisable. Pakistan has a country-wide radio system. Most of the programming is in Urdu or other local languages. There are three short English language news broadcasts daily. Music aired is Pakistani.

A good short-wave radio can be helpful for wider coverage of world events. VOA, BBC, and other nations' broadcasts have special programs in English for this region. An outside antenna will improve reception, and a radio with push-button capability to lock-in a station makes shortwave hunting easier.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

Pakistani newspapers in English are readily available in major cities and may be home delivered. The International Herald Tribune and USA Today are flown in from Hong Kong and cost about \$1.75 a copy. Hotel newsstands and bookstores carry international editions of Time and Newsweek. However, while books are government subsidized magazines are not which tends to make them rather expensive. Subscriptions from the local news dealer may be available for home or

office delivery. Single copies of American magazines and comic books may also be found at newsstands and bookstores.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

Pakistan has limited but usually adequate hospital facilities. Laboratory and X-ray facilities are available, but service, equipment, and cleanliness are not consistent with U.S. standards.

Bring your own supply of any medications, both prescription and over-the-counter, used on a regular basis, and make arrangements for resupply by mail. Pharmacies throughout Pakistan can fill some prescription needs and have a large variety of non-prescription drugs, some manufactured locally and some imported. Locally purchased drugs may cost less than in the U.S. Some non-prescription items are available at the commissaries. If you have specific questions about what to bring, write to the Regional Medical Officer.

Expectant mothers are advised not to deliver in Pakistan.

Although dental care is available in Pakistan, most employees prefer to have dental evaluation and treatment in the U.S. Orthodontia service is limited.

Standard prescriptions for glasses can be filled inexpensively, but no safety glass is available and standards are uncertain. Americans send eyewear to the U.S. for the filling of prescriptions. Have glasses checked before coming to post and bring a spare pair.

Islamabad: Civilian hospitals in the Islamabad/Rawalpindi area are adequate although not up to American standards. However, emergency surgery and trauma cases can be sent to Shifa International Hospital in Islamabad.

Karachi: Hospital facilities especially the modern and well-equipped Agha Khan Hospital in Karachi are occasionally used for inpatient emergency care and radiologist and laboratory services. Individuals requiring elective surgery, diagnostic tests not available in Karachi, or treatment for serious illnesses may be evacuated to London or Singapore.

Although dental care is available, have dental evaluation and treatment before reporting to post. Orthodontia service is limited. Fluoride tablets are provided for children.

Individuals taking any long-term medications are advised to bring an adequate supply from home.

Lahore: The Shaikh Zayed Hospital is used in emergencies and has a few British or U.S. trained doctors, but is not up to U.S. standards. Inpatients often need round-the-clock supervision by family or friends.

Peshawar: There are hospitals in Peshawar, but standards are far below those found in the U.S. Persons living in Peshawar often choose to drive to Islamabad to get their health care.

Community Health

Americans are commonly plagued by diarrhea of multiple causes and upper respiratory infections. Because of its higher standards of sanitation and living conditions, frequent immunizations, and preventive medicines, the American community is fairly well isolated from malaria, tuberculosis, typhoid fever, rabies, and polio. However, they still occur and reasonable precautions are necessary.

Sanitation throughout Pakistan is a constant problem, although overall health conditions where Americans live are generally good. The public water supply is unsafe everywhere and drinking water must be filtered and boiled. Sewage systems are antiquated or inadequate. Refuse collection is erratic. The burning of cow dung, leaves, and garbage often produce irritating dust and smoke.

Refrigeration and sanitary packaging of foodstuffs in public markets are rare. To avoid enteric disorders, wash all fresh produce in chlorine solution or cook it thoroughly before eating.

Preventive Measures

Check your immunization record. If you are entering (or reentering after a trip) from South American or African countries, you will need a yellow fever immunization (more easily obtained in the U.S. than in Pakistan). For your own protection, also have typhoid, tetanus, and hepatitis A and B immunizations. Rabies is endemic in Pakistan, and it is recommended that anyone planning to stay in Pakistan should have the preventive rabies immunization series. Malaria prophylaxis is recommended and should be initiated 2 weeks before arrival in Pakistan. Do not neglect your immunizations or booster shots.

It is recommended that you include first-aid supplies in their luggage or airfreight. First-aid supplies should include the following items: first-aid manual, thermometer (for small children include a rectal thermometer), tweezers, scissors, Band-aids, gauze pads, gauze roll, tape, triangle bandage, ace bandage, skin cleanser (alcohol, Betadine, peroxide), aspirin and/or acetaminophen (Tylenol), antacid (Maalox, Gelusil, Mylanta), anti-diarrheal (Pepto Bismol, Kaopectate), antibacterial ointment (Bacitracin, Neosporin), sunscreen, insect repellent (Deet), dry-skin lotion, and calamine lotion.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs & Duties

There are some direct flights to Islamabad, but you should check your itinerary carefully. One PIA direct flight from London stops in Tehran. Anyone flying to Pakistan via the Pacific must have a Chinese visa, if the plane stops in China,

even though the traveler is only in transit and does not leave the plane.

Carry with you your valid American driver's license (a temporary one will not do), insurance papers, automobile registration if you are shipping a car, and special medicines.

A passport is required. The visa requirement may be waived for American Citizens not of Indian origin who arrive for a visit of less than 30 days. Please check with the Pakistani embassy or consulate before arrival. Information on entry requirements can be obtained from the Embassy of Pakistan, 2315 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC, 20008, telephone (202)939-6295 or 6261, Internet home page: <http://www.pakistan-embassy.com>. Travelers may also contact one of the Consulates General of Pakistan located at 12 East 65th St., New York, NY 10021, telephone (212)879-5800, fax (212)517-6987, or 10850 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1100, Los Angeles, CA 90024, telephone (310)441-5114, fax (310)441-9256. If a traveler plans to stay longer than 30 days in Pakistan, he or she must register with the local police station and obtain a residence permit. This permit must be returned to the same office for an exit visa when the traveler is preparing to leave the country. Airlines may require travelers departing the U.S. to present multiple photographs and complete copies of passports and other travel documents. Tourist facilities are available in the principal population centers of the country.

American citizens living in or visiting Pakistan are encouraged to register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in Pakistan and obtain updated information on travel and security within Pakistan. They are located at the following addresses:

The U.S. Embassy in Islamabad is located at Diplomatic Enclave, Ramna 5, telephone (92-51) 2080-0000; consular section telephone (92-51) 2080-2700, fax (92-51) 282-2632, website <http://www.usembassy.state.gov/>

islamabad or www.usembassy.state.gov/pakistan.

The U.S. Consulate General in Karachi is located at 8 Abdullah Haroon Road, telephone (92-21) 568-5170 (after hours: 92-21-568-1606), fax (92-21) 568-0496, website <http://www.usembassy.state.gov/pakistan> or www.usembassy.state.gov/posts/pk2/wwwhamcn.html.

The U.S. Consulate in Lahore is located on 50-Empress Road near Shimla Road or Sharah-E-Abdul Hamid Bin Badees, (Old Empress Road), telephone (92-42) 636-5530, fax (92-42) 636-5177, website <http://usconsulate-lahore.org.pk/>. Email address: amconsul@brain.net.pk

The U.S. Consulate in Peshawar is located at 11 Hospital Road, Cantonment, Peshawar, telephone (92-91) 279-801 through 803, fax (92-91) 276-712, web site <http://brain.net.pk/~consul/>.

Pets

No regulations restrict importation of household pets (dogs, cats, birds); however, health and vaccination certificates may need to be presented. Certificates should be issued no more than two weeks prior to arrival in Pakistan. Rabies shots must have been given within four weeks preceding arrival. The easiest way to bring a pet into the country is to bring the pet along as accompanying air baggage. Special rules apply to the importation of pet monkeys. Be sure to check with all airlines for their specific requirements.

Rabies is endemic in Pakistan, heartworm is present, and ticks are plentiful, even in the city. Vaccinate your pets as applicable for rabies, distemper, leptospirosis, hepatitis, parvo, and feline leukemia. Bring an ample supply of special medicines for your pet, including heartworm medicine, deworming medicines, flea/tick and mange/scabies preparations, pet vitamins, rawhide bones, and grooming needs. Ship bird seed and gravel, as the

commissary only stocks dog and cat food and kitty litter.

There are a few veterinarians in Pakistan, but services and facilities are below U.S. standards. Fatal anesthesia overdosing during surgery is one risk to pets. There is one kennel of limited quality in Islamabad. There are no kennels in Karachi or Lahore. People with older animals or pets not in excellent health might want to consider leaving them behind. Between the climate and veterinary care, a tour in Pakistan can be hard on a family pet. Animals are not allowed in hotels in Pakistan.

Firearms and Ammunition

Only personnel with diplomatic or consular titles are authorized to import firearms.

Currency, Banking, and Weights and Measures

The currency of Pakistan is the rupee (Rs), which is divided into 100 paise. The rate of exchange in late 1999 was about 51 rupees to the dollar. Paper money is used in notes from Rs. 1 to Rs. 1,000. Coins are in short supply.

Travelers are restricted in the amount of rupees they can bring into and out of the country. In Pakistan the rupee is the only currency that can be used.

Pakistan uses the metric system but be prepared to figure in miles and yards as well. Gasoline is sold by the liter (1.0567 quarts), cloth by the meter (39 inches), food by the kilogram (2.2 pounds), and distance is measured by the kilometer (0.625 miles).

Special Information

In 1956, Pakistan was proclaimed an Islamic Republic; Islam is, therefore, part of Pakistan's national identity. Some understanding of Islam and the social pattern it encourages is essential for Americans living in Pakistan.

In general, good taste and common sense will tell you how to avoid

offending your Muslim acquaintances, but a few specific points may be helpful. For example, men shake hands with men without hesitation, but it is a good idea to wait for a woman to extend her hand first in greeting.

The custom of "purdah," strict seclusion and veiling of women, is gradually disappearing as more educated Pakistani women take their places in public life. Purdah is still observed, especially in small towns and rural areas, where women may still wear the traditional black veil and coat (burkah). Even among the unveiled, a certain reticence persists about socializing outside the home. In many cases, this is reinforced by the husband's attitude. A Pakistani guest may commonly appear at a dinner party without his wife whether or not she observes purdah.

This tradition also accounts for the advice that women should cover-up when in public areas. The crowd in the bazaar, for instance, is unaccustomed to seeing bare arms and short sleeves on a woman, and can lead to unwanted jostling and touching. Staring is culturally common, and while at times discomfoting it should not be considered threatening.

Propriety is particularly important when visiting a mosque. Shoes are always removed for visits to mosques and holy places.

The public consumption of alcohol is banned in Pakistan. Foreigners registered in international hotels can get a permit to be served alcoholic beverages. These drinks are expensive. In their own homes, Americans are free to follow their usual customs concerning liquor. One should not offer alcohol to a Muslim Pakistani. It is thoughtful to have an adequate supply of soft drinks and juices for your Pakistani guests.

Devout Muslims will not eat or touch pork; some cannot bear the sight of it. To avoid embarrassment, do not serve pork or foods contain-

ing pork when Muslim guests are present. Some Muslim servants object to cooking pork. Dogs are considered unclean by some Muslims. Family pets should be confined when Pakistanis are in your home. It is a good idea to keep your dog away from maintenance workers when they are in your house.

Ramadan is a religious period observed by abstaining from eating, drinking, or smoking from sunrise to sunset for one month. You will want to refrain from daytime entertaining of your Pakistani friends during this month and should be considerate of your servants' physical limitations.

Photographs should be taken with discretion to avoid giving offense. Always obtain permission before photographing people, particularly women. For security reasons, it is also forbidden to photograph military installations, airports, and bridges.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

- Mar. 23. Pakistan Day
- May 1. Labor Day
- Aug. 14. Independence Day
- Sept. 6 Depfense Day
- Nov. 9 Allama Muhammad Iqbal Day
- Dec. 25. Christmas Day
- Dec. 25. Quaid-e-Azam Birthday
- Muharram*
- Ashura*
- Id al Adha*
- Ramadan*
- Id al-Fitr*
- Mawlid an Nabi*

*variable

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PALAU

Republic of Palau

Major City:

Koror

INTRODUCTION

Some areas of **PALAU** were settled in 1000 BC or even earlier, likely by Malays from Indonesia, Melanese from New Guinea, and by some Polynesians. Spain, Portugal, and England all laid claim to the islands at various times. In 1783 the English vessel *Antelope*, under the command of Captain Henry Wilson, was shipwrecked on one of the Rock Islands between Koror and Peleliu. With the help of the Koror high chief Ibedul, Wilson and his crew stayed for three months to rebuild the ship. Afterwards, more foreign explorers sailed through Palauan waters and the islands were open to further European contact. Germany acquired the islands around the beginning of the 20th century and then handed them over to Japan. After the defeat of Japan in World War II, the US took control over what were then called the Marshall, Caroline and Marianas Islands. The islands became part of the United Nations' Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, with Palau administered as one of the three island groups' six districts. Palau became independent with the ratification of a Compact of Free Association with the United States that came into effect on October 1, 1994.

MAJOR CITY

Koror

Koror, on Koror Island, is the capital of Palau and has a population of about 12,000. Most Palauans and nearly 90% of Palau's 2,800 foreign residents live in Koror. The island of Koror covers only 3.5 square miles and is the center of commerce with most of the country's hotels, shops, and eating establishments. There is an ongoing migration to the capital city. A two-lane concrete bridge links Koror with the large island of Babeldaob (Babelthuap). The Koror state government provides public bus service. Beyond Koror the main road is paved up to the airport with coral and dirt roads connecting the other states. Palau's only deepwater harbor is at Malakal in Koror, and the international airport is 6 miles from the capital. Koror's economy is driven by tourism, particularly for Palau's scuba diving and snorkeling opportunities. A new capital is under construction in eastern Babeldaob, about 12 miles north-east of Koror.

Recreation and Entertainment

Palau has some of the world's most impressive dive sites, with miles of unexplored barrier reefs. The waters

provide many spectacular vertical drops, especially along the Rock Islands. Snorkeling, sea kayaking, sailing, and fishing are also popular. Blue holes, underwater caves, World War II wrecks, and diverse marine life attract tourists. Jellyfish Lake is an inland marine lake that is cut off from the rest of the ocean. The lake teems with jellyfish, and snorkelers can swim among them because they have no sting.

Tropical forests cover much of the islands, and other areas have mangrove forests and even grassland savannas. Palau has 50 species of resident birds, and the marine waters have over 1,500 species of fish and over 700 species of coral and anemones. There are also salt-water crocodiles, giant clams, and dugongs (closely related to the manatee).

Ancient village sites on the Rock Islands and the grand terraces on nearby Babeldaob date to 1000 BC. Babeldaob is Palau's biggest island, some 27 miles long and 15 miles across at its widest and it is covered in dense foliage. The terrain is varied with steep mountains, freshwater lakes, and sand dunes. There are 37 stone monoliths known as *badru-lchau* that testify to the island's early civilization. Other remnants of Palau's early history are located at Imeungs in the southwest of the



Museum Bai in Koror, Palau

© Morton Beebe, S.F./Corbis. Reproduced by permission.

island. The ruins of stone foundations and pillars are all that remain of the ancient community.

During World War II, fighting between US and Japanese forces took place on Koror, as well as on the nearby islands of Peleiu and Angaur. Peleliu is the southernmost of the Rock Islands, and in 1985 it was designated a US National Historic Landmark. Abandoned tanks, helmets, and bomb casings are still strewn about the island.

The Palau National Museum has over 1,000 relics from the islands' past, including shell money and traditional weapons. Traditional Palauan culture is noted for its intricately carved wooden storyboards and delicate weavings. The *bai* or public meeting center, offers insights into traditional Palauan society

through the painted carvings that tell a story on interior posts, beams, and gable ends. Palauan culture today has a blend of traditional, Japanese, and American influences. Koror has several open-air cocktail lounges, some offering live entertainment or karaoke.

Koror annually hosts several festivals and special events. The Youth Day Fair on March 15 features open-air concerts and sports competitions. The Palau Sport Fishing Association holds its annual fishing derby during the last week in April or the first week in May. Senior Citizens' Day on May 5 features dance competitions, handicrafts exhibitions, parades, and floats. The Palau Arts Festival falls on July 9, Constitution Day. There are also Independence Day celebrations on October

1. The third week in November is Tourism Awareness Week.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The Republic of Palau is a scattered group of islands in the westernmost part of Micronesia. The country's territory includes some 340 islands east of the Philippines that stretch out over an area 125 miles in length. The total land area of the islands is 170 square miles. Babeldaob, the largest island, covers 153 square miles.

Palau's islands include four topographic types: volcanic, high lime-

stone, low platform, and coral atoll. The Palau barrier reef encloses a lagoon on the western side that contains a large number of small elevated limestone islets known as the Rock Islands. Babeldaob and Koror have the highest elevations, at 713 feet and 2,061 feet, respectively. Several northern islands, such as Arakabesan and Malakal, are volcanic formations. There are tall mountains, lush and thick jungles, caves, waterfalls, spacious beaches, and rocky shores. The waters are clear enough in some places to see depths of 300 feet.

Palau has a maritime tropical climate, with little temperature variation by season or time of day. The average temperature is 82°F during the cooler months. High humidity and heavy precipitation occur throughout the year. The heaviest rainfalls occur between May and January. Typhoons and tropical storms occur from July through November.

Population

Palau has a population of about 19,000. The states of Koror and Airai contain about 80% of the population.

Most Palauans are Micronesian, with a mixed Polynesian, Malayan, and Melanesian background. About 10% of the population is Filipino. There are also smaller numbers of other Micronesians, Chinese, and people of European descent.

Most of the population is Christian (Catholics, Seventh-Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, the Assembly of God, the Liebenzell Mission, and Latter-Day Saints). About one-third of the population observes the Modekngei religion that is indigenous to Palau.

English is the official language in all of Palau's sixteen states. Palauan is also an official language in thirteen states. Sonsorolese is an official language in the state of Sonsoral, as is Tobi in the state of Tobi.

Angaur and Japanese are also spoken in the state of Anguar.

Government

Palauan villages were and still are ordered around 10 clans that are organized matrilineally. Once, a council of chiefs from the 10 ranking clans governed the villages, and a parallel council of their female counterparts held a significant advisory role in the division and control of land and money.

In 1978 Palau opted for a separate negotiation with the US regarding future political status, due to the expiration of the UN Trusteeship. On July 9, 1980, the Palau constitution was ratified, and its first constitutional elections were held.

Independence came on October 1, 1994 with the entry into force of the Compact of Free Association with the United States. Palau was the last Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands territories to gain its independence. Under the Compact, the U.S. will remain responsible for Palau's defense for 50 years. Otherwise, Palau is a sovereign nation and conducts its own foreign relations. Since independence, Palau has established diplomatic relations with a number of nations, including many of its Pacific neighbors. Palau was admitted to the United Nations on December 15, 1994, and has since joined several other international organizations.

Today, Palau is a democratic republic with directly elected executive and legislative branches. Presidential elections take place every four years, with the presidential and vice-presidential candidates running on separate tickets.

The Palau National Congress (Olbiil era Kelulau) has two houses. In the Senate there are nine members elected through a nationwide vote. In the House of Delegates there are 16 members, one chosen from each of Palau's 16 states. All of the legislators serve four-year terms. Each

state also elects its own governor and legislature.

In keeping with tradition, Palau has established a Council of Chiefs as an advisory body to the president. The Council is made up of the highest traditional chiefs from each of the 16 states. The Council is consulted on matters concerning traditional laws and customs.

The judicial system consists of the Supreme Court, National Court, the Court of Common Pleas, and the Land Court. The Supreme Court has trial and appellate divisions and is presided over by the Chief Justice.

Palau's flag is a yellow circle on a light blue field. The circle is slightly off center toward the hoist.

Arts, Science, Education

Elementary education is compulsory between the ages of six and fourteen and is provided by the government. The Palau High School in Koror is the country's only public high school and accounts for about two-thirds of secondary school enrollment. Postsecondary education is provided by the College of Micronesia's Micronesian Occupational College in Koror.

Commerce and Industry

Tourism is Palau's main industry, accounting for roughly half of the nation's GDP. The greatest attractions to the country are scuba diving and snorkeling among the islands' rich marine environment, including the Floating Garden Islands to the west of Koror. In 1997, the number of visitors was about 67,000, almost three times the actual population of Palau. The greatest number of tourists come from Japan, Taiwan, and the U.S.

Agriculture is mainly on a subsistence level, the principal crops

being coconuts, root crops, and bananas. Tuna fishing is also potential source of revenue.

Construction is the most important industrial activity, contributing over 9% of GDP. Several large infrastructure projects, including the rebuilding of the bridge connecting Koror and Babeldaob Islands after its collapse in 1996 and the construction of a highway around the rim of Babeldaob, boosted activity at the end of 1990s.

The government alone employs nearly 30% of workers. One of the government's main responsibilities is administering external assistance. Under the terms of the Compact of Free Association with the United States, Palau will receive more than \$450 million in assistance over 15 years. The first grant of \$142 million was made in 1994. Further annual payments in lesser

For such a small nation, the general economy does fairly well. Per capita GDP stands at over \$7,000 (1998 est.), which makes it one of the wealthier states in the Pacific Islands. However, the country is heavily reliant on imported foods, fuel, and machinery. Imports in 1999 totaled about \$126 million, whereas exports only brought in about \$14 million.

The remaining economic challenge confronting Palau is to ensure the long-term viability of its economy by reducing its reliance on foreign assistance.

Transportation

Continental Micronesia flies to Palau daily via Guam, the international air service hub for the Micronesia region. There are also three weekly flights to Manila, Philippines. The only asphalt roads are on Koror, Airai, and Melekeok. Palauans rely on small private watercraft for transportation throughout the country.

Side roads in Koror and on the Island of Babeldaob are in poor condition. Maximum speed limit is 25 miles per hour, but slower in congested areas, and passing of slow moving vehicles is prohibited.

Communications

Worldwide telephone, facsimile, telex, IDD, Internet/e-mail service, and operator-assisted dialing services are available. Phone cards are available at PNCC Office and calls can be made from most hotels in Palau.

WSZB is Koror's AM radio station, and there are also two FM stations. Island Cable TV Palau provides 12 channels, including CNN.

Tia Belau is the bi-weekly local newspaper. The government produces the *Palau Gazette*. *The Pacific Daily News* is delivered daily from Guam. Mail to and from Palau uses standard U.S. postal rates and postage.

Health and Medicine

Hospital services are provided by the 60-bed MacDonald Memorial Hospital in Koror. Koror also has the Belau Medical Clinic and the Seventh-Day Adventist Eye Clinic. Smallpox immunization is required for travelers not originating in the U. S. or its territories. Cholera and yellow fever immunizations are required for those arriving from infected areas.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs & Duties

A valid passport or proof of U.S. citizenship and onward/return ticket for a stay up to 30 days are required. A visa is required for stays longer than 30 days. The necessary forms for obtaining an entry permit can be

obtained from airline or shipping agency servicing Palau. For more information about entry requirements of Palau, travelers may consult with the Representative Office, 1150 18th St., N.W., Suite 750, Washington, DC 20036, (202) 452-6814.

U.S. citizens living in or visiting Palau are encouraged to register at the U.S. Embassy. They may also obtain updated information on travel and security within the country at the Embassy. The U.S. Embassy is located in Koror, Palau. There is no street address. The Embassy is located in an area known as Topside, about one and one quarter miles north of the post office and downtown area of Koror on the main road towards the airport. The mailing address of the U.S. Embassy is: P.O. Box 6028, Koror, Palau 96940. The telephone number is (680) 488-2920. The fax number is (680) 488-2911. The Embassy does not issue passports; that function is performed by the Honolulu Passport Agency.

Firearms & Ammunitions

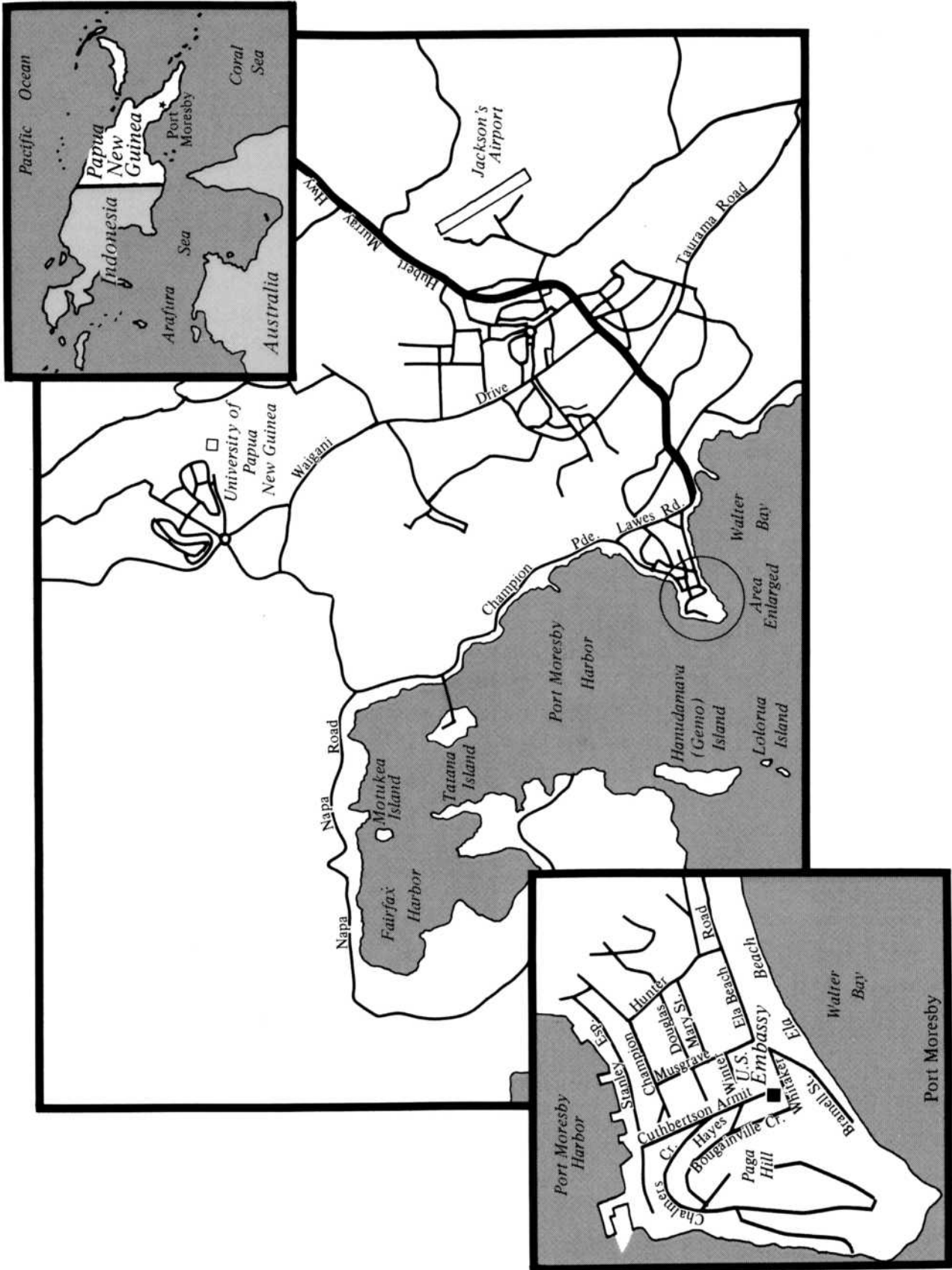
Firearms of any kind are strictly prohibited in Palau. The penalty for possession of a firearm or ammunition is up to fifteen years imprisonment.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan. 1	New Year's Day
Jan. 9	Martyrs' Day
Mar. 15	Youth Day
May 6	Senior Citizens' Day
May 31	President's Day
July 9	Constitution Day
Oct. 1	Independence Day
Oct.24	UN Day
Dec. 25	Christmas Day
	*Variable

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Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Independent State of Papua New Guinea

Major City:

Port Moresby

Other Cities:

Goroka, Kerema, Lae, Madang, Rabaul, Wewak

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report 1999 for Papua New Guinea. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

PAPUA NEW GUINEA "The Land of the Unexpected" is one of the last windows into the Stone Age. It is a country of striking contrasts where more than 1000, diverse tribes coexist with a modern economy based on world-class copper and gold mines.

It is the largest and most diverse of the Pacific Island nations. Covering a land area of nearly 180,000 square miles, it is nearly twice as large as the United Kingdom, and the size of Oregon and Idaho combined.

The geography is dramatic and tremendously varied. The country boasts great outcroppings of mountains ranging in height up to 15,000 feet, as well as vast river systems

and some of the world's most extensive swamps. A number of Papua New Guinea's islands border the Coral and Solomon seas. The coastal waters contain live coral reefs, some rivaling Australia's Great Barrier Reef in all but size.

Much of the country's appeal lies in its people. The more than 3.7 million inhabitants are sparsely scattered throughout the country, with concentrations in a number of towns as well as in the highlands. Physical characteristics vary widely, and over 800 distinct languages have been identified, some spoken by as few as 30 to 40 individuals. This diversity, which has been the subject of intense anthropological and linguistic research, also poses unique political challenges as the government attempts to strike a balance between local autonomy and national authority, which will permit orderly political and economic development.

Independent since 1975, Papua New Guinea retains an Australian flavor and a large expatriate population in its modern sector. The tropical climate is ideal for snorkeling, scuba diving, and sailing.

Living in this island nation presents rare opportunities to observe a traditional society coping with major social, cultural, and political trans-

formations, while striving to maintain the splendor of its history.

MAJOR CITY

Port Moresby

Port Moresby, the capital of Papua New Guinea, is a sprawling town with a population of over 300,000 (1998 est.) located on hilly terrain on the southern Papua coast. Because it lies within a small rain shadow, the city's geography and climate differ substantially from other parts of Papua New Guinea. During the dry season (June-September), hills in the city dry up and turn brown. However, the climate, although hot, is usually pleasant: low humidity (60%), steady trade winds, daytime highs of 80°F, and nighttime lows in the high 60s°F.

During the rainy season, which coincides with the southern summer (October-May), daytime highs frequently reach the low 90s°F; 80% humidity is normal. However, lengthy afternoon rain showers cool things off, and nights are usually in the low to mid 70s°F. At this time of the year, the landscape in Port Moresby is green.

The old center of town is located, lies on a peninsula that helps protect the large harbor from the Coral Sea. A number of modern high rise buildings punctuate the skyline, contrasting with the traditional Motuan villages on stilts along the shoreline. The city's shipping docks and a yacht marina are located along the shore.

Next to the city center are Touaguba and Ela Makana Hills, sites of Port Moresby's best housing and the location of all the Embassy housing. Both benefit from cool ocean breezes and spectacular views of harbor and sea. Centered on a small business district by the harbor, over the years, Port Moresby has expanded via suburban developments some 11 kilometers inland. Boroko, the main shopping area, and adjacent Gordons are the largest middle-class areas of Port Moresby. Both are located 6 to 8 kilometers inland. Jackson's Airport, which can handle 747s, is 11 kilometers from downtown via a newly constructed highway.

Papua New Guinea's capital center is the suburb of Waigani, 8 kilometers from downtown. A six-lane boulevard leads to several modern high rise buildings that house government offices. Waigani is also the site of an 18-hole golf course and several diplomatic missions.

The Parliament House, National Museum and a small theater for live performances are also in Waigani, as is the Prime Minister's official residence. The University of Papua New Guinea, and the National Botanical Gardens, home of one of the world's largest orchid collections as well as a fine sample of Papua New Guinea's exotic birds, is nearby.

Utilities

Electricity is 240v, 50hz. Power can be erratic; surges and spikes are common. Employees are advised to bring voltage protectors and surge suppressors. Those who own computers should bring an uninterruptible power supply. The water supply is usually dependable.

Food

Although some imported items are significantly more expensive than in the United States, most foods used by American or Asian families are regularly available in Port Moresby. Supermarkets and pharmacies resemble their counterparts in Australia rather than those of other developing countries.

A wide variety of meats, fish, canned goods, fruits, vegetables and frozen goods is available. Quality in general is high, with the exception of imported fresh fruits and vegetables which are sometimes offered in poor condition. Most food items are imported from Australia, although limited items imported from the United States are also found in the stores. Locally produced fruits, vegetables, fish, seafood, chicken, eggs and beef are also available. Bread is baked locally. Fresh and UHT "long life" milk, both imported, are widely available. A wide range of good quality dairy products, including ice cream, is always available. Major supermarkets maintain delicatessen sections stocked with a good selection of sausage and cheeses. Coffee produced in Papua New Guinea is high quality and flavorful. However, instant coffee is imported and decaffeinated is not available in the local market. There is a bottling plant in Port Moresby and a wide variety of soft drinks are always available.

Wines available locally are primarily from Australia and New Zealand.

In general, prices of imported and processed foods are 1.5 to 2 times more expensive than in the United States. Locally produced fruits, vegetables and sea food, however, are quite inexpensive. Some all-American items which are not quite the same locally and which employees may wish to bring with them are chocolate chips, peanut butter, decaffeinated coffee and special convenience foods, like canned pumpkin or pudding mixes. Candles are expensive and not good quality.

Clothing

Lightweight, summer clothes are most useful in this tropical climate. Cotton clothes and underwear are most comfortable for activities out of doors. Locally available shoes, clothing and fabrics are limited in choice, expensive and generally not good quality.

Fashion tends to the practical and casual. During the wet season, an umbrella is most useful. Raincoats are too hot. However, raincoats, ponchos, sweaters and light-weight jackets are useful for travel in the highlands, where temperatures are significantly cooler. Light sweaters or wraps are also useful in Port Moresby after sundown during the cooler months. Hats and sunglasses are necessary even for short periods in the sun.

Men: During the day, short-sleeved, open neck shirts with slacks are customary. Tropical formal wear includes a summer-weight suit and tie, or long-sleeved white shirt and tie with slacks. Tropical informal attire (for most social events) is an open-neck sport shirt worn with slacks. Tropical floral print shirts, like those widely sold in Honolulu, are currently fashionable for informal evening wear.

Women: Lightweight dresses and short-sleeved summer suits are worn to the office. Many women find pantyhose uncomfortable in the tropical heat and do not wear them. Slacks, walking shorts, and cotton skirts and dresses are acceptable for street wear and travel. Cotton underwear and sleepwear are most comfortable. Tropical formal evening wear is generally street-length cocktail dresses or suits. Tropical informal evening wear can be summer dresses or summer evening slacks and shirts.

Children: Primary and secondary students wear uniforms to school. Shorts, blue jeans, and t-shirts worn with sandals or athletic shoes are universally popular. Girls may want cotton dresses for dressier occasions. Children too should have hats and sunglasses.

Supplies and Services

Toiletries, cosmetics, medicines and common household articles normally used by American families are available locally. Many are U.S. brand names made by Australian subsidiaries. However, prices for toiletries are high and brands of cosmetics sold in the United States are not available. Bring a supply if they have special preferences. Hardware stores are well stocked, and kitchenware and household linen is available, although more expensive than in the United States.

Most medicines are available, but sold under brand names common in Australia. Ask your doctor for the generic name of the medication they will need in Port Moresby. Common medicines are sometimes considerably cheaper than in the United States.

Most basic services are available at varying levels of reliability. Dry cleaning and shoe repair are available, but expensive. There are good unisex hair salons which offer competent service at prices similar to those in the U.S. Garage and appliance repair services are spotty in quality and parts can be expensive.

Domestic Help

Female domestic servants who do general housework, laundry and child-minding are available, although those who are English speaking and well-trained are not easy to find. Competent cooks are very scarce. Families with small children usually rely on their domestic help for babysitting services. Current weekly wages for domestic help, working five days a week, range from \$140 to \$200 a month.

Religious Activities

Most major Christian denominations are represented in Port Moresby. Anglican, Assembly of God, Baptist, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Seventh Day Adventist, Methodist, Mormon and Jehovah's Witnesses churches all have weekly services. Congregations include Papua New Guineans and foreigners. Ministers and priests are both

expatriate and Papua New Guinean. Services are in English, pidgin or Motu. An Islamic congregation also meets weekly. There is no Jewish synagogue, or Hindu or Buddhist temple.

Education

Schools used by children of post personnel in Port Moresby include the Port Moresby International School (kindergarten through grade 12), the Ela Beach School (primary grades), and the Murray International School (primary grades). The schools employ national and expatriate teachers, many of whom are spouses of expatriates working in Papua New Guinea. The curriculum is similar to that followed in Australia. All three schools have extensive playing fields and sports programs. The Port Moresby International High School offers an International Baccalaureate program in grades 11 and 12. The school year begins at the end of January and ends in mid-December. It is broken into four terms approximately ten weeks in length, with a long vacation in December-January.

Sports

Sports available to everyone include golf, tennis, scuba diving, bush walking, jogging, softball, swimming, waterskiing, windsurfing, squash, snorkeling and sailing. Soccer and rugby are popular spectator sports. Little League Baseball is available to both boys and girls. Parents willing to help coach are always welcome.

Karate and dance schools take all ages. Diving lessons are offered on a regular basis. There are occasional theater productions by university, regional and amateur groups. The amateur theater group is open to new members. There are occasional choral presentations by church-based choirs. Exhibitions of contemporary and traditional art are organized at the National Gallery and Museum, which has a good permanent collection of traditional art as well as a small collection of live domestic birds and animals. The beautifully kept National Botanic Gardens feature an orchid exhibi-

tion and a walkthrough aviary and provide safe and beautiful picnic facilities for a small fee. There are several restaurants throughout the city, featuring both Asian and Western cuisine. Many expatriate residents are members of clubs, which run restaurants, bars and sporting facilities. The Port Moresby Yacht Club operates a marina in the city center. Another boat mooring facility is available for a fee a short distance out of town. There are also some secure night spots which offer discotheques, bars and slot machines.

There are no movie theaters, although a local hotel offers recent releases every Sunday night in a theater atmosphere. However, video tapes can be rented and satellite television is available.

Special Information

Crime is a serious problem in Port Moresby, and consists of everything from bag snatching and car jacking to armed robbery and rape. Much of the crime is committed by young men and boys who, if they have access to weapons, easily become violent. Widespread abuse of alcohol and marijuana aggravates the problem. Hijacking and highway robbery is common and makes road travel outside the towns dangerous. The few criminals notwithstanding, there have been no incidents of terrorism in PNG. Nor is xenophobia, or racial or religious animosity common.

OTHER CITIES

GOROKA, located in the central highlands 300 miles northwest of the capital, is a provincial headquarters with 22,000 residents. The center of European settlement in the region, the city has an animal husbandry station. Goroka's mile-high elevation contributes to its expanding tourist business. There is an airport here, as well as a major truck route heading east.

The port of **KEREMA** lies on Kerema Bay on the Gulf of Papua, in

south-central Papua New Guinea. This became a regional seat in 1958 when the district (now provincial) headquarters was transferred from Kikori. Kerema has a fish-processing factory; rubber and coconuts are grown near the city. There is a road link to Malalawa and an airstrip. The population is approximately 4,000.

LAE is situated on Huan Gulf on New Guinea Island, approximately 200 miles north of Port Moresby. During World War II, it was occupied by the Japanese, and became a major supply base. The city suffered heavy bombings by Allied planes in that period, and was eventually occupied in September 1943 by the Australians. Today, Lae is a commercial center, and a base for air transport lines in the area gold fields. Lae has an estimated population of 80,000.

MADANG (formerly called Friedrich-Wilhelmshafen), with some 27,000 residents, is situated on Astrolabe Bay, on the country's eastern coast. The area is a center for the timber industry based in the Gogol forest. It also is a communications point for offshore islands, as well as a distribution hub. Agricultural products are exported from Madang; industries include engineering workshops and timber milling. This was the administrative center for a German colony abandoned because of malaria in 1899. Madang was the objective of an Australian drive along the coast in World War II. It was captured by Australian and U.S. forces in April 1944. A lighthouse in the harbor commemorates coast watchers who helped the Allies in the war.

RABAUL, situated on Simpson Harbor in the northeastern part of New Britain Island, was a major Japanese air force base after occupation in 1942 and, as such, was headquarters for the projected invasion of Australia. The city, surrounded by volcanoes, was damaged by the eruption of Matupi in 1937 and, consequently, the administrative government of the Trust Territory of New Guinea was moved to

Lae. Rabaul had been the capital of German New Guinea in the early years of this century and, from 1920 to 1941, was the principal town of the Australian mandate. It is still a major port and has a population of nearly 18,000.

WEWAK is located on the country's northern coast, about 75 miles west of the mouth of the Sepik River. It was a Japanese base in World War II, bombed heavily by American forces in 1943. The Allied advance along the northern coast bypassed the city. Wewak is a port of call for coastal and Australian shipping. The economy is hindered by the primitive back-country conditions. The discovery of gold in the Sepik area in the 1930s led to the community's founding. The fields have since been abandoned. With over 23,000 residents, Wewak has an international airport and road links to Maprik and Paguwi.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Papua New Guinea lies in the southwest Pacific, just south of the equator and about 100 miles north-east of Australia. The largest of the Pacific Island nations, it includes the eastern half of the island of New Guinea which it shares with Indonesia and numerous offshore islands, the largest of which are New Britain, New Ireland, Bougainville, and Manus. Their combined surface area is 286,248 square miles, slightly larger than the state of California.

The main island comprises 85% of Papua New Guinea's total land area. A complex system of mountains extends from the eastern end of the islands to the western boundary with Indonesian Irian Jaya. Precipitous slopes, knife-sharp ridges, great outcroppings of mountains rising to heights of almost 15,000 feet, and broad upland val-

leys at altitudes of 5,000-10,000 feet characterize this area. Most of the terrain is covered by dense jungles of tropical rain forest. Large rivers comprising the world's twelfth largest riverine network flow to the south, north and east; few are navigable except by small boats in the lower reaches. The largest river, the Fly, which begins in the mountains of western Papua, flows over 700 miles, and can be navigated for 500 miles.

Between the northern and the central range of mountains lies the Central Depression, which contains the Sepik, Ramu, and Markham River valleys. Lowlands and rolling foothills of varying widths stretch along most of the coasts. Huge stretches of wetlands are common in the poorly-drained coastal areas. On the southwest littoral, the great delta plain of the Daru coast forms one of the world's most extensive swamps, exceeding 100,000 square miles.

The archipelagic areas of Papua New Guinea include three major islands—New Britain, New Ireland, and Bougainville—as well as a great variety of smaller, often very isolated island groups. The islands contain many volcanoes, both active and dormant; rich agricultural zones; and considerable mineral wealth. Thousands of coral reefs make the surrounding waters a mecca for marine biologists and scuba divers, while several of the smaller island groups, including the Trobriands and Manus Island, were the sites of classic anthropological studies.

Papua New Guinea lies wholly within the Tropics, and its climate is monsoonal. The “wet” northwest monsoon season extends from December to March and the “dry” southeast monsoon from May to October. Average annual rainfall is high, ranging from 80 to 100 inches for most districts. Although many areas have a wet and dry season, these terms are relative. Even in the so-called dry season, 2-4 inches of rain per month fall in most areas. Many areas receive more than 200



Cory Langley. Reproduced by permission.

Marketplace in Papua New Guinea

inches, but a few, like Port Moresby, lie in a rain shadow and receive 40 inches or less annually.

Although tropical, temperatures are not extreme. Most lowland, coastal, and island areas have a daily average temperature of 81°F, and seasonal variations are slight. In the highlands, temperature varies with altitude. At 6,000 feet, the average temperature is 61°F; daytime temperatures rise to 90°F and nighttime temperatures fall between 40°F and 50°F. Lowland humidity is uniformly about 80% with very little seasonal variation. Humidity fluctuates more in the highlands where temperatures are lower.

Papua New Guinea's rugged geography has hindered the development of adequate transport and communication facilities. The lack of this infrastructure continues to inhibit the development of some of the interior areas. It also has a negative impact upon the entire process of

social, political and economic integration.

Population

Papua New Guinea's population grows at about 2.3% per year and was estimated in 1998 at approximately 4.6 million. It is one of the most heterogeneous populations in the Pacific, including several thousand villages, most with only a few hundred people. Divided by language, customs, and traditions, some of these communities have engaged in tribal warfare with their neighbors for centuries. The isolation created by the mountainous terrain is so great that some groups, until recently, did not know that neighboring groups lived only a few kilometers away. Nearly 800 identified languages (20% of the world's languages) are spoken in Papua New Guinea.

Melanesian Pidgin is the lingua franca. An English cognate, Pidgin

is relatively easy for Americans to learn and understand. English, the official language, is spoken by a rapidly increasing group of educated people.

Population density varies widely from the nearly uninhabited forests of Western Province, which has an average population density of 1 person/sq. km., to the relatively crowded Western Highlands, which reports 40 persons/sq. km. Although there is considerable urban drift to the cities of PNG, there are no recent statistical studies of the phenomenon. The UN Population Fund estimates that current growth rates are no higher than those measured in a 1980-90 study which showed 4.6% annual growth for Port Moresby and 2.7% annual growth for Lae on the north coast.

Though decreasing in size, there is still a relatively large expatriate community in PNG. About 10,000 Australians, 2,000 British, 3,000

New Zealanders, 2,000-2,600 Americans (mostly missionaries), and 5,000 Filipinos make up the bulk of an expatriate population estimated at 22,600. This number is decreasing as the government pursues a program to have Papua New Guineans take on jobs now held by expatriates.

Culture

Papua New Guinea is a young nation, made up of hundreds of smaller cultural groups, which speak nearly 800 separate languages. First loyalties are to family and clan. Strong attachment to the idea of a nation or obedience to government imposed regulations is common for the most part only among the educated elite. For most Papua New Guineans, the interface between traditional and modern economic and government systems is the "wantok system." Wantok means literally "one talk," i.e., common language. It includes clansmen, relatives and friends who speak the same language. The wantok system involves people in an intricate network of rights and obligations extending well beyond the primary family. For a person who has prospered materially, the wantok system creates an obligation to assist other group members with gifts, money or jobs. To a Westerner, and occasionally to a Westernized Papua New Guinean, the wantok system may seem regressive or an impediment to modernization. However, most Papua New Guineans still regard it as part of the basic scaffolding of their social system. Forced to choose between obligations to the extended family and to their employers, many Papua New Guineans will choose the family first, which poses a problem for foreign managers.

Generally speaking traditional society in Papua New Guinea is male dominated and, in some areas, polygamous. Melanesian society generally does not have hereditary chiefs. Villages and clans are dominated by a Big Man, someone who has attained power and influence through demonstrated ability and

the acquisition and sharing of property. Although most Papua New Guinea microsociety feel that important matters should be decided by consensus, it is the Big Man who shapes the consensus. In Port Moresby, these structures are hidden, but they do exist and are important. Members of Parliament and senior government officials at both national and provincial levels often are Big Men in their own microsociety or are close relatives of Big Men. Women are traditionally expected to be subservient to their male relatives; to be seen and not heard. Fewer girls than boys attend school and the rate of literacy for women is lower than for men. Bride price, which traditionally cemented social obligations between families and clans, is frequently abused in the modern economy, particularly in areas where cash incomes are high. This makes it hard for young men to get wives legally and reduces marriage in some cases to the purchase of women. Nevertheless, with increased education and economic opportunity, the gap between male and female is slowly closing.

As in many other developing countries, there is a steady flow of economic migrants from the rural areas to Papua New Guinea's few cities. Jobs, particularly for those with little education, are generally not available, and basic needs, which in the village are either produced by the family or gathered from the forest, are expensive. Most rural migrants to the cities live in shanty towns, called "settlements," which have few, if any, public services and where crime breeds and criminals take refuge.

Public Institutions

Papua New Guinea became self-governing on December 1, 1973. The Australian Government progressively transferred political and administrative responsibilities, and Papua New Guinea gained full independence on September 16, 1975.

The Constitution provides for a national government consisting of a

Parliament and an independent Judicial system. The Parliament is a single-chamber legislature based on a modified Westminster system whose members are elected for 5-year terms under a system of universal adult suffrage. The last national election was held in June 1997.

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II is Head of State; she is represented in Papua New Guinea by a Governor General who must be a citizen of Papua New Guinea and is required to act under the advice of the National Executive Council. Executive power is vested in the Cabinet (National Executive Council), led by the Prime Minister (Head of Government).

The National Executive Council is made up of members of the National Legislature (Parliament) who are chosen by the leader of the political party or coalition of parties that holds the most seats in the Parliament. Party influence is weak and members of Parliament are often elected on the basis of their prominence in local communities rather than their party affiliation. Consequently, ideologies are not sharply drawn between parties, and voters frequently cross party lines. As a result, the governments since independence have been formed by different, highly fluid coalitions. Votes of no confidence are common, and debate is often vigorous.

The country is divided into 19 provinces plus the National Capital District (NCD-Port Moresby). A constitutional amendment in 1995 significantly changed the administration of the provinces. It both centralized the political control of the provinces-by appointing as governors the regional members of the national parliament and providing most provincial funding through the national government-while decentralizing to the provinces the responsibility of providing most government services for the people, such as health and education. Implementing the new system has proven to be more difficult than originally envisioned, and many

coordination problems are still being worked out.

Arts, Science, and Education

There is a system of state and private schools in Papua New Guinea which provides primary through tertiary education. However, education is neither compulsory nor free, and overall school facilities are not sufficient to meet the rapidly growing numbers of children who require education. Failure to provide education appropriate to fill the demand for skilled workers has created large groups of early school leavers among the PNG population who do not have sufficient skills to find jobs, but who have just enough education to make them dissatisfied with village life. Expatriates in Papua New Guinea and well-to-do Papua New Guineans either enroll their children in private institutions or send them abroad for schooling.

Approximately 72% of Papua New Guineans are literate. English is introduced into the school curriculum no later than second grade, and all those who complete the sixth grade or better can speak and read English. Reforms introduced in primary education in 1994 divide early education into elementary, grades prep through two, and primary, which carries the student through grade eight. Secondary schools are divided into lower secondary, grades nine through ten, and upper secondary, grades eleven through twelve. National examinations are given at grade six and grade ten. Students who cannot pass those exams, or whose parents cannot afford to pay for continued schooling, must leave school. As of 1996, a little over 90% of school age children started primary school. However, only 33% of those could expect to go on to lower secondary, and only 10% of those in lower secondary, will be able to complete 12th grade. The school reforms, which aim for universal primary education by 2004, hope to enable at least 50% of all primary school graduates to go on to lower secondary. However, shortcomings

in budgets and administration in recent years make it unlikely that the target will be met by that date.

A correspondence system, known as the College of Distance Education (CODE) covers grades 7 through 12 and is available to children who cannot find places in the high schools. As of 1996, about half the number of those enrolled in high schools were enrolled in CODE courses. There are also 14 centers for the disabled throughout PNG, which are operated by Non-Government Organizations with some support from the Government of Papua New Guinea.

There are over fifty tertiary institutions, the most important of which are the University of Papua New Guinea at Port Moresby (liberal arts, law, medicine, and business administration), the Papua New Guinea Institute of Technology at Lae, and the University of Papua New Guinea at Goroka (teacher training and business education).

Private international schools operated under the aegis of the International Education Agency (IEA) and staffed primarily by expatriate teaching staff, are found in the main population centers. Of these there are about 22 primary schools and eight high schools in the country.

Papua New Guineans express their rich cultural heritage in wood carvings, pottery, bark painting, dancing, costuming, and personal ornamentation. Oral tradition and legends, which are often surprisingly similar despite the diversity of peoples and languages, have also played an important role in the culture. They form the basis of traditional village social structure and are reenacted in song and dance. They are also depicted in carvings and bark paintings that are closely associated with clan customs and ceremonies. Magic and ancestor worship also play an integral part in everyday village life. The PNG Government promotes indigenous art and is actively sponsoring a revival of older forms of cultural expression. Artists now also work in such

modern mediums as textiles and lithographs.

Port Moresby's excellent National Museum and Art Gallery has a large permanent collection of traditional arts. The National Library also has an extensive collection of books and video tapes on aspects of life in Papua New Guinea, both traditional and modern, which Embassy personnel can borrow. The National Research Institute has a variety of publications, tapes, and records of traditional songs, stories, and legends. Other groups, including the National Theatre company, Raun Raun Travelling Theatre, and National Arts School, present cultural events periodically.

Several art shops in Port Moresby sell artifacts collected from all over the country. Hundreds of dancers from various villages, wearing elaborate headdresses and body decorations, perform annually at the world famous Highlands Sing Sing, held alternately in Mount Hagen and Goroka. The annual Hiri festival is held in Port Moresby each September with a week of traditional dancing, singing, sailing, and canoe racing. The latter commemorates old trading voyages that set out from the region when the southeast trade winds were blowing and returned with the northwesterly monsoons.

Commerce and Industry

The World Bank classifies Papua New Guinea as a middle-income country based on its estimated 1995 per capita GNP of \$1,160. However, although capital intensive exploitation of natural resources (copper, gold, oil, timber), along with tree crops (coffee, copra, palm oil, cocoa), generates significant export revenues, at least 80% of the population reside in isolated villages, engaged in subsistence agriculture and smallholder cash-crop production. Non-export private-sector activity is mainly distributive rather than productive. Thus, the living standards and standard social indicators (such

as literacy, infant and maternal mortality, and life expectancy) of the vast majority of the people are akin to those in low-income developing nations. The minimum weekly wage in 1998 was slightly less than \$11.00.

Traditional villages are still home for most of the population, but education and exposure to Western culture are leading more young people to leave the village to look for work in towns. Unfortunately, economic growth in the non-mining sector has not kept pace with population growth over the past decade. The relatively small urban-based manufacturing and service sectors are unable to provide jobs for the increasing numbers of youths who leave their villages. Consequently, centers such as Port Moresby, Lae and Mount Hagen have large, growing, squatter settlements.

In an effort to slow migration and bring villagers into the money economy, the Government encourages agricultural development. Agricultural extension services and price-support programs have encouraged the planting of export crops. In addition, the Government has supported projects including large sugar, oil palm, and rubber plantations, which are now slowly being privatized. Development of locally-owned commercial fishing and sustainable forestry ventures is also a goal.

Economic growth continues to be hampered by the geography of the country. The extremely rugged terrain inhibits road construction; and the capital and most populous city, Port Moresby, is accessible only by sea or air. In the center of the country, the Highlands Highway links the port of Lae to major towns and mining and petroleum sites in the Highlands. Additional road development has been slow since independence and maintenance of existing roads has been poor, though improving this is a major goal of the Government's development program. Some third-tier airlines and helicopter companies complement the national airline, Air Niugini, in providing cargo and passenger service

to over 400 airports and airstrips throughout the country. Coastal and inter-island shipping is expensive and often not equipped to carry passengers.

Papua New Guinea is heavily dependent on imports for manufactured goods and exports raw materials and agricultural products. In 1997 Papua New Guinea imported \$1.5 billion in machinery, transportation equipment and other manufactured goods, rice and processed foods, fuels and chemicals. Its principal suppliers are Australia, Japan, the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Malaysia. During the same year, it exported \$2.2 billion in gold, copper ore, oil, timber, palm oil, coffee, and cocoa. Its major markets are Australia, Japan, Germany, the United Kingdom, South Korea and China. U.S. trade with Papua New Guinea is limited. In 1997 U.S. goods, dominated by machinery and aircraft, accounted for about 8 percent of PNG's total imports. During the same year, the United States purchased about 3 percent of PNG's total exports, primarily oil, coffee and cocoa.

Historically, the mining and petroleum sector has contributed 25% of PNG's GDP and between 65 to 80% of export earnings. While production from older major ventures, including the Ok Tedi Copper Mine, the Porgera Gold Mine and the Kutubu oil fields, has begun to decline, new projects are under development or active exploration. The Lihir Gold Mine, one of the largest gold mines outside South Africa, commenced production in 1994 in New Ireland Province. A new oil field was also opened at Gobe in the Gulf and Southern Highlands Provinces in 1998.

U.S. companies have been active in the development of PNG's mining and petroleum sector. Chevron owns part of the Kutubu and Gobe Joint Ventures and operates those fields. The company also is spearheading a major natural gas development project. Battle Mountain Gold owns an interest in the Lihir Gold Mine. Other American companies are

exploring for oil, gas, and minerals in PNG. U.S. firms also supply services and supplies to the mining and petroleum industries. U.S. financial institutions have been involved in financing for most major resource development projects in PNG. The Bank of Hawaii has been operating in PNG since 1997.

Transportation

Automobiles

Port Moresby consists of several suburbs spread over a large area. This, combined with inadequate public transportation, makes a privately-owned vehicle a necessity. Vehicles can be imported, but all common Japanese models, Australian Ford, and Hyundai are sold and serviced in Port Moresby.

Traffic moves on the left, and right-hand drive cars are required by law. The 3-year Papua New Guinea driver's license is obtained by presenting a valid U.S. driver's license. Third-party liability insurance is mandatory. It currently costs K120.00 (\$56.00) per year. Two insurance agencies in Port Moresby provide coverage at K1,050.00 (\$494.00) per year plus 3% sales tax. Letters from former insurers indicating no insurance claims over the past 5 years can sharply reduce insurance fees.

Gasoline currently costs approximately \$1.64 per gallon. Vehicle repairs and service are expensive, often slow, and the quality of work is uneven. All sales outlets service the brands they sell, but repairs on cars not sold in Port Moresby can be hard to obtain. Considerable delay and expense can be incurred if spare parts must be imported.

Four-wheel drive vehicles are not necessary for driving in Port Moresby. Bicycles are not practical due to the extremely hilly terrain and narrow roads.

Local

Use of a private car is essential in Port Moresby. No adequate, reliable public transportation system exists.

Public Motor Vehicles (PMVs-small buses or 15-passenger vans) offer unscheduled daytime service for 50 toea (\$.24) to most parts of the city, but they are often unreliable and unsafe. Cars are available for hire, but cost more than they do in the U.S. Taxis are unsecure and not recommended.

Except for the Highland's Highway beginning in Lae, and roads around most major towns, no extensive road system exists in the country. Road networks between Port Moresby and the interior have been prevented so far by barriers of mountains, swamps and jungles. The longest road from Port Moresby extends just over 200 miles to the northwest. Another road extends 200 miles east, and a third stretches 45 miles north into the mountains past Sogeri. None of the roads reaches a town of over 1,000 inhabitants and highway banditry is common. Paved roads stop approximately 20 miles from city limits.

Papua New Guinea has no rail network. Intercoastal shipping exists but is not designed for passenger travel.

Regional

Most people travel between the main population centers by air. The national airline, Air Niugini, provides daily service to most major towns. Planes are usually full, even though domestic and international air fares are among the highest in the world. Third-level air carriers fly to more isolated towns and villages that have grass airstrips.

Air Niugini and Qantas offer several flights a week to Australia. Currently two flights a week also are available to Manila, Singapore and Honiara.

Communications

Telephone, Fax and Internet

The telephone system in Papua New Guinea is relatively efficient. Australia and most main areas of PNG can be dialed directly.

Mail

Local and international mail service is reliable. Within country, mail is delivered only to a post office box or counter, not to individual companies or residences. Mailing a letter within country costs K.25 (\$.12) for up to 50 grams. Airmail letters to the U.S. cost K1.00] (\$.47) per 20 gram. Airmail parcel rate to the U.S. is K30.50 (\$14.341 per kilogram).

Radio and TV

Radio is the most accessible communications medium in PNG where rugged terrain prevents newspapers from reaching the more remote communities and television is beyond the reach of the vast majority of citizens. Most radio stations broadcast news several times a day and most programs are in English.

There are three radio broadcasters in Papua New Guinea: the National Broadcasting Company (NBC), NauFM and Radio Kalang. NBC manages the majority of the radio broadcasting operations in the country. It operates a national non-commercial AM network that, during the evening, also broadcasts in short-wave in local languages from 19 provincial stations located throughout the country. NauFM operates two stations. It broadcasts in English featuring popular music and is targeted at a young, professional audience. As Yumi FM, it also broadcasts in Tok Pisin, a service that targets an older and more traditional audience. Radio Kalang is a commercial FM station which offers music, news and commentary.

Radio Australia, BBC, and VOA signals can be picked up on a short-wave radio. Reception is usually good with an outdoor antenna. Short-wave sets purchased locally cost about 25% more than comparable sets sold in the U.S. The local cable company also makes four Australian radio stations available to cable TV subscribers for a regular monthly charge.

The national TV station, EM-TV, broadcasts news, old American and Australian programs and movies, as well as some local programming. It

receives news via satellite from its parent network in Australia. Satellite TV can be rented at a fee of K56 (\$25.00) per month. It currently offers 14 channels, including CNNI, Cinemax, ESPN, the Discovery Channel, four Australian channels, and a local movie channel.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

Two English-language newspapers, the Post-Courier and The National, are published 5 days a week in Papua New Guinea. A few magazines, technical journals, and various weeklies are also published, including the Pidgin language Wantok and the English-language The Independent. Coverage is usually unbiased and accurate, although the international news is not extensive.

Australian newspapers and magazines, regionally oriented journals, and a few general interest American magazines are available at news stands. Paperback books are also available, but the selection is poor and prices are high.

The National Library in Waigani has a good collection of nonfiction, periodicals, and children's books. It also has research facilities and a lending service of some 6,000 films and 400 video cassettes, including documentaries about Papua New Guinea. The library at the University of Papua New Guinea has an extensive but outdated selection of books and audio materials. It, too, is open to the public.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

Port Moresby General Hospital can handle most routine cases, however, service and hygiene are inadequate by U.S. standards. The hospital is chronically short on staff and overcrowded, while most of the employees are undertrained or untrained. Thus, personnel are advised to use the private medical clinics in Port Moresby that are staffed by Western-trained doctors. Local pharma-

cies stock a full range of medicines to meet most medical requirements. Some lab tests must be performed in Australia, causing delays which can be lengthy.

Specialized surgery and treatment for more unusual or difficult medical problems are not available in port Moresby. Cases requiring special treatment are normally evacuated to Cairns, Brisbane or Sydney, Australia. Psychiatric treatment is not available in Port Moresby.

Competent, private dentists practice in Port Moresby. General treatment is available, but costs are higher than in the U.S.

Community Health

Tap water should not be considered safe for drinking in Papua New Guinea. Garbage is collected at residences twice a week by the City Council Works Department. Sewage disposal facilities are adequate, though a fair amount is dumped into the Coral Sea 3 miles offshore from Port Moresby, so the area is not safe for swimming. Local food container and beverage sterilization facilities are considered to be adequate. Milk is safe. Meat, fish and poultry do not require special handling, but should be thoroughly cooked. Local seafood should never be eaten raw. Local vegetables and fruits should be well scrubbed and soaked in a Clorox solution.

Preventive Measures

Many of the communicable diseases found in Papua New Guinea also occur in the United States, however, some conditions are found more frequently in PNG. Intestinal problems occur, but dysentery is not common. Chloroquine-resistant malaria is endemic at lower elevations in all areas outside Port Moresby. Port Moresby has a relatively low incidence of malaria, however cases do occur, and precautions such as antimalarial tablets (Mefloquin is most commonly used) should be taken beginning 2 weeks before coming to PNG, taken during the stay in country and for 6 weeks after leaving. Because of the nocturnal feeding habits of the Anopheles

mosquito, malaria transmission occurs primarily between dusk and dawn. Personal protection measures are very important. Use of a repellent cream or spray when going out in the evenings is recommended, especially during the rainy season. Visitors should get current information from traveling into remote areas of PNG.

As in all tropical climates, sunburn, prickly heat, and various fungal infections are easy to contract. All cuts and scratches should be treated immediately with a good antiseptic to prevent infection. Snake bites can be a danger, so grass surrounding residences must be cut regularly to discourage their presence. Care should be taken when visiting uncultivated areas. Large spiders are seen occasionally, but are seldom dangerous.

For 8-9 months of the year, the climate in Port Moresby is warm and dry with some dirt and dust in the air. During the remaining 3-4 months of the year, it is hot, humid and rainy. Flu and colds can occur during the sudden change from dry to wet season and vice versa. Persons with a history of sinus allergies or asthma may find their symptoms exacerbated by the environment. Mold and mildew are a problem here, though somewhat less than in other equatorial posts due to the relatively dry weather. Air conditioned storage is recommended.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs & Duties

Travel to Papua New Guinea is by air. The most direct route from the United States is via Sydney, Australia. United Airlines is the only American carrier which flies to Australia. Transportation between Sydney and Port Moresby is available from Qantas four days a week and between Cairns and Port Moresby seven days a week. Air West also provides regular service from Cairns. In order to make these con-

nections it is necessary to overnight in Australia. Connections to Port Moresby are also available twice a week by Air Niugini from Manila and Singapore.

Customs clearance usually requires a minimum of five working days. Unaccompanied baggage takes about two to three weeks to reach Port Moresby by air from the United States. Surface shipments average 4 months in transit. Most surface shipments are trans-shipped at either Hong Kong, Singapore or Sydney. Customs clearance for household effects usually requires a minimum of five working days.

A valid passport, onward/return ticket, and proof of sufficient funds for the intended visit are required. Tourist visas are required for stays up to 60 days. (Visas are issued upon arrival at Jacksons International Airport in Port Moresby). Business visas require passport validity of at least one year from the date the visa is issued, two application forms, two photos, a company letter, biographical data, a recent annual report of the parent company and a fee for multiple entries. An AIDS test is required for work and residency permits (U.S. test accepted).

American citizens who remain in Papua New Guinea beyond the period authorized by immigration authorities may face fines and penalties. Papua New Guinea collects a departure tax. The departure tax is normally incorporated into airline fares at the time of ticket issuance.

For more information about entry and exit requirements, travelers may contact the Embassy of Papua New Guinea, 1615 New Hampshire Ave., NW, Suite 300, Washington DC 20009, Tel. 202-745-3680, or visit the Embassy's website at www.pngembassy.org.

Travelers may also wish to obtain entry permission from the Government of Australia for transit or other purposes (see section on Medical Facilities) before traveling to Papua New Guinea. American citi-

zens no longer need a visa to travel to Australia as tourists but must obtain an Electronic Travel Authority (ETA) through their travel agent. For further information about Australian visas or the ETA, contact the Embassy of Australia in Washington, D.C., at 1-800-242-2878 or at the Embassy of Australia's website at <http://www.austemb.org>.

U.S. citizens are encouraged to carry a copy of their U.S. passports with them at all times, so that, if questioned by local officials, proof of identity and U.S. citizenship are readily available.

U.S. citizens are encouraged to register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Port Moresby and obtain updated information on travel and security within Papua New Guinea. The U.S. Embassy is located at Douglas Street, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. This address should be used for courier service deliveries. The Embassy is located adjacent to the Bank of Papua New Guinea. The mailing address is P.O. Box 1492, Port Moresby, N.C.D. 121, Papua New Guinea. The U.S. Embassy's telephone number is (675) 321-1455; fax (675) 321-1593. Americans may submit consular inquiries via e-mail to: consularportmoresby@state.gov.

Pets

All pets, except those originating in Australia or New Zealand, are prohibited entry into Papua New Guinea unless they have been quarantined for six months in either Australia or New Zealand. Pets originating in New Guinea, however, can be acquired in Port Moresby.

Currency, Banking, and Weights and Measures

Papua New Guinean and American currency may be exchanged freely through the banks. The Papua New Guinea kina and toea (100 toea = 1 kina) are the only legal currency in the country. No restrictions are placed on the amount of currency a person can bring into Papua New Guinea. Travelers may not export

more than K5,000 kina without special permission.

The exchange rate floats freely. As of December 1999, the rate was US\$1 = K2.85.

Jackson's International Airport at Port Moresby has banking and exchange facilities. Persons not traveling on a diplomatic passport are required to pay a departure tax of K30.00 (\$14.00). Most hotels, restaurants and shops accept major U.S. credit cards. Papua New Guinea uses the metric system.

Disaster Preparedness

Papua New Guinea is located in an area of high seismic activity. Although the probability of a major earthquake occurring during an individual trip is remote, earthquakes can and will continue to happen. In addition, there are two active volcanoes near the town of Rabaul on New Britain. General information regarding disaster preparedness is available via the Internet from the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) home page at <http://www.fema.gov>.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan.1	New Year's Day
Mar/Apr.	Good Friday*
Mar/Apr.	Easter Saturday*
Mar/Apr.	Easter*
Mar/Apr.	Easter Monday*
June	Queen's Birthday Celebrated*
July 23	Remembrance Day (ANZAC)
Sept. 16.	PNG Independence Day
Sept. 21.	St. Michael's Day
Dec. 25	Christmas Day
Dec. 26	Boxing Day
	*variable

SPECIAL INFORMATION

The Department of State has issued the following public announcement concerning safety in Papua New Guinea:

Although reliable statistics are difficult or impossible to obtain, violent crime is a serious threat in many areas of Papua New Guinea (PNG). The visitor to PNG can minimize the potential to become a victim of crime by taking appropriate precautions, for example, by taking part in organized tours run by reliable and experienced operators. This primer provides basic guidance for those who will be visiting PNG for a short period. Persons who plan to stay in PNG for more than a week or two should get in touch with the Embassy or long-time residents for additional guidance.

There are several universal ways to stay out of trouble: do not increase your vulnerability by drinking heavily or staying out after midnight; do not patronize disreputable bars; do not proposition women; do not visit squatter settlements or other economically distressed areas; do not display money or valuables; and do not verbally abuse, cheat or tempt PNG citizens. Wear modest clothes, jewelry and watches so as not to draw attention to yourself. Limit your conversations with members of the opposite sex to those persons you know or have business with.

Persons arriving at the Port Moresby Jackson's International Airport should arrange, if possible, to be met, particularly if their flight arrives at night. If no one meets you, it is possible to take a courtesy bus to the Gateway, Islander Travelodge or Port Moresby Travelodge Hotels and contact your sponsor from there. The terminal itself is not a danger zone, but thefts and assaults have occurred in the terminal parking lot. If picking up a rental vehicle, obtain a street map and review it in the office before

leaving. Do not travel by car outside Port Moresby at night, even on major highways. If you encounter a roadblock which does not appear to be manned by uniformed police, or notice a disturbance on the road ahead, turn around immediately, if possible, and use an alternative route. Police vehicles are sky-blue with red insignia.

Do not leave cash or high-value belongings in hotel rooms. Do not leave room keys on hotel counters when going out; drop them in the slot, if provided, or hand them to a clerk. Lock sliding glass doors or windows when going out.

Up-scale restaurants and stores usually have their own security guards. It is still advisable, however, to remain watchful when entering or leaving. Ask the staff to assign someone to escort you to your car if you feel uncomfortable (particularly at night). Avoid carrying a purse or briefcase in public. Do not leave anything of even minor value in sight within a parked car.

Sexual assaults are primarily crimes of opportunity. PNG women rarely wear shorts, pants or miniskirts; therefore, female visitors are advised not to wear revealing clothing in public such as swimsuits, sundresses, or similar apparel

Most expatriates avoid using public motor vehicles (PMVs) or taxis to get around, relying instead on their sponsor or a rental vehicle for transport. Visitors should inquire of colleagues or hotel employees before undertaking trips to unfamiliar neighborhoods.

Carjackings, rock-throwing and attempts to stop cars occur occasionally. Keep an eye on persons in the vicinity of your vehicle at all times, particularly when stopped at intersections or crosswalks.

Most hotels and private residences in Port Moresby have secure parking lots, i.e., fenced areas entered through gates opened by remote control or security guards. Try to

avoid parking outside secure areas at night.

Individual travelers to the PNG highlands need to exercise substantially greater caution than those taking part in organized tours. The Highlands provinces -- Enga, Chimbu, and Eastern, Southern and Western Highlands -- can be volatile. Political disputes, interclan fights and sudden altercations (for example, at sporting events) occur frequently. Criminals have been known to set up roadblocks on segments of the Highlands highway, which runs from Lae to Mt. Hagen, Mendi and Tari. Visitors should inquire locally concerning security before driving between towns. An extensive secondary airline network provides frequent service within the Highlands.

Due to the risk of roadblocks, avoid traveling outside of Port Moresby, even on paved highways, at night.

Driving carefully is important because many PNG citizens respond emotionally and violently to a serious incident or an injury involving relatives or fellow villagers. Such reactions can endanger the life of the person perceived to have inflicted the loss, whether or not that person would be found legally responsible by a court. Drive defensively at all times, but particularly in the afternoons and evenings of "pay Fridays," when the likelihood of encountering inebriated drivers or pedestrians is greatest. Killing a dog or pig is almost certain to trigger a demand for monetary compensation, so exercise caution when driving through rural areas. Finally, it is unwise to provoke PNG drivers by cutting them off or gesturing rudely.

Short-term visitors who take the precautions outlined above are likely to find their stay in Papua New Guinea interesting, enjoyable and rewarding. The vast majority of PNG citizens are friendly, live peacefully and are eager to learn about life in other countries. Attention to personal security will enhance your confidence in under-

taking personal and professional contacts, leading in turn, to a deeper understanding of Papua New Guinea and its people. Unfortunately, crime is a serious problem in Papua New Guinea, perhaps even more for Papua New Guineans than for visitors. The US Embassy emphasizes that there is no way to guarantee personal safety during a visit to PNG, only to minimize the chances of becoming a victim.

RECOMMENDED READING

These titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country.

Books

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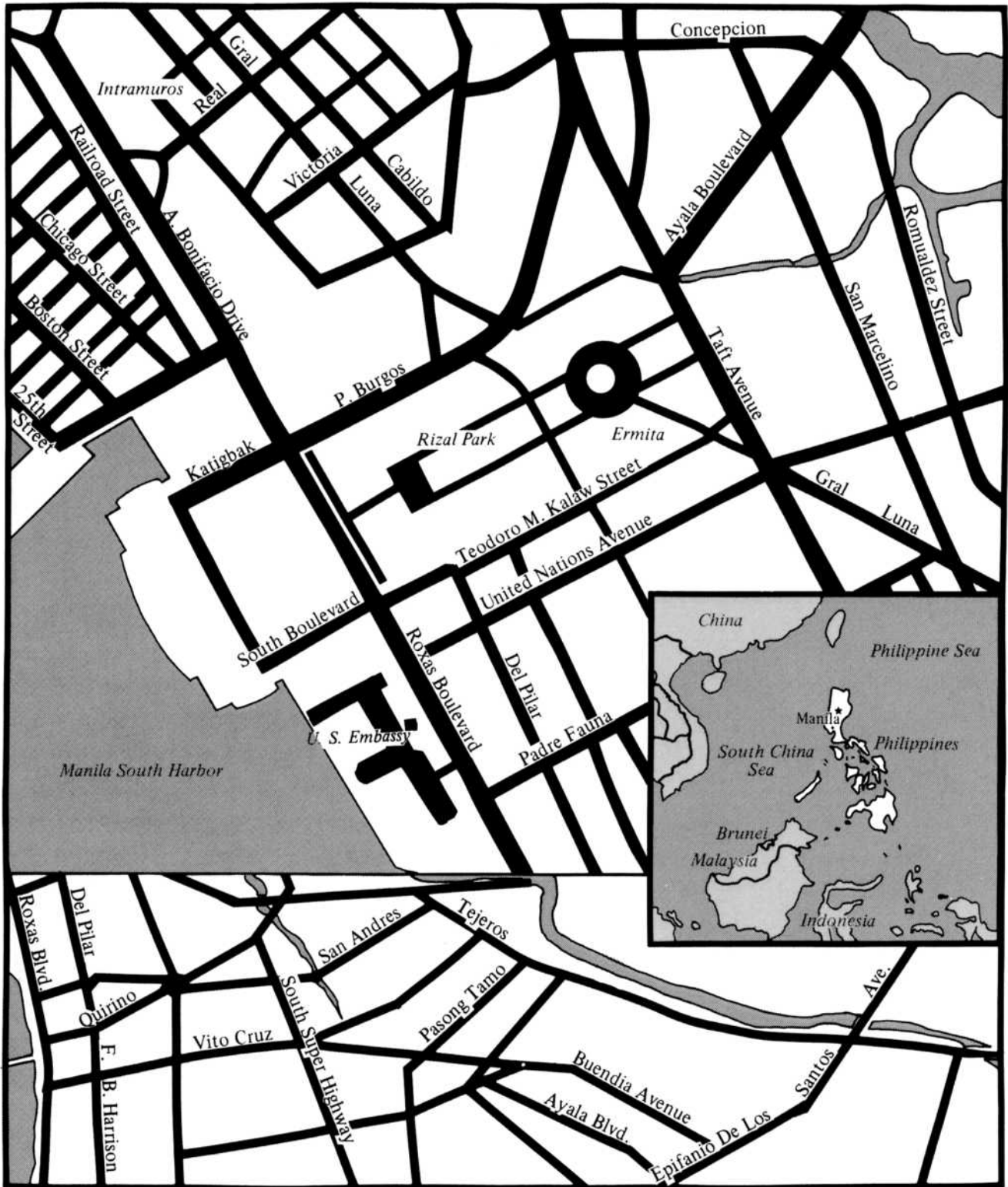
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- Video Tapes**
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- Anderson, Robin and Bob Connolly. *Joe Leahy's Neighbours*. Pacific Video Cassette Series No. 19. Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies: Port Moresby.
- Anderson, Robin and Bob Connolly. *Black Harvest*. Pacific Video Cassette Series No. 25. Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies: Port Moresby.



Manila, Philippines

THE PHILIPPINES

Republic of the Philippines

Major Cities:

Manila, Quezon City, Cebu City, Baguio, Davao City

Other Cities:

Bacolod, Batangas, Butuan, Iligan, Iloilo City, San Pablo, Zamboanga

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated August 1994. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

The Republic of the **PHILIPPINES**, though Asian, bears the imprint of European and American influence. Not only is the Philippines one of the largest English-speaking countries in the world, it is the only Christian country in Asia.

This Pacific island nation was under Spanish control for nearly 400 years after it was first visited in 1521 by Ferdinand Magellan on his expedition around the world. The country eventually was named *Islas Filipinas* for the child who was to become King Philip II of Spain.

After close to a half-century of American rule, the Philippines gained its independence in 1946.

The country made great strides in achieving a national identity and a political and strategic importance in Asia.

Because of the country's strategic importance, the U.S. had for many years maintained military bases there, mainly Clark Airbase and Subic Bay Naval Base. However, disagreements over the military treaty covering the bases led to a U.S. withdrawal of forces in 1992. The departure of U.S. troops poses questions about Philippine and Southeast Asian defense, as well as the future of the Philippine economy.

MAJOR CITIES

Manila

Metropolitan Manila, located on the main island of Luzon, is the capital and the major city along the coastal lowlands of Manila Bay and the Pasig River. The bay forms one of the largest and finest landlocked harbors in the Far East, and is Manila's outstanding feature. It is rimmed by distant mountains and islands, dotted by ships, and frequently framed by flamboyant sunsets. Roxas (formerly Dewey) Boulevard, which follows the shore-

line for several miles, quickly becomes a familiar landmark. It is lined with modern office buildings, embassies, hotels, restaurants, the Philippine Cultural Center complex, and large apartment houses. This boulevard, along with the modern commercial and residential areas of suburban Makati, typifies the contrasts which exist in Manila: on one side of the street is a five-star hotel, on the other, a shanty town of squatters built on land reclaimed from Manila Bay.

The architectural styles of Manila manifest the influence of 400 years of Spanish domination, nearly 50 years of American rule, and modern trends developed in buildings erected or reconstructed since World War II.

The social habits of people in Manila are superficially Occidental and the society is cosmopolitan. Western clothes predominate, but there is some adherence to local traditional dress. The majority of Filipinos speak English.

Manila was established as a fortified colony by López de Legaspi in 1571, and was developed by Spanish missionaries. It became an important commercial center under Spanish rule. The city was taken by the English in 1762, but was recaptured for Spain two years later. The

United States won control in the Battle of Manila Bay (August 1898), during the Spanish-American War. World War II took a heavy toll on the city, reducing to rubble much of the 16th-century Spanish architecture of the old walled city, Intramuros; only the Church of San Agustín was spared. The devastation wrought is considered second only to that of Warsaw. The Japanese, who had occupied the city from 1942, were ousted in 1945. Manila Cathedral, the seat of the Catholic archdiocese, was rebuilt in 1958, as was almost the entire city during the post-war years. Manila proper, known as the "Pearl of the Orient," is now a modern metropolis with a population of 1.6 million (2000 est.).

Most streets in the city are of concrete or asphalt, but many are constantly in a state of disrepair; side streets are often narrow and hazardous. Road surfaces deteriorate rapidly during the rainy season, and are marked by potholes of all sizes. Traffic is congested, especially during rush hours. Driving is not orderly. Air pollution is a continuing problem.

More than 150 American business concerns are located in Manila, and many more have agencies or representatives here. The oldest foreign-based American Chamber of Commerce has offices on the Paseo de Roxas, Manila's famous shoreline boulevard. The expatriate community includes more than 150,000 Chinese and a large number of Americans, Spaniards, Japanese, Indians, British, Germans, Swiss, and people of other nationalities. The tourist trade has increased in recent years but, still, fewer Americans stop in Manila than at other Far East spots. Most U.S. visitors here are on business.

Greater Manila's population, which includes Quezon City, Pasay City, Caloocan City, and Pasig, is estimated at almost ten million. Although the official capital of the Philippines is Quezon City, 13 miles from downtown Manila, its development remains in the planning

stages and only a few government agencies are located here.

Clothing

Cotton and other lightweight clothing is worn year round in the Philippines; however, woolen clothing, including topcoats, is needed for visits to Baguio or travel to Hong Kong, Taipei, or Tokyo during winter. Sweaters and shawls are useful in air-conditioned rooms and at night in the cooler months. Nylon clothing is usually too warm and uncomfortable during very hot months. Cotton or cotton/synthetic mixtures are recommended.

Manila is a style-conscious city, and the latest European and American fashions are followed. There are some variations in Cebu City but, in general, members of the diplomatic and business communities are well dressed.

Clothes wear out quickly because of the climate and frequent laundering. Shoes deteriorate more rapidly during the rainy season and because of poor sidewalk conditions. Unless you store clothing in air-conditioned rooms or dry closets, air it occasionally to prevent mildew.

Women find that cotton, cotton-blend, or linen dresses are worn and acceptable everywhere and, depending on style, are suitable for almost every occasion. Shorts and slacks should be worn only for sports or at home. Cocktail dresses of silks, brocades, laces, chiffons, and fine linen also are popular and comfortable. Dressmakers can make all types of women's clothing from the casual to *haute couture*; prices and results vary accordingly. Ready-made women's shoes in sizes larger than 8 are difficult to find, but shoes can be made to order inexpensively.

Men wear tropical worsted and Palm Beach-type suits during the cooler months and, if they anticipate a full social schedule, will need black-tie attire. Washable suits are convenient and practical, but dry cleaning is readily available. Dacron and cotton blends are most useful. After arrival, most men

enjoy the practical comfort of the *Barong Tagalog*, a traditional Filipino shirt. It is loose fitting, usually made of sheer material with embroidered collar, cuffs, and front, and is worn outside the trousers both day and evening.

White daytime shirts of porous summer-weight fabric are needed. Short-sleeved shirts are acceptable in offices, and cotton sport shirts are most useful for leisure hours. Long-sleeved shirts are needed in Baguio. Locally made men's shoes are not of the best quality and U.S. made shoes are quite expensive.

Children wear the same type of clothing in the Philippines as they do in the U.S. They spend much of their time out-of-doors, and need many changes of washable, durable, play clothes. Teenage styles generally follow American fads.

Any special dress considerations for children attending school in the Philippines can be easily met after arrival. Lightweight rainwear is a necessity for small children. Students attending Brent School in Baguio need warmer clothing than is called for in Manila.

Laundry is customarily done at home by the *lavandera*, in a household which employs more than one domestic, and by the all-around maid in a small or single-person household. Dry cleaning is available at prices comparable to those in the U.S., and quality is good.

Food

Several large well-stocked supermarkets are in Manila and the suburban areas. Open markets throughout the country sell fresh fruits and vegetables; use caution when buying perishables since markets may not be refrigerated or sanitary.

Supplies & Services

The beauty salons and barbershops range from adequate to luxurious in Manila; in the other major cities, shops are simple and work is passable. Dressmaking, tailoring, shoe repair, and other personal services



Aerial view of Manila, Philippines

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can be easily found and, on the whole, the work is satisfactory and the rates are reasonable.

Religious Activities

Catholics number more than 80% of the Philippine population, and have many churches in all localities. Catholic orders from Spain, Belgium, Canada, the U.S., and other countries are active here. In the capital, Protestant churches include the Union Church of Manila (nondenominational), Holy Trinity Anglican Episcopal, International Baptist, Lutheran, and Seventh Day Adventist. Manila also has a Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, a Unitarian congre-

gation, and a Jewish Community Center. The Saturday newspapers list worship times and places.

Domestic Help

Employing household help is the norm rather than the exception in the Philippines, not only among foreigners but also middle-income and well-to-do families.

In Manila, competent household help is easy to find, although sometimes a short trial period is necessary before settling on someone suitable. Under proper supervision, domestics are clean, honest, loyal, cooperative, and good with children. Careful and patient instructions

must be given, since their understanding of English cannot be taken for granted.

Filipino domestics are not covered under the national social security system. However, low-cost health insurance is available for domestics, and it is expected that the employer provide it. Local laws apply to, and provide for, such benefits as regular days off, payment of medical fees, adequate dismissal notice, etc. Complete physical examinations of prospective domestics and annual checkups are strongly recommended.

Education

The International School, located in nearby Makati, is a nonsectarian, college-preparatory, and general academic day school for boys and girls of all nationalities from kindergarten through grade 12.

International, formerly called the American School, was founded in 1920 by American and British residents of Manila. It was incorporated as a private, independent institution, and is registered under the laws of the Republic of the Philippines on a nonprofit, non-stock basis. In 1970, the name was changed to reflect the increasing internationality of the student population.

Instruction is in English. The curriculum is that of U.S. general academic and college preparatory schools. Spanish, French, German, Chinese, Latin, and Pilipino are offered as foreign languages.

International is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, and its credits are accepted by American colleges and universities. High school students may earn both U.S. and International Baccalaureate diplomas. Academic standards tend to be more rigorous than those in the U.S. The school participates in, and is a center for, several American testing programs: Secondary School Admission Test (SSAT), College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB), National Merit Scholarship Pro-

gram (PSAT/NMSQT), and American College Test (ACT).

Students are encouraged to participate in the wide variety of sports and other extracurricular activities offered after class hours. International is a member of the Philippine Secondary School Athletic Association. There is active intramural competition.

Brent School of Manila was opened in August 1984. Its mother school is Brent School in Baguio City, which was founded in 1909. Located on the campus of the University of Life in Manila, this unit started with a population of 305 students enrolled in kindergarten to grade 10. An integral part of the original school in Baguio, it is doubly accredited with the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and the Philippine Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities. Brent School-Manila is an international, coeducational, day school related to the Episcopal Church in the Philippines. Brent is a small academic community that provides an atmosphere of high academic standards, Christian values, and discipline. The primary aim is to meet the educational needs of the children of the international community from kindergarten to high school, and specifically to prepare students for admission to the leading colleges and universities of all nations.

The curriculum is American with British adaptations, and is designed to provide each student with background necessary for college life. Special requirements for Filipino students are also met. Small classes permit greater dialogue between faculty and students, and pursuit of individual ideas and interests of the students is facilitated.

Sports and extracurricular activities are offered, though on a smaller scale than the International School.

Several preschools are attended by American children in Manila. Concepts vary from Montessori to social learning. All of the preschools offer a variety of activities and instruc-

tion for the child. The schools often have small classes and offer a clean and stimulating environment. The general age for acceptance in pre-school is around two-and-a-half years of age or diaper trained. There are a few exceptions to this rule.

Special Opportunities

The University of the Philippines (a half-hour drive from downtown Manila with various branches throughout the city) and the University of Santo Tomás are accredited with American colleges, especially for junior/senior level courses. Other private institutions of higher learning are also open to college-age students living in Manila. However, the Philippine system provides only 10 years (six elementary and four secondary) of preparation before college, and this must be taken into consideration prior to enrollment. Most American students choose to go to U.S. colleges because of this difference. Both discipline and scholastic requirements are less rigorous in Philippine universities, and libraries, laboratories, and other facilities are below the standards of American schools.

Very few programs are available for the handicapped child or for children with learning disorders.

Recreation

The tropical weather of the Philippines provides almost year-round opportunities for touring and outdoor recreational activities. These are somewhat curtailed, however, in the heat of April and May, and during the rains and typhoons from July to September.

Sight-seeing in Manila is highly diversified. Within the city itself, there are interesting historical sites, ancient churches, a zoo, a botanical garden, beautiful parks, and a number of small but significant museums, such as the Museo and the Ayala. The Philippine National Museum, which was almost totally destroyed during World War II, once again features permanent exhibitions, mostly scientific in nature, and periodic exhib-

its of Philippine art and artifacts. The number of small galleries of local art, predominantly modern in trend, is increasing. The Art Association of the Philippines promotes an interest in the field through seminars, lectures, and exhibits of local works.

Malacanang Palace, former home of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos, is now a museum, housing memorabilia from Malacanang's history as the center of Philippine government, and especially memorabilia of the Marcos era. Casa Manila, situated in the heart of Intramuros (meaning within the walls), is a model of a 19th-century upper-class urban home. Intramuros contains several other places of interest including two churches, Plaza Roma with its statue to the three martyred priests, and Fort Santiago, with the Rizal Museum. Intramuros itself is a unique combination of the Orient and the Occident: an Old World medieval fortress encircled by walls of oriental materials in a tropical land. Even in their crumbling state, the walls remain today as a monument, a relic of the Spanish era of Philippine history.

Opportunities for weekend and day trips which appeal to sightseers, hikers, picnickers, and camera enthusiasts are plentiful. It is necessary to travel a considerable distance from Manila Bay for safe, unpolluted swimming. Beach resort areas are increasing, however, with the building of modern hotels and restaurants. These areas are a two-to-four-hour drive from Manila.

The closest approach to big game in the Philippines is the wild *carabao* (water buffalo). Deer is next, with open season from January to May. Wild pig is found in almost every mountain region of the country. Snipe is the most popular game bird among hunters. The hunting season for jack snipe runs from September to February. Many varieties of migratory birds, plus dove, wild chicken, partridge, quail, and other game birds are plentiful.

Among the saltwater fish available are: sea bass; barracuda; Spanish mackerel; pompano; tuna, which includes bonitos, yellowfins, skip-jacks, albacores, and bluefins; the leather jacket; sergeant fish; and swordfish. Huge marlins have been caught in Philippine waters. Freshwater fish include the giant eel, the murrel, carp, *gurami*, tilapia, and catfish. Unfortunately, inaccessibility of the areas, restrictions on use of firearms, and lack of hotel accommodations impede hunting and fishing.

Nowhere in the world is there greater profusion or wider diversity of shells than in the Philippines. Because of the uniform warmth of the tropical currents that flow around the islands, shells here have richer colors and more imaginative patterns than in any other region. A great many of the world's rarest and most highly prized specimens of marine shells have either been picked up on Philippine beaches at low tide, trawled, or dredged from the surrounding waters of some of the islands—notably Cebu, Mindanao, Sulu, Palawan, and Samar. The archipelago has been called a "mollusk paradise," and is reputedly the richest shell-collecting region in the world. Some coral forms are growing scarce, and it is illegal to export coral from the islands.

The following places of interest are usually visited at least once during an extended stay in the Philippines:

Tagaytay Ridge, about 35 miles, or an hour's drive, south of Manila. The ridge is 2,000 feet high and enjoys cool breezes throughout the year. It commands a dramatic view of rugged mountains and valleys, as well as of Lake Taal and Taal Volcano. This volcano is the lowest known in the world, and inside its crater is another lake which is again centered by a tiny peak. Few views equal the scenic beauty of Tagaytay Ridge. Overnight accommodations or meals can be obtained at the Taal Vista Lodge.

Pagsanjan Gorge and Rapids can be reached in a



Skyscrapers in the Philippines

Cory Langley. Reproduced by permission.

two-and-a-half-hour-drive from Manila. The trip up-river is made on a native *banca* (small dugout canoe) to Pagsanjan Falls through a gorge. The walls rise perpendicularly about 300 feet and are covered by luxuriant tropical growth. The return trip provides the excitement of shooting the rapids. The entire journey normally is made as a day's outing, with a picnic lunch at the falls or at one of the numerous lodges or restaurants along the river.

The Bamboo Organ at Las Pinas, a site about a 30-minute drive from Manila. This remarkable and unique organ, made of over 100 dry bamboo tubes in 1814, still has flute tones which have remained virtually unchanged in close to two centuries. The organ was completely renovated in Germany in 1975. Las Pinas Church, also renovated, is a perfect setting for this unique organ. An organist provides demonstrations. The annual Bamboo Organ Festival, held in February, features musicians from around the world.

Bataan and Corregidor, evoke memories of the gallant, but futile, stand of Philippine-American forces against the Japanese during World War II. Bataan is a peninsula jut-

ting out to the China Sea, and can be visited by car in a day's outing. Corregidor, an island at the mouth of Manila Bay, can be reached by tour boat.

Los Baños, about a one-hour drive from Manila, and famous for its hot springs. The University of the Philippines' Colleges of Agriculture and Forestry and Forest Products Laboratory, and the International Rice Research Institute—the only such institute in Southeast Asia—are located here.

Baguio, a beautiful resort situated in the mountains at approximately 5,000 feet in altitude. It has a pleasantly cool climate all year, and is the most popular vacation spot in the Philippines, especially for families. Only 155 miles north of Manila, it can be reached by car in five hours or by plane in about one hour. During the rainy season, travel to and from Baguio is interrupted by landslides on the road and poor visibility at the airport.

Banaue Rice Terraces, north of Baguio, known locally as the "Eighth Wonder of the World." The view presents an entire chain of mountains terraced to their highest peaks for the cultivation of rice. These terraces were carved out of

the mountainsides by the Ifugao Indians thousands of years ago. Because of road conditions, tourists normally hire a car with an experienced driver for the seven- to eight-hour trip, driving to Bontoc or Banaue the first day, and returning to Baguio either the second or third day. Some break the trip to or from the terraces with an overnight stop at Mount Dana Lodge, about a three-hour drive from Baguio, where a delightfully cool night can be spent at one of the Philippines' most modern guest houses. The Banaue Hotel has good accommodations.

Hundred Islands, which actually are 400 islands, islets, and rocks in Lingayen Gulf, and of particular interest to fishermen, skin divers, campers, and sightseers.

Mount Mayon, famous as the world's most nearly perfect volcanic cone. Rising 8,000 feet from the plain of Albay, it is near the city of Legaspi, which is accessible by car (a 10-hour drive), bus, or plane. To climb Mayon takes about three days, and the climb is not easy. The area of Bicol, which Mount Mayon "crowns," provides activities for everyone including beaches, adventure tours, caves, and shopping. Tiwi Hot Springs, 25 miles from Legaspi, is one of several thermal springs in the area.

The entire archipelago that comprises the Republic of the Philippines is full of private, rustic, white sandy beaches (such as Boracay) or classic, secluded, high-class beach resorts such as El Nido. For scuba divers, snorkelers, sailors, and just beach lovers, the Philippines offers an array of locations from which to choose.

Sports

Manila offers many opportunities for participation in sports. Facilities for golf, tennis, swimming, bowling, riding, scuba diving, basketball, softball, and sailing are available. Lessons, particularly in golf and tennis, can be obtained at reasonable fees.

Golf was introduced to the islands at the turn of this century, and has become one of the most popular sports. Several golf clubs and links in and around Manila attract players; there are practice driving ranges in the city.

The best known of the clubs is the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club, with two 18-hole courses on a 320-acre estate. Wack Wack has hosted international championships and attracted outstanding golfers from around the world. In addition, the following clubs are conveniently located in and around Manila: Muni Golf Links, Capitol Hills Golf Club, Manila Golf Club, University of the Philippines Club, Intramuros Golf Course, and Alabang Golf and Country Club.

Several private clubs and hotels have pools for the use of members. Tennis and *pelota* (a cross between *jai alai* and racquetball) are popular in Manila, and courts for these sports are available at private clubs. Several modern bowling alleys also are in the Manila area.

The Manila Yacht Club welcomes foreigners interested in sailing. It sponsors active one-design and cruiser-class races, and a regular, international competition with the Hong Kong Yacht Club. Sailing lessons are offered. Boats cost much less than in the U.S.

Basketball, boxing, cockfights, horse racing, track meets, and *jai alai* (the Basque game somewhat similar to handball) are popular spectator sports. Visiting sports stars give occasional exhibitions. Equipment and appropriate sports attire are not always available on the local market.

Entertainment

Movies are popular among Filipinos, and several first-class, air-conditioned theaters exist, particularly in the new suburban areas. First-run American and European films may be seen, as well as Filipino, Japanese, and Chinese films. Movies do not have long runs, however, sometimes showing only for

three days. Admission prices are reasonable.

The magnificent Cultural Center of the Philippines on Roxas Boulevard has a 2,000-seat auditorium and a smaller theater with 450 seats. The Folk Art Theater, used for concerts, bazaars, and pageants, is a covered, open-air building, where many local and foreign musical artists perform. The Cultural Center also includes the Philippine International Convention Center.

The Manila Symphony Society, with guest conductors, presents several concerts and at least one opera or operetta annually. A number of other active local orchestra groups and choral societies also perform.

The Bayanihan Dance Group, which has made several successful world tours, and several other folk dance and ballet groups present performances throughout the year.

The Thomas Jefferson Library (U.S.-sponsored) and the American Historical Collection (located in the U.S. Chancery Annex) have good libraries for public use. Private clubs maintain lending libraries. The public libraries, and those at various schools and universities, are seldom used by the foreign community.

Fiestas play an important role in Philippine life. They are a combination of religious symbolism and social life, and are held in the various *barrios* to commemorate feast days of patron saints and in remembrance of unusual local events. Almost all are based on Catholic tradition, but many also hark to earlier pre-Christian times. The fiestas are often colorful, lively, and spectacular. May is the height of the season for flowers, and numerous festivals are planned for that month.

The Philippines offers ample subject matter for photographers. Film is readily available on the local market. Printing and developing facilities for all types of film also are available locally.

Many good restaurants in all price ranges, serving Filipino, American, Chinese, Indian, Thai, Middle Eastern, Japanese, and continental food, are located in Manila. Prices vary depending on the restaurant, but are usually less than their equivalent in the U.S. Nightclubs and cocktail lounges abound, especially in the downtown areas.

The large American community provides many opportunities for social activities. In addition to school and church groups, memberships are available in several civic organizations, including the American Chamber of Commerce, Masonic Lodge and Shrine, Eastern Star, Elks, Fraternal Order of Eagles, American Association of the Philippines, Junior Chamber of Commerce, Rotary International, Knights of Columbus, Lions Club, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Toastmasters Club, YMCA, YWCA, and American Women's Club of the Philippines. Boy and Girl Scout chapters are active, as is the International Little League of Manila. All children have the opportunity to join school-sponsored programs.

Private clubs attract many Americans. Among these are the Manila Polo Club; the Manila Boat Club, on the Pasig River in Santa Ana; the Manila Yacht Club, with clubhouse and sheltered basin on Roxas Boulevard; the Manila Overseas Press Club; the Casino Español, with chiefly Spanish membership; Manila Club, primarily British; Manila Symphony Women's Auxiliary; the Manila Theater Guild; and the All Nations Women's Club.

Also, there are numerous charity and welfare organizations which welcome volunteer help.

Quezon City

Quezon City was the nation's capital from 1948 to 1976, and remains officially listed as such, but its development during those years was mainly in the planning stages, and only a few government agencies

are located here. Thirteen miles from downtown Manila, the area formerly was a private estate named for Filipino statesman Manuel Luis Quezon.

Now grown to a center with over 2.2 million residents, Quezon City is the site of the main campus of the University of the Philippines, founded in 1908. Several theaters and concert halls are located here, among them Areneta Coliseum, Abelardo Hall and Guerrero Theatre (connected with the university), the British Council Center, and the Goethe Institute. Art exhibits are mounted in a number of galleries, and are an integral part of greater Manila's cultural life.

Quezon City bustles with business and recreational establishments. Although its proximity makes it a geographical extension of Manila proper, it retains a unique identity within the metropolitan area.

Cebu City

Cebu City, with a population of more than 700,000 (metropolitan population 1.7 million) boasts of having had the earliest sustained contact with the Western world. Cebu City was the initial seat of Philippine Christendom—Ferdinand Magellan's cross, raised here in 1521, is among the many points of interest. Others include the Basilica of San Agustín, which houses an ancient religious relic, the image of Santo Niño; and the museum of the University of San Carlos, where precious artifacts from Cebu City and Mindanao are kept.

The city, commonly referred to only as Cebu, is on the island of the same name in the Visayas, those islands which comprise the Central Philippines between Luzon and Mindanao. Cebu Island is long (140 miles), narrow (22 miles at the widest point), and densely populated, with a central spine of craggy hills. The city itself is widespread and has a bustling, congested business district around the port. Because of the destruction during World War II,

the once-Spanish character of Cebu City is a recollection which finds form only in some old houses down back streets, in the exteriors of several churches, and in an 18th-century triangular fort. Colo Street is the oldest street in the Philippines.

Although most of the city was rebuilt between 1945 and 1947, it suffers today from deterioration, since many buildings were hastily constructed of low-quality materials. A large part of Cebu City consists of narrow passageways lined with crowded, frame structures. However, the number of modern office buildings, wide avenues, and substantial contemporary houses is rapidly increasing. Traffic is a hectic mixture of "jeepneys," taxis, cars, motorcycles, horse carts, and motorized tricycles.

An increasing number of people are migrating into the city from elsewhere in Cebu province, and from the neighboring islands of Bohol and Leyte, in search of work. Large numbers of Chinese are engaged in wholesale and retail trade, and there is a small Indian community. The Cebuano version of the Visayan (or Bisayan) language is generally used; Visayan is also spoken in the rest of the central Visayas and in most of Mindanao. Almost everyone in Cebu City proper understands a certain amount of English; the better-educated and business people speak it well. Spanish and Chinese are still spoken by the *mestizo* (mixed blood) groups.

The Western community is loosely defined. Most foreign businesses have Filipino managers. The American business community is small. The largest single group of Americans is the Protestant missionaries. There are also some Catholic missionaries, medical and various students, spouses of Filipinos, and a sprinkling of Europeans and Asians.

Cebu City, about 10° north of the equator, is some 350 miles from Manila. The climate is hot and humid during the entire year, with rainfall less evenly distributed by

season than it is in Manila. The hottest weather is generally from March through June. Nights are usually pleasant from August through February, with the daytime high temperature ranging between 85° and 94°F. Cebu City is considered to be just off the typhoon belt, but has occasionally been hit by storms of considerable force.

Religious Activities

Cebu City is a center for Protestant missionary activities, and English-language services are held by the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (an amalgamation of Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and others), the Missouri-Synod Lutheran, several Baptist groups, the Philippine Independent Church (a separate Philippine church in communion with Episcopalians), a variety of evangelical groups, Mormons, and Seventh-Day Adventists. Cebu City also offers Catholic masses in both English and Visayan. In Baguio, there are regular English-language services provided by Roman Catholic, Episcopal, Christian Science, Lutheran, and United Church of Christ congregations. The latter is a united church staffed by Presbyterians and Evangelical United Brethren. Baptists and Lutherans sponsor many missionaries in and around Baguio.

Education

Except for families with young children, schooling in Cebu City is cause for concern. A number of alternatives are available for elementary education. Most foreign children attend Cebu International School, a private institution founded by the American community in 1924. English instruction, using primarily American textbooks, is offered from kindergarten through grade 12. The staff is Filipino. Students coming from American schools can expect both scholastic and social adjustments. Tutors can be found for additional scholastic help, which is usually needed.

Several Catholic schools for boys and girls provide alternatives to

International, but few foreign residents attend them. Admission is by competitive examination. Classes tend to be large, learning is by rote, and competition in all aspects of school life is intense. Although in the best of these schools most instruction is in English, Pilipino is increasingly used in the lower grades, and the general level of English appears to be diminishing. Elementary school comprises kindergarten through grade six, followed by four years of high school (no junior high). Most foreign students find that these schools do not meet their long-term needs. St. Teresa's College and the College of the Immaculate Conception are considered the best schools for girls. The top boys' school, Sacred Heart, a Jesuit institution, requires the study of Chinese at all levels.

High school alternatives are local Catholic schools, considerably more satisfactory for girls than for boys; correspondence courses; or boarding school. The only boarding school of international caliber in the Philippines is Brent School in Baguio. Tutors can be found to assist with correspondence courses. There are adequate nursery schools in Cebu City.

Special Opportunities

Cebu City has a number of colleges, universities, and "diploma mills." One of the better educational institutions in the Philippines, the University of San Carlos (which is older than Harvard), is operated by German, Dutch, and American priests of the Society of the Divine Word. Undergraduate and graduate courses are offered in a variety of subjects. The University of the Philippines has a small branch in Cebu City, although its current graduate offerings are mainly in the fields of business and commerce. Cebu City is a major center for medical education, and a number of Americans and other foreigners attend school here. St. Teresa's has a college department (comparable to a junior college/finishing school) which enrolls American girls upon successful completion of the Philippine College Entrance Examination.

Special education for handicapped children or those with learning disabilities is not available.

Recreation

Although Cebu City experiences constant debilitating heat, outdoor activity is possible all year. Public sports and recreational facilities are extremely limited, so Americans rely on a variety of private clubs: the Cebu Country Club, Club Filipino, Montebello Hotel, Liloan Beach Club, and Casino Español.

There are two excellent private 18-hole golf courses at the edge of the city. Golf lessons are inexpensive. Three hotels have freshwater swimming pools, available for a membership fee. A number of small private tennis clubs, one or two of which have lighted courts, are available. *Pelota* is popular, and several clubs and private individuals have courts. Whites are worn for both tennis and *pelota*. Badminton is available at one club. The city has a number of bowling alleys (mostly duckpin). Local running clubs and other organizations sponsor races. Basketball is a popular spectator sport, and opportunities exist for playing in amateur leagues.

The seas around Cebu are clear, warm, and fish-laden. Beaches, mainly privately owned, are found both in Cebu City and Mactan, about a 45-minute drive.

Numerous coral islands and sandbars are located in the straits between Cebu and Bohol. Scuba diving opportunities are unparalleled. Attractive sea shells can still be found, but commercial shell collectors are rapidly reducing the supply. Although the area is good for small boating, no docking facilities currently exist.

Other than an often-bouncy but scenic car ride around the circumference of Cebu Island (which would take about two days) or to Mactan Island, no land touring is available. Trips to nearby islands can be rewarding, although public facilities are not up to American standards. Shipping lines run regular services

to Manila, as well as many neighboring ports. Some offer cabins, but most have only deck passage; the ships are crowded, dirty, and unsafe. Philippine Airlines offers service to many cities in the Visayas.

Entertainment

Entertainment possibilities are limited. Cebu City has about 20 movie theaters, of which only a few are acceptable. Most movies are in Tagalog, but some American films are shown. Eight to 10 restaurants serve reasonably good food, and there are a number of nightclubs or discos.

Cebu City has only one good public library, the United States Information Agency (USIA) facility. Among college libraries, only that at San Carlos University is adequate; it has a good Filipiniana collection. No children's collections, other than the small one at Cebu International School, are available. Although several stores carry reasonable selections of popular paperbacks, more serious reading matter or children's books are rarely available. Books deteriorate rapidly in this climate and anything of value should be brought to Cebu City with awareness of the risk involved. Local newspapers are inadequate for national or international news. While Asian edition of the *Wall Street Journal* is now available on the day of publication, the *International Herald Tribune* arrives one to three days after publication. *Time* and *Newsweek* may be bought at newsstands or hotels.

Four TV channels have frequent color broadcasts, with some American reruns. Shortwave radio reception is not always clear, but Voice of America (VOA), as well as Radio Australia and British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), can be heard. Local radio programming is mostly disco and rock music, but several local FM-stereo stations broadcast more subdued music. Private satellite receivers are becoming popular among Filipinos.

Baguio

Baguio, the "summer capital," is located about 155 miles north of Manila, in the hills of northern Luzon, the main island of the Philippines. The countryside here is mountainous and rugged, with scrub growth and pines covering the slopes. Scenery and a cool climate are Baguio's chief assets. The area, however, is subject to earthquakes. More than 1,600 people died during an earthquake on July 16, 1991.

Built primarily by the Americans in the early 1900s, Baguio is a modern and thriving small-town community which has become one of the foremost vacation spots of not only the Philippines, but also of the entire Far East. A large number of well-to-do Manilans and Philippine government officials have summer homes in Baguio. Schools, business firms, and other organizations maintain summer camps and homes here for their employees.

The main economic activity is tourism. The resident population of Baguio is over 250,000, but this figure triples during the tourist season. Poor squatters make up over 50% of the population; the rest are business representatives, retired families, school teachers, missionaries, and the wealthy who can afford to commute, for weekends and extended vacations, between Baguio and Manila or other large cities.

The foreign colony is small, consisting mainly of Spaniards, Indians, Chinese, and Americans. The small Chinese community is complete with its own school and churches.

The American/European colony consists of missionaries, business representatives, teachers, miners, and their families. The Voice of America's (VOA) Philippines Relay Station is located in Baguio. English is spoken well by 75% of the local population. It is estimated that more than 3,000 Americans visit Baguio each year.

The U.S. Embassy residence in Baguio was the site of surrender

ceremonies, in September 1945, of General Yamashita to the American Forces.

Around the city, in mountain villages, live the Igorots (a generic term for various tribes). Igorots are mountain tribesmen with loyalty first to their own societies. They manage to eke a scanty subsistence from the mountainsides, and to supplement this by weaving and wood carving. Their native costumes (loin cloths and jackets for the men and bright-colored straight skirts and blouses for the women) are of interest to the foreign residents and tourists.

The Baguio business center consists of a central market, where local produce is sold, and many small shops and restaurants which line the four main streets. Around this area are found civic buildings; the impressive cathedral; lovely Burnham Park, named for the Chicago architect who designed the city; the St. Louis School of Silver; and the Easter School of Weaving.

Baguio is situated at an altitude of 4,600 feet above sea level. The climate varies between the dry and (very) wet seasons, each lasting about six months. The dry season begins in December and continues until June. Temperatures vary from the low 80s in the daytime to the 50s and 60s at night. This interval ends in June when the rains, which are light in May, become heavy. Baguio averages 176 inches of rainfall a year, with a record fall of 355 inches and a low of 99 inches. July and August are the rainiest months, averaging 42 inches each. The rains begin tapering off in September and are light in October and November.

Education

Brent School, founded in 1909 under the auspices of the Episcopal Church, is the only doubly accredited, coeducational, nonsectarian, day and boarding school in Southeast Asia. Its accreditation is with the Western Association of Schools and Colleges in the U.S. and with the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges, and Uni-

versities. The campus offers an invigorating and healthful climate which is conducive to study year round.

Brent's curriculum is representative of the best practices to be found in public schools in the U.S. and abroad. The school provides a seminar approach to learning. There is individually guided education and close personal contact between students and faculty. An active creative and performing arts program is a feature of the school, and participation in individual and group sports is encouraged. In-depth cultural studies, curriculum-related field trips, and specialized brief courses contribute to an educational program combining the richness of Western heritage with the experience of life in an Asian culture.

Special Opportunities

Both Baguio Colleges Foundation and St. Louis University have junior college-level courses, but all credits are not transferable to American colleges, and educational standards are considered low. No adequate facilities for post-high school education are available except correspondence courses. A few facilities are available for learning the local language. Ilocano if the local dialect, but most Filipinos speak English. Private tutoring in Spanish is available. Many local residents speak Pilipino, which has been declared the national language in the Philippines.

Recreation and Entertainment

There are good beaches at Lingayen Gulf, 32 miles from Baguio, and at Poro Point, 36 miles away. Fishing is excellent at Hundred Islands, a three-to-four-hour drive from Baguio.

Burnham Park, the "Central Park" of Baguio, has sprawling lawns around a lagoon, and walks lined with *agoho* (Australian pine) and eucalyptus trees. Adults and children alike are attracted by boating facilities, a roller skating rink, an athletic bowl, well-shaded picnic grounds, bicycling, and scooter

rides. A botanical garden with a natural area features a rich collection of Philippine flowers. A children's playground is a special attraction here.

The Crystal Caves are about 35 miles (one hour by car) from Baguio, and face the China Sea. This area is popular among visitors.

Americans patronize the two or three theaters in the city offering English-language movies, although they are screened somewhat later than U.S. showings.

No operettas, concerts, museums, or hobby club facilities are available. There are several local restaurants in Baguio, but some Americans prefer to eat only in their homes or at the Baguio Country Club, since unboiled water and unsanitary conditions may exist elsewhere.

Radio reception in Baguio is good. Direct television reception is good with an outside antenna. Four local VHF channels are on the air and a cable system is available in some parts of the city.

Baguio, with its scenic beauty, is a natural for photographers. The few local festivities, including parades and Igorot dances, as well as the festivals in the lowlands, provide interesting material for photographers. Color film can be processed in Manila, Hawaii, or Australia. Black-and-white film is processed in Baguio.

Almost all American contact with social activities are centered around the Baguio Country Club. Activities hosted at the country club and those sponsored by church and school organizations afford contact with Filipino residents, foreign nationals involved in mining, forestry, and missionary work, and Americans who have retired to Baguio.

Davao City

Davao City (officially, the City of Davao) lies on a channel leading from the Gulf of Davao on the Pacific side of Mindanao, the south-

ernmost and second largest island in the Philippines. It is geographically one of the largest cities in the world, covering 98,785 acres (244,000 hectares), and comprising mostly agricultural land. The metropolitan population is about 1.2 million (850,000 in the city proper), making it the largest city on Mindanao, although most of the people live in rural districts and on farmlands.

Davao City was founded in 1849 and, during the first half of the 20th century, developed as a Japanese colony. It served as a Japanese naval base for more than three years during World War II.

Davao City's latitude (about 7° north of the equator) and sea-level altitude result in a year-round, hot, tropical climate somewhat relieved by almost constant sea/land breezes. The average annual rainfall is about 80 inches a year. The mean daily maximum temperature is 89°F, and the mean daily minimum, 73°F. Davao City is outside the typhoon belt.

The area and city are engaged primarily in large-scale production of copra, bananas and abaca, logging, and plywood manufacturing. The city is focused upon the support of these activities and is experiencing economic and population growth. In recent years, Davao City has become a trading center serving the gold mining activities underway in a nearby province.

Mindanao was the "frontier" of the Philippines, and it retains much of the spirit of a pioneering city. Davaowenos are predominantly Cebuano speakers, revealing the origins of a city whose farmers and business representatives migrated from the Visayan Islands in the central Philippines. The region also includes large numbers of migrants who came from Luzon as well as small groups of both Christian and Muslim ethnic tribes. A large and influential Chinese-Filipino community is part of Davao City's overall population profile. The city is experiencing a steady increase in its

American community, which mostly comprises missionaries.

Education

English-language instruction is available at one or two private schools for children in preschool and kindergarten. Westerners usually rely on two or three of the best local schools for elementary and high school instruction. Some Americans in the district rely upon home instruction, using the Calvert system, or send their children to either International School or one of the boarding schools in Baguio.

Recreation and Entertainment

Swimming at the nearby beaches or the Davao Insular Hotel, and golf at either of two courses, are the primary outdoor sports in Davao City. Tennis, hiking, and picnicking are also enjoyed. Some members of the American community own boats, and opportunities abound for deep-water fishing and skin diving off the nearby islands. Because of the lack of good highways, travel to other interesting areas and cities on the island must be done by air.

Davao City does not offer a variety of entertainment. Amateur dramatic groups present performances and American participation is welcomed. A few nightclubs provide a diversion. Several excellent restaurants serve American, Chinese, and Filipino food.

Social life for the American community centers around home, church, and civic groups, and includes contact with both Filipinos and foreign residents. Most Americans belong to at least one local club, such as the Davao Beach Club, Apo Golf and Country Club, or Rotary. Membership, by invitation, usually is easily arranged.

OTHER CITIES

BACOLOD, the capital of Negros Occidental Province in the Visayan Islands, is a thriving, affluent city of 429,000 in the center of a vast

sugar-producing area. It is a modern urban area, with shopping malls, commercial districts, and art centers. A university was established here in 1957. The popular Mambucal summer resort is nearby.

The seaport of **BATANGAS** is the capital of the province of the same name. Situated in southwestern Luzon, it is near the mouth of the Calumpan River, on the northwest coast of Batangas Bay. The city is connected with Manila, which is about 58 miles to the south, by road and coastal shipping. Batangas trades in corn, sugar, and coconuts. The population here exceeds 240,000.

BUTUAN, the capital of Agusan Province, is situated in the northeastern part of Mindanao on the Agusan River. It is a port and trading center for copra and abaca. Magellan first proclaimed Spanish sovereignty over the Philippines here in 1521. Butuan has a population of about 270,000.

ILIGAN lies on the southeast shore of Iligan Bay in Mindanao. It is the chief port on the north coast and the site of a tin plate mill. The city was the scene of uprising in the Philippine Revolution of 1896. The population is about 285,000.

ILOILO CITY, both a commercial and cultural center, is the capital of its eponymous province, and lies on the southeastern part of Iloilo Strait, in one of the most populous areas of the entire archipelago. It is officially the City of Iloilo but, like so many other places in the Philippines, the simpler version of its name is commonly used. Iloilo City is a prosperous manufacturing and commercial center which has been a port for foreign trade since 1855. A Spanish settlement, it was frequently raided during the 16th and 17th centuries by the Moros (Moors). Although it suffered during the Japanese occupation in World War II, most of its old churches and buildings from the Spanish era are still intact. Iloilo City's population is estimated at 366,000 (2000 est.).

Located 17 miles southwest of Santa Cruz on Luzon, **SAN PABLO** is the largest town in the province of Laguna. It became a city in 1940 and has an estimated population of 208,000. San Pablo is a major rail and highway center in a valley near several small crater lakes. Copra is shipped from here.

ZAMBOANGA is a noted port and trade center in the province of Zamboanga del Sur, on the western tip of Mindanao. It is set at the foot of a mountain range, and its pleasant tropical climate and beautiful parks have earned for it the apt description, "city of flowers." Established in 1635 as a Spanish stronghold, Fort Pilar, the town grew and flourished during the years before World War II, when the Philippines were under U.S. control. Today, the city has a population over 600,000. A decided Moros influence remains in the area, and the local market has a wide array of Muslim artifacts and textiles.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The Philippines comprise some 7,100 islands, of which only 880 are inhabited. The two major islands are Luzon to the north, and Mindanao to the south. These and the central Visayas group are represented by the three stars in the Philippine flag.

Although generally mountainous, with peaks up to almost 10,000 feet, the country has extensive fertile coastal and central plains and rolling uplands. Large, rich valleys, traversed by rivers, lie between mountain ranges. The Philippines has many volcanoes, some of them active. The spring 1991 eruption of Mount Pinatubo was one of history's major volcanic explosions and its resulting atmospheric effects had worldwide implications. The rugged and irregular coastline, some 21,600

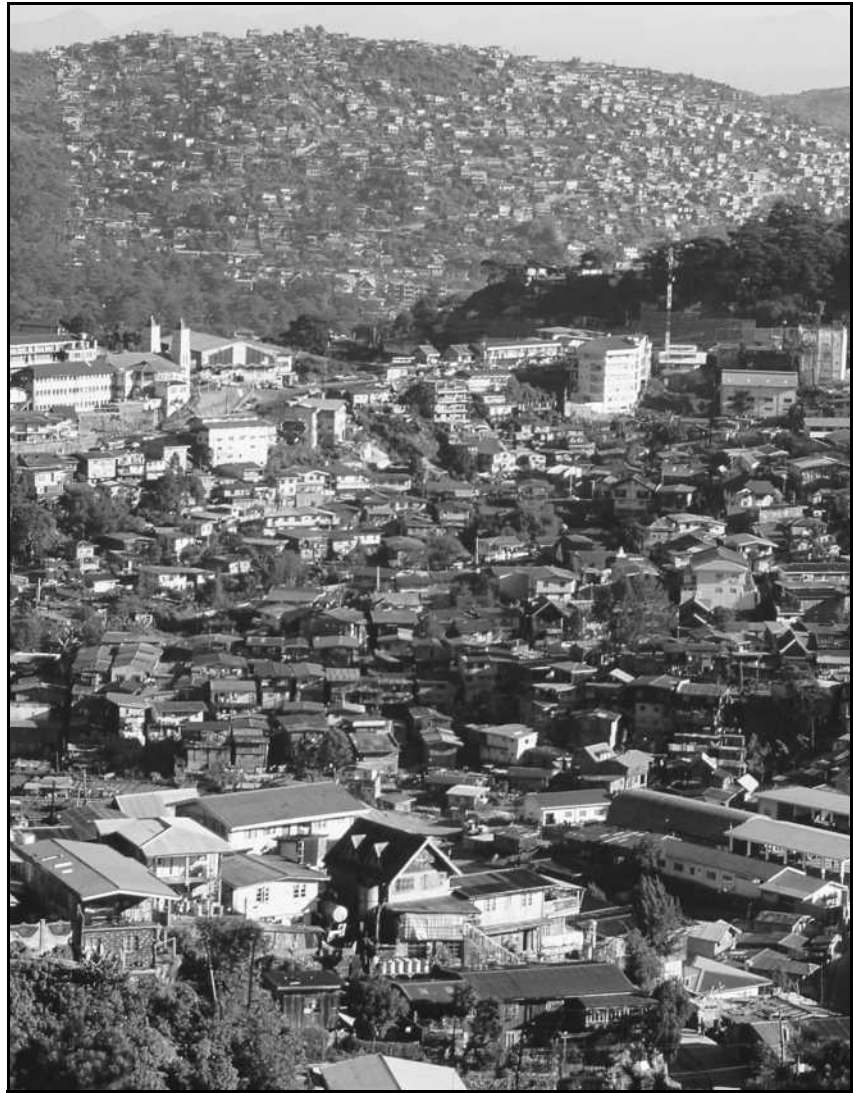
miles long, provides numerous harbors of all sizes. In comparison, the coastline of the continental United States is only 12,000 miles in length.

The Philippines ranks fifth among the world's countries in ratio of forest to tableland. Interesting plant life is abundant throughout the islands. The *sampaguita*, a small, multi-petaled, and exceedingly fragrant blossom is the national flower. Orchids grow in profusion—some 1,000 varieties are known.

Many interesting species of animals and birds are found in the forests and mountains. The *carabao*, or water buffalo, is indigenous.

The Philippine climate is mostly hot and humid. Manila is situated at sea level on the island of Luzon, 15° north of the equator. Three seasons are defined: the hot, dry period from March through May, ending with violent thunderstorms and torrential rains; the wet season from June into November, with daily rains during July, August, and September; and the cool, dry interval from November to February. Manila has an annual mean temperature of 80°F. The average monthly maximum temperature ranges from 86°F to 93°F, and the monthly minimum temperature from 69°F to 75°F. Average relative humidity spans a scale from 69% in April to 84% in August and September.

Typhoons, common in the Philippines during the rainy season, bring high winds and heavy rains. In November 1991, a typhoon, designated Thelma, hit an area about 340 miles southeast of Manila resulting in at least 6,500 deaths. Manila sometimes feels the full impact of these violent storms, although more often they miss the city because it is sheltered by mountains. In the rainy season, frequent floods cause delays in transportation and possible damage to automobiles. However, recent flood-control projects are alleviating this situation.



View of Baguio, Philippines

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Minor earth tremors occur frequently. In 1969 and 1970, major earthquakes hit Manila, with some casualties and damage. In 1976, a devastating earthquake, followed by strong tidal waves, struck southwestern Mindanao. In January 1982, an earthquake measuring 6.8 on the Richter scale battered northern Bicol Peninsula and, in August of the following year, another hit Ilocos Norte; both of these caused extensive loss of life and property damage. In 1991, an earthquake in Baguio claimed 1,600 lives.

Population

The Philippines is inhabited by more than 80 million people of vary-

ing races, traditions, cultures, and religious beliefs who speak 87 different dialects. Culturally, the people are of three main classifications: the Christian group, comprising over 90% of the population, who inhabit the lowlands; the Muslims, comprising 4%, in the southern island of Mindanao and Sulu archipelago; and the third group, composed of the mountain people—Igorot, Ifugao, Negrito, Mangyan, etc.—living in the mountainous interiors of the islands. Some of the latter societies remain largely untouched by civilization.

The Philippines is a melting pot. The dominant race is Malay, but many Filipinos are of Chinese,

Spanish, or American descent. About 83% of the people are Roman Catholic. The remaining 9% of the Christian element belong to the Philippine Independent Church (*Aglipayan*), the indigenous *Iglesia ni Christo*, and various Protestant faiths.

Traditionally, Filipinos are noted for their friendliness and hospitality, but the past several years have witnessed a growing spirit of nationalism and some expression of anti-Americanism, particularly in Manila. However, the majority of Filipinos still welcome American friendship, and personal relationships develop more easily here than in most Asian nations.

The Filipinos have a natural reverence for women. Filipinos enjoy a status unmatched in other Oriental countries; at home and in the community, they share equal footing with Filipino men. Filipinos have strong family ties. Fiestas play a major role in their lives.

Although Tagalog is the predominant language, Pilipino (a mixture of Tagalog and other dialects) and English are the official languages. The latter is used in Manila for business, commerce, and higher education. Leading newspapers, magazines, and many television and radio programs are in English.

The use of Pilipino is increasing rapidly in schools and communications media. Nevertheless, Americans have no real language problems except, perhaps, when traveling in the more isolated areas of the country, where some knowledge of Tagalog is helpful. An adjustment becomes necessary to attune the American ear to the Filipino manner of speaking, with equivalent difficulty to be expected on the Filipino's part in understanding the American cadence.

Government

The Philippines has experienced much governmental turmoil in recent years. After 20 years of President Ferdinand Marcos' authoritar-

ian rule, Corazon Aquino was elected to the presidency in 1986. Aquino faced formidable problems, not the least of which was dealing with dissidents in the military and surviving six serious military coups. Some dissidents accused Aquino of catering to the elite of Philippine society and ignoring the poor. Several factors contributed to a sense of instability among the Filipino people: increasing economic problems, debate concerning U.S. use of military bases in the Philippines, and the perceived notion that Aquino was an indecisive and ineffective leader. Prevented by the constitution from running for a second term, Aquino backed the eventual winner, Fidel Ramos, who was elected to a six-year term in May 1992.

Ramos, however, had to deal with quite a bit of trouble concerning political corruption, a weak economy, and ongoing internal threats from Islamic extremists. He lost the election of 1998 to Joseph Estrada, his vice-president. Estrada eventually faced impeachment from charges of massive corruption and plunder. Amidst relatively peaceful rallies and demonstrations, Estrada stepped-down to be replaced by his vice-president, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, in January 2001.

The Philippines changed from an American-style presidential system to a modified parliamentary system during and after President Ferdinand Marcos imposed martial law from 1972 to 1981. However, after the election of Aquino, a new constitution was drafted and approved in a plebiscite in 1982. Under this constitution, an American-style presidential system was restored. The powers of the three branches of government (the president, the legislature, and the judiciary) are balanced with no one branch predominating.

Executive power is vested in the president who is elected by direct universal suffrage and is limited to one term of six years duration. The president appoints a Cabinet which oversees day to day affairs of the government. Legislative power

resides in a 24 member Senate with members elected from a nationwide constituency, and the 250 member House of Representatives. Of the number 200 are elected from individual local constituencies and 50 appointed by the president. The judicial system consists of a 15 member Supreme Court and various lower courts.

Government in the Philippines is unitary, not federal. The central government supervises administrative details for the provinces, cities, and towns, but these local jurisdictions choose their own officials and manage most of their own affairs.

Administratively, the 72 provinces are divided into 12 regions. Metropolitan Manila, which includes the city proper, Quezon City, and other jurisdictions, has its own legal status. In the south, with its substantial concentrations of Muslim Filipinos, and in northern Luzon, with its substantial numbers of cultural minorities, the government is implementing a constitutionally mandated program of regional autonomy.

The flag of the Philippines consists of equal horizontal bands of blue and red; next to the staff is a golden sun with three stars on a white triangle.

Arts, Science, Education

The Philippines has over 40,000 public and private primary, intermediate, secondary, and collegiate schools. Among the institutions of higher education are the University of the Philippines, the University of Santo Tomás, and other nationally chartered centers of higher learning. The scope of private education is impressive—171 government and 636 private colleges and universities. Although it is occasionally argued that some schools fall below the standards of learning elsewhere, the mere presence of so many schools is an achievement which few other developing nations can match. An educated electorate

is part of the Filipino's concept of democracy. Until recent years, much of the intellectual and cultural life of the country revolved around the universities. Today, expanding libraries, museums, concert halls, book shops, and art galleries provide alternate experiences.

As the Far East's only predominantly Christian country, Western ideas and values have strongly influenced Philippine art. The art world is active and diversified. Folk-dance groups enjoy the same popularity as Western modern and classical ballet companies. Two symphony orchestras in Manila have concert seasons, and drama clubs (several with international membership) perform throughout the year. Exciting and venturesome examples of modern architecture are represented in some new buildings in the Manila area.

A large scientific community is active in the Philippines. The National Science Development Board has under its jurisdiction the National Institute of Science and Technology, the Nuclear Research Institute, the Coconut Research Institute, and the Textile Research Institute. The Nuclear Research Institute operates a one-megawatt reactor, producing isotopes for medical use, and carries on research in other areas.

Philippine scientists work with their counterparts from all over the world in the International Rice Research Institute in Los Baños, which has developed new strains of "miracle rice." Another important international project is the country's affiliation with INTELSAT through two PHILCOMSAT satellite earth stations. These installations at Tanay make it possible for the Philippines to carry direct telecasts worldwide events.

Commerce and Industry

The once-promising Philippine economy declined in the early 1990s due to a variety of factors. The shut-

down of U.S. military operations resulted in the loss of thousands of civilian jobs, as well as more than one billion dollars that the bases injected into the economy. Prolonged drought and inadequate infrastructure also contributed to the country's stagnant economic growth. Growth resumed in 1993 and 1994, and inflation declined.

The economy retains many of its traditional characteristics. Almost 40% the labor force is employed in agriculture and many earn their living in the related activities of processing, transportation, and trade in agricultural products. Efforts are being made to encourage and decentralize industrial development, which is presently concentrated around Manila. In the south, Iligan City with its hydroelectric dam and steel complex, and Davao City and Cebu City are developing into industrial areas. Export-processing zones are located in Bataan, Cebu City, and Baguio, and others are planned in the provinces.

A large debt burden, and population pressure make agricultural development, industrial sector expansion, and increased export earnings critical to future development. Chief Philippine exports include coconut products, garments, and electronics. Key crops include rice and corn, primarily for domestic consumption; sugar, coconut products, abaca, pineapple, bananas, and forest products such as lumber, plywood, and veneer for export.

The private sector dominates the Philippine economy. Government economic agencies determine the policy framework within which the private sector functions and the principal directions of the economy through the Investment Priorities Plan. Economic nationalism is a potent force in the Philippines, and some government trade and investment policies reflect this sentiment. The public sector also has responsibility for much needed economic infrastructures, such as power generation, roads, and port and air terminal facilities.

A few wealthy families, which are now developing modern management practices, are very influential in the private sector. The Filipino-Chinese community is also a major force in businesses. Americans traditionally have been the principal foreign investors in the Philippines. But Japanese, European, and other Asian investments and financial interests have become increasingly important.

Unemployment in metropolitan Manila is about twice as high as in rural areas and underemployment throughout the country is a serious problem. Creating new jobs to reduce underemployment and provide employment for new workers is one of the Philippines most pressing problems. A competitive wage scale and a well-trained, English-speaking labor force are important attractions for employment-generating investment.

Trade unions have had a long history in the Philippines. However, unions are divided among a vast array of rival labor federations whose disunity seriously undermines the economic and political influence of the labor movement. The number of strikes has declined recently, but some unions pursue strikes for ideological more than economic reasons.

Transportation

Travel by air to practically any part of the world can be arranged from Manila. American-flag cargo ships, with limited passenger capacity (usually 12), have infrequent trans-Pacific sailings from Taiwan to the U.S. west coast via Hong Kong and Japan but, for all practical purposes, surface travel between the U.S. and the Philippines is not convenient.

Airlines connecting Manila with other points in the Far East include Air France, China Airlines, Cathay Pacific, KLM (Royal Dutch Airlines), Korean Airlines, Northwest, Pakistan International, Philippine Airlines, Qantas, Sabena, SAS (Scandinavian Airlines) Thai Air-

ways International, Japan Airlines, and Air Egypt. Northwest has daily scheduled flights to the U.S.

Philippine Airlines (PAL) makes scheduled flights to cities and important towns throughout the country. It is possible to arrange a one-day round trip to some places.

Inter-island ships sail almost daily, with calls at major ports within the country. Although the accommodations cannot be considered first class, those traveling on the ships find their voyages adventurous and enjoyable. Ships are often crowded and overbooked; at times ship travel may be hazardous because safety regulations may be unenforced.

Modes of city transportation vary, but taxis are most commonly used by Americans who do not have personal vehicles. Many taxi companies and individual owners and operators provide service throughout the large cities and their suburbs. Mostly, small Japanese cars are used. Many taxis are old, dirty, poorly maintained, and driven recklessly; many do not have air conditioning. Street crime in Manila often involves taxis, so care should be taken when hailing one. The most reputable taxis are found in front of hotels and other large businesses and have meters that work; fares are reasonable. A small tip is usually given.

Bus service is available throughout Manila and suburban areas. Fares are cheap and schedules frequent. However, buses are seldom used by Americans, as they are considered neither safe nor comfortable by U.S. standards. Pickpockets are quite active on the buses here. Buses are also handled recklessly, and drivers often race from one street corner to another vying for passengers, and sometimes vary the established route.

"Jeepneys," colorful vehicles built on Jeep frames, are plentiful in Manila and suburban areas. They carry up to a dozen people and are frequently overcrowded. Fare is nominal to most points in Manila; this means of

transportation, however, cannot be relied on to follow regular routes. Most vehicles have side curtains, but passengers should expect to get wet when it rains. Since "jeepneys" are preferable to city buses, Americans occasionally use them.

For an occasional "fun trip," there is the horse-drawn *carretela* or *calesa*. One should bargain with the driver (*cochero*) to set the price of the trip. These horse-drawn vehicles are banned from the main thoroughfares of Manila, as they constitute a serious traffic hazard for motorized vehicles.

Two major highways lead out of Manila, one going north to Angeles and Baguio, and one heading south. Although the roads have four-lane sections near Manila, mainly they are two-lane highways.

Train travel is not recommended, considering the unsafe condition of roadbeds, substandard cleanliness of cars, and frequent pilferage of belongings.

Although it is possible to go to almost any point on Luzon Island by bus, few Americans do so for the same reasons as given for Manila city buses. Sarkies Bus Tours may be the exception. The company has clean, air-conditioned vehicles traveling regularly between Manila and several cities, including Baguio and Banaue.

Driving in the Philippines, as in most places where traffic is highly congested, requires considerable care and patience in order to avoid accidents. Some people find it desirable to employ a full-time chauffeur for this reason, and to ensure against the danger of pilferage or theft of an unattended car.

Communications

Although local telephone service is common in the Philippines, it is far from reliable. Storms, and even showers, disrupt the service, and telephone instruments often are unusable for no apparent reason. Frequently, repairs take an inordi-

nate amount of time. Long-distance service to the U.S. is excellent—when telephones are functioning properly. Some international connections are scheduled for certain hours of the day. Although not always dependable, service between Manila and all major Philippine cities is also available.

International telegraph and cable service is provided by several companies, including RCA, ETPI, and Globe Mackay. Mail leaves for, and arrives from, the U.S. via American-flag carriers seven days a week. Transit time is usually five to six days.

Radio and television programs in the Philippines resemble those in the U.S. They are commercial and highly competitive. Many are in English. Popular American series are carried in English on TV, but many locally produced shows are in Tagalog. Local news and public affairs programs are usually in English. Movies are also popular on television, both in English and Tagalog.

Currently, the Philippines has over 300 radio stations, with about 45 of these in the metro Manila area. Radio stations carry news, music, and commercials. Music varies from the classics to rock. Many Manila stations broadcast in FM stereo, featuring a wide variety of pop and classical music. Radio/TV stations carry international and U.S. news, but these reports are inclined to be sketchy and lacking in depth. Anyone interested in comprehensive information should have a shortwave receiver. A shortwave radio will pick up broadcasts from Voice of America (VOA), British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), and Radio Australia.

The Philippines has over 25 TV channels, about five of them (plus two cable channels) in the Manila area. All Manila stations are color-equipped. TV channel allocations are the same as those in the U.S.

Eight major English-language daily newspapers are printed in the Philippines. The *Manila Bulletin* is the largest of the three English national dailies. Other English newspapers and periodicals specialize in current business and trade affairs. The *Asian Wall Street Journal* and *International Herald Tribune* are available at newsstands and at major hotels.

More than 10 locally published weekly magazines are in English. Some have multi-interest, short articles (*Focus Philippines* and *Panorama*) and others carry articles for a specific audience. Most pieces are light features on human interest and other apolitical subjects but, occasionally, there is in-depth analysis of current events.

The Far East editions of *Time* and *Newsweek* are available by subscription or direct purchase at local newsstands. A limited supply of most American magazines, four to six weeks late, and paperback books can be purchased at local newsstands.

Health and Medicine

For most medical and surgical problems, Manila's facilities are considered satisfactory. Makati Medical Center, a 300-bed hospital opened in November 1968, has modern equipment and facilities comparable to those in a large U.S. community hospital. Many of its staff physicians and surgeons are American-trained. Other good hospitals include Manila Medical Center, Manila Doctor's Hospital, and St. Luke's Hospital in neighboring Quezon City.

Since a large number of Filipino doctors and nurses have received advanced training in the U.S., most specialties are found. A few excellent expatriate doctors practice in Manila.

Despite the availability of U.S.-trained Filipino doctors and dentists in Manila, dental work and

medical problems should be taken care of before departure for the Philippines.

There are several U.S.-trained physicians in Cebu City. For most illnesses and emergency medical problems, the facilities are considered adequate. Cebu Doctor's Hospital, opened in 1972, comes closest to meeting Western standards for cleanliness and equipment, and is preferred by most of the American community. Chong Hua and Perpetual Succour Hospitals are also acceptable. Routine dental care is available here, but orthodontic treatment and oral surgery must be done in Manila. If you use regular medication, arrange with a U.S. pharmacy to make routine shipments.

Several U.S.-trained physicians in Davao City are used extensively by the American population of that city. The Ricardo Limso Medical Center is where most of the recommended physicians admit patients. Although it does not have some of the more sophisticated equipment found in most American hospitals, the facility is considered adequate for many medical problems, including emergency surgery (e.g., appendectomy). Elective surgery or sophisticated diagnostic procedures should be performed elsewhere.

In general, common diseases may be treated in Baguio. The two hospitals considered adequate are Notre Dame de Lourdes and Pines City Doctor's Hospital. Treatment at better hospitals is recommended for illnesses requiring a prolonged hospitalization or major surgery.

The following general health advice refers to Manila, but actually applies to the entire Philippines:

The general level of sanitation is lower than that in the U.S., but is high in comparison with many other developing countries. An increase in the population of metropolitan Manila since the time of liberation has greatly overtaxed the water supply, sewage and garbage disposal, street cleaning, and utilities.

Caution must be exercised regarding the municipal water supply. At times, particularly during the dry season, pressure is low in the mains, and water in certain areas of the city cannot be considered potable. Some of the residential villages have their own deep wells and pumps, and make it a practice to monitor the purity of their water. As a general precaution, however, water used for drinking and daily dental care should be boiled.

Some open sewers still exist in Manila, and practices in the area of waste disposal, food handling, and market sanitation in some areas may not be adequate from a public health standpoint. Manila continues its effort to improve hygienic conditions in the city, and to educate its people in public health and sanitation measures. However, the program has not reached all levels of society, and caution must be exercised. Cockroaches, ants, mosquitoes, fleas, termites, rats, and mice are quite common in the Philippines. They can be controlled through home efforts and the use of commercial exterminators.

Laws require the reporting of communicable diseases. There are isolation hospitals for the treatment of typhoid, cholera, diphtheria, poliomyelitis, etc. Incoming ships and airplanes, and their passengers, are subject to quarantine inspection.

Occasional gastrointestinal upsets and colds are almost unavoidable in the Philippines. Through normal precautions and care, it should be possible to avoid serious diseases such as cholera, typhoid, bacillary dysentery, and intestinal parasites. Inoculation against typhoid, tetanus-diphtheria, poliomyelitis, and cholera is advised. Susceptible children should be vaccinated against measles, mumps, hemophilus B, and rubella, following the usual recommended schedules.

Gamma globulin is available for hepatitis prophylaxis. Tuberculosis is common in the Philippines, and periodic skin tests are recommended. It is important that all

household help and drivers have physical examinations at regular intervals.

While the areas in and around Manila, Baguio, and Cebu City are malaria-free, there is incidence of the disease in some of the rural, undeveloped parts of the country. Visitors traveling in these areas should take appropriate preventions. Chloroquine-resistant malaria may be encountered in some places.

Penicillinase-producing *Neisseria gonorrhoea* (PPNG) is common here. This type of gonorrhoea is resistant to penicillin and must be treated by other means.

Respiratory infections and irritations are also common because of atmospheric pollution and the vagaries of air conditioning.

Normal precaution must be taken in eating fresh fruits and vegetables. It is wise to eat local produce only after peeling, soaking, scrubbing, and cooking. A certain amount of salt in the daily diet is desirable.

Boiling for five minutes is the recommended method for sterilizing water. Bottled beverages sold here are usually plentiful and safe. In general, it is safer to drink bottled beverages or hot tea or coffee, rather than water, in public places. Powdered, reconstituted milk is widely used. Fresh milk and dairy products, other than Magnolia brand, are not always considered safe, even though pasteurized. Meats from local markets should be well cooked, and the freshness of fish determined before eating.

Many fine restaurants in Manila are patronized by Americans. These are quality establishments and may be patronized with reasonable confidence. However, it is not wise to eat raw food, especially raw seafood, even at the best places. Care should be taken in consuming local dairy products, and children should not be allowed to eat ice cream or other food bought from street peddlers. Ice is always suspect. It should also

be noted that alcohol does not kill bacteria.

Visitors must remember to avoid overexertion and excessive fatigue. The tropical environment is enervating, and recovery from exercise may not be as prompt in the Philippines as in a temperate climate. Serious burns may follow relatively short exposure to the sun. Heat rash responds best to frequent cool showers, air-conditioned rooms, loose clothing, and all measures to reduce perspiration. Superficial skin infections are extremely common in the tropics. Even the smallest wound should be carefully cleaned with an antibiotic disinfectant and covered.

Most standard medicines are stocked in the larger pharmacies in major cities, although brand names may be different and unfamiliar. Many major multi-national drug companies have factories and representatives in the Philippines.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan. 1	New Year's Day
Feb. 25	Freedom Day
Apr. 9	Araw ng Kagitingan (Valour Day)
Mar/Apr.	Maundy Thursday*
Mar/Apr.	Good Friday*
Mar/Apr.	Easter*
May.	Flores de Mayo*
May 1	Labor Day
June 12.	Independence Day
Aug. (last Sun)	National Heroes Day*
Sept. 21.	Thanksgiving
Nov. 1	All Saints' Day
Nov.2.	All Souls' Day
Nov. 30	Bonifacio Day
Dec. 25	Christmas Day
Dec. 30	Rizal Day
Dec.31.	Last Day of the Year

*variable

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs & Duties

Several air routes are traveled from the U.S. west coast to the Philippines; the most commonly used are those via Honolulu and Guam to Manila, or via Seattle or Anchorage, through Tokyo to Manila.

Travel within the archipelago is possible by boat, plane, bus, or car. Few tourists rent a car to drive, as the road system is crowded and drivers are undisciplined. Driving off the national highways and paved roads is particularly dangerous, especially at night. To avoid overcrowded or unsafe transport, caution is urged in planning travel by older, inter-island ferryboats or other public conveyances.

U.S. citizens are allowed to enter the Philippines without a visa upon presentation of their U.S. passport, which must be valid for at least six months after entry, and a return ticket to the U.S. or onward ticket to another country. Upon arrival, immigration authorities will annotate the U.S. passport with an entry visa valid for 21 days. If you plan to stay longer than 21 days, you will have to apply for an extension at the Philippine Bureau of Immigration and Deportation, Magallanes Drive, Intramuros, Manila, Philippines. There are special requirements for the entry of unaccompanied minors. Additional information concerning entry requirements may be obtained from the Embassy of the Philippines, 1600 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036, telephone (202) 467-9300 or from the Philippines Consulates General in Chicago, Honolulu, Los Angeles, New York, or San Francisco.

U.S. citizens living in or visiting the Philippines are encouraged to register with the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Manila, located at 1201 Roxas Boulevard, Manila City; tel. (63-2) 523-1001. The Consular American Citizen Services fax num-

ber is (63-2) 522-3242 and the ACS web page is <http://usembassy.state.gov/posts/rp1/www3004.html>.

The U.S. Consular Agency in Cebu provides limited services for U.S. citizens. The Consular Agency address is: Third Floor, PCI Bank, Gorordo Avenue, Lahug, Cebu City; tel. (63-32) 231-1261.

Pets

A pet (animal or bird) may be brought to the Philippines if accompanied by a health certificate, documentation of rabies inoculation, import permit from the Philippine Bureau of Animal Industry, and certificate of tax exemption. The validation of an animal's health certificate by a Philippine embassy or consulate is not sufficient documentation to permit landing or free entry; the import permit and tax certificate are the only papers acknowledged by Philippine officials. Without proper clearance, the animal will be held at customs in quarantine.

Currency, Banking and Weights and Measures

The official currency unit is the *peso*, which is divided into 100 *centavos*.

Visitors should also be vigilant when using credit cards. One form of credit card fraud involves the illicit use of an electronic device to retrieve and record information, including the PIN, from the card's magnetic strip. The information is then used to make unauthorized purchases. To limit your vulnerability to this scam, never let your card out of your sight. Major problems have occurred at large department stores and some hotel restaurants.

The metric system of weights and measures is standard in the Philippines, but English units (pounds, gallons, and yards) often are used.

The time in the Philippines is Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) plus eight.

Disaster Preparedness

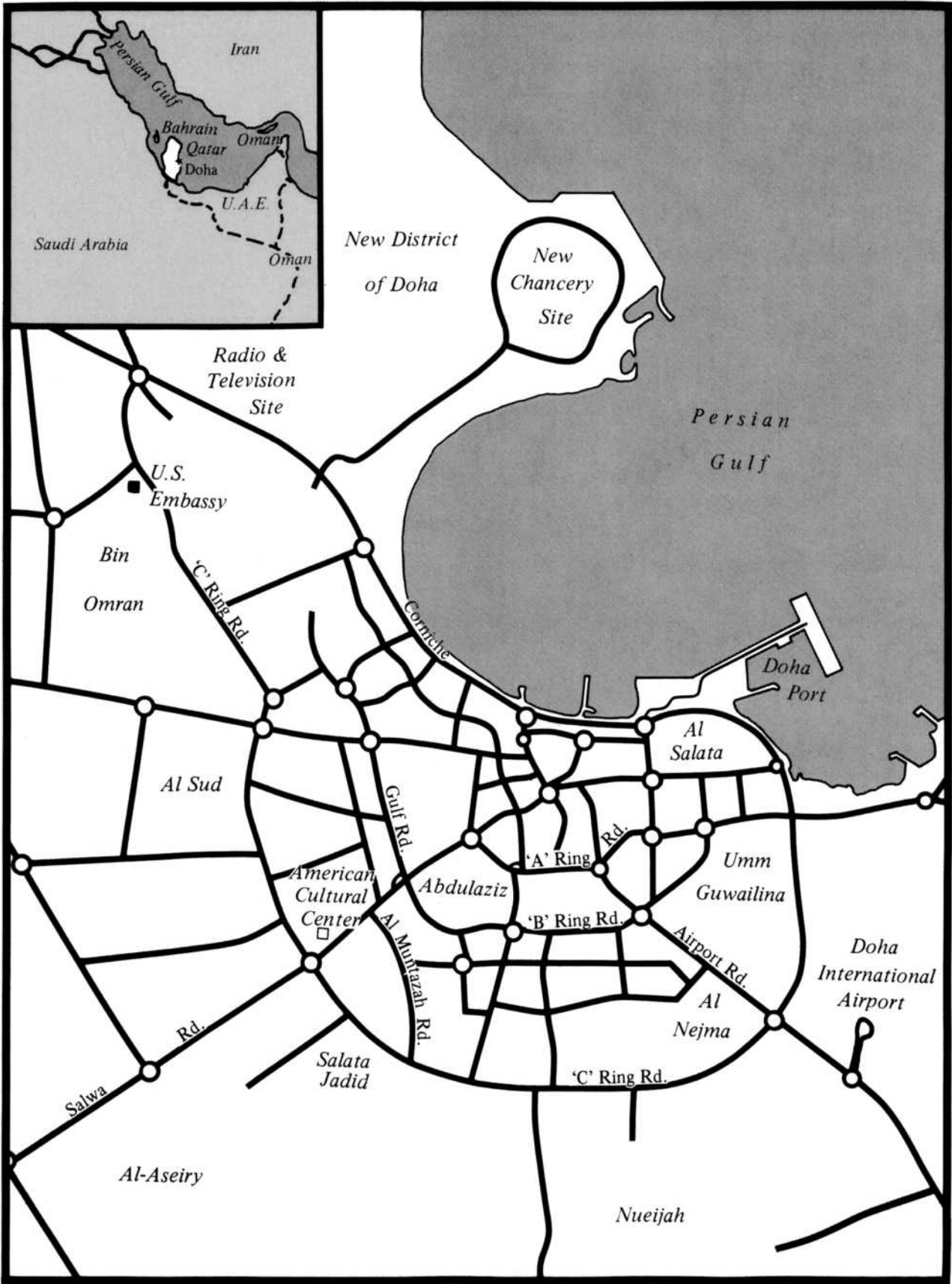
The Philippines is a volcano-, typhoon- and earthquake-prone country. During the rainy season (May to November) there are typhoons and flash floods. Flooding can cause road delays and cut off bridges. Typhoons in the vicinity of the Philippines can interrupt air and sea links within the country. Volcanic activity is frequent, and periodically the Government of the Philippines announces alerts for specific volcanoes. Earthquakes can also occur throughout the country. General information about natural disaster preparedness is available via the Internet from the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) at <http://www.fema.gov>

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Doha, Qatar

QATAR

State of Qatar

Major City:

Doha

Other City:

Umm Said

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated March 1997. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

QATAR, a fully independent sovereign Arab state on the western shore of the Persian Gulf, was a protectorate of the United Kingdom for 75 years before proclaiming its autonomy in 1971. It had been inhabited for many centuries, as early as 4,000 B.C., and had existed under the dominance of Bahrain and the occupation of the Ottoman Turks. At the beginning of World War I, Great Britain expanded custody of Qatar, promising to protect it from all aggression by sea, and to lend its good offices in case of land attack.

High-quality oil was discovered in 1939, but exports were delayed by the second World War. During the 1950s and 1960s, gradually increasing oil income brought economic prosperity, social progress, and the beginning of modern industry. In 1968, Qatar attempted to form a federation with neighboring Gulf countries, Bahrain and the Trucial States (the present United Arab Emirates). Attempts to agree on the terms of the union failed. In September 1971 Qatar decided to become a separate entity known as the State of Qatar. (The name sounds like "catter.")

MAJOR CITY

Doha

Doha's 2000 population is about 355,000 and growing. Most have arrived in the past 15 years, as the city has expanded at an incredible rate. Although generally well maintained by municipal authorities, the city has grown faster than its basic infrastructure, resulting in a large number of ongoing renovation projects (roads, sewers, telephone cables, etc.).

Privately funded residential and office building construction is found throughout the city. Notwithstanding this large-scale development around the capital, a shortage of reasonably priced, Western-style housing persists. The majority of new living units are large, poorly designed (and expensive) European-style "villas," with high perimeter walls and very small interior gardens.

Once a sleepy seaport, Doha has come a long way since the oil boom of the mid-1970s. The modern skyline now includes a number of multistory buildings that contrast sharply with the flat, rocky plains surrounding the city. Many of the older buildings are being torn down and replaced, especially in the old "souk" area of the city center.

Streets in the old section of the city are narrow and congested, but a system of wide, high-speed parkways links the newer, suburban areas. Very few open spaces are found in the city center, but a 7-kilometer-long park system along the waterfront Corniche offers agreeable vistas and a place to walk or jog and is a popular gathering spot in the cooler months. In addition, a limited number of public parks and museums are located around the city, including the attractive Doha



Aerial view of Doha, Qatar

© Christine Osborne/Corbis. Reproduced by permission.

Zoo, the National Museum, Doha Fort, Khulaifat Park, Muntaza Park, the Airport Park, and Aladdin's Kingdom, a Western-style amusement park. Mosques appear in every neighborhood; one is never more than a few blocks from an impressive example of Muslim architecture.

Food

With the exception of fresh fish, some chicken, and seasonal, locally grown produce (cucumbers, tomatoes, melons, etc.), all food consumed in Doha is imported. Although poor supermarket inventory management results in frequent shortages, overall selection among the various retail outlets is good. U.S.-style one-stop shopping may be impossible, but one can usually find everything one needs to feed an American family. Several modern supermarkets offer a vari-

ety of fresh and frozen meat, frozen poultry, canned goods and frozen foods, some from the U.S. but most from Europe, the Middle East, and Australia.

A wholesale produce market on the outskirts of the city sells imported fruits and vegetables at Washington, D.C., area prices. An adjoining fish market offers a good selection of fresh, reasonably-priced fish and shellfish. Dairy products, including fresh and "shelf life" milk, cheese, yogurt, cream, and butter, are available at most local retail outlets. Both imported and locally manufactured soft drinks are available at reasonable prices. Local bakeries produce various types of bread, rolls, pies, and cakes; however, the quality is not quite up to U.S. standards.

Alcoholic beverages are available but carefully rationed and controlled. Using a ration card issued by the British Embassy, one can only purchase liquor once per month up to QR 500 (about \$137) per family. Prices include importation duty and are very close to U.S. retail prices for similar items.

Clothing

For 4 to 5 months of the year, Doha's temperatures exceed those of the hottest August days in Washington, D.C. Cotton and other cooler fabrics for both women and men are essential during this period. For 2 to 3 months in winter, it is cool enough for light jackets and woolen clothing in the evenings. Good-quality clothing is about twice the cost in Doha as in the U.S. By contrast, the local fabric market is reasonably priced, and local dressmakers and tailors can be hired to custom-make cloth-

ing items for significantly less than retail outlets charge for premanufactured items. However, the abilities of local tailors and dressmakers vary widely, and custom-made clothing can be a hit-or-miss proposition.

Men: Because many offices and homes are centrally air-conditioned, lightweight suits and jackets are comfortable for office and evening wear. For informal occasions, slacks and sport shirts are appropriate.

Dress shoes and some fashionable men's clothing are available in Doha. English and continental shoes average \$200 to \$300 a pair. American shirts, ties, socks, underwear, and pajamas are available, but again at very high prices. Continental suits are sold for \$700 to \$900 and sport coats for \$350. Occasionally, a reasonably priced suit or jacket is found at one of the local shops, though apparel stocked locally is inferior by U.S. standards. Even if the price is right, fit and size can present problems. Tailor-made suits and shirts are more affordable, but great care must be exercised in choosing a tailor and explaining the design requirements.

Women: Although Qatari women wear the traditional, ankle-length black cloaks (abayas), Western women wear regular Western dress. Knee-length and mid-calf-length dresses and skirts are preferable, as very short dresses, shorts, and tank tops are considered in poor taste and offend the host country's religious and cultural principles. Many women have dresses or skirts made locally.

American shoes are typically not available in Doha. European shoes in the latest styles can be purchased, but many Americans have difficulty finding the correct size, and prices are very high. The rough outdoor terrain is very damaging to shoes, and replacements will be needed more often than in the U.S. Shoe repair work is available but not always of good quality.

Children's clothing is available, but quality and style are uneven, and all items are much more costly than in the U.S.

Supplies and Services

Ample supplies of toiletries, cosmetics, shaving supplies, and home medications, mostly European brands, are available at higher than U.S. prices. Pharmacies carry a wide range of prescription and nonprescription drugs, first-aid supplies, and birth control products.

British, French, and some American cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco, and smoking accessories are available locally at prices comparable to those in the U.S.

Dry cleaning is available at several retail outlets. A man's business suit typically costs about \$6, a woman's suit about \$4.50. Business hours for dry-cleaning establishments are short, sometimes only a few hours per day.

Hairdressing salons for men and women are adequate by Western standards. A man's haircut costs \$3 to \$10, depending on the shop patronized. A shampoo and set, without a cut, costs about \$20.

Religious Activities

Islam is the only officially sanctioned religion in Qatar, and it is illegal to display crosses and other religious symbols on buildings or in public areas. Likewise, churches and other official places of worship are banned. Unofficially, a variety of Christian worship services are held in private schools and homes, including Catholic, Protestant, and Anglican services. There is a Christian burial ground near Dukhan, about an hour west of Doha.

Education

Expatriate schools are available for the American, British, French, Lebanese, Indian, Egyptian, Bangladeshi, Iranian, and Pakistani communities. In 1988, Doha's American International School (AIS) was founded as an independent, coeducational private school. AIS offers

an American-style educational program for students of all nationalities, from kindergarten through grade 12. AIS receives grant money from the Department of State's Office of Overseas Schools (A/OPR/OS). It is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc. The school operates on a quarter term system from the beginning of September to the middle of June. The school runs at full capacity with 400 students, about half of whom are American citizens. A new school building has been in the planning stages.

Other local schools include the Doha English Speaking School (DESS), a British-style grade school, and Doha College, a British high school. These schools are sponsored by the British Embassy and follow traditional British educational models, preparing students to pass the qualifying exams that control access to the better public and private schools and colleges in the U.K. Despite differences in goals and methods, the British schools can prepare American children to enter U.S. public schools with their age groups. Supplemental courses in areas beyond the British curriculum, such as U.S. history, must be arranged privately. The schools operate on a trimester basis from September to late June.

For further information, contact:
 American International School
 P.O. Box 22090, Doha, Qatar
 FAX: 011-974-806311
 Tel: 011-974-806770

Doha English Speaking School
 P.O. Box 7660, Doha, Qatar
 FAX: 011-974-875921
 Tel: 011-974-862530

Doha College
 P.O. Box 7506, Doha, Qatar
 FAX: 011-974-685720
 Tel: 011-974-887379

Sports

Organized athletic events are typically limited to soccer, although a few other sports make an occasional appearance. For those who can afford to join private clubs, a variety of sports are available, including

wind surfing, sailing, weight lifting, volleyball, etc. Fishing and boating are popular but expensive. A few bowling alleys are available, both for league play and individual play.

A new championship golf course just north of Doha will open soon. Due to the costs of maintaining grass greens and fairways in the harsh desert climate, membership fees and greens fees are expected to be very high. Two older golf courses already operate in Qatar, both with dirt fairways and oiled sand greens (browns). One is a 1-hour drive west of Doha, and the other is a 40-minute drive south. Membership at either club is less expensive, but may require a wait of several months. A few private tennis and squash clubs operate in Doha. A local rugby club is open to all reasonably skilled players. There is also a scuba club in Qatar.

A number of private clubs with sports facilities, some at hotels, offer individual and family memberships. Typically, these clubs offer swimming, squash, tennis, and weight room facilities. Membership fees are relatively high. The Al-Messilah compound also has a small weight room, a large (25 meter) swimming pool, two squash courts, two tennis courts and several children's playgrounds. These facilities are free to Al-Messilah residents and their guests.

Aside from the occasional tennis or squash match, soccer football is the only local spectator sport. Local and regional teams compete frequently on Doha's various public and private soccer fields.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

The principal outdoor activity in Doha is the weekend beach trip. The beaches which are easily reached over good roads are too noisy and litter-strewn for most Americans. The more attractive beaches in the North and West are also more remote: most are 1–2 hours away from the city and accessible only by 4 wheel-drive vehicles. The remote

beaches offer better privacy and family enjoyment for Westerners. Beachgoers travel in convoys and bring all necessary supplies with them, including food, drinking water, tents, firewood, etc.—all beaches are “primitive” (no shade, fresh water, rest rooms or concessions of any kind). At the Inland Sea south of Umm Said, sand dunes extend to the water's edge, sheltering mile after mile of beautiful, deserted beaches. However, a trip to the Inland Sea is three hours each way, much of it over salt flats, gravel flats and loose sand. It requires substantial planning and a minimum of 3–4 well-maintained 4-wheel-drive vehicles. Due to the distance involved, many visitors to the Inland Sea camp out overnight and return to Doha the next day.

Doha's National Museum is among the finest of its type in the Gulf. The facility is a treasure chest of bedouin artifacts, crafts, jewelry, and other works associated with the history of the Qatari people. It also has an aquarium and lagoon, in which local sea life and traditional fishing boats are displayed.

Arabian oryx can be seen at the Doha Zoo and on a farm at Shahaniya. These extremely rare animals were captured elsewhere on the Arabian peninsula to form a breeding herd in Qatar and to help save the strain from extinction.

Entertainment

Doha has no western-style bars or nightclubs; public drinking and dancing are prohibited. Private restaurants in the major hotels and in private clubs offer alcoholic beverages to members and paying guests only. All other liquor is sold via a local ration system controlled by the British Embassy. Most evening entertainment is either alcohol-free or takes place in private homes.

Doha has two cinemas, but they show South Asian and Arabic movies almost exclusively.

An amateur, English language theater group produces several plays

every year, including one or more musical productions. There are a few private choral, instrumental and dance groups in Doha, but no city choir, dance troupe or orchestra. The National Folklore Troupe, established to preserve Qatar's traditional music and dance, presents public performances on holidays and for special events. Qatar occasionally hosts an international sporting event, such as the Qatar Tennis Open in January.

Social Activities

Opportunities for charitable volunteer work exist but are limited. Local social services enjoy massive government support. Charities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been virtually nonexistent in the past, but interest in this concept is growing—Qatar's first NGO, Friends of the Environment, has just been established.

Although Qatar is still a traditional society, opportunities exist to establish rewarding personal relationships with Qatari nationals, both men and women. Cross-cultural ties have been strengthened by the large number of young men who have been sent abroad for higher education. The size and variety of expatriate communities also present excellent opportunities for staff members to develop personal and business relationships.

OTHER CITY

UMM SAID (also called Musay'id) is an important port situated 25 miles south of Doha on the Persian (Arabian) Gulf. For over 20 years, it was the country's only deep water port. Revenue from material exported and imported here was critical in the development of the country from the city's founding in 1949. The Qatar Petroleum Company constructed a tanker terminal in the area, including an artificial deep water port. The company's headquarters was built here, as well. A deep water port was opened in the capital in the 1970s, lessen-

ing the importance of Umm Said. The city has a population of over 6,100 (1986 est.).

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

A sovereign Arab State on the western shore of the Arabian Gulf, Qatar occupies a 4,200-square-mile peninsula somewhat smaller than Connecticut, as well as several small offshore islands. The Qatar Peninsula projects north into the Gulf for about 100 miles and has a maximum width of about 55 miles. Halul, a permanently settled island, is an important storage center and tanker terminal for three offshore oil fields.

Doha, the capital city, is situated on the east coast, as are the country's larger towns.

In the south at the neck of the peninsula, Qatar borders the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Riyadh, the Saudi capital, lies 250 miles due west beyond the Jafura Desert.

The port of Abu Dhabi, capital of the United Arab Emirates, is about 150 nautical miles southeast. The vast Rub' al-Khali Desert (the Empty Quarter) extends to the shallow inlets, reefs, and shoals of the Gulf.

The nearest seaward neighbor is Bahrain to the north. Although Bahrain's capital, Manama, is 100 miles from Doha, only 20 miles separate the two countries at the narrowest part of the channel that runs between them into the Gulf of Salwa.

The eastern (Iranian) shore of the Gulf is 120 miles beyond Qatar's northern tip. The nearest Iranian port, Bushire, lies about 250 miles from Doha. The Iraqi Port of Basra, on the northern shore of the Gulf, is 350 miles away. The southern Strait

of Hormuz, 310 miles from Doha, provides access to the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea. Thus, Qatar occupies a central position in the Arabian Gulf.

The overall outline of the peninsula was not defined on European maps until well into the 19th century, though Karsten Niebuhr briefly described the peninsula in his *Voyage en Arabie*, published in Switzerland in 1780. The historical appearance of Qatari place-names on European maps suggests strongly that, until recent times, international navigators were familiar only with the northern end of the country and the eastern pearling banks.

Qatar's terrain is monotonously flat, except for the Dukhan anticline in the west and some low rock outcroppings at the northern end of the east coast. Blown sand covers much of the south, and shifting dunes predominate in the southeast. The Dukhan anticline rises from the west coast as a chain of separate hills of up to 325 feet in height, about 35 miles long and 3 to 5 miles wide, covering the country's onshore oil fields.

Natural vegetation, including semi-permanent pasture, is limited to areas surrounding wells, depressions, and short drainage courses active only after the winter rains. Most flora is confined to the northern half of the country. Elsewhere, the featureless terrain is relieved only by sparse patches of camel thorn and isolated date palm plantations.

The coastline is uneven and rises gently on both sides of the peninsula. Sandy reefs abound in the surrounding shallows. Extensive salt flats at the landward end of the peninsula, between Salwa on the west coast and Khor al-Odeid in the east, support the local belief that Qatar was once an island, separated from what is now the Saudi Province of al-Hasa.

Qatar lies outside the area of the annual monsoons. Its seasons are similar to those of the Temperate Zone, although usually much hotter. The winter months from December through February are cool, considering that Qatar's latitude is about the same as that of Miami, Florida. Intense heat persists at least from May through September. March, April, October, and November normally provide the most agreeable climatic conditions. Humidity ranges from 32% in midsummer to highs of 96 to 100% in the fall and early winter. Rainfall is usually very light and averages less than 3 inches per year, mostly in the winter months. Almost no rain falls from May through October. Frequent high winds, especially from March through August, can fill the air with fine dust and create a brownish haze on the horizon.

The prevailing desert wind ("shemal") comes from the north during the spring and summer months. This constant, rather strong wind can be irritating, especially for allergy sufferers. In late summer, when the shemal dies, the humidity rises, making the climate even more unpleasant. It is not uncommon for building windows to fog up and drip moisture during the months of August and September.

Population

The population of Qatar (including large expatriate communities comprising other Arabs, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Indians, Baluchis, Filipinos, Sri Lankans, Iranians, and Westerners) is estimated at almost 750,000 people. Some 2,600 Britons, 2,000 other Europeans, and 3,500 Americans reside here. About 80% of the total population is concentrated in and around Doha.

The indigenous Qataris, who total around 100,000, can be traced to three main migratory movements: 1) overland, in the 1760s, by members of tribes already concentrated in Kuwait and along the shores of the Saudi Province of al-Hasa; 2) by tribal elements during the period of

the Wahhabi expansion from al-Hasa at the end of the 1700s; and 3) by sea from neighboring Gulf shores.

Those involved in the overland influx were almost entirely bedouin in origin. Their interest in the peninsula hinged on rainfall and grazing factors. Coastal wells and suitable sites for pearling and fishing ports controlled the pattern of immigration by sea from other regions of the Gulf.

Qatar appears in fifth century A.D. writings as a seafaring community, and Qataris continued to look to the sea for their communications and livelihoods until the advent of oil. The surrounding deserts and seas isolated them from their neighbors. Pearling and fishing represented the only sources of wealth. The elderly still recall a time when Qatar's 400 pearling ships constituted one-third of the entire Gulf fleet and when the pearl beds of the peninsula, Bahrain, and the lower Gulf coast were recognized as the world's most prolific. But the development of the cultured pearl by the Japanese in the 1930s almost destroyed this trade, which had flourished since Babylonian times.

Islam is the official and predominant religion of the population, indigenous and migratory alike. Most Qataris are Sunni Muslims of the Wahhabi sect; Sunnis are the more numerous and orthodox of the two main Islamic streams, and Wahhabism is the fundamentalist, puritanical school prevalent in Saudi Arabia, though more moderate in Qatar. The state is committed under the provisional constitution to "endeavor to install proper Islamic religious principles."

The official language is Arabic, although most senior Qatari officials are fluent in English, and much of the commercial and government business may be conducted in English.

Many native-born Qataris are only a generation removed from a very

simple village life. The most obvious traditional customs are the universal wearing of the "thobe" or "dishdash" and the infrequent public appearance of women. When they do appear outside their homes, virtually all Qatari women wear ankle-length black shawls ("abayas"), and many women still cover their faces or wear a face mask ("batula"). While alcohol is forbidden for Muslims, non-Muslims are allowed limited quantities under a strictly controlled licensing arrangement with the British Embassy. Qataris are somewhat shy but very polite and hospitable. Qatari social functions (such as teas and weddings) are segregated with the men and women attending separately, sometimes on different days. Most restaurants, from traditional to fast food, contain a "family section" separate from the more public areas of the establishment.

Public Institutions

Qatar became a British protectorate after the fall of the Ottoman Empire in World War I. The other Gulf emirates had come under British protection 100 years earlier. The British role in Qatari affairs was never comprehensive. In 1971, Qatar announced its intention to terminate the special treaty arrangements with Britain and to assume all responsibility for internal and external affairs.

A provisional constitution was promulgated in 1970. It specified that the rulership would be hereditary within the family of Al Thani, whose ancestry has been traced to the Bani Tamim, one of the ruling tribes of ancient Arabia. In the 18th century, members of this tribe had moved 200 miles north from the Jabrin Oasis to the western shore of the Gulf. The 1970 constitution provided for a Council of Ministers (cabinet), appointed by the Emir (head of state) to assist in the discharge of duties and the exercise of powers. It also provided for the establishment of an Advisory Council to assist the Emir and the cabinet.

In a 1999 move towards democracy, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani allowed for the election of a Central Municipal Council by universal suffrage. The same year, he appointed a committee to draft a new Constitution.

The major change will be the addition of an elected Advisory Council (Parliament). Until now, this council has had an emir-appointed membership. Through this change, citizens will be given greater opportunity to make decisions within their own government. However, the emir must always issue final approval of any legislation initiated through the parliament.

Recently, the emir has also established a new, separate position of Prime Minister. Traditionally, this office was held by the emir. The current Prime Minister is Sheikh Abdullah bin Khalifa Al-Thani, the emir's brother.

There are no political parties or labor unions in Qatar.

Five courts (the Higher Criminal Court, the Lower Criminal Court, the Civil Court, the Court of Appeals, and the Labor Court) operate on the basis of codified laws under the supervision of the Ministry of Justice. In addition, the Shari'ah Court applies religious law, based on the precepts of the Qur'an. The division between the secular and religious spheres of law is still being defined.

Arts, Science, and Education

The National Museum, dedicated June 23, 1975, contains collections illustrating the development of the state of Qatar and the way of life of its people. Intended to serve as a repository of the culture and traditions of the peoples of the Gulf, the museum occupies the restored, former Emir's palace. Prized exhibits include an aquarium, a bedouin camp, and several examples of dhows, the wooden ships that have

sailed on the Gulf and the Indian Ocean from the earliest times. These are moored in an artificial lagoon dug out of reclaimed waterfront land.

Excavation of ruins and buried cairns on the west coast and elsewhere by Danish and French archaeological expeditions between 1956 and 1982 have yielded evidence of prehistoric habitation. The finds are mainly of the Stone and Iron Ages and include artifacts dating from about 4000 B.C.

The Doha Public Library houses a collection of thousands of ancient Arabic manuscripts, as well as modern works and a small collection of books in English. Qatar also has a system of branch and school-affiliated libraries.

A public school system was established in 1956, and adult education was introduced a year later. Adult teaching centers offer basic literacy courses. Outside the public system are American, British, French, Indian, Lebanese, Pakistani, Iranian, and other private schools serving the various expatriate communities as well as some Qataris. Qatar University, established in 1977, enrolls full-time and part-time students (four-fifths women) in five departments: education, humanities, Islamic studies, science, and engineering. All public education in Qatar is free through the university level, and full scholarships are provided by the Ministry of Education to qualified Qatari students wishing to study abroad. Many educated Qataris are graduates of U.S. universities.

Active cultural centers in Doha include the British Council, the French Cultural Center, the Indian Cultural Center, and the USIS-operated American Cultural Center.

Commerce and Industry

From 1949, when the first cargo of crude was exported, the economy of

Qatar has depended on one resource—oil. In 1974, when oil revenues rocketed to \$1,928 billion (a 500% increase over 1973 earnings) the pace of economic development increased dramatically.

Qatar's oil income has since fluctuated with changes in production levels and world prices, but it remains the mainstay of the local economy. The oil sector accounts for about 80% of Qatar's export earnings and some 66% of government revenues. In recent years, production has been steady at approximately 400,000 barrels per day. The state has full control over oil production and marketing, and the Qatar General Petroleum Company (QGPC), the state-owned oil company, is one of the largest employers in the country.

At present production rates, and without application of enhanced oil recovery techniques, Qatar could deplete its oil reserves in about 25 years. However, vast offshore natural gas reserves are under development and will anchor the economy for the foreseeable future. The North Field, one of the world's largest natural gas fields, with estimated reserves of 380 trillion cubic feet, lies just off the northern tip of the Qatar Peninsula. Development projects involving billions of dollars have attracted investment from American, Japanese, French, and other international companies. In addition to gas production, much of the investment centers on construction of facilities for liquefaction the gas and shipping the liquefied natural gas (LNG) to overseas markets.

The first phase of the North Field development, funded mostly by foreign investment and orchestrated by a state-owned company known as Qatargas, will be completed in 1997. Subsequent production phases will be added later, and some are already underway. To support the development plans, a huge natural gas liquefaction plant and shipping facility is nearing completion at Ras Laffan, about one hour north of Doha.

Starting in 1969, when construction began on a fertilizer plant, Qatar embarked on an ambitious industrialization scheme. Not surprisingly, all heavy industrial projects have relied on indigenous petroleum and natural gas reserves for either fuel or feedstock. For the execution of most of these projects, the government has formed joint ventures with foreign partners under which the foreign company acquires a minority ownership while providing technical, managerial, and marketing expertise. This arrangement has been employed in establishing petrochemical, fertilizer, and steel factories and is now being used for gas development.

Thus far, the government and its foreign partners have generated most of the economic activity in Qatar. The private sector has largely limited its participation in the larger ventures to trading and construction contracting. Early in 1988, however, the government began cautiously encouraging privatization of certain activities in the areas of education, public health, and water/electricity.

Qatar has not emerged as a regional business center. Service industries and banking, while active, have focused on the domestic economy. The tourist trade is increasing but still represents only a small segment of the economy.

Per capita GDP is about \$20,300 (2000 est.).

Transportation

Local

Private cars provide the only practical and dependable transportation in Doha. Taxis may be hailed at the airport, at the main hotels, or as they cruise the streets, but they have no telephone call-out service and are poorly equipped (e.g., with no seat belts or air-conditioning), and the drivers tend to speak only Arabic. They are more or less reliable, usually have functioning meters, and are relatively cheap. A

more expensive alternative is a local limousine service, which more closely resembles taxi service in the U.S. "Limousines" are late-model Chevy Caprices, driven by English-speaking drivers, and are equipped with air-conditioning, rear seat belts, functioning meters, and telephone/radio dispatch equipment. Prices for this higher grade of service are comparable to taxi fares in New York and other large U.S. cities. Reasonably priced rental cars are available from Avis, Hertz, Budget, and other franchises.

Regional

Travel within the country is solely by car. Vehicle travel to neighboring countries is not recommended for safety reasons (long, desolate driving distances and the lack of shoulders or emergency lanes) and because of frequent border crossing difficulties. Air transportation links to neighboring countries are extensive, fairly well managed, and much more convenient. Planes are often overbooked, and travelers are advised to reconfirm reservations and arrive at the airport well in advance of posted flight times. Doha is served by Gulf Air, Emirates Air, Qatar Airways, Saudia, KLM, Air France, Air India, British Airways, Iran Air, Pakistan International Airlines, Egypt Air, and most other non-Gulf Arab airlines. No U.S. airline serves Doha directly, although several "code share" flights are available to and from European transit points. Current code share flights to and from the Gulf include selected flights on Gulf Air (American Airlines), Emirates Air (United), and KLM (Northwest).

Communications

Telephones and Telegraph

Telephone service in Doha is excellent. An unlimited number of local calls can be made for a nominal line charge of about \$30 per month. However, the local phone company makes up for any lost revenue by charging very high rates for long-distance service (calling the U.S. from Qatar costs about \$2.50 per

minute, twice as much as calling Qatar from the U.S.)

Telegram and telex facilities are readily available, but these have mostly been eclipsed by fax machines.

Mobile phones are expensive but very popular with the Qatari nationals. Personal pagers (known as "bleeps") are also pervasive and are much less expensive.

Internet service is run by the partially state-owned Qatar Telecom (Q-Tel). Access is primarily for business use.

Radio and TV

Qatar TV (QTV) broadcasts in color in Middle Eastern PAL format on two channels, English and Arabic. The English-language channel often shows American programs, but all broadcasts are heavily censored. English-language news is broadcast at 8 pm and includes up-to-the-minute film footage via commercial satellite service. The telephone company (Q-TEL) operates a limited cable TV service that includes CNN, the BBC, and several English-speaking European channels. Cable service is expensive, and all broadcasts are censored.

Radio programming on the English-language station of the Qatar Broadcasting Service (QBS) is excellent, with 19 hours a day in FM stereo. English-language news is broadcast several times daily, and a variety of programs are aired, including classic rock, contemporary rock, jazz, classical music, country music, children's shows, and a number of informational talk shows. Shortwave radio owners can pick up VOA, BBC, and other foreign radio signals.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

Qatar has its own English-language daily, the *Gulf Times*, which carries many major world news and feature syndicates. The *Times* weekend edition carries several popular American color comics. A selection of

state-supported and semiprivate publications are also available, but almost all are in Arabic. Many U.S. and British magazines are sold in Doha, including the *International Herald Tribune*. Photos and texts considered politically or morally objectionable are regularly censored before distribution. While low sales volume publications are marked up 300% over the original price, high-volume items (e.g., *Time*, *Newsweek*) are more reasonable.

The American Cultural Center has a small library. The British Council maintains a library, but its offerings are limited, and, as noted above, the National Library has relatively few volumes in English.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

Medical and dental health facilities in Doha either belong to the Ministry of Public Health or are privately owned and operated. Public Health Ministry services include a general hospital with modern facilities, a women's obstetrics hospital, and a number of neighborhood primary care clinics. An increasing number of private clinics, staffed by foreign doctors, have opened in recent years. Several private dental clinics are also available. Although access to public facilities is currently provided free of charge to all expatriates, these clinics can be noisy and crowded, and waiting times can range from 1 to 4 hours, depending on the time of day and the number of patients to be seen. Most Americans prefer to pay a reasonable fee at the private clinics, which are quicker and more convenient. All public facilities and most private ones are segregated; separate waiting areas and treatment rooms are provided for male and female patients.

Emergency treatment is available at the local hospital, which runs a U.S.-style Emergency Medical Service. Most local physicians are

Egyptian trained, although some are European- or American-trained. Judged by Western standards, local nursing care ranges from fair to poor.

Obtain eyeglass prescriptions before traveling to Doha. If the need arises after arrival, lenses and frames are available locally at prices comparable to those in the U.S.

Most pharmacies in Doha have standard European medical supplies and drugs, though relatively few U.S. brands are stocked.

Community Health

Doha itself is one of the cleaner cities in the Gulf, but some goods are imported from high-risk areas. For this reason, proper food care and hygiene standards must be rigidly followed. Food sold at major supermarkets is of good quality and is examined by local health inspectors. Expired products are almost always removed from the shelves promptly.

The general state of public health in Qatar is fair to good. The Ministry of Public Health's veterinary section inspects animals before slaughter. The Doha municipality has a rodent control program, available when needed. The municipality also arranges for free daily garbage collection. Despite these efforts, the control of flies and other insects remains a problem, especially in the cooler months. On the positive side, Qatar has relatively few mosquitoes and no mosquito-borne diseases.

Preventive Measures

Bring typhoid, gamma globulin, tetanus toxoid, and TB skin testing up to date before arrival. Due to the crowded conditions and a continuing influx of expatriates from affected areas, outbreaks of cholera or typhoid are always possible. Children should have up-to-date DPT, polio, and MMR shots.

Tap water comes almost exclusively from desalination plants. Routine tests reveal that the water is suitable for drinking, though filtering is

advised, particularly in the summer months. Inexpensive bottled water is manufactured in Qatar and the U.A.E.; more expensive varieties come from Europe. Bottled water contains fluoride, but tap water does not. Parents may wish to administer fluoride supplements to children under age 16.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Most travelers fly an American air carrier to Europe and then continue via a non-American carrier to Doha, sometimes with a stop in Bahrain. The most common transfer points are London, Paris, Amsterdam, and Frankfurt.

Travel to Doha from the continental United States takes 18-20 hours. Many travelers take an overnight rest stop at a European transit point en route.

Although it is possible to drive overland from Europe or nearby Middle Eastern States, this is not recommended. Long driving distances and strict customs/immigration requirements in neighboring countries make this a tedious and problem-ridden endeavor.

Passports and visas are required. American citizens may obtain a tourist or business visa at the airport in Doha upon arrival. These visas are valid for 14 days and may be extended for an additional 14 days. However, American citizen travelers will be able to clear Qatari immigration more quickly and be granted a longer stay in the country by obtaining visas prior to arrival. For further information, travelers may contact the Embassy of the State of Qatar, 4200 Wisconsin Ave., N.W., Suite 200, Washington, D.C. 20016, telephone (202) 274-1600, fax (202) 237-0053, or the Consulate General of the State of Qatar, 4265 San Felipe Street, Suite 1100, Houston, Texas 77027, telephone (713) 968-9840, fax (713) 968-9841. Addi-

tional information is available on the Internet at <http://www.traveldocs.com>.

Qatari customs authorities enforce strict regulations concerning importation into Qatar of items such as alcohol, narcotics, pork products, firearms, or anything deemed pornographic by Qatari authorities. While importation of religious material for personal use is acceptable, importation of religious material for the purpose of proselytizing is not. It is advisable to contact the Embassy of the State of Qatar in Washington, D.C., or the Consulate General of the State of Qatar in Houston for specific information regarding customs requirements.

U.S. citizens, particularly those of Arab descent, are encouraged to carry a copy of their U.S. passports with them at all times, so that if questioned by local officials, proof of identity and U.S. citizenship is readily available.

U.S. citizens living in or visiting Qatar are encouraged to register at the consular section of the U.S. Embassy in Qatar and obtain updated information on travel and security within Qatar. The U.S. Embassy is located in the Al-Luqta District on 22nd February Street, P.O. Box 2399, Doha, phone (974) 488-4101. For after hour emergencies, American citizens may call (974) 488-4101 extension 6600 to reach the duty officer.

On the Internet, you may reach the Embassy web site at <http://www.usembassy.org.qa>. The Embassy observes a Sunday through Thursday workweek. Many businesses and government offices in Qatar observe a Saturday through Wednesday workweek.

Pets

Pets entering Qatar require an import permit from the Ministry of Agriculture. Cats with proper documentation are allowed to enter with no difficulty, but some breeds of dogs, especially large dogs, are not admitted. Application forms for

import permits may be obtained from the Ministry of Agriculture through a sponsoring employer. A copy of the pet's health certificate and vaccination record must be submitted with the application.

Currency, Banking and Weights and Measures

The local currency is the Qatari rial (QR), worth about U.S. 28 cents and divided into 100 dirhams. The official rate of exchange is a fixed rate of US\$1 = QRs 3.64.

More than a dozen commercial banks operate in Qatar. The state imposes no restrictions on the import, export, or exchange of currencies. Travelers checks may be cashed locally without difficulty. Some ATM machines give cash for international credit cards and CIRCUS debit cards.

The metric system is used for weights and measures.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan. 1	New Year's Day
June 27	Anniversary of the Emir's Succession
Sept. 3	Independence Day
.	Id al-Adha*
.	Ramadan*
.	Id al-Fitr*
.	Hijra New Year*

*variable, based on Islamic calendar

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SAMOA

*Independent State of Samoa
(formerly Western Samoa)*

Major City:
Apia

INTRODUCTION

Polynesians migrated from Southeast Asia to the Samoa Islands more than 2,000 years ago. Polynesian historical accounts go back to AD 1250. The Samoa Islands may have first been settled by migrants from what is now Fiji or Tonga. The first contact with Europeans began as whalers, pirates, and escaped convicts landed on the islands. In 1722, the Dutch sailor Jacob Roggeveen recorded spotting the islands. Contact with Europeans was infrequent until the arrival of English missionaries under Rev. John Williams in 1830. Between 1847 and 1861, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Germany competed to align themselves with various Samoan royal families. The entanglements resulted in a civil war in 1889. In 1900, the colonial powers created a political boundary along the 171st meridian that divided the Samoan people. Under that convention, the United States annexed Eastern Samoa and Germany took Western Samoa. Eastern Samoa became the US territory known as American Samoa. New Zealand occupied Western Samoa in 1914 at the start of World War I, and from 1919 until 1946 New Zealand administered the area as a mandate of the League of Nations. From 1947 until 1961, a

series of constitutional advances brought Western Samoa from dependent status to self-government. A constitution was produced in 1960 and it came into effect with independence on January 1, 1962.

The country dropped the “Western” from its name in 1997.

MAJOR CITY

Apia

Apia, with a population of 33,000, is Samoa’s capital and only major town. Apia is located on the northern coast of the island of Upolu. The country’s largest industry is the Samoa Breweries plant that lies to the west of Apia. The Western Samoa Trust Estates Corporation has developed a hybrid high-yield variety of cocoa on a plantation 3 miles from the city. Faleolo International Airport west of Apia handles the majority of arrivals to Samoa. The main interisland transport in the Samoas is provided by Samoa Air and Polynesian Airlines. There is also daily service to Pago Pago, American Samoa. The number of passenger cars in Apia and around Samoa significantly increased in the 1990s, and the city now has a

number of traffic lights. Apia Harbour is the only port of entry for Samoa.

Recreation and Entertainment

The most popular sport in Samoa is rugby, which is played almost year-round throughout the islands. Apia Park, the site of the 1983 South Pacific Games, is used mainly for rugby, soccer, and field hockey. Lawn bowling, netball, squash, tennis, boxing, wrestling, and American football are popular sports. Cricket is played throughout Samoa’s villages. Samoan cricket (kilikiti) is a modification of the British form, in which the bat resembles a traditional war club and teams number 30–40 per side. The Royal Samoan Country Club features an 18-hole course. Jazzer-cise, weight training, and aerobic classes are also available in Apia.

Samoa’s biggest commercial center is the Maketi Fou, a central market that operates around the clock. Assorted meat, fish, and produce are sold there, but the market is also a place where people meet and mingle. The Palolo Deep National Marine Reserve near Apia’s wharf is a superb site for snorkeling and picnics. The Philatelic Bureau of the Post Office offers collectors a wide selection of Samoa’s stamps. Com-

memorative and mint coins from the Treasury are available from the Treasury Department in the Central Bank.

The *fale* is a traditional oval thatched-roof structure without walls that serves as a home or a meeting house. *Fale* accommodations are available to visitors in Samoa. Foreigners who visit a traditional village will endear themselves to the people if traditional Samoan rules of etiquette are followed. There are many places in the Samoas, especially in the interiors of islands or on remote beaches, where no formal accommodation and not even village accommodations will be available, making camping the only option. In Samoa, there are four official camping areas, all on Upolu: O Le Satapuala Resort, Tafatafa Beach, Lotofaga Beach, and Return-to-Paradise Beach.

Apia has several historical monuments and colonial buildings along its waterfront. The Catholic Cathedral was constructed between 1885 and 1905, and was the most prominent building along the city's skyline for many years. The clock tower in the center of the city was built as a monument to Samoans who were killed in World War I. Apia also has a World War II monument and a memorial to missionary Rev. John Williams. The Mulinu'u Peninsula at the western end of Apia has German, British, American, and Samoan monuments. The tombs of two former Samoan chiefs are also located on the peninsula. In the cool hills above Apia lies Vailima, the estate of Robert Louis Stevenson. The house lies some 650 feet above sea level and is (in name only) the official residence of the ruling Samoan head of state. The home was recently renovated to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of Stevenson's death in 1894. Stevenson's tomb is at the summit of nearby Mt. Vaea.

The Nelson Public Library contains a wide assortment of books pertain-

ing to the South Pacific that are difficult to find elsewhere.

A *fiafia* is traditional Samoan theater or music. The *fiafias* performed today often cater to tourists. The *fiafias* offered in Apia are usually elaborate shows of singing and dancing offered by the larger hotels, the most famous of which is at Aggie Grey's Hotel.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Samoa is a group of islands in the South Pacific Ocean, about one-half of the way from Hawaii to New Zealand. The main islands are Savai'i and Upolu, separated by the 11-mile Apolima Strait. There are also several smaller islands, of which only Manono and Apolima are uninhabited. The islands have a total land area of 1,104 square miles, or slightly smaller than the state of Rhode Island. Samoa's exclusive marine economic zone covers approximately 50,000 square miles.

The islands are volcanic, with coral reefs surrounding most of them. The rugged ranges rise to 3,608 feet on Upolu and 6,094 feet on Savai'i. Apolima is a volcanic crater whose wall is pierced by a passage that connects its harbor with the sea. Manono rises to a height of 230 feet, and is composed chiefly of coral sand. The islands have active volcanoes; severe eruptions occurred on Savai'i during 1905–11.

The climate is tropical, but temperature ranges are not considerable. The hottest month is December and the coldest is July; the average daily temperature is 81°F. The highland areas of Savai'i and Upolu are cooler year-round. The dry season runs from May to October, while the wet season lasts from November to April. Rainfall averages 113 inches

per year. Leeward shore areas such as Apia are drier than the windward shores and the Manu'a Islands, which can receive up to 200 inches of rain. Samoa lies in the middle of the Pacific's notorious cyclone/typhoon belt.

Population

Samoa has an estimated population of 235,000, with a population density of about 195 people per square mile. Over 70% of the population lives on Upolu. There has been massive emigration to New Zealand, Australia, and the United States (especially Hawaii). Many Samoans also live in American Samoa. Samoans are the second-largest branch of Polynesians, and account for over 90% of the population. Most of the remaining Samoans are of mixed Samoan and European or Asian descent. Europeans, other Pacific islanders, and Asians make up less than 1% of the total. Over 99% of the population adheres to some form of Christianity. About half the population associates with the Congregational Christian Church of Western Samoa, a successor to the London Missionary Society. Other faiths include Congregational, Roman Catholic, Methodist, Latter-Day Saints, and Seventh-Day Adventist. Samoan is the universal language, but Samoan and English are official. Samoan is a Polynesian language similar to Maori, Tongan, Hawaiian, and Tahitian.

Government

During the 19th century, Great Britain, the United States, and Germany were in competition to gain control over the Samoa Islands. The three countries began to align themselves with rival Samoan factions, culminating in a civil war in 1889. After a brief reconciliation in 1898, in 1900 the governing powers split up the islands and made Western Samoa a German protectorate. New Zealand occupied the territory during World War I, and it administered the



Local market in Apia

Susan Rock. Reproduced by permission.

islands as a mandate of the League of Nations during 1919–46. In 1946, the territory was made a trusteeship of the United Nations, and New Zealand formally committed to promote the development of Western Samoa toward ultimate self-government. Legislative elections began in 1957, and a constitution was adopted in 1960. On January 1, 1962, Western Samoa became an independent nation.

Executive power is in the hands of the head of state. Chief Susuga Malietoa Tanumafili II has lifetime tenure, becoming sole chief of state in 1963. Upon his death, a new chief of state will be elected by the Legislative Assembly to serve a five-year term. The prime minister is appointed by the chief of state with approval of the Legislative Assembly, and the cabinet is appointed by the chief of state with the prime

minister's advice. The unicameral Legislative Assembly (Fono) consists of 49 seats; 47 are elected from territorial districts by ethnic Samoans districts while the other two are chosen by non-Samoans on separate electoral rolls. Universal suffrage was extended in 1990.

Only matai (chiefs or head of family) are able to run for the Legislative Assembly. There are more than 25,000 matais in the country, about 5% of whom are women.

The prime minister is chosen by a majority in the Fono and is appointed by the chief of state. The prime minister's choices for the 12 cabinet positions are appointed by the chief of state, subject to the continuing confidence of the Fono.

The judicial system is patterned after practices in British courts.

Samoa custom is taken into account in certain cases. The Supreme Court has full civil and criminal jurisdiction for the administration of justice in Samoa.

Samoa's flag is a red field with a blue canton. The canton contains five white five-rayed stars representing the Southern Cross constellation.

Arts, Science, Education

Village schools provide four years of primary education. District schools draw the brighter pupils from village schools and educate them through the upper primary level. In the Apia area, urban schools provide a lower- through upper-primary curriculum. A major educational goal is to make Samo-

ans bilingual, with English as a second language. The language of instruction in secondary schools is English.

The University of the South Pacific School of Agriculture has a campus on the outskirts of Apia. The University of Samoa has courses in the arts and sciences. New Zealand provides extensive scientific and technical aid to Samoa.

Commerce and Industry

The economy is based primarily on agriculture, which accounts for about half of the gross domestic product, two-thirds of employment, and about 90% of exports. The bulk of export earnings comes from the sale of coconut oil and copra. Tourism has become the most important growth industry. Remittances from overseas workers and foreign aid are also important sources of foreign exchange. Production of taro, the primary food export crop, dropped 97% in 1993/94 when a fungal disease threatened the country's basic food crops. Samoa has one of the highest unemployment rates and lowest wages in Oceania.

Transportation

Most major roads are tar-sealed, but secondary roads are predominantly dirt and gravel, and may be overgrown. A four-wheel drive vehicle is recommended for travel on these roads. Travellers should be aware that vehicle safety regulations are rarely enforced and traffic violations occur routinely. Night driving is dangerous and not recommended.

Most of the paved roads are on the northern coast of Upolu. Buses and taxis provide public transport, but buses may run irregular schedules. Diesel-powered launches carry passengers and freight around the islands. Small motor vessels maintain services between Apia and Pago Pago, American Samoa. Cargo and passenger connections to New Zealand are made every two weeks.

Scheduled oceangoing vessels connect Samoa with Australian, Japanese, UK, and North American ports. Apia is the main port on Upolu, and Asau is a deep-water port on Savai'i. Polynesian Airlines flies daily from Apia to Pago Pago, where there are connecting flights to New Zealand, Australia, and the United States. Air Samoa and Samoa Aviation provide internal air service between Upolu and Savai'i.

Communications

Internal and overseas telecommunications services are available; the islands have one Intelsat satellite earth station. The government-controlled Samoan Broadcasting Service in Apia transmits radio programs on two stations in Samoan and English and provides direct broadcasts from the Fono. There is no domestic television service, but broadcasts are received from American Samoa. The *Samoan Times* is the only daily newspaper; *Samoa Weekly*, *Samoa Observer*, and *South Sea Star* are bilingual weeklies.

Health and Medicine

Health care facilities in Samoa are adequate for routine medical treatment, but are limited in range and availability. A national hospital is located in Apia and district hospitals are available on Savai'i and Upolu

The increase in obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular problems in recent decades is linked to the growing popularity of a Western diet high in processed starches, canned food, and sweets.

Medical Facilities

Health care facilities in Samoa are adequate for routine medical treatment, but are limited in range and availability. A national hospital is located in Apia and district hospitals are available on Savai'i and Upolu. Doctors and hospitals often expect immediate cash payment for

health services. U.S. medical insurance is not always valid outside the United States. The Medicare/Medicaid program does not provide payment for medical services outside the United States. Travelers to Samoa may wish to consider obtaining typhoid immunizations before arrival, because immunizations are not currently available to the public in Samoa. Supplemental medical insurance with specific overseas coverage including provision for medical evacuation may prove useful. Information on health matters can also be obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention through its international travelers hotline at (404) 332-4559 or via the CDC home page on the Internet: <http://www.cdc.gov/>.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan. 1	New Year's Day
Mar/Apr.	Good Friday*
Mar/Apr.	Easter Monday*
Mar. (2nd Mon)	Commonwealth Day
June 1-3	ANZAC Independence
May/June	Whitsunday/ Pentecost*
May/June	Whitmonday*
Aug. 7	Labor Day
Oct. (2nd Sun & Mon)	Children's White Sunday
Nov. 7	Arbor Day
Nov. 24	Women's Day
Dec. 25	Christmas Day
Dec. 26	Boxing Day
Dec. 31	New Year's Eve
	*Variable

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs & Duties

A passport and an onward/return ticket are required for travel to Samoa. Visas are not required for a stay of up to 30 days. Further infor-

mation about entry requirements may be obtained from the Samoa Mission to the United Nations at 800 2nd Avenue, Suite 400J, New York, NY 10017, telephone (212) 599-6196, fax (212) 599-0797.

Samoa's customs authorities may enforce strict regulations concerning temporary importation into or export from Samoa of items such as fruit, pets, firearms, and drugs. It is advisable to contact the Samoan Mission to the United Nations for specific information regarding customs requirements.

U.S. citizens are encouraged to register at the Embassy. The U.S. Embassy in Samoa is located in the John Williams Building, Fifth Floor, Beach Road, Apia. The Embassy is open to the public from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. every morning and by appointment at other times. The Embassy's mailing address is U.S.

Embassy, P.O. Box 3430, Apia, Samoa. The telephone number is (685) 21-631. The fax number is (685) 22-030. Americans may obtain updated information on travel and security for Samoa at the U.S. Embassy or by visiting the Embassy's home page at <http://travel.state.gov/samoa.html>.

Currency, Banking & Weights and Measures

The Samoan *tala* (ST) is broken into 100 *sene*. Notes are available in denominations of 100, 50, 20, 10, 5 and 2 tala. Coins are in denominations of 1, 2, 4, 10, 20, and 50 sene and 1 tala. The exchange rate is about 3.34ST=US\$1 (January 2001).

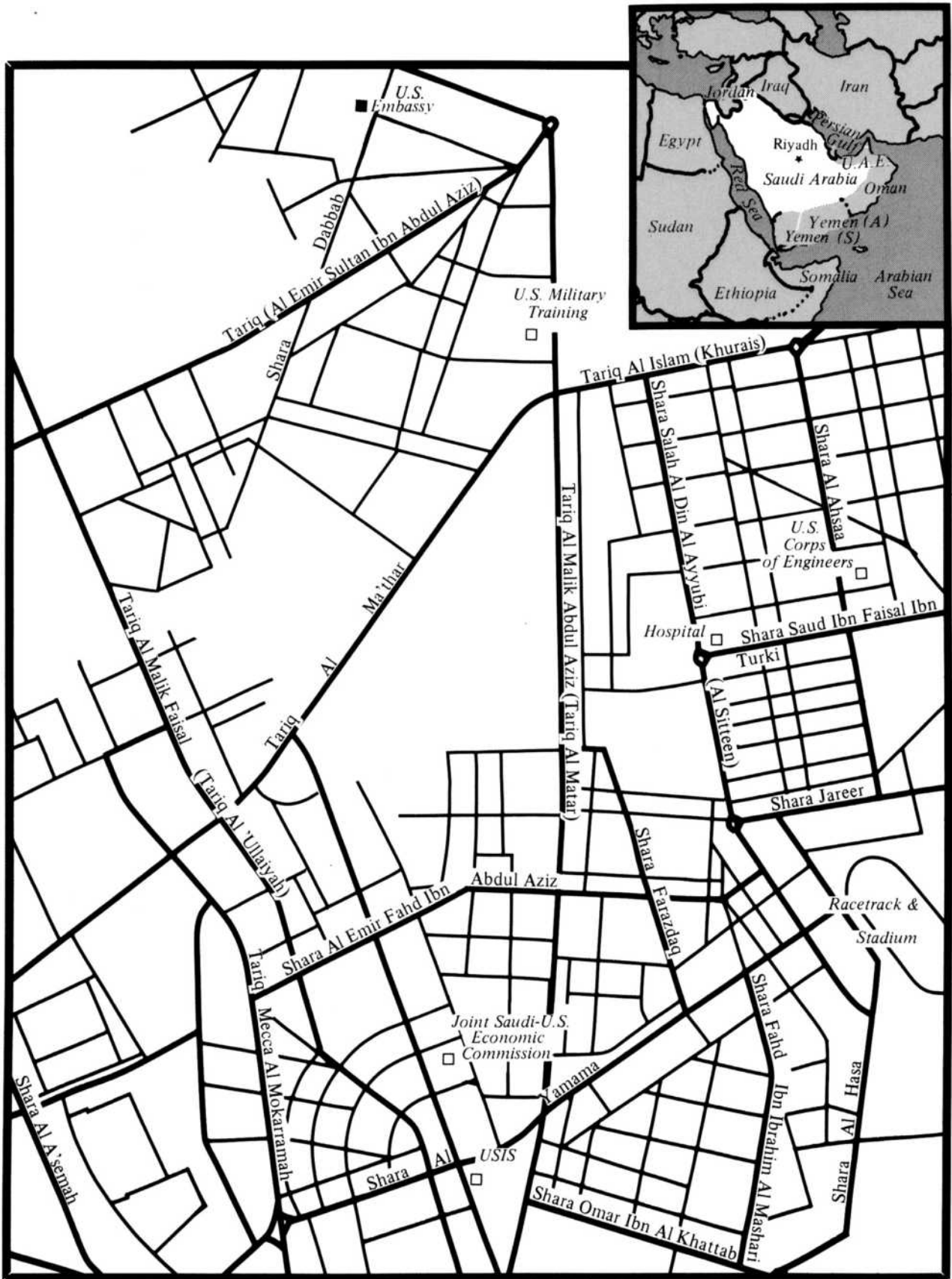
Credit cards are accepted on a limited basis. Travellers checks are generally accepted in major hotels, banks and tourist shops.

Disaster Preparedness

Samoa is located in an area of high seismic activity. Although the probability of a major earthquake occurring during an individual trip is remote, earthquakes can and will continue to happen. General information regarding disaster preparedness is available via the Internet at <http://travel.state.gov/crisismg.html>, and from the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) home page at <http://www.fema.gov>.

RECOMMENDED READING

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Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

SAUDI ARABIA

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Major Cities:

Riyadh, Dhahran, Jeddah, Makkah, Al-madinah

Other City:

Hofuf

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated May 1997. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

SAUDI ARABIA, a country of romance and legend, awakens memories from Lawrence of Arabia or scenes from some dimly remembered Hollywood epic. It has, indeed, a colorful past, an exciting present, and a bright future.

Saudi Arabia is about one-third the size of the U.S., comprised mostly of gravel and sand desert. Water from deep wells makes farming possible in some areas. Saudi Arabia has 25% of the Earth's proven oil resources and is the world's largest oil exporter. Islam, the only religion legally practiced in Saudi Arabia, plays a dominant part in the country's history and daily life. Because

it is the birthplace of the prophet Mohammed and the site of the Muslim holy cities of Mecca and Medina, Saudi Arabia is considered Islam's Holy Land. It is in this context that Islamic legal traditions take precedence over all other government regulations.

For thousands of years Arabs have roamed the desert tending their herds and flocks, tilling the soil where water was plentiful, and trading goods brought by camel caravan, but the unified nation of Saudi Arabia has been in existence for little more than 50 years. The landscape is one of contrast—the visitor to Saudi Arabia will be rewarded with a visually enriching experience—an interesting blending of old and new. Oil income has enabled the country to modernize rapidly, but many of its desert customs and traditions still play an important role in day-to-day business transactions.

Saudis are a cultivated people with an ancient and glorious heritage. If you adapt to their ways, slow down, and follow their customs, you will find that living in Saudi Arabia is a rich experience.

MAJOR CITIES

Riyadh

Riyadh, the capital city with a population of over four million and an annual growth rate of 8%, is near the geographic center of Saudi Arabia. It is about 770 miles east of Jeddah and 280 miles west of Dhahran. Riyadh is connected to both cities by good highways and frequently scheduled Saudia Airlines flights. An express train runs from Riyadh to Dammam daily.

Riyadh has definite seasons with a wide range of temperatures and low humidity. From May through October, temperatures can reach 120°F to 130°F. From November through April, temperatures are mild and pleasant during the day with night temperatures sometimes falling as low as 30°F to 40°F in January and February. Some winter clothing is essential. Rainfall is minimal, but when it does occur, it is usually a downpour and city streets are quickly flooded.

About 13,000 Americans have registered with the Consular Office in Riyadh. Those not with the U.S. Government are with private business concerns or on contract with



Skyline of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

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the Saudi Government. They are scattered throughout the city and its environs in single villas or compounds.

Food

Virtually all food items may be found in Saudi Arabia, except pork and alcohol products.

Several large supermarkets and a variety of specialty shops carry a full range of American and European food items as well as fresh produce and fish, frozen items, good meats, and fresh milk. There is a large open-air fruit and vegetable market where fresh produce, eggs, and chicken are reasonably priced.

Clothing

Men: During the 5-month hot season most men wear lightweight suits with short-sleeved shirts to work. Sport jackets are popular for

casual wear and evening social occasions. Formal wear is sometimes needed, but a dark suit is usually acceptable. Wool and heavier suits and jackets are worn in winter, and a lightweight jacket may be necessary for early morning and evening hours.

Men should dress in a conservative fashion when in public. Shorts, sleeveless shirts, or offensive T-shirts should not be worn downtown.

Men's clothing is available locally, but is expensive. Tailors will make suits for under \$200, not including fabric which is available locally at fairly reasonable prices.

A good variety of shoes is available locally, but not always in larger sizes. If your feet are difficult to fit,

you should bring plenty of shoes with you.

Women: Clothing made of natural fibers (cotton, linen, silk, and light weight wools in winter) are the most comfortable regardless of the time of year. Layered clothing is practical, especially in winter when morning temperatures are cool but rise rapidly during the day. Bring sandals, sun hats and/or head scarves.

Women should dress conservatively when in public—long dresses below the knee, sleeves below the elbow, a modest neckline, and no trousers. Wearing tight or revealing clothing is unacceptable in public and risks unpleasant confrontation with the Saudi religious police, the Mutawa. Non-Muslim women are not required to wear an abaya, a black cloak that covers the wearer from head to foot, however, many western

women, particularly in Riyadh, choose to wear an abaya and carry a head scarf in order to avoid harassment by the religious police. However, even with the abaya and scarf, harassment still occurs.

There are many women's clothing stores in Riyadh, ranging from the bargain variety to designer shops. Prices are high and there are no facilities for trying on items. Clothes can be returned, but only for an exchange, not a refund.

There are many dressmakers, but unless work is done in a private home, fittings are not permitted. If work is being done in a shop, you must take your measurements with you or an item to be duplicated. Dress patterns are not available locally, but most dressmakers can duplicate an existing item or copy a photograph or drawing quite easily. A wide range of fabrics is available in all price ranges.

Children: Children's clothing is available but expensive. Inexpensive clothing from the Far East can be found, but it is often of poor quality and sized to fit only smaller children.

The dress code for the Saudi Arabian International School (SAIS-R) Elementary School requires girls to wear blouses or dresses with sleeves. Boys should wear shirts with sleeves and appropriate pants. Through grade 3, boys and girls may wear loose-fitting short pants to school, provided the pants extend at least to the knee. In junior high, girls should wear blouses or dresses with sleeves or loose-fitting pants and tops. Boys should wear shirts with sleeves and long pants. Boys and girls may only wear sweat pants or shorts for physical education classes.

Supplies and Services

Riyadh has a wealth of shops and shopping malls. Almost everything is available from tropical fish and tanks to designer clothing. A full selection of American and European cosmetics, perfumes, and toiletries are available, but are more expen-

sive than in the U.S. If you take long-term medication, bring a supply to last until you locate a local source. Most prescription medicines are in stock at local pharmacies. If bringing medication with you, have a copy of your prescription available for Saudi customs inspectors.

Adequate laundry and dry cleaning services are available. There is a dry-cleaning service available through one of the major hotels.

Barbershops and hair stylists for men are located throughout Riyadh. Prices compare with those in the U.S. Public beauty shops for women are not permitted in the Kingdom.

Basic shoe repair is available and adequate.

Religious Activities

Only Islamic services are permitted in Saudi Arabia. However, discreet Christian services are held in various private group meetings. No open advertisements or notices may be distributed regarding their existence.

Education

The Saudi Arabian International School of Riyadh-American Section (SAISR-AM) for kindergarten through grade 9 has an enrollment of 1,800 students representing more than 50 nations. SAISR-AM is licensed by the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education and is accredited by the Middle States Association of Schools and Colleges. It is governed by a seven-member school board elected by the parents. The curriculum is American and instruction is in English. About 90% of the teachers and administrators are Americans or Canadians. The school term is from late August until the end of May with a 3-week Christmas vacation and about a 10-day spring break, not necessarily at Easter.

The school has three libraries with a total of 40,000 volumes, science labs, five fully-equipped computer laboratories, and a large, covered sports area. SAISR-AM offers art, band, music, typing, study skills, mechanical drawing, computer sciences,

English as a Second Language (ESL), French, and Arabic. Sports include boys' and girls' basketball, volleyball, softball, and soccer.

Learning Strategies classes supplement the regular curriculum for students who need additional help with organizational skills in grades 2-5. After school study labs are also offered to students in grades 3-5 who require minimal levels of remediation. A variety of after school enrichment activities are offered in grades 1-9, and often include drama, cooking, space camp, and yearbook. The number of students per class varies between 13 and 20, depending on enrollment, and all students are tested to determine classroom placement prior to beginning classes.

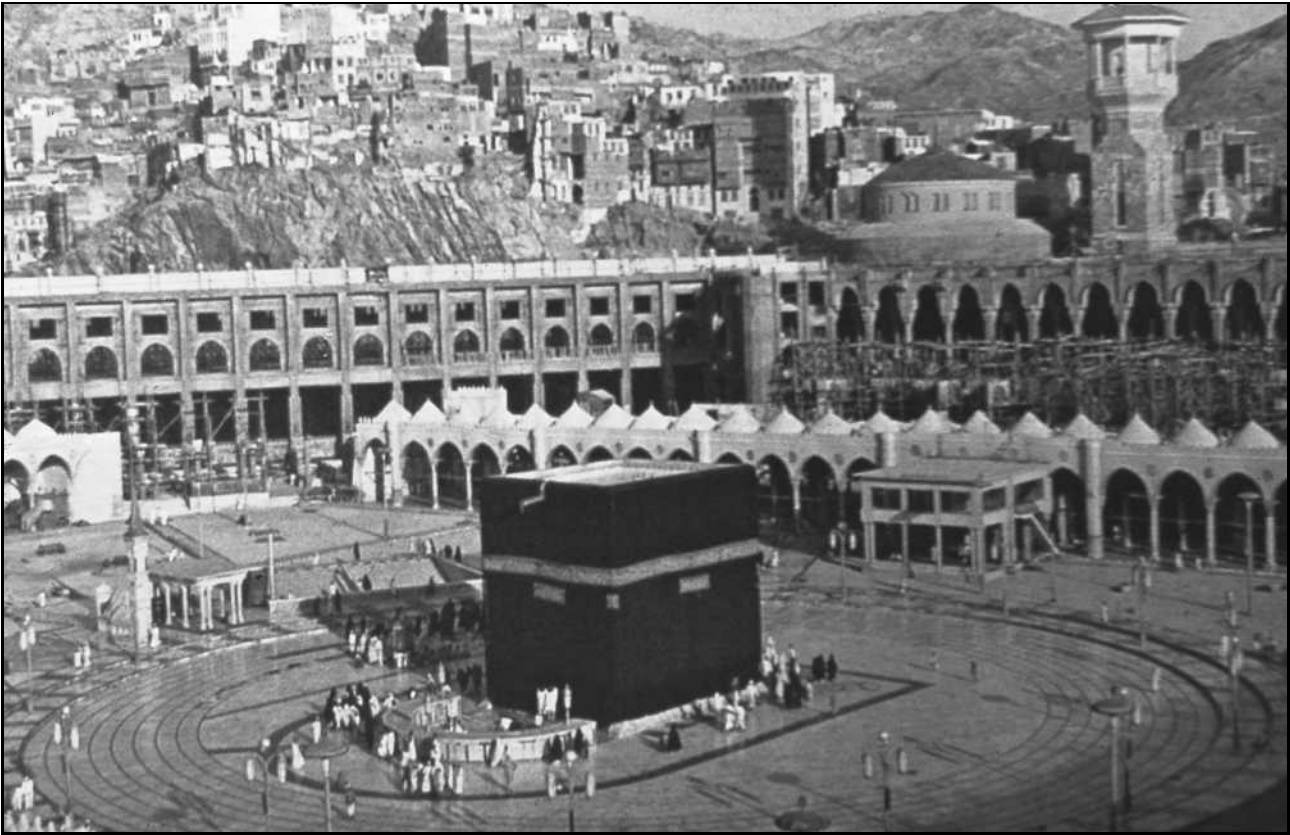
The school does not offer a comprehensive special education program. Programs for students with special needs are severely limited in terms of facilities, material, staffing, and community services for referrals. Students who have physical, emotional, or learning problems that cannot be appropriately remediated given the school's limitations will not be allowed to attend SAISR-AM. The school reserves the right to discontinue a student's enrollment if problems beyond the scope of the school program are discovered after initial acceptance.

The Saudi Arabian International School-British Section, for children from kindergarten through grade 8, is an alternative to the SAISR-AM. The school year extends from late September through the end of June. There is generally a waiting list. Small French and German schools also operate in Riyadh.

Sports

Tennis, swimming, and camping are the most popular outdoor sports in Riyadh. Two tennis leagues sponsor tournaments throughout the year, and several tennis pros in the city give lessons.

Several bowling alleys are located in Riyadh and some have women's



Aerial view of Mecca, Saudi Arabia

Archive Photos, Inc. Reproduced by permission.

hours. Horseback riding lessons are available at the Equestrian Club.

Two 18-hole golf courses are located on the outskirts of the city and the Intercontinental Hotel has a course in town. Fairways are shaped from sand, and golfers carry an astroturf tee mat. The greens are oiled sand.

Most public spectator sports are open to men only. The horse racing season is from October through April, and the camel races take place in March and early April and are sometimes open to women.

All health clubs and/or sports facilities for women have been closed.

A bicycle is useful for both recreation and as a quick means of transportation. A limited selection of bicycles at high prices are available locally; therefore, it is recommended that you bring a bike.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Camping and day trips in the desert are popular during the cooler weather, from November through March. You can buy tents and camping equipment locally.

Among the more popular sites within an hour's drive from Riyadh are Diriyah, Al-Kharj, and the camel trails. Diriyah is the ruined capital of the Al-Saud state established in 1726 and destroyed in 1818 by a punitive expedition of troops sent by the Ottoman Empire. Diriyah is currently being restored by the Ministry of Education's Department of Antiquities.

The Al-Kharj agricultural area, about one hour from Riyadh, is green with date palm groves and farms. The town itself is dominated by a castle built by Abdul Aziz. The camel trails are located along the escarpment southeast of Riyadh. Climbing the trails to the top of the escarpment is worth the beautiful

view of the surrounding hills, sand dunes, and river beds.

Hunting for fossils and desert diamonds (quartz crystals formed by fusion of sand particles by lightning) is another weekend pastime. These activities require the use of a four-wheel drive vehicle. Persons interested in desert recreation should consult the book, *Desert Treks from Riyadh*, available locally. The book charts out day and weekend trips and more extensive excursions for the adventurous.

Social Activities

American Community Services (ACS), located on the U.S. Embassy annex in a wadi near the Diplomatic Quarter, is an organization offering a great variety of activities to American expatriates in Riyadh. It has tours, both in and out of the country, seminars, classes (cooking, square dancing, survival Arabic, computer skills and many others), and provides a base for many support groups. Family counseling is also

available at ACS. ACS also shows movies on Thursday nights and runs a summer day camp for children.

The American Women of Riyadh (AWR) is open to all American women in Riyadh and meets monthly at the Embassy, featuring a guest speaker.

Musical and theatrical groups meet regularly and perform during the year. These events are not advertised publicly, but only by word of mouth. CLO usually has information about the Riyadh Choral Society, the Concert Band, Theater-Goround, and others.

Riyadh has several amusement parks and a zoo for children. Unfortunately, these are not open to women. Occasionally the school will organize a tour for the children and include the mothers.

There are many parks with playground equipment on the Diplomatic Quarter. They are not always well maintained and due to the number of picnicking Saudi families on weekends, are not generally available for use.

Various ethnic restaurants (Lebanese, Saudi, Thai, Turkish, Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Philippine, and Continental) abound in Riyadh as do many American fast-food restaurants: Hardees, McDonald's, Burger King, TCBY, Taco Bell, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Dairy Queen, Pizza Hut, and Baskin-Robbins. The major hotels also have restaurant facilities. However, only those establishments with a family section will allow women - and many have restrictions on women unescorted by a male family member.

There are no cinemas in the Kingdom.

Dhahran

Dhahran is situated on the eastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula, about 280 miles from Riyadh and about 1,000 miles from Jeddah. To

the east in the Persian (Arabian) Gulf, lies the independent island state of Bahrain, accessible by a 15-mile causeway.

The term Dhahran is an Arabic word meaning two hills. It originally referred to a geological formation sighted from Bahrain in 1932 by American geologists and which looked promising for oil exploration. At this formation, the first producing oil well, number 7, was drilled in 1938. The site is today part of the Base Camp for Saudi ARAMCO, now one of the world's largest oil companies.

Dhahran is not actually a town but rather a geographic location, which includes a scattered collection of self-contained compounds in the center of the Al-Khobar-Dammam metropolitan area. These include the American Consulate General, the Dhahran International Airport, the King Abdul Aziz Royal Saudi Air Force Base, the King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals, and regional offices of the Ministry of Petroleum and of PETROMIN, the Saudi Government's petroleum distribution system.

Dhahran has over 50,000 people, most of them Saudi ARAMCO employees and their dependents living on the Base Camp or in the growing Doha Camp residential neighborhood. The Saudi ARAMCO Base Camp resembles, in many respects, a prosperous suburban community in the western U.S. with many of the facilities and standards of an American life style.

Al-Khobar, a thriving commercial center about 11 miles from Dammam, is the capital of the Eastern Province. Dammam has a population of about 130,000; Al-Khobar has a population of about 80,000. The two form a continuous metropolitan area. An estimated 1.6 million people reside in the Eastern Province, which is, in area, the largest of Saudi Arabia's 14 political subdivisions.

The resident American population of the Eastern Province was about

19,000 in mid-1996. Over half work for Saudi ARAMCO or for petrochemical joint ventures in Jubail, 75 miles north of Dhahran. Construction firms employ other Americans as contractors to the Saudi defense forces, the province's two universities, and various joint partnerships between Saudi and American companies. Most Americans live either on company compounds or on commercially operated housing compounds designed for foreigners. Others reside in individual homes scattered throughout the tri-city Dammam/Al-Khobar/Dhahran area, at Jubail, or in Saudi ARAMCO camps at Ras Tanoura and Abqaiq.

Food

A wide variety of food is available locally, and fresh fish, lamb, chicken, eggs, milk products, and some vegetables are produced locally. Most foodstuffs are imported, however, and food costs are somewhat higher than in Washington, D.C. Several large U.S.-style supermarkets are located in Al-Khobar, and you can find American brands.

Clothing

Merchants in both Al-Khobar and Dammam stock clothing from the U.S., Europe, and Asian countries. You can find shirts, lightweight suits, sweaters, and ties for men. Women can purchase stockings, lingerie, bathing suits, novelty, sports and lounging clothes, blouses, and dresses. Clothing supplies, however, for men and women are not constant or available in all sizes. Prices can be high and there are no facilities for women to try on clothes before purchasing.

Men: Lightweight clothing is suitable most of the year. Sportswear and business suits are acceptable at all times. In general, cotton or other natural fabrics are the most practical. Topcoats and overcoats are not required in Dhahran.

Standard summer wear for social occasions is a short-sleeved dress shirt, tie, and slacks with a blazer or summer weight suits. From Novem-

ber to April, medium-weight suits are generally worn. Cool, light-weight walking shoes with rubber soles are necessary in Saudi Arabia; leather soles wear out quickly in the sand.

Women: Women should wear non-revealing, loose-fitting clothes in public places. Long caftans are available locally and comfortable in the climate. Natural-fiber fabrics are most practical. Bring plenty of sandals, head scarves, and/or sun hats.

Entertaining at home is usually casual, although there are occasional formal dances and dinner parties. Many Saudi women dress elegantly for home entertaining, wearing expensive Paris creations. Very few days, even in winter, are cool enough to wear wool fabrics comfortably all day. Heavy and dark cottons or lightweight knits are most suitable for daytime wear. It turns much cooler in the evening, and woolen dresses, cotton knits, and silks are appropriate. A winter coat is not essential, but an in-between season coat is useful, as are sweaters and cardigans.

Saudi Arabian religious and social customs prescribe that Muslim women cover themselves completely in public. Western women, therefore, should dress conservatively when shopping in downtown Al-Khobar or Dammam and suburban markets. At a minimum, dresses should have a high neckline, sleeves that cover the elbow, and should be well below the knee. Many western women wear long-sleeved, floor-length cotton, shirtwaist dresses while shopping. Alternatively, slacks with a long over-shirt can be worn. Tight-fitting slacks and dresses, miniskirts, and shorts should not be worn in public places. To do so risks attracting unpleasant public attention and even arrest or reprimand by the Saudi religious police.

Children: School-aged children dress much as do their U.S. counterparts. Adolescent girls should wear conservative clothing similar to

their mothers' when going downtown to Al-Khobar or Dammam. Light-to-medium-heavy wool clothing for outdoor wear is needed when winter winds turn chilly and temperatures sometimes drop to near freezing at night. During the cool months children will need a medium-weight jacket or Windbreaker, prices are high and children's sizes are particularly difficult to find locally.

Supplies and Services

Standard toiletries, cosmetics, cigarettes, and tobacco are sold in Al-Khobar. You can also buy detergents, packaged water softeners, household cleaning equipment, and supplies locally.

Fabrics for both men's and women's clothing is readily found in Al-Khobar and Dammam. Tailors in these cities and in Bahrain can make both men's and women's clothing. They are adept at copying garments, although you may have to wait 2–4 weeks.

Shoe repair is fair to good for men's shoes and reasonably priced but poor for women's shoes. Two commercial laundries provide adequate services as do local dry cleaners.

Barbershops are located in Al-Khobar, at Saudi ARAMCO, and at the USMTM/NCO Club. The latter also has a good beauty shop, as does Saudi ARAMCO.

Religious Activities

Saudi Arabia is a Muslim country, and only Islam is allowed to be practiced. However, discreet arrangements exist to meet the needs of other religions.

Education

The Dhahran Academy, managed by the Saudi Arabian International School system, is an American school recognized by the Department of State's Office of Overseas Schools. It provides schooling for children from kindergarten through grade 9. Present enrollment at the Academy exceeds 1,250 children of 37 nationalities, of whom 26% are American. Most of the teaching staff

are recruited from the U.S. Two smaller private schools offer English-language, pre-kindergarten classes.

High school-aged children must be sent to boarding schools outside of Saudi Arabia. Numerous high school institutions are located in Europe, including those operated by the Defense Department's Division of Overseas Defense Dependents Schools (DODDS); DODDS also operates a high school in Bahrain, which has a boarding facility.

Sports

Swimming, boating, and picnicking are possible at three good beaches on Half Moon Bay. Fishing and snorkeling are generally good. Enthusiasts should bring skin diving, water-skiing, and fishing gear. Tennis rackets, bowling shoes, golf clubs (preferably old ones, as the sand will take its toll), and beach equipment are helpful. Camping in the desert is popular, so bring sleeping bags and other camping gear.

Tennis courts are open by invitation at Saudi ARAMCO. The King Fahd University also has tennis courts, but for men only. Saudi ARAMCO has facilities for racquetball, squash, and a bowling alley.

Some local hotels also have tennis or sports facilities open to the public for a fee, but men and women must use them at different times. Those seeking participation in team sports will find basketball and softball leagues. Saudi ARAMCO sponsors a world-class Little League softball team.

Usual sports attire is worn on the courts. Women should remember to dress modestly on the way to or from sports facilities or other compounds. Men are also discouraged from wearing shorts or bathing suits when not in a sports facility.

For children, Boy, Girl, and Cub Scouts, and Brownie troops are organized by the Dhahran Academy and by Saudi ARAMCO.



Old town, Souk Al-Alawi, in Jeddah

© Wolfgang Kaehler. Reproduced by permission.

Special interest clubs exist at Saudi ARAMCO. These include art, cooking, computers, natural history, and photography. Photographers need to be alert to local sensitivities about what can be photographed. Seek guidance before setting out with your camera.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Dhahran is situated in the middle of a modern high-speed highway network that permits easy travel to Riyadh and to other major towns in the Eastern province. Hofuf, an ancient Arab town in one of the world's largest oases, is only 2 hours away. There is a traditional mud-walled fort, a typical Arab market, a colorful Thursday camel market, and some unique caves. Qatif, another oasis about 20 miles away, has a bustling Thursday morning outdoor market and a 16th century Portuguese fort which is now a bath house.

In contrast, the new Jubail Industrial City, some 70 miles north of Dhahran, is a magnificent example of modern industrial planning. It contains 15 primary petrochemical industries, planned residential communities, and a large industrial port. Both the Royal Commission in Jubail and Saudi ARAMCO in Dhahran have modern, well-

designed exhibition centers open to the public.

The Dhahran area also has two large amusement parks with rides and games for children. Bahrain, linked to Saudi Arabia by the 15-mile King Fahd Causeway, is about one hour away by car. Bahrain, with its nightclubs, museums, and beaches, offers a pleasant change of pace from Dhahran.

Entertainment

There are no public theaters, concert halls, or movie theaters in Dhahran. Saudi ARAMCO shows movies, and amateur dramatic groups present an occasional stage play or musical. A local group sponsors several performances each year by professional classical musicians brought from Europe.

As is the case in all of Saudi Arabia, no nightclubs or bars are located in the Eastern Province, but several local hotels and restaurants serve excellent Middle-Eastern, Oriental, and Continental cuisine. A growing number of American-style, fast-food eating places are located in Al-Khobar.

Hotels and restaurants that have family rooms allow men and women to eat together. If the restaurant has no family room, only men may

patronize it. The Dining Hall/Snack Bar at Saudi ARAMCO is an American-style restaurant.

Shopping in Al-Khobar is a frequent diversion. Gold and silver jewelry in the traditional Bedouin styles, oriental carpets, and Middle-Eastern or south-Asian brass curios are popular buys. Two well-stocked toy stores exist in Al-Khobar. Several book stores exist, but English-language selections are limited. Tapes and video tapes exist, but are censored to remove scenes regarded as objectionable.

American TV sets receive only AFRTS broadcast, but European (PAL) system sets connected to a rotor antenna will receive English-language telecasts from stations at Saudi ARAMCO, Bahrain, Qatar, and sometimes Dubai. Most TV programming begins in the mid-afternoon and ends between 10 pm and midnight. Programming on these stations is of an international character with some U.S. and British programs included.

Saudi ARAMCO also operates four FM radio stations that play a variety of music.

Social Activities

You can make social life in Dhahran as active as you wish to make it. Besides the large American community, over 9,000 British, several hundred Canadians, and smaller communities of French and Germans live in the Dhahran area. Moreover, many Saudis and other Middle-Easterners speak English, and are comfortable with Americans.

Saudi hospitality is generous and expansive. An International Women's Group, as well as an American Airport Wives Club, meets monthly. By joining the American Businessmen's Association, male newcomers are able to meet their American counterparts. The Association holds periodic evening dinners to which wives are invited.

Jeddah

Located on the Red Sea, Jeddah is the country's chief port and is about the same latitude as Calcutta, Hong Kong, and Honolulu. What began as a little fishing village in ancient times grew into an important trading center as a result of its strategic position on the Spice Route, linking Southern Arabia with the lands to the North. The future of the settlement was assured in 641 A.D., when shortly after the advent of Islam, the Caliph Othman chose it as the principal port for Mecca. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 consolidated Jeddah's position as a major center of trade in the Middle East. Many of the great merchant houses seen today date from this period. The old city was surrounded by a wall from 1511 to 1947. Today, only replicas of the city gates remain.

With an estimated population of two million, Jeddah is a thriving commercial center. It becomes even busier during the Hajj, the last month of the Muslim year, when about one million Muslim pilgrims from all over the world arrive en route to Mecca, 45 miles away.

About 6,000 Americans live in the Jeddah district. Most work for American firms such as Raytheon, Litton, Daniel International, Lockheed, and Mobil under contract to the Saudi Government. Americans also work in international and Saudi companies. Many live in separate company or private housing compounds, although some live in houses and apartments scattered throughout the city.

Due to the huge expatriate work force in Saudi Arabia, the city has a cosmopolitan character. In addition to Americans and West Europeans, thousands of Lebanese, Indians, Sri Lankans, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Syrians, Palestinians, Egyptians, and Filipinos provide the labor for the vast infrastructure, which has been built with oil revenues.

Food

Modern, well-stocked supermarkets carry a complete assortment of Western and other imported goods as well as local products. Because of the national diversity of the labor force, you will find an unusually wide variety of food items. Fruit and vegetables are plentiful both locally produced and imported. Fresh milk and other dairy products are available.

Fresh fish and shrimp are widely available. Beef, lamb, veal, and chicken are plentiful and of good quality. Chicken is either locally raised or imported from France. Some U.S. frozen chicken and turkey can be found. Bread is excellent and inexpensive. Other items are more costly than in the U.S. Pork is not available locally.

Clothing

Men: Men should dress modestly in public at all times. They should not wear clothing revealing bare arms or legs such as tank tops or shorts, nor should they wear visible gold jewelry or religious symbols. It is possible to wear summer clothes year round. Evenings in January and February may require a sweater.

Short-sleeved sport shirts and slacks are appropriate for casual wear. Tennis shoes are recommended for Red Sea swimming as protection against the sharp coral.

Suits and dress clothes in general are best purchased in the U.S., but sports clothes, shoes, and ties are available locally at reasonable prices.

Women: Women should wear clothing with sleeves at least to the elbows, reasonably high necklines, and skirts well below the knees. If pants are worn, a loose-fitting top should cover the hips. Professional, conservative, loose-fitting business attire is appropriate, although suits are not generally worn due to the climate. Hosiery is a matter of personal preference, but not generally worn to work. Bear in mind that offices and homes are well-cooled,

although outside is warm and humid.

On the beaches of the Red Sea, women can wear beach attire only when well outside of the city or on private beaches.

Some boutiques feature European clothing, but choices are limited, prices are high, and there are no facilities for trying on articles. Fabric is plentiful, but mainly polyester in bright colors and bold prints. Cottons are harder to find.

Children: Most children's wear is available, but quality varies and prices fluctuate. Short shorts, midriff blouses, tank tops and sleeveless tops are not appropriate attire for school. Baby clothes and diapers are available.

Supplies and Services

Most personal and household needs can be met here. A full selection of perfumes, cosmetics, medicines, and toiletries are available. Many prescription medicines are stocked, but bring a supply of any prescribed medicine in case it is not sold here.

Dry cleaning is reasonable and dependable. Leather shoe heels wear out quickly and shoe repair is not of satisfactory quality.

Tailors in the city do a reasonable job of copying existing garments.

Religious Activities

Only Islamic services are permitted in Saudi Arabia.

Education

The Saudia-Saudi Arabian International School (S-SAIS), owned by Saudia Airlines, offers an American curriculum. It spans pre-kindergarten through grade 9, although it is attempting to add year 10 for the school year 1996-97.

Teachers are mostly recruited in the U.S., but some American dependent teachers are hired locally. Special teachers are available for physical education, music, band and orchestra, art, and remedial reading; and English and math for advanced stu-

dents. The school's administrative staff includes a superintendent, a curriculum coordinator, and counselors.

The school has a general science lab, combination auditorium-gymnasium, homemaking lab, computer rooms, a resource center for remedial math and English, and a media center. The library has a current collection of 14,500 volumes in the main campus school and 15,000 books in the primary school.

Extracurricular activities include softball, basketball, soccer, swim team (semiprivate), and intramurals twice a week. Varsity sports include track, volleyball, softball, and basketball. Other activities such as Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts are also available.

The school term lasts from late August through early June, totaling the 180 school days required in most U.S. schools. In addition to winter and spring breaks, there is a post-Ramadan break and a Hajj break when these occur during the school year.

The Continental School follows a British system and accepts children from ages 3 to 16. The school year follows the British system, the first term being September through December, the second term January through March, and the third term from April through early July. Children are accepted on a space-available basis, and it is difficult to obtain space for students over age 13.

Another British school, Jeddah Prep, accepts children up to age 13. Small French and German schools are also in operation.

Arabic nursery schools are numerous but not acceptable for Americans. Some satisfactory American- and British-managed nursery schools are available. Costs are about \$10 per morning.

Sports

Organized sports leagues for both adults and children include volley-

ball, softball, two running clubs, tennis, squash, basketball, little league baseball, bowling, cricket, and rugby. Except for these leagues and occasional soccer matches (open to men only), no regular spectator sports exist in Jeddah.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

The area around Jeddah offers many points of interest—the Red Sea with its beautiful coral reefs, the lonely desert vistas, nearby oases, and the foothills.

Taif, in the mountains, is only a 2-hour drive from Jeddah. Located 6,000 feet above sea level, its cooler climate offers welcome relief in summer. The King and his ministers maintain summer homes and offices there to escape the searing heat of Jeddah and Riyadh. An excellent paved road winds its way up the escarpment and provides a panorama of surrounding mountains. A weekend at the Sheraton or Intercontinental Hotel in Taif makes a pleasant change.

Coastal waters around Jeddah provide exceptional deep-sea fishing. Shark, amberjack, barracuda, tuna, grouper, red snapper, sea bass, and an occasional sailfish are caught in nearby waters. If you are interested in deep-sea fishing, bring a good rod and reel. You can rent boats in Jeddah harbor, although the cost is high. Some residents enjoy sailing and boating and own wind surfing or light sailing vessels. Jeddah has two sailing clubs.

A protected inlet known as The Creek (Abhor Creek), about 30 minutes north of the city, is a popular spot for boating, swimming, snorkeling, diving, shell collecting, and picnicking.

Underwater scenes of the Red Sea are among the most beautiful in the world, making snorkeling and skin diving popular. An extraordinary variety of fish, in a stunning background of coral formations, provides a glimpse of an entirely different world. Snorkeling requires only tennis shoes, fins, snorkel, and mask.

You can buy these locally at prices slightly higher than in the U.S.

Scuba diving is also popular. You can dive in the Red Sea 9 months of the year without a wetsuit. Compressed air is readily available at a reasonable cost. Tanks, wet suits, regulators, and buoyancy compensators are available locally. If you are interested in scuba diving but not certified, instructors give lessons regularly at various locations around Jeddah. Rental diving equipment is also available, and a diving club is located in Jeddah.

Overnight desert camping trips, especially in winter, are popular. The desert provides a pleasant contrast to the bustling city and has a beauty of its own. Wadi Fatima and Wadi Khulays, oases not too far from Jeddah on the road to Mecca, offer scenic spots in the cooler months. Further away, Waba Crater, an explosion crater 1.8 miles across and 1,000 feet deep, is a unique destination for overnight camping.

Entertainment

Western forms of public entertainment do not exist in Jeddah. Since there are no cinemas, theaters, or operas, the Western community produces its own. It has two theater groups—a light opera group and a concert committee that features visiting artists and a choral society. The British Consulate General Cinema Club offers a weekly full length recent movie.

Dining out is a favorite pastime. The hotels have wonderful buffets at reasonable costs and international restaurants abound in Jeddah.

Shopping in the Jeddah souks (markets) for Arab handicrafts, old and new, is another favorite pastime. Oriental rugs, gold jewelry, and Bedouin silver are the most popular purchases.

Social Activities

Social activity in Jeddah revolves around the home, since no public entertainment or clubs exist. Buffet and sit-down dinners are typical forms of entertainment.

The American Ladies of Jeddah, a community-wide American Women's Club, meets monthly and sponsors recreational, social, and welfare projects. The group publishes a monthly newsletter. Additionally, the International Women's Group, a large organization open to all nationalities meets monthly.

Square dancing, Scottish dancing, and bridge are popular with the international community.

The Saudi Arabian Natural History Society meets monthly and features a speaker and a slide show on some aspect of Saudi Arabian natural history.

Makkah

Makkah (Mecca, to the Western world), one of Islam's greatest shrines, is certainly counted among Saudi Arabia's major cities but, by its very nature, it defies exact classification in that non-Muslims are forbidden to enter. It lies in the western part of the country, the Hijaz (or Hejaz), about 50 miles from the Red Sea coast, in a narrow valley surrounded by low hills. It is a modern city of more than 900,000 residents, and is the capital and administrative center of the province which bears its name.

The major industry of this holy city is tourism—but of a religious nature. Each year during the *Hajj* (Dhu al-Hijja), in the final month of the lunar year, more than a million worshipers from all over the world pour into Makkah for the pilgrimage which every Muslim hopes to make once in his lifetime.

Muhammad (whose name is also seen written Mohammed, or Mohamet) was born in Makkah in 570. His spiritual experiences led him to preach as a prophet here, but he eventually was forced to go to what is now Al-Madinah (Medina) to establish an Islamic state; he died there in 632. It was Muhammad who originated the practice of praying toward Makkah.

Modern Makkah is the site of the Great Mosque with its black-draped Kaaba. Here, also, is Umm Al-Qura University, which houses the faculty of Islamic studies among its other departments. There are schools and hospitals and a number of large bazaars.

Al-Madinah

The second most sacred city of Islam after Mecca, Al-Madinah (also referred to as Medinah or Medina) is located in western Saudi Arabia's Hejaz Province, about 215 miles north of Makkah. Along with agricultural products, the city's economy thrives on the pilgrim traffic and the businesses associated with it.

The city is no longer contained within walls; today there are wide avenues with luxury shops, coffeehouses, and over 40 hotels. Al-Madinah's roughly 500,000 residents have access to an airport and several roads. The Islamic University is located here.

Al-Madinah, formerly known as Yathric, was the terminus of Muhammad's journey from Makkah. He lived here until his death in 632. In 1924–25 the Hejaz Province was conquered by Ibn Saud and became part of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

OTHER CITY

HOFUF (also called al-Hufuf), in eastern Saudi Arabia, is about 200 miles east of the nation's capital. Its residents, mostly Muslim Arabs, make up half of the al-Hasa oasis' population. In Hofuf, the old Qaisariya bazaar coexists with modern office buildings. Hofuf's Western look is the result of the destruction of the old town walls, and of town planning. The nearby oil industry has aided in the city's commercial expansion. Farm products of the oasis are marketed here. The House of Sa'ud initially occupied Hofuf in the late 1700s. The Ottoman Turks made it their headquarters in eastern Arabia in 1871,

but were driven out by Ibn Saud in 1913. Hofuf's population is estimated at over 150,000.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Saudi Arabia lies in the area known as the Middle East—the meeting place of the continents of Asia, Africa, and Europe. It occupies much of the Arabian Peninsula and has a land area of about 830,000 square miles. The vast uninhabited Empty Quarter, al-Rub'al-Khali, is about the size of Texas and is the largest single body of sand in the world. The principal cultivated areas are in the Asir highlands in the Southwestern Province and in the Hasa Eastern Province along the Arabian Gulf.

The country is divided administratively into thirteen provinces, including the Hijaz, the Asir, the Nejd, the Al-Hasa, and the Northern Province, each headed by a governor or emir. The topography varies from vast stretches of sand to rugged mountain ranges. From the Gulf of Aqaba south to Yemen lies a dry, narrow, coastal plain bordering the Red Sea. East of the plain a narrow chain of mountains rises to 9,000 feet. This entire region, traditionally called the Hijaz, is now known as the Western Region. The same mountain chain rises to 12,000 feet and becomes more rugged in the south near Yemen. This portion, known as the Asir, has more rainfall than any other part of the country. Its dense population, villages, terraced farms, and green forests are more reminiscent of Africa than the Desert Kingdom.

The Nejd, the heartland of Saudi Arabia, is the ancestral home of the Al Sa'ud, the Kingdom's ruling family. This area contains the heaviest concentration of nomadic Bedouins who still lead their flocks of sheep, goats, and camels across the arid

land in search of pastures. But the Bedouin are modernizing and water trucks are now common sights near their tent encampments.

The Eastern Province, Al-Hasa, although largely desert, contains most of the nation's oil fields. Besides oil, two large oases, Qatif and Hofuf, support substantial agricultural production. Most activity and population are centered around the market city of Al-Khobar; Dhahran, site of the Saudi ARAMCO complex; and the busy port of Dammam.

Riyadh's climate has a greater difference between winter-summer temperatures than elsewhere in the Kingdom. Riyadh has practically no humidity, making summers especially dry and dusty. Dust, the single most disagreeable factor in Riyadh's climate both for housekeeping and for allergy sufferers, is a year-round problem. Annual rainfall averages 2-4 inches, usually concentrated in a few torrential rainfalls in early spring. Winters produce moderate daytime temperatures from November through February. Evenings are sometimes cool enough to require residential heating.

Jeddah, the commercial center, has a tropical climate—mild in winter and hot and very humid in summer. Summer lasts 8-10 months, with temperatures moderating in November. Relief from the heat often comes at sunset when sea breezes arrive. Except on the few occasions when it rains, the sun shines daily. Winter is comparable to the spring and summer seasons of resorts on the Mediterranean Sea.

Dhahran's climate, like that of Jeddah, is very humid, 60 to 90%, with summer lasting from April through October. The average maximum shade temperature in July and August is 110°F with "in sun" temperatures up to 150°F. From December to April, it is cooler and pleasant with indoor heating required at times, especially in the areas north of Dhahran.

Rainfall in both Jeddah and Dhahran is sparse, about 3-4 inches a year concentrated in a few heavy showers during fall and spring. Because of the high humidity, care should be taken in both Jeddah and Dhahran to store items in air-conditioned areas to prevent mildew.

Throughout Saudi Arabia, winds blow sand and dust into cars and homes, marring finishes and damaging unprotected equipment. Occasional full-fledged dust/sandstorms last 1-4 days and can aggravate respiratory problems.

Insect pests are not much of a problem, although flies can be bothersome during the cooler months, particularly in the desert. Mosquitoes are abundant at certain times of the year. Roaches, ants, and termites do invade the home, but insecticides control them well. Snakes are seldom seen but, along with scorpions, do exist and have been found on the compounds.

Population

In 2000, Saudi Arabia's population was estimated to be over 22 million. Until the 1960s most of the population was nomadic or semi-nomadic. Urbanization has advanced quite rapidly, and today about 95% of the population is settled.

Saudis are ethnic Arabs, but there has been some intermingling with Turkish, Iranian, Indonesian, Indian, and African peoples due mostly to pilgrims who immigrated and settled in the Hijaz along the coast of the Red Sea.

Many Arabs from nearby countries are employed in the Kingdom, as well as significant numbers of expatriate workers from North America, South Asia, Europe, and the Far East.

Arabic is, by royal decree, the official language of business. In the spoken language there are several regional variations in dialect. A knowledge of Arabic is helpful but not essential, since in urban areas and among middle- and upper-class

Saudis, English is widely used and most shopkeepers speak and understand English. English is acknowledged as a second language and is taught in secondary schools. Despite the government's emphasis on English, many older people and policemen or taxi drivers do not speak or understand it.

Islam is the official religion, and the government considers it a sacred duty to safeguard the two greatest shrines of Islam, the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. The Great Mosque of Mecca, with the cubed, black-draped Kaaba at its open-air center, is the major focal point of Islam. It is the Kaaba toward which all Muslims pray. Travel by non-Muslims into the cities of Mecca and Medina is prohibited.

Two Islamic religious observances during the year change the pace of daily life dramatically. Ramadan, the ninth month of the lunar year, is the period when Muslims abstain from eating, drinking, and smoking from sunrise to sunset. Non-Muslims are also required to refrain from eating, drinking, and smoking in public. At sunset each day, fasting ends as Muslim families gather to feast and to exchange greetings. Following Ramadan is Id Al-Fitr, a time of feasting, gift giving, and visits to homes of family members.

The second religious observance is the Hajj, the pilgrimage to the holy cities prescribed as a religious duty for Muslims. Every Muslim who can bear the expense is required to make the Hajj once during his or her lifetime. Each year, as the holy days of Hajj approach, several million Muslims from many nations arrive in Jeddah by land, sea, and air en route to Mecca and the Plain of Arafat, where the religious rites take place. They are joined by Saudis and resident expatriate Muslims in the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, making the Hajj the largest gathering of humanity at one time in the world. The last days of Hajj celebrate the feast of the sacrifice, Eid al-Adha.

Although many aspects of life in Saudi Arabia are becoming Westernized, traditional customs can make living in the Kingdom difficult. Flexibility and patience are necessary in dealing with everyday affairs as observance of local customs is usually of greater importance than one's diplomatic status.

Many social events are only for men, and, among the more conservative Saudi men, female family members are never mentioned in conversation. Although many Saudi women are educated in the West, and a great many of them are enterprising businesswomen or professionals, most of their social functions are for ladies only. Only occasionally will a Saudi woman attend a mixed function. However, it is useful to keep in mind that with over 70 diplomatic missions and many thousands of expatriates and Americans resident in the Kingdom, opportunities for socializing in a more western setting are numerous.

Saudi women appear veiled in public, wearing the "abaya," the traditional black cloak that covers the wearer from head to foot. Americans in Saudi Arabia should respect local traditions and customs and take care not to offend sensitivities. Women should wear long dresses, well below the knee, with long sleeves and avoid trousers. Non-Muslim women are not required to wear an abaya, but should dress conservatively (loose fitting dresses that cover well below the knee with long sleeves and a high neckline) when in public. However, some western women, particularly those living in the Riyadh area and in the more conservative central region, wear an abaya when in public places, and carry a head scarf in order to avoid harassment by the religious police known as the Mutawwa'in. However, even with the abaya and scarf, harassment still occurs.

The Mutawwa'in (members of the Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice), literally translated as "enforcers" and sometimes referred to as "religious

police," comprise a special agency of the Saudi Government with specific powers to enforce religious stricture. Whatever may be written or whatever even a Mutawwa'in leader may say, individual Mutawwa'a attempt to enforce their own versions of modesty.

Under Saudi customs, it is prohibited for unmarried persons of the opposite sex to be together in public unless they are family members or close relatives. Public displays of affection, holding hands and kissing are also prohibited. Some Mutawwa'in try to enforce the rule that men and women who are beyond childhood years may not mingle in public, unless they are family or close relatives. Mutawwa'in may ask to see proof that a couple is married or related. Women who are not accompanied by a close male relative sometimes are not served at certain restaurants, particularly fast-food outlets. In addition, many restaurants no longer have a "family section" in which women are permitted to eat. Due to these restrictions, dating in the traditional sense can be problematic for single travelers.

Local custom prohibits photographing Arab women, and the Saudi Government requests that you not photograph poor areas or beggars. Excessive use of a camera may attract unfavorable attention, so take photographs discreetly. Photography of airports, ports, industrial, or military facilities is not permitted.

Except for American business representatives and official visitors, few Americans visit Saudi Arabia. The Saudi Government does not issue tourist visas and even business visit visas are difficult to obtain. Hajj visas (good for 30 days) are issued only to Muslims.

Public Institutions

The original area of Saudi Arabia ruled by the Al-Saud was the Nejd, the central and more tribal part of Saudi Arabia. During the first 30 years of the 20th century, the

regions of the Hijaz, the Asir, and the oil-rich Eastern Province (the Al-Hasa) were brought under Saudi rule. Today, Saudi Arabia is a traditional Islamic monarchy ruled by a King chosen from the direct descendants of Abdul Aziz Al-Saud.

The Council of Ministers performs executive and legislative functions, examines proposed legislation, and makes recommendations to the King. It is composed of heads of ministries, separate agencies, and other advisers appointed by the King, who is also Prime Minister. Once a recommendation is made and a course of action is decided upon, the King issues a royal decree, turning the decision into law.

Saudi Arabia's legal system, the "Shari'ah," is the body of Islamic jurisprudence derived from the Koran and from traditions of the Prophet Mohammed. It governs both civil and criminal law. Interpretations of the law are made by the Ulema, men learned in traditional jurisprudence. In cases not covered by the Shari'ah, administrative decisions are made by civil officials. Local commercial councils issue decisions based on customary commercial law or practice. The Board of Grievances, which has some of the functions of a national appeals court, hears civil and commercial cases. Every Saudi citizen has the right to have grievances heard by the King.

Saudi Arabia is divided into 14 administrative districts. The governors, or emirs, of these subdivisions report to the Minister of the Interior and often directly to the King. Lesser emirs, who function at a district or city level, report to the Interior Ministry or provincial governor. Some communities, including Jeddah, have municipal councils whose members are appointed by the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs.

Commerce and Industry

Saudi Arabia's first producing oil well was completed in 1938, but full-scale commercial production did not begin until after World War II. Today, Saudi Arabia is the world's largest oil exporter. Most oil is shipped in tankers through the Arabian Gulf or through the Petroline pipeline to the Red Sea. The primary company developing the country's oil resources is the Saudi Arabian Oil Company (Saudi ARAMCO), formerly the Arabian-American Oil Company, now a wholly owned Saudi entity.

Oil accounts for 90% of export earnings, 75% of all government revenues, and 40% of the GNP. Income from the Hajj, once the mainstay of the government, continues to grow. Services provided to pilgrims now cost more than the income generated, but the pilgrimage is still a major stimulus to economic activity in the Hijaz or Western Province.

Saudi Arabia has no labor unions, but Saudi labor laws provide for worker protection. The supply of skilled Saudi workers is increasing due to improved technical education and training but still remains in short supply. Expatriates fill the gap with an estimated four-five million foreigners residing in Saudi Arabia. Most manual labor is performed by Filipinos, Sri Lankans, Bangladeshis, Egyptians, Indians, and Pakistanis. Middle- and upper-level technical and professional personnel, especially in commerce and construction, include Lebanese, Syrians, Egyptians, Palestinians, and Jordanians as well as Filipinos and Pakistanis. Large numbers of Westerners occupy technical, professional, and managerial positions.

The government continues to develop new petrochemical industries such as paints, fertilizers, and plastics. Despite increased industrial and agricultural production, Saudi Arabia still relies heavily on imports. Increasingly high customs duties have been imposed to limit the flow of imported goods. Still, the

Kingdom has achieved basic self-sufficiency in some agricultural staples, including wheat and dairy products.

The U.S. is Saudi Arabia's largest trade partner, barely edging out Japan, but European and other Asian countries are also becoming increasingly tough competitors. Major U.S. civilian exports are automobiles and parts, barley, telecommunications equipment, cigarettes, trucks, rice, air-conditioners, and aircraft.

Transportation

Local

The national bus company, Saudi Arabian Transport Company (SAPTCO), operates service within major cities. Buses have separate compartments for women and the bus stops are segregated by gender.

Taxis, also called limousines, are expensive and not always reliable. Taxi drivers may speak limited English.

Regional

Major airline carriers servicing the Kingdom are Saudia (the national airline), TWA, British Airways, Air France, Lufthansa, and most other European and Middle Eastern airlines. Direct flights are available from most major European cities. Saudia flies between New York to Riyadh via Jeddah five times a week during the summer season and two times a week during the winter season. TWA has flights three times a week between New York City and Riyadh through Cairo. Only Saudia is permitted to make domestic flights. Numerous airlines service Bahrain, a one-hour drive from Dhahran.

Saudi Arabia has more than 5,000 miles of paved roads with modern highways linking major cities. Riyadh is a 10-hour drive from Jeddah and a 4-hour drive from Dhahran. Scattered service stations en route provide gasoline and repair service. These are not, however, the Western equivalent of rest stops.

A railroad operates between Damman, on the Arabian Gulf, and Riyadh. The trip averages 4-5 hours with two stops en route. There are two trains daily on weekdays and one train daily on weekends. Private, air-conditioned compartments are available for groups of up to five people.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

A fax machine is very helpful for the transfer of information, especially for women who do not always have the mobility to which they are accustomed.

It is possible to have access to the popular communication bulletin board services and communication networks through a subsidiary of Saudi PTT. Charges are based on the time for which the line is used and the amount of data sent. Thus, if you are bringing a computer you may wish to consider including a modem for this or for using a computer fax program.

General phone directories are available in Arabic, but are not widely distributed. Telephone service between Riyadh, Taif, Dhahran, Jeddah, and other major cities in Saudi Arabia is good. Direct, long-distance international dialing is available. The cost to dial the U.S. via Saudi PTT is about U.S. \$2.25 per minute. Connections are excellent, but it is much cheaper to have friends and relatives call you from the U.S. or to call using a calling service.

Commercial telegrams may be sent from any city in the Kingdom.

Radio and TV

In Riyadh and Jeddah, the English service of the Saudi Radio system broadcasts news, music, features, and talk shows 6 hours daily. The Saudi Radio Service in Dhahran does not broadcast in English, but Saudi ARAMCO has four FM stereo stations featuring country, easy listening, classical, and pop music as well as Associated Press news sum-

maries. Neighboring Bahrain has English service on FM, offering 14 hours daily of music, news, and features.

Shortwave reception is not always good, but VOA and AFRTS provide music, news, sports commentary, and features. VOA broadcasts 11 hours daily in English to the Middle East. BBC reception is good 18 hours a day.

Saudi TV operates two channels: one in Arabic and the other in English, both broadcast on the European standard, ME/SECAM. The English-language channel shows many American and British programs as well as a variety of children's programs and cartoons. All programs are censored, and few current TV programs or movies are shown because of the Kingdom's strict moral codes.

Armed Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS) is available in Riyadh, Jeddah, and Dhahran and offers a variety of American sitcoms, sporting events, movies and news.

In Riyadh the United States Employees Recreation Association (USERA) offers a 5-channel cable TV service for a nominal yearly fee. Program broadcasting currently consists of two satellite feeds from Armed Forces Radio Television Service (AFRTS), CNN International, and two local Saudi channels. AFRTS offers a variety of American sitcoms, sports events, movies, and news. Satellite Cable service is also available for an additional monthly fee. Programs are broadcast in several different system formats—PAL, SECAM, and NTSC3.58, limiting the utility of American standard TVs.

Dhahran has access to the Saudi ARAMCO TV system, which uses the PAL European system. American-standard TVs cannot receive this transmission. In addition to American movies, serials, and programs, Saudi ARAMCO TV carries a delayed version of Saudi TV's English newscast. Bahrain TV operates an all-English channel that can

be clearly received all year round in Dhahran, offering 6-8 hours daily (longer on weekends) of American and European movies, shows, and serials as well as regular news. The U.A.E. and Qatar also have all-English channels that can be received in Dhahran much of the year. You can use a roof antenna to pick up telecasts from Kuwait and Oman.

A Saudi TV channel in English is received on SECAM. Multi-system TVs are available locally at a reasonable price.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

International editions of magazines such as *Time*, *Newsweek*, and the *Economist* reach newsstands only a few days late. *The International Herald Tribune*, *London Times*, *USA Today*, and three locally published English newspapers (the *Riyadh Daily*, *Arab News*, and the *Saudi Gazette*) are available in Riyadh. Foreign publications are always censored.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

Good dental care is available in both Jeddah and Riyadh, although it is more expensive than in the U.S.

Pharmacies carry a wide selection of drugs. The drugs are generally European brands or American drugs listed by their European names and of a different dosage than that used in the U.S. If you are on a regularly prescribed medication (contraceptives, antihypertensives, cardiac drugs, medication for migraine headaches, etc.) or have a favorite brand, bring an adequate supply.

Saudi Arabia has strict penalties for violators of its narcotics laws. Prescription drugs in small quantities, clearly labeled, should cause no difficulties. Problems arise when they are in large quantities, unlabeled, or lack documentation, such as a copy of the prescription, or when

they are deemed illicit by Saudi authorities. Many drugs sold in nearby countries without a prescription are considered illegal here. Individuals are arrested for possession of these drugs.

Preventive Measures

Meningococcal AC vaccine is required for travelers from the U.S. All persons who are arriving in Saudi Arabia should receive this immunization to avoid having to receive it at the port of entry. Certain other immunizations are required when arriving from surrounding countries. Typhoid, tetanus, oral polio, Hepatitis B, and DPT immunizations should be up to date. The incidence of Hepatitis A is low, and gamma globulin is no longer given regularly. However, Hepatitis A vaccine is recommended for those who do not have antibodies. Malaria is only found in the southwestern section of the country and regular prophylaxis is not required.

Schistosomiasis is ever present, and all travelers should avoid swimming in freshwater lakes. Brucellosis is endemic; all dairy products consumed should be pasteurized. Although the city water in Riyadh is usually potable, bottled water is preferred for consumption. You need not soak fruits and vegetables, but thoroughly clean all produce. In the major cities, the restaurants patronized by Westerners are safe. Bottled water is readily available.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs & Duties

Travelers usually arrive in Saudi Arabia by plane at one of the three international airports—King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh, King Abdul Aziz International Airport in Jeddah, or Dhahran International Airport in Dhahran. All three of the airports are serviced by a great number of airlines in addition to the state-owned airline Saudia.

Travel to Makkah (Mecca) and Medina, the cities where the two holiest mosques of Islam are located, is forbidden to non-Muslims. American Muslims who are not resident in Saudi Arabia but who plan to participate in the annual Hajj pilgrimage to the holy cities of Makkah (Mecca) and Medina should pay close attention to the following:

All travel plans should be made through a travel agent in order to book accommodations in advance. Hajj visas are required and are valid only for travel to the two holy cities. Onward travel to Riyadh or other cities in Saudi Arabia is not permitted.

Foreign Muslim residents of the Kingdom may perform the Hajj once every five years. Advance approval must be obtained from an immigration office with the approval of the Saudi sponsor.

Passports valid for at least six months and visas are required for entry. Visas are issued for business and work, to visit close relatives, and for transit and religious visits. Visas for tourism are issued only for approved tour groups following organized itineraries. Airport and seaport visas are not available. All visas require a sponsor, can take several months to process, and must be obtained prior to arrival. Women visitors and residents are required to be met by their sponsor upon arrival. Women traveling alone, who are not met by sponsors, have experienced delays before being allowed to enter the country or to continue on to other flights.

Visitors to Saudi Arabia generally obtain a meningitis vaccination prior to arrival. A medical report or physical examination is required to obtain work and residence permits.

Residents working in Saudi Arabia generally must surrender their passports while in the Kingdom. The sponsor (normally the employer) obtains work and residence permits for the employee and for any family members. Family

members of those working are not required by law to surrender their passports, though they often do. Residents carry a Saudi residence permit (Iqama) for identification in place of their passports. The U.S. Embassy and Consulates General in Saudi Arabia cannot sponsor private American citizens for Saudi visas.

Foreign residents traveling within the Kingdom, even between towns in the same province, carry travel letters issued by employers and authenticated by an immigration official or a Chamber of Commerce office. Police at all airports and dozens of roadblocks routinely arrest and imprison violators.

Residents in Saudi Arabia who are departing the country must obtain an exit permit prior to leaving and an exit/reentry permit if they intend to return to Saudi Arabia. The Saudi sponsor's approval is required for exit permits. A married woman residing in Saudi Arabia with her husband must have her husband's approval to receive an exit permit. The father must approve the departure of any children. The U.S. Embassy and U.S. Consulates General cannot sponsor private U.S. citizens for an exit permit under any circumstances. Temporary visitors normally do not need an exit permit but may be prevented from departing the country if they are involved in a legal dispute.

Saudi customs authorities enforce strict regulations concerning importation into Saudi Arabia of such banned items as alcohol products, weapons and any item that is held to be contrary to the tenets of Islam. This includes non-Islamic religious materials, pork products, and pornography. Saudi customs and postal officials broadly define what is contrary to Islam, and therefore prohibited. Christmas decorations, fashion magazines, and "suggestive" videos may be confiscated and the owner subject to penalties and fines. It is advisable to contact the Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Washington or one of Saudi Arabia's consulates in the United States for specific informa-

tion regarding customs requirements.

Penalties for the import, manufacture, possession, and consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs are severe. Convicted offenders can expect jail sentences, fines, public flogging, and/or deportation. The penalty for drug trafficking in Saudi Arabia is death. Saudi officials make no exceptions. Customs inspections at ports of entry are thorough. The U.S. Embassy and Consulates General have no standing in Saudi courts to obtain leniency for an American convicted of alcohol or drug offenses.

Besides alcohol products and illicit drugs, Saudi Arabia also prohibits the import, use, or possession of any item that is held to be contrary to the tenets of Islam. The private ownership of weapons is prohibited. Imported and domestic audiovisual media and reading matter are censored.

Americans living in or visiting Saudi Arabia are encouraged to register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Riyadh or the Consulates General in Dhahran and Jeddah. U.S. citizens who register at the U.S. Embassy or the U.S. Consulates General may obtain updated information on travel and security within Saudi Arabia and can be included in the warden network.

The U.S. Embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, is located at Collector Road M, Riyadh Diplomatic Quarter. The international mailing address is P.O. Box 94309, Riyadh 11693. Mail may also be sent via the U.S. Postal Service to: U.S. Embassy, Unit 61307, APO AE 09803-1307. The Embassy telephone number is (966) (1) 488-3800, fax (966) (1) 488-7275.

The U.S. Consulate General in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, is located between Aramco Headquarters and the old Dhahran Airport at the King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals highway exit. The international mailing address is P.O. Box 38955, Doha-Dhahran 31942. Mail may also be sent via the U.S. Postal

Service to: Unit 66803, APO AE 09858-6803. The telephone number is (966) (3) 330-3200, fax (966) (3) 330-0464.

The U.S. Consulate General in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, is located on Palestine Road, Ruwais. The international mailing address is P.O. Box 149, Jeddah. Mail may also be sent via the U.S. Postal Service to: Unit 62112, APO AE 09811-2112. The telephone number is (966) (2) 667-0080, fax (966) (2) 669-3078 or 669-3098.

Special Information

Saudi authorities do not permit criticism of Islam or the royal family. The government prohibits the public practice of religions other than Islam, although private worship by non-Muslims generally is permitted. Non-Muslims suspects of violating these restrictions have been jailed.

Currency, Banking and Weights and Measures

The Saudi Arabian monetary unit is the riyal (SR), which is divided into 100 halalahs. Notes are issued in denominations of 1, 5, 10, 50, 100, and 500. Coins are in 5, 10, 25, and 50 halalah denominations but they are being phased out. The riyal is quoted in dollars but based on Special Drawing Rights (SDR). As the SDR/dollar rate varies, the official riyal/dollar rate is revalued at intervals to keep within a narrow range around US\$1=SR 3.75.

The riyal is readily convertible and is one of the world's most stable currencies. Most foreign currencies can be converted against it.

Commercial banks are located in all the major cities. Riyadh, Jeddah, and Dhahran have many banks that were formerly foreign-owned but have been converted into joint stock companies with majority ownership by Saudi interests; e.g., Citibank has a minority interest in the Saudi American Bank.

Saudi Arabia is still a cash-oriented society, although acceptance of checks and major credit cards is growing.

The metric system is the official standard of measurement, although Saudi Arabia still uses older Arab weights and measures. Saudis use the Muslim lunar calendar, which is about 12 days shorter than the Gregorian calendar used in most other countries. Consequently, exact dates of official local holidays change each year.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

.....	Id al-Adha*
.....	Hijra New Year*
.....	Ashura*
.....	Mawlid an Nabi*
.....	Lailat al Kadr*
.....	Id al-Fitr*

*variable, based on the Islamic calendar

RECOMMENDED READING

These titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country. The Department of State does not endorse unofficial publications.

Note: Saudi Arabia prohibits importation of some of these books.

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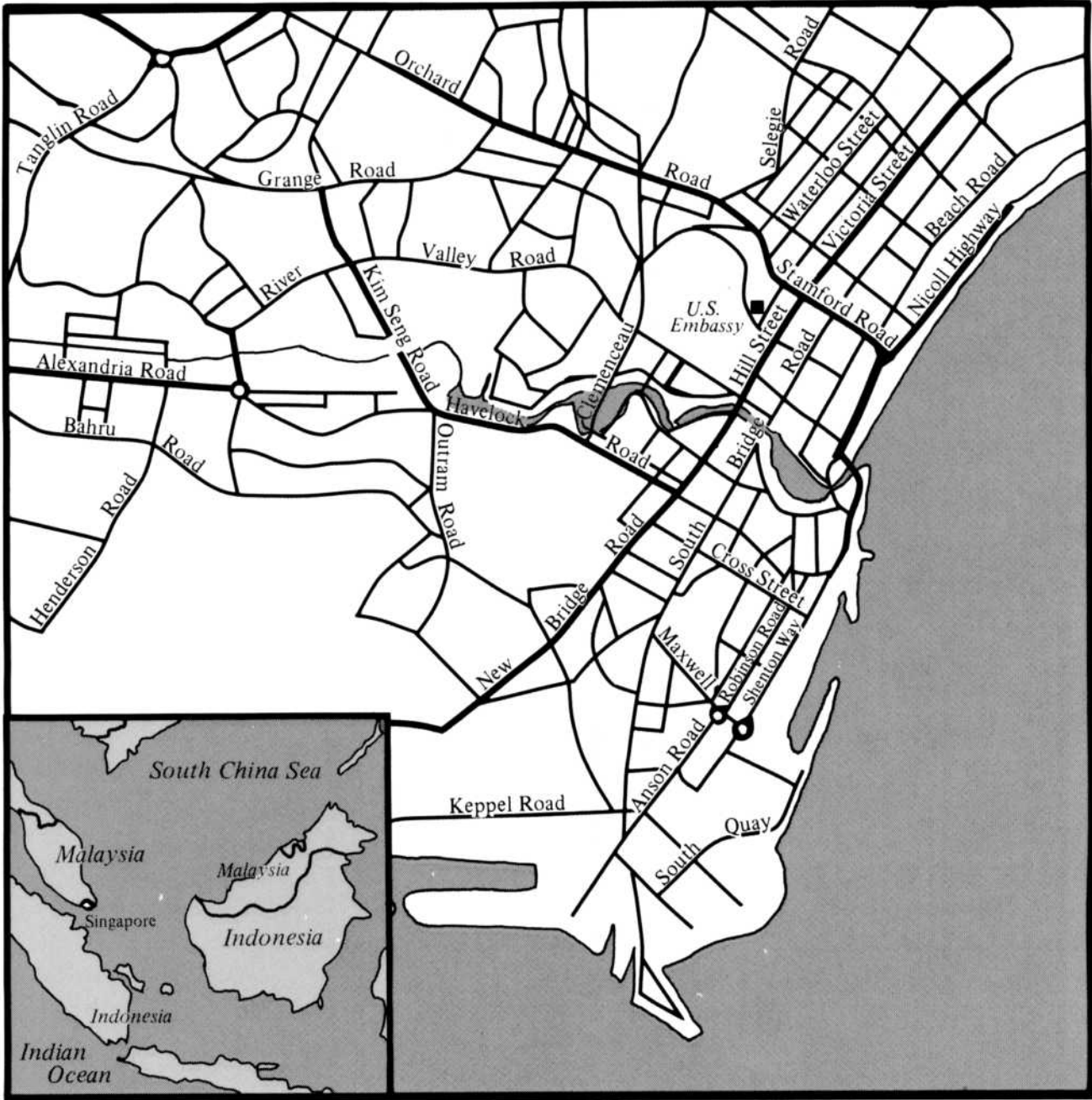
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Singapore, Singapore

SINGAPORE

Republic of Singapore

Major City:

Singapore

Other City:

Jurong

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report for Singapore. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

Since the dynamic, modern metropolis of **SINGAPORE** attained its independence in August 1965, its capable leadership has been molding it into a model of social and economic progress and multi-racial harmony. A former British colony, and later a self-governing member of the British Commonwealth and (for two years) of the Federation of Malaysia, the Republic of Singapore remains a major port of the East, and one of the world's great commercial centers.

Singapore ranks with Japan and Brunei as one of the most prosperous countries in Asia. One of the busiest and cleanest ports in the world, it throbs with activity. It is a

melting pot of Chinese, Malay, Indian, and Western cultures, each endeavoring to maintain its own identity and rich heritage.

MAJOR CITY

Singapore

Singapore is both a city and a republic. The entire country is almost entirely urban and suburban in nature and, because of this, the distinction between Singapore and Singapore City is disappearing. Therefore, all national information applies to the city as well.

The modern city was established in 1819 by Sir Stamford Raffles of the British East India Company. Centuries earlier, it had been known as Temasek, or "Sea Town." According to legend, its current name was given by a prince of the Srivijaya (Hindu-Malayan) empire who, upon landing at Temasek, saw an animal resembling a lion; hence, Singa Pura, or Lion City.

The settlement begun here by Raffles attracted enterprising merchants and industrious immigrants from throughout the Malay peninsula and the islands of the Indonesian archipelago. Soon came the

Chinese, Indians, British, Arabs, and Ceylonese whose descendants comprise today's Singaporean population.

Separate areas were designated for the many and varied ethnic groups who came to seek new and better lives and, although there has been considerable assimilation and resettlement, Singapore retains areas where traditions of the past continue. Narrow roads, vibrant street activity, mosques and temples, and unique sights and sounds all add to the color and fascination of this exotic city. The harbor, the parks and gardens, and the colonial heart of Singapore create still another, but equally interesting, aspect of this Southeast Asian melange.

Singapore, which became part of the Straits Settlements (British crown colony) in 1826, was made a separate British colony in 1946. It was a Malaysian state from 1963 to 1965, when it established its independence as a republic. During World War II, Singapore was under Japanese occupation for three-and-a-half years.

Clothing

Lightweight trousers, shirt (long- or short-sleeved) and tie are appropriate office wear. Many men keep a jacket and tie on hand only for more formal events. Suitable fabrics for

trousers and suits are lightweight dacron, cotton blends, or other washable fabrics.

Ready-to-wear shorts, worn for sports, and trousers are available in Singapore. Some men have their clothing tailor-made at about the same cost as a better quality ready-to-wear suit in the U.S. Workmanship is generally good.

A variety of British and U.S. men's items, such as shirts, socks, underwear, handkerchiefs, ties, and accessories, are sold in Singapore. U.S. items are usually more expensive here—size 34 waist and above are not easily obtained. U.S.-made shoes, however, are not available. Some men, especially those with small feet, have found locally acquired shoes comfortable and well fitting; lasts tend to be wider than U.S. styles. European shoes also are available, but costlier. American sizes nine and above are scarce and at times difficult to find.

Cool and washable cottons and cotton blends are the best fabric choices for women in Singapore's heat and humidity. Frequent laundering is necessary, and clothes fade and wear more rapidly here than in the U.S. Clothing that requires dry cleaning is not recommended, as few facilities meet U.S. standards. Light colors are cooler for day, although both dark and light colors are worn. Short- or long-sleeved and sleeveless dresses can be worn, depending on air conditioning and personal preference.

In the office, women wear dresses or pantsuits; a sweater is useful because of the air conditioning. Casual, summer daytime wear is appropriate for other everyday activities. Singaporeans dress conservatively but stylishly and are not usually seen in bare-shoulder or bare-midriff dresses during the day. Shorts and pants are worn for most sports; shorts are considered inappropriate on the street or for shopping, but culottes, knee-length shorts, or slacks are popular. Skirts and blouses are comfortable for golf;

tennis outfits for tennis and squash are available or can be made.

Leather, patent leather, linen, and silk shoes are worn as in the U.S. Low-heeled sandals are most comfortable, as closed shoes may be warm. Ready-made shoes are available, but sizes eight or larger and narrow widths are available only in expensive European imports. Shoes can be made, but often with disappointing results. If proper fit is a problem for you, bring a good supply. Remember, feet might swell in tropical heat.

All schools, including the American School, require locally made uniforms for children. Play clothes for outside activities and some dress clothes for parties and church should be brought from home.

Generally, available ready-to-wear clothing includes some U.S. brands, but parents usually rely on local ready-made play clothes. Children's dress clothes can be made here inexpensively.

Food

Several major supermarkets in Singapore are comparable to small U.S. supermarkets. Most families also have a grocer who takes daily telephone orders and delivers goods to the home. These items cost more than in the supermarket but, for many, the service is timesaving and convenient.

Fresh fruits and vegetables are abundant. Local, tropical varieties, as well as those imported from either the Northern or Southern Hemisphere, depending on the season, are available. Oranges and apples shipped from the U.S. and elsewhere are of high quality. Orange juice is expensive. Canned goods are imported from Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan, the People's Republic of China, the U.S., and Europe. A limited variety of frozen foods can be purchased. Baby foods and formulas, both U.S. and Australian brands, are available but more expensive than in the U.S.

Fresh milk and other dairy products are imported from Australia and are expensive. Most resident Americans buy reconstituted, canned, or powdered milk at considerable savings.

Good meat is imported from Australia and New Zealand. Australian beef has a slightly different taste and texture, as the cattle are grass-fed rather than corn-fed. Domestic chickens are less expensive than other meats and are of good quality.

Food spoils quickly in this hot, humid climate. Airtight containers (which are available here) prolong freshness and keep ants and weevils out of flour, sugar, crackers, and cookies.

Supplies & Services

Singapore offers many types of repair services. Local craftsmanship ranks higher in quality and considerably lower in cost than that in the U.S. In the Eastern tradition, china, furniture, shoes, etc., are repaired time and again; nothing that can be salvaged is discarded.

Quality dry cleaning varies, and even a firm one has come to trust may eventually prove undependable. Prices are high.

Singapore has commercial laundries, but an *amah* (a domestic) will probably do the washing at home. *Amahs* are thorough, but not always gentle; they are among the reasons that clothes fade and wear out quickly.

Many beauty shops offer services comparable with those of an average quality U.S. shop. Some stylists and services are excellent, and most women eventually make satisfactory arrangements.

Most electronic equipment can be repaired locally; workmanship is reliable. U.S. equipment is more expensive to repair than Japanese and European brands.

One of the few genuine bargains in Singapore—picture framing—is of good quality and inexpensive. Non-

reflecting glass and acid free matting are available.

Religious Activities

Most major Christian religions are represented here. English services are held at Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Anglican, Mormon, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Methodist, Baptist, Christian Scientist, or Seventh Day Adventist churches. One Sephardic synagogue conducts "Baghdad-tradition" services, which is not easily understood by most American Jews.

It is the custom for those visiting mosques and temples to remove their shoes before entering. Modest dress is expected.

Domestic Help

Household domestics are difficult to find. Increasingly, both Americans and Singaporeans are employing foreigners—Filipinos, Indonesians, Thais, Sri Lankans, Indians, Bangladeshis, and Malaysians—which often means cumbersome and expensive hiring arrangements, as they must be approved by the government before they are permitted to work or enter the country.

Americans here often employ at least one general domestic called an *amah*, whose duties usually include cooking, cleaning, washing, ironing and, sometimes, baby-sitting.

Singles or those without children need only a part-time *amah* who works a few days a week.

Some families employ more than one domestic, in varying combinations of cook, *amah*, cook/*amah*, gardener, etc. These may be live-in or live-out, and either full- or part-time.

Monthly wages vary from S\$300 for a part-time *amah* to S\$600 for a full-time live-in cook/*amah*. A foreign maid is paid less than a Singaporean maid. In addition to basic salary, a food allowance is usually paid. For a Singaporean or foreign *amah*, the employer makes a monthly payment based on salary to the Central Provident Fund (CPF),

a form of social security. No CPF payment is required for a domestic who is employed less than 14 hours per week. The employer usually gives an annual bonus of one month's salary to Chinese employees at Chinese New Year, to Malay employees at Hari Raya Puasa, and to Christian employees at Christmas.

Education

Since 1956, the Singapore American School has provided an U.S.-style education to the international community. The aim of the school is to educate and equip children of any race, religion, or nationality with academic, social and interpersonal skills to help insure success in adult life. A wide range of electives and extracurricular activities are offered.

Nonprofit and community supported, the Singapore American School has children from over 40 nationalities in attendance, although more than 60 percent of the student body are U.S. citizens. The current total enrollment is over 2,000. Classes for preschool (three year olds), pre-kindergarten through grade eight are at the Ulu Pandan Campus, grades nine through 12 use the King's Road Campus.

The school year consists of two semesters, with vacations at Christmas and spring break. Full accreditation is given by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

In addition to the intramural program, the school is the venue for many Singapore American Community Action Council (SACAC) programs, which include American football, gymnastics, baseball, and T-ball.

Through grade eight, the classrooms are designed for multi-age groupings with a continuous educational progress program. The high school compares to a comprehensive U.S. high school, but does not offer an extensive vocational education program. The program of study is

mainly, though not exclusively, college preparatory.

The address of Singapore American School is 60 King's Road, Singapore 1026, Republic of Singapore, (high school); 201 Ulu Pandan Road, Singapore 2159, Republic of Singapore (elementary school).

The International School of Singapore opened in September 1981 and is committed to a complete academic program stressing the basics of education. A standardized testing program, using both American and British materials, insures that students are progressing at a rate that compares to that of their peers in their homeland. English is the dominant language but, for the large number of non-English speaking students, a separate program—English as a Second Language—is offered. This program enables students of any nationality to participate in class with little difficulty. The school's educational program helps students successfully complete O- and A-level examinations as well as the Scholastic Achievement Test, which prepares them to enter American colleges and universities.

International School is located 15 minutes from downtown Singapore. Facilities include two campuses, 54 classrooms, cafeteria, playing fields, science laboratories, computer room, and a 6,000-volume library. The school is completely air-conditioned. International's mailing address is Preston Road, Singapore 0410.

Two excellent schools, the United World College of Southeast Asia and the Dover Court Preparatory School, offer a British curriculum and are highly accredited.

The United World College of South East Asia is an international day and boarding school for students in grades six through 12. It seeks to foster international understanding through education and also to provide schooling adapted to today's special needs. Its pupils represent some 40 different nationalities, but

share a common academic and activities curriculum. Equivalence agreements exist with most countries represented at the school, so that departing pupils may obtain admission to universities of their choice in their own countries. Some 1,350 students are generally enrolled; about 50 are American.

United World College was designed as the first of a number of international schools that offer students of different nationalities a two-year course of study before entering a university or starting a career. Course work is geared to the British school system, but a record of study credits is maintained for all American students and for others who may require it during grades nine through 12. Arrangements are made for students considering application to U.S. universities to take the Scholastic Aptitude and Achievement Tests set by the College Entrance Examination Board.

The school year, beginning in September, comprises three terms. An eight-week vacation begins in early July, and two shorter vacations of about two weeks each are taken in December and late March.

Queries should be directed to the school at Pasir Panjang, P.O. Box 15, Singapore 9111, Republic of Singapore.

Dover Court Preparatory School is an international boarding and day preparatory school for children in pre-kindergarten through grade nine. Current enrollment numbers some 900 students; Americans represent a small percentage.

Classrooms are large, light, airy, and well equipped. The buildings are set in 12 acres of park land, and the school has ample playing areas. A tennis court and facilities for swimming, athletics, and football are available.

The school year, comprised of three terms, begins in September and ends in July. A limited number of boarding facilities are offered to

children of all nationalities from ages six through 13.

A Child Guidance Center at the Dover Court site provides individual therapy. The center offers a full psycho-educational testing program and individual therapy for children who have learning disabilities or emotional and behavioral problems. There are some boarding facilities.

Further information is available from the school at Dover Road, Singapore 0513, Republic of Singapore.

Another institution with a British curriculum is the Tanglin Trust Schools located six miles from the city center, near the National University of Singapore. The coeducational, day school for children ages three to 11 has a definite British focus; no Americans attend. The address is Portsdown Road, Singapore 0513, Republic of Singapore.

Singapore universities enroll some foreign students. The Chinese Language and Research Center, located on the Nanyang Campus of the National University of Singapore (NUS), is popular with Chinese language specialists. American students cannot enroll in degree programs.

The National University of Singapore has a non-credit, evening lecture series on a variety of subjects. The Vocational Industrial Training Board offers a number of practical courses such as boat handling, interior decorating, Japanese flower arranging, silk screen printing, photography, and woodworking; these are open to Americans upon application.

Courses in Chinese cooking, yoga, painting, *mah-jongg*, etc., are available through the YWCA. The American Women's Association, the Pan Pacific South-East Asian Women's Association, the Chinese Women's Association, and other groups offer similar programs.

Language-study programs are available. The Alliance Française offers a complete range of courses in

French. Both the NUS and the Vocational Industrial Training Board teach several languages in evening classes. NUS offers full-time Mandarin instruction. A commercial language center features up-to-date language equipment.

Recreation

Opportunities for touring and sight-seeing in the Singapore area are nearly limitless. Some of the most interesting places are:

The Botanical Gardens. Singapore is famous for these gardens, where the first rubber saplings of South-east Asia were brought from South America and planted. Today, thousands of exotic tropical plants flourish, including rare orchid hybrids. Black swans float on a tranquil lake. It is a gorgeous park and well worth a Sunday afternoon's stroll.

The Mandai Orchid Gardens, truly a land of orchids. In these gardens alone are thousands of colorful hybrids, many of which have won acclaim in international flower shows, but commercial shipments often strip the gardens of their flowers.

Jurong Bird Park, the world's largest and most colorful aviary, inhabited by thousands of feathered creatures, including dozens of rare species. Electric tram cars take visitors around the park, and to the world's tallest man-made waterfall as well.

Singapore Zoological Gardens, one of the most modern zoos in existence. Here, most animals live in a natural setting—a promontory with lawns, trees, and shrubs. An electric train takes visitors around the gardens.

Mount Faber—Sentosa Island. If one wishes to escape from Singapore proper, the cable car at Mount Faber can be taken to the Island of Sentosa. Mount Faber is 385 feet above sea level, the perfect spot to watch the sun go down and lights come up in the city. Telescopes are provided for an excellent view of the harbor, the Southern

Islands and, on a clear day, the Indonesian Archipelago. Sentosa is a lush unspoiled island with a natural forest and a quiet village. Features include a superb 18-hole golf course on the sea, the world's first coralarium, and a swimming lagoon and picnic area. The Surrender Chamber is also located on this island; this is a replica of the site of the original surrendering of Singapore by the Japanese Occupation Forces to the Allied Forces after World War II.

The range of sight-seeing in Singapore also includes Tiger Balm Gardens, which features grotesque plaster and stone figures representing demons, grottos, and scenes from Chinese myth and legend. Chinatown lies in and around New Bridge Road and, although many of the old shop houses are being demolished, visitors can still see medicine men and fortune tellers on the sidewalk. There are more than 500 Chinese and Indian temples in Singapore, notable among them the exotic Sri Mariamman Hindu temple on South Bridge Road, the Sultan Mosque, and the Buddhist Temple of One Thousand Lights. Other interesting places to visit are Chinese and Japanese Gardens, Van Kleef Aquarium and the Kranji War Memorial. A small National Museum features a limited study of the natural history of the region and houses an impressive jade collection. The National University of Singapore maintains a small but excellent collection of Oriental ceramics which presently is on long-term loan to the National Museum. The National Art Gallery presents exhibits by local and international artists.

As a duty free port, Singapore offers many imported items below European prices. Movie cameras, calculators, watches, household appliances, sporting equipment, and leather goods are some products which may be purchased at discount, although prices can vary widely between establishments. Good, but expensive, jade and antiques from Burma, China, and Thailand may be purchased in some

of the elegant shops in the Tanglin Road area. In the North Bridge Road, Arab Street, and Serangoon Road districts, crafts such as Chinese figurines, rattan and cane furniture, batik, and silk are available. The best places for casual shopping are the large shopping centers on Orchard and Tanglin Roads and People's Park on New Bridge Road.

In general, Americans in Singapore rely on Malaysia for weekend excursions or more extended trips. The Malaysian macadam, two-lane roads are good, although narrow, and frequent congestion often results in extended delays on the causeway into Malaysia. Rest houses, run by the government, are inexpensive, usually clean and comfortable (if unglamorous), and are found throughout Malaysia. Dining facilities provide Chinese, Indian, and Malay food, as well as simple Western dishes.

The Safari Park, north of Singapore in Johore State, Malaysia, features wild animals roaming freely in an enclosed area. Visitors drive through the park in cars to observe the animals in their natural habitat.

Malaysia's east coast, up to the northern border, has roads that are passable during dry months. However, in the rainy season, allowances must be made for flooded road conditions. A few streams and rivers still have unreliable ferry systems, although modern bridges are presently being constructed. A three-hour drive up the east coast will lead to Mersing, where visitors can stay at the rest house, rent boats, and visit the uninhabited paradise-type islands with clear blue water, palm trees, and white beaches.

Instruction or participation in most sports is available, but may require membership in a club. Golf, bowling, tennis, squash, rugby, soccer, softball, swimming, sailing, horseback riding, scuba diving, judo, yoga, and ice skating are among those available here.

The Singapore Swimming Club has a large saltwater pool, and badminton is also available. The American Club is noted for its bowling lanes, and offers opportunities to join leagues; the pool here is small, but excellent for children. Tennis, squash, and racquetball facilities are available. The Cricket Club features tennis (eight grass courts), squash, and cricket.

Golf is popular. The Singapore Island Country Club has four excellent courses at two separate locations, but membership is expensive and the waiting period is usually several years. Other golf clubs are the Warren, Changi, Seletar, Koppel, Sembawang, Jurong, and Tengah. These are nine-hole courses, less expensive, and with shorter waiting periods for membership. Non-members can play on weekdays by paying greens fees.

The Singapore Tennis Center, with nine outdoor and three indoor courts operating on the principle of U.S. tennis centers, is open to the public for hourly and seasonal rental.

The Singapore Sports Council operates several swimming pools, a dozen or so squash courts, more than 30 tennis courts, and a short seven-hole golf course. All are open to the public for a nominal fee. The YMCA and YWCA offer tennis, squash, martial arts such as karate and Tai Kwon Do, yoga, and other sports and recreational activities for a nominal charge.

Boating is popular; sailboats and motor-boats are available, as are opportunities for water-skiing and scuba diving. Surprisingly, beaches are poor and scarce; the best are located offshore and in Malaysia, and can be reached only by boat. Singapore has several yacht clubs, including the Republic of Singapore Yacht Club, the Singapore Sailing Club in Changi, and the Singapore Armed Forces Yacht Club. Dinghies and motor-boats are available for daily and monthly charter at most clubs for nominal fee.



Cory Langley. Reproduced by permission.

Industrial port of Singapore

Malaysia is no longer good hunting country, and game conservation efforts are being made. Wild pig is about the only game bagged, despite occasional reports in the press of tigers and rogue elephants. Import and licensing of firearms is strictly controlled, and a permit for possession is obtained only after considerable delay.

Some surf fishing is done off the Malaysian coast. Taman Negara National Park, north of Kuala Lumpur, is well stocked for stream and river fishing. The park is accessible only by river.

Because of the heat and the beating sun, hiking is not an enjoyable sport here; however, a men's cross-country running club meets in the evening. Jungle hiking is quite pleasant in the cool hill country of Malaysia.

Farther up the east coast are beaches and good accommodations. From May to September, one can see the sea turtles which come up at night to lay their eggs on most of the beaches along the east coast. However, in Malaysia, as elsewhere in the world today, some of the beaches are polluted.

Two popular spots on the west coast are Malacca, the old Dutch and Por-

tuguese trading center, once the hub of trade before Singapore was founded in 1819; and Port Dickson, a beach resort which has fishing, swimming, sailing, and water-skiing facilities. Both are five to six hours by car from Singapore and have good accommodations.

Trips to Kuala Lumpur and Penang take more than two days, except by air. Also, a longer journey is required to visit one of the hill stations in Malaysia. Fraser's Hill (about two hours' drive from Kuala Lumpur) and Cameron Highlands (five hours' drive), have a definite colonial atmosphere. A resort with high-rise hotel and gambling facilities is located at Genting Highlands (one hour). A visit to any of these places provides a refreshing climatic change, since they are 10 to 15 degrees cooler than Singapore. They offer golf and hiking.

Entertainment

Several air-conditioned, first-run movie theaters show most recent American, British, and Chinese films. High quality but less popular art films are shown at the Goethe Institut. Some private clubs and film societies offer members a wide spectrum of classic, popular films. A number of commercial video-tape rental shops exist (PAL system). All films and videos are censored.

The government-sponsored Singapore Symphony Orchestra made its debut in early 1979 and features both guest conductors and soloists. Instrumental and choral groups, and solo musicians also give public recitals. Popular artists and groups frequently appear at various hotels and in large outdoor concerts. Musical programs are contributed by Singapore's various ethnic groups, ranging from Western ensemble to traditional Malay *kronchong* (orchestra) music. Those who wish to participate in musical activities have many opportunities to do so.

A number of capable amateur groups present plays. Impresarios sponsor an occasional one-man show or small theatre troupe. Traditional Chinese opera and Indian and Malay dances are popular in Singapore.

The Singapore National Library, considered one of the best in the area, has more than 400,000 English-language books, plus a smaller number in the other official languages. The National University of Singapore's extensive library facilities may be used with permission granted on individual application. Small libraries are maintained in the American Club and the Tanglin Club for members' use, as well as a number of small specialized collections scattered throughout the city.

Singapore has many well-stocked bookstores. A good selection of both American and British paperbacks are available at prices somewhat higher than in the U.S. Selection is good at Singapore's many record and tape stores, but new releases are not always available.

Dining is a pleasure here. Singapore has a variety of inexpensive restaurants and, with concerted attempts to lure tourists and the resultant hotel boom, the number of good eating places has multiplied. Variety in style, quality, and price is infinite—from outdoor stalls to elegant continental dining.

Every type of Chinese, Indian, Malay, and Indonesian food is available in Singapore. The food at outdoor night markets and also at daytime food stalls near Telok Ayer Market is excellent, and visitors need not worry about unhygienic preparation. Curries and Indian vegetarian food can be found, and there also are establishments where *Nonya* food—a unique mixture of Chinese ingredients and Malay cooking—is served. Western food is also available. The local Tiger beer is excellent, and Singapore is one of only a few places in Asia where water can be consumed safely.

Opportunities abound to devote time to charity. Many institutions for orphans and for the handicapped welcome volunteers.

The Singapore American Community Action Council (SACAC), created in 1973, works with the American schools here to combat drug abuse and promote a healthy home environment by providing counseling and sponsoring activities for singles, families and young people.

The American Women's Association (AWA) is a large and active organization whose monthly meetings usually feature a speaker. The AWA sponsors many trips, courses, and activities, and provides outreach opportunities for volunteers.

The American Business Council, a large group of resident Americans representing most of the U.S. companies in Singapore, discusses business matters through specialized committees.

Singapore offers an interesting and varied social life; an individual's work and personal wishes determine the degree of involvement. Singaporeans are friendly and sociable; opportunities to meet members of the large and growing multi-national business community are numerous.

The Singapore Tourist Promotion Board is located at Raffles City

Tower 36-04, 250 North Bridge Road, Singapore 0617.

OTHER CITY

JURONG, in the western section of Singapore, is one of the largest industrial sites in Southeast Asia. Jurong is not a separate city, but is known as an "industrial town." Over 3,000 companies are situated in 20 industrial estates, employing almost 70 percent of the country's work force. Industries include ship-building yards, a steel pipe factory, and an oil refinery. The National Iron and Steel Mill is the city's industrial center. Jurong has a short history, dating only to the early 1960s. Singapore's secession from the Malaysia federation in 1965 slowed the suburb's growth. Jurong Bird Park, with the world's largest walk-in aviary, and the Chinese and Japanese Gardens—the Japanese being one of the largest such gardens outside of Japan—are among tourist spots. The Singapore Science Center, located here, covers physical and life sciences, specifically for younger visitors. Jurong Town has a university, and all social amenities.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Singapore is a small and almost entirely urbanized island (225 square miles at high tide). It lies 85 miles north of the equator, off the tip of the Malay Peninsula, from which it is separated by the Straits of Johore. A causeway, with both a road and a railway, crosses the three-quarters of a mile to the Malay mainland. Relatively flat (highest elevation 581 feet), the maximum distance from east to west is 26 miles and from north to south, 14 miles. The Republic of Singapore consists of Singapore Island and 54 smaller islands.

Vegetation is lush and tropical. Seasons are nonexistent. Here in the "Land of Eternal Summer," the mean high is 82°F and the mean low, 77°F. For its location, however, Singapore is not as hot as might be expected and, at times, it is surprisingly cool because of sea breezes.

Humidity is high (average 70%) and annual rainfall is 96 inches. Wet and dry seasons are somewhat indistinct, but November through February are wetter than the other months and tend to be cooler. Over a period of time, the climate can be oppressive. Depending on the length of one's stay, the lack of climatic variation coupled with the difficulty of leaving the island may cause psychological weariness. For this reason regular exercise and frequent vacations are important here.

Even in a clean city like Singapore, the tropical climate seems to foster diseases; germs and viruses thrive here. Many people who have scant history of illness complain of recurring colds and other infections. Enthusiastic air conditioning probably contributes to respiratory problems. Many restaurants and shops are uncomfortably overcooled.

Humidity makes mildew a problem—books, records, leather items, or anything that is not used or aired regularly or stored in air conditioning is vulnerable. Closets and bureau drawers take on a musty odor that is difficult to eliminate. Rust is also a problem; metal items that are not painted or tropicalized begin to rust in a short time.

Singapore, like every other tropical area, has its share of cockroaches, water bugs, small pesky ants, and termites. Flies are almost nonexistent. Mosquitoes can be annoying despite strenuous efforts to control them, but malaria is not a problem.

Population

Singapore's population is almost 4.3 million (2001 est.). The average annual growth rate is 3.5%. Most of the population (77%) is ethnically

Chinese; Malays comprise 14% of the population; and Indians 7.9%

A fascinating melange of cultures fulfills the Singapore Tourist Promotion Board promise of "Instant Asia." Because of the multi-racial character of the society, there are many sights, sounds, tastes, and smells of the East.

Chinese, English, Malay, and Tamil (the language of southeastern India) are official languages. Most Chinese are descendants of immigrants from China's southern provinces, and their main dialects are Hokkien, Teochew, and Cantonese. The government is stressing the learning of Mandarin by all Singaporeans, particularly the Chinese. English is used for administration; about 75 percent of Singapore's citizens speak and understand at least rudimentary English. A knowledge of one of the other tongues is not necessary, but Chinese and Malay can be useful—the latter, especially, for traveling in Malaysia.

Singapore is a secular state with considerable religious tolerance. The main religions are Taoism, Islam, Buddhism (mostly Mahayana), Christianity (almost equally divided between Catholic and Protestant), and Hinduism. Two holidays of each of the major groups in Singapore are set aside for national observance. Sikhs, Jews, Zoroastrians, and Jains are also represented.

The cultural patterns are equally rich in variety. In a multi-racial society, each ethnic group stresses its traditions to preserve its individuality. For example, Thaipusam, a Hindu religious observance, is dying out in India, but is celebrated with fervor in Singapore. Chinese New Year, in January or February, is a two-week festival marked by feasting and home celebration. Muslims celebrate Hari Raya Puasa and Hari Raya Haji with equal enthusiasm.

Multi-racial, multi-religious, multi-cultural—herein lies some of the fascination of Singapore. Except for Muslim or Hindu dietary restric-

tions, which generally must be honored when entertaining Malays or Indians, few taboos differ markedly from those in America.

Government

Singapore's parliamentary democracy government is based on full adult suffrage. Voting is compulsory.

Parliament's 83 members are elected for a maximum of five years. Members usually speak English but may speak in any of the four official languages, and simultaneous translation is provided.

Before the constitution was amended in 1991, Singapore's largely ceremonial president was elected to a four-year term by the Parliament. The amended constitution retains the term length, but the president is now elected by the people. In addition, the president gained control over the spending of the country's significant monetary reserves and over certain civil service appointments. In 1996, however, the Parliament enacted governmental reforms that curtailed the president's veto power. Ong Teng Cheong was elected in 1993 in Singapore's first popular presidential election. The current president is Sellapan Ramanathan (1999).

The president appoints as new prime minister the member of Parliament with the most support. The cabinet is also chosen by the president, but with the advice of the prime minister. Most governmental affairs are handled by the prime minister and cabinet. Lee Kuan Yew had been the only prime minister in the country's history when he left office (1959–1990). Goh Chok Tong succeeded him.

The three major political parties are the People's Action Party (authoritarian), the Workers' Party of Singapore (social-democratic) and the Singapore Democratic Alliance.

Singapore's government has long been known as restrictive, with social stability often taking prece-

dence over individual liberty. Examples of this government authoritarianism include: the management and control of all television and radio broadcasting, control over news publications, and maintaining the power to interfere with the activities of opposition political parties. The government's policy of flogging criminals received international attention in 1993 when an American was sentenced for vandalism and receiving stolen goods.

Singapore is a land of the entrepreneur, a free port, and a significant importer of food and agricultural products. However, as the major trading center for Southeast Asia, it trades or transships 75 percent of its imports to neighboring markets. The government is committed to a mixed policy allowing a high degree of free enterprise, but also is heavily involved in commerce and industry. In addition, an extensive social development program of education, housing, medical care, and social welfare has been instituted. One of the most impressive achievements is low-cost public housing. Some 86 percent of Singapore's population live in high-rise apartments built by the government.

The flag of Singapore consists of red and white horizontal divisions; in the upper left canton are a white crescent and five white stars.

Arts, Science, Education

Education is not compulsory, but primary education is free for the children of Singapore citizens, and is universally available. The government endeavors to provide at least 10 years of education for each child. Literacy is at 93.5% (1999).

In line with the government policy on bilingualism, each child must learn two languages, English and a choice of one of the other official languages—Chinese, Malay, or Tamil. Thus, the multi-lingual aspect of Singapore is being preserved.

The cost of secondary education is nominal. The government promotes technical and vocational education at the secondary level to enhance employment opportunities for the younger generation. The Vocational and Industrial Training Board (VITB) was established in 1979 to provide vocational training and to conduct continuing education and training. It offers about 50 courses to approximately 20,000 students in applied arts, commercial, industrial, and service skills at its 15 training institutes.

Singapore has six institutions of higher learning: the National University of Singapore (NUS), Nanyang Technological Institute, Singapore Polytechnic, Ngee Ann Polytechnic, the Institute of Education, and the College of Physical Education.

The NUS offers courses leading to bachelor degrees in eight faculties; namely, arts and social sciences, law, science, medicine, dentistry, engineering, architecture and building, accounting and business administration. Graduate degrees are available in most faculties. The Nanyang Technological Institute conducts practice-oriented engineering courses at university level. The Institute of Education, in conjunction with the NUS, offers graduate-degree programs in education.

Singapore Polytechnic and Ngee Ann Polytechnic are two institutions that provide courses mainly at technician level. These institutions offer courses comparable to those at U.S. junior colleges.

Each year, a large number of Singaporean students go abroad to the U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, or Great Britain for higher studies.

Government policy is to preserve and nurture the traditions of the various ethnic communities. Hence, the arts in Singapore are as varied as its cultural heritage. Amateur organizations regularly use dance, drama, and musical performances to reflect the diverse cultures of var-

ious ethnic groups. In addition, foreign troupes and companies and popular recording artists have performed to full houses and appreciative audiences. The Cultural Affairs Unit of the Ministry of Community Development, and, to a lesser extent, the National Theater Trust, are the principal impresarios, with sponsorship from the government, diplomatic missions, the business community, and foundations.

The premier cultural event is the Festival of Arts, held biennially since 1977. The month-long festival features outstanding local, regional, and international productions, representing all facets of the performing arts. The Houston Ballet, Merce Cunningham Dance Company, Magic Theater of San Francisco, and jazz greats Ellis Marsalis, Billy Taylor, and Herbie Mann are some of the American groups that have participated in previous festivals. The Ministry organizes annual jazz, drama, and choral festivals.

The Singapore Symphony Orchestra (SSO), a full-time professional orchestra, performs regularly at the Victoria Concert Hall and occasionally gives outdoor performances at parks and community centers. The Symphony's season is divided into four quarterly series, each consisting of six to eight pairs of concerts. The SSO also performs familiar favorites concerts, featuring lighter music. The Orchestra often features renowned conductors and soloists as guest performers.

The National Museum offers handsome displays of Singapore's social and culture history, and an audiovisual show to bring it all up to date. The National Museum Art Gallery, which houses a permanent collection of contemporary works by local and Malaysian artists, regularly organizes short-term exhibitions by Singaporean artists, and hosts quality exhibitions from abroad. The Young People's Gallery displays students' arts and crafts and holds workshops for schoolchildren.

The Singapore Science Centre, established in 1970, is rated as one

of the most outstanding institutions of its kind in the world. Its five exhibition galleries contain over 500 exhibits, many of them "participatory," which are regularly updated. The center has research facilities and hosts public lectures and scientific conferences. Its Omni-Theater, opened in 1987, houses a 274-seat omniplanetarium where images are projected onto a curved viewing area, extending over the audience's heads and beyond their peripheral vision, giving the illusion of a ride through space.

Commerce and Industry

Singapore is one of the world's smallest nations and also one of the most prosperous. Factors responsible for this prosperity include: a strategic location; availability of skilled, well-paid labor; tax and other financial incentives; and up-to-date telecommunications.

Singapore is a free trading country and a significant importer of food and agricultural products. The government is committed to a policy of free enterprise but is involved in commerce and industry.

During the past 20 years, Singapore's economic growth has been rapid. Per capita gross domestic product (GDP) was \$26,500 in 2000, one of the highest in Asia. The commercial and industrial structure has diversified from a primarily entrepôt trading base to include a wide range of manufacturing services and financial activities. Today, Singapore ranks as a significant oil refining center, one of the world's busiest ports, and a major financial, communications, transportation, and medical services center.

The government is making a concerted effort to move the economy away from labor-intensive manufacturing to a more high tech and service orientation. The service sector accounts for 70% of the GDP, with 35% of the workforce involved; industry is 30% of the GDP with over 20% of the workforce involved.

Singapore's economic policies are attractive to foreign investors and have led to a significant multinational business presence here. The U.S. is the largest foreign investor in Singapore, accounting for about 54% of investment commitments. U.S. interests are primarily in petroleum refining, offshore oil exploration, diversified manufacturing, and electronics. The activities of U.S. firms also include shipping, banking, hotels, insurance, importing, and exporting. The resident American community numbers over 7,000.

The European Union and Japan are next in line in terms foreign investors. The U.S., Japan and Malaysia are Singapore's major trading partners. Trade with Indonesia is also substantial. Entrepôt trade, Singapore's traditional role in the region, now provides a smaller percentage of the Gross National Product (GNP), but has continued to increase in value.

Singapore imports mainly capital goods and raw materials for industry, and exports a variety of locally manufactured products, crude rubber, electrical machinery, and finished textile goods.

The American Business Council of Singapore is located at 354 Orchard Road, #10-12 Shaw House, Singapore 0923; the telephone number is (65) 235-0077. The Singapore Federation of Chamber of Commerce and Industry is at 03-01 Chinese Chamber of Commerce Building, 47 Hill Street, Singapore 0617; telephone: (65) 338-9761.

Transportation

Singapore, a hub of air and sea transportation, is served by more than 40 airlines and about 250 shipping lines. Air flights link neighboring countries, and distances are thought of in terms of air miles (e.g., Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 204; Jakarta, Indonesia, 557; Bangkok, Thailand, 897; Manila, Philippines, 1,481; Hong Kong, 1,607). Air travel between Singapore and other cities in the region is expensive by U.S.

standards. United and Northwest have connecting flights from the U.S. via either Hong Kong or Tokyo. Singapore's Changi International Airport is one of the best airports in the world.

The Singapore terminus of the Malayan National Railroad has service to Kuala Lumpur and Penang, and connections through to Bangkok and other points in Thailand. Service is good, and cars are clean and sometimes air-conditioned. Second- and third-class travel is recommended to only the hardiest of souls. The trip from Singapore to Penang takes 20 to 22 hours.

Taxis are plentiful, except during rush hour and when it rains. Taxis are affordable, clean, and safe. Bus service is frequent and cheap; however, many buses are not air conditioned.

MRT, the underground rapid transit system, is one of the world's best. Recently completed, the central city is well served by this inexpensive, fast transportation.

Singapore's major roads and streets are, by Asian standards, excellent. They are continually being widened to accommodate increasing traffic. A causeway connects Singapore with western Malaysia, which also has a good road system and many interesting places to visit. However, extended delays are encountered on weekends and holidays, and driving in Malaysia is frequently hazardous.

As a result of increasing traffic congestion on the island, several restrictive measures have been imposed in an effort to control private ownership of automobiles. Road taxes have been raised, an Area License Scheme placed into effect, and a surcharge imposed on cars over 10 years old. These road taxes are levied on motor cubic-centimeter capacity.

Driving is on the left, and right-hand-drive cars are used universally. A Singapore driver's

license may be obtained on presentation of a valid license and a passport. Third party liability insurance is mandatory.

Small cars are easier to maneuver in Singapore's traffic and on Malaysia's narrow roads. European, Japanese, and Australian models are available. U.S. made cars are practically nonexistent in Singapore. The used car market is substantial.

Auto repairs generally cost about the same as in the U.S. Spare parts for U.S. manufactured cars are not available.

Cars may be rented daily, weekly, or monthly.

Communications

Telephone service is better in Singapore than in other major Southeast Asian cities. Direct dialing is available to most major cities. It is easy to call the U.S. from Singapore; connections are usually excellent and rates are relatively inexpensive. Commercial telegraph service to the U.S. is available and reliable.

International mail service is efficient. Airmail between Singapore and the U.S. is less than a week in transit. Mail within Southeast Asia is sometimes less dependable.

The state-owned Singapore Broadcasting Corporation (SBC) operates nine radio channels and broadcasts daily on AM and FM from 6 a.m. to midnight, with programs in English, Mandarin, Malay, and Tamil on separate frequencies. Programs are varied and news is reported on the hour. A 24-hour FM (stereo) popular music station broadcasts in English. Voice of America (VOA) morning and evening newscasts can be heard on shortwave; British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) "World Service" broadcasts are relayed on FM 24 hours a day. Listeners can also receive a 24-hour FM (stereo) popular music station from a nearby Indonesian island that broadcasts in English and Indonesian.

Three Singaporean (government controlled) and three Malaysian color television channels are received here. Weekday telecasts begin in late afternoon and end about midnight. Sunday and holiday telecasts begin at 9 a.m.; Saturday telecasts start at 1 p.m. Programming is in English, Mandarin, Tamil, and Malay. Many American programs are shown, including popular series and documentaries, although they are generally a year or so old. Channel 12, which shows cultural, educational, and informational programs (mainly in English), begins transmission at 7:30 p.m. daily for four hours.

The TV system is 625 PAL; American sets will not operate in Singapore without expensive, and sometimes unsuccessful, alterations. TV rentals are available. TVs, video players, and all types of radios can be purchased locally at reasonable prices.

Three English-language daily newspapers are published in Singapore: the *Straits Times*, the *Business Times*, and the *New Paper*, an afternoon tabloid. International news coverage in the *Straits Times* is excellent. The *International Herald Tribune* and *USA Today* are printed in Singapore via satellite and are available on newsstands the same day of U.S. distribution. The *Asian Wall Street Journal* and the *Far Eastern Economic Review* are not sold in Singapore. In 1987, the government accused both of interfering in local politics and sales were curbed. Later, the publications ceased distribution altogether. International editions of *Time* and *Newsweek* are on the stands every Thursday, and the Asian edition of *Reader's Digest* is also available.

American magazines are available on newsstands, but are a month or so late and cost two or three times their U.S. price; highly specialized and most general interest magazines are not available. Often U.K. or Australian magazines are more readily available.

Health and Medicine

Facilities are adequate for most health problems. For outpatient care, Americans usually go to doctors at commercial clinics. Competent specialists in almost every field can be found in Singapore. Most doctors have been trained in Singapore, England, Australia, the U.S., or Canada. Adequate pediatric and obstetric services also are available.

Most Americans use Mt. Elizabeth, Gleneagles, Mt. Alvernia, American Hospital, Thomson Medical Center, Youngberg Memorial Adventist, or Jurong Hospitals. All are well managed and efficient. Excellent dental and ophthalmologic care is available. Prescriptions can be filled locally.

Singapore is probably the cleanest city in Asia. Sewage and garbage disposal is never a problem. Daily trash collection is efficient. Water is potable and normally in good supply, although rationing may be imposed during prolonged drought.

The government keeps up a constant battle against mosquitoes and other insects. Flies have been all but eradicated. Ants and cockroaches are more of a problem here than in temperate climates.

Americans have found the typical overseas precautions in food preparation unnecessary in Singapore. Locally packaged food causes no ill effects. Most local restaurants, including hawker stalls, are safe.

Singapore has few health hazards. Malaria has been eradicated, although it may be picked up in Malaysia or Indonesia. Dengue fever is more of a problem. It, too, is transmitted by mosquitoes and is enervating, lasting two or three months. Occasionally, there is a case of cholera, but such cases are few and are immediately isolated.

Children sometimes contract tropical fevers of unknown origin which may last from one to three days but,

in general, Singapore provides a good environment for young children. Serious dysentery is rare. Respiratory ailments, however, are quite common. The heat and humidity increase the incidence of skin problems; treatment should be sought at the first sign of trouble, since infections spread quickly.

The yellow fever shot is the only vaccination required for entry into Singapore, and only for those arriving from infected areas. Cholera and smallpox immunizations are not necessary.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs & Duties

Singapore is about halfway around the world from Washington, DC, and is served by numerous air and shipping lines. Two American carriers, Northwest and United, provide service between the U.S. and Singapore.

A valid passport is required. U.S. citizens do not need a visa if their visit is for business or pleasure and their stay is for 90 days or less. The Government of Singapore generally allows Americans to enter with less than six months of validity remaining on their passport, but some neighboring countries, particularly Indonesia, do not. Specific information about entry requirements for Singapore may be sought from the Embassy of the Republic of Singapore at 3501 International Place, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20008, tel. (202) 537-3100. Please see also the Singapore Government home page on the Internet at <http://www.gov.sg/>.

Singapore customs authorities may enforce strict regulations concerning temporary importation into or export from Singapore of items such as firearms, illegal drugs, certain religious materials, chewing gum, videotapes, CD's, and software (for censorship or pirating reasons). It is advisable to contact the Embassy of

Singapore in Washington, D.C. for specific information regarding customs requirements. Singapore customs officials encourage the use of an ATA (Admission Temporaire/Temporary Admission) carnet for the temporary admission of professional equipment, commercial samples, and/or goods for exhibitions and fair purposes. ATA carnet headquarters, located at the U.S. Council for International Business, 1212 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10036, issues and guarantees the ATA carnet in the United States. For additional information, please call (212) 354-4480, or send e-mail to atacarnet@uscib.org or visit <http://www.uscib.org> for details.

Visitors should be aware of Singapore's strict laws and penalties for a variety of actions that might not be illegal or might be considered minor offenses in the United States, including jaywalking, littering and spitting, failure to flush at public toilets, and the importation, sale or personal use of chewing gum. Singapore has a mandatory caning sentence for vandalism offenses. Caning may also be imposed for immigration violations and other offenses. Penalties for possession, use, or trafficking in illegal drugs are strict, and convicted offenders can expect jail sentences and fines. Singapore has a mandatory death penalty for many narcotics offenses. Commercial disputes that may be handled as civil suits in the United States can escalate to criminal cases in Singapore and result in heavy fines and prison sentences. There are no jury trials in Singapore. Judges hear cases and decide sentencing. The Government of Singapore does not provide legal assistance except in capital cases.

Pets

The Immigration Department of the Government of Singapore requests six weeks' notice of intent to import a cat or dog. Dogs and cats are quarantined for a minimum of 30 days from the date of arrival and regardless of certificate of rabies immunization will be given a rabies vaccination upon arrival. Other ani-

mals are classified differently. Quarantine facilities are modern and adequate. Visiting hours are liberal, and pet owners may see their animals at the Animal Quarantine Station, 51 Jalan Buroh, Jurong Town, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 10 a.m. to noon on Saturday. The station is closed on Sundays and public holidays.

Firearms & Ammunition

Stringent controls are imposed on the importation of firearms. Licenses are issued only to members of the Singapore Gun Club or the Singapore Rifle Association.

Currency, Banking and Weights and Measures

The Singapore dollar currency is based on the decimal system.

Singapore uses the metric system of weights and measures.

The time in Singapore is Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) plus eight.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan. 1	New Year's Day
Feb.	Chinese New Year*
Mar/Apr.	Good Friday*
Mar/Apr.	Easter*
May 1	Labor Day
May	Wesak*
Aug. 9	Singapore National Day
Oct/Nov.	Diwali*
Dec. 25	Christmas Day
.	Ramadan*
.	Hari Raya Puasa/Id al-Fitr*
.	Hari Raya Haji/Id al-Adah*

*variable

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The following titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country:

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SOLOMON ISLANDS

Solomon Islands

Major City:

Honiara

Other Cities:

Auki

INTRODUCTION

People have inhabited the **SOLOMON ISLANDS** since at least 1000 BC. The Spanish explorer Alvaro de Mendaña y Neyra of Peru first visited the islands in 1567, seeking the legendary Isles of Solomon. The name “Solomon Islands” and the promise of gold helped lure settlers to the region starting in 1595. The first European settlers were killed by the islanders and by disease. Other attempts to colonize the islands failed. Missionaries arrived in the mid-1800s. The United Kingdom declared a protectorate over the southern Solomons in 1893, which gradually encompassed the entire archipelago by 1900. Commercial coconut farming began in the 20th century. During World War II, most planters and traders were evacuated to Australia. The Japanese occupied the islands during the war, and they were almost constantly a scene of combat. As a result, abandoned war equipment littered the islands, some of which remains today. After the war, the islands returned to British rule, but nationalistic movements emerged. US forces remained on the islands until 1950. The post-war generation moved closer towards self-determination, and an elected governing council was created in 1970. The Solomon Islands

became independent on July 7, 1978.

MAJOR CITY

Honiara

Honiara is located on the island of Guadalcanal, the site of bloody fighting between US and Japanese forces during World War II. Honiara derives its name from *nahoniara*, or “place of the northeast wind.” The adjacent high mountains deflect rain away, so it has a relatively low amount of rainfall compared to the rest of the island. The city itself was established after the war on the site of the original American military base that was constructed of Quonset huts between Kukum and Point Cruz in order to utilize existing roads, waterfront facilities, and buildings.

Honiara, with a population of 53,000, is the major commercial center of the Solomon Islands and has a developed port and support services. The town originally was confined to the narrow east-west seashore area, but it later grew to cover inland areas and several ridges that were once World War II battle sites. Some of the newer communities along the ridges started

out as squatters’ camps. Construction in Honiara still occasionally unearths human remains or even live munitions from the war.

There is a bomb disposal unit that detonates unexploded wartime munitions about 8 miles outside the city. A mile-long stretch of Honiara along Mendaña Avenue (between the Mendana Hotel and Chinatown) is the nation’s primary commercial and business district, with government offices, the port facility, the main shopping area, hotels, banks, restaurants, and churches. The Central Market there is the nation’s main food market, with produce arriving from all areas of the country.

Recreation

Soccer, rugby, volleyball, softball, and cricket are played at sport grounds in or around Honiara. Tennis and squash are played at clubs in Honiara, and boxing matches are held in Kukum. The Solomon Islands’ only golf course is located at Ranadi, less than 3 miles from Honiara. The golf course is located next to the remnants of a US wartime airstrip. Scuba diving and snorkeling are popular tourist activities.

The Central Bank in Honiara has a display of traditional local currency that includes money made from feathers, dolphin teeth, shells, and

clams. The governor general's residence and a memorial to the US soldiers killed at Guadalcanal are also in Honiara. The Botanical Gardens contains an orchid garden, a creek, and a greenhouse used for growing herbs.

Guadalcanal saw heavy combat during World War II, as the US and Japanese fought for control over Henderson Field, the islands' airstrip. One of the most furious sea battles ever fought took place off Savo Island, near Guadalcanal in August 1942. The naval battles between Guadalcanal and Savo during 1942–43 sent dozens of ships to the ocean floor and the channel became known as Iron Bottom Sound. Many were beached or sank close to shore, and these are possibly the most accessible shipwrecks in the world. They now provide many popular dive sites near Honiara for both experienced and beginner divers. Two popular dive sights are at the mouth of the Bonegi River, and feature sunken Japanese transport ships encrusted in coral and teeming with tropical fish.

About 12 miles from Honiara, divers can also explore an American B-17 bomber lies that lies intact under 50 feet of water. The scattered remains of aircraft, artillery, tanks, guns, and vehicles from the war also attract US and Japanese servicemen to revisit battlefield sites on Guadalcanal (such as Bloody Ridge, Tenaru, and Red Beach) and New Georgia. Six of the original Quonset huts built by the US still remain in Honiara, just west of the Mataniko River. The provincial government of Guadalcanal still uses the buildings. Honiara's Central Hospital is still known by its wartime designation of "No. 9."

South of the capital is Skyline Ridge, the site of the decisive American victory at the Battle of Mataniko River. The Skyline Memorial there honors all the US troops that served in the Solomon Islands. There are Japanese memorials atop Mt. Austen and east of the airfield at the mouth of Alligator Creek (Ilu River). The Vilu Village War

Museum, 15 miles west of Honiara, has a wide range of war artifacts, including Japanese and American aircraft.

The National Museum and Cultural Center in Honiara contains exhibits covering archeology, dance, currency, weaponry, and body ornamentation. The cultural center is in a park-like setting of traditional leaf houses that exhibit the different building customs of Solomon Islanders.

OTHER CITY

AUKI is the provincial capital on the island of Malaita. The island (population 87,000, 1992 est.) is home to many Melanesian tribes, each with different languages and customs. Auki serves as a central location from which to explore many villages and experience a variety of cultures. One of the most popular modes of exploration is a motorized canoe tour. A one hour tour will take you to Langa Langa Lagoon, where very little has changed over the centuries for the natives who worship sharks as deities. Natives will often share a performance of the traditional warriors' welcome dances or witch doctor rituals. Some may demonstrate the ancient art of making shell-money or the local custom of fortune telling. The ancient custom of shark calling is also practiced here. Day trips and tours of other local villages can be arranged. Auki is also the site of the Bush Cultural Village, a unique area where visitors can arrange to see cultural demonstrations.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The Solomon Islands is a chain of six large and numerous small islands in the South Pacific, about 1,200 miles northeast of Australia

and 300 miles east of Papua New Guinea. The largest island is Guadalcanal, covering some 2,047 square miles; other major islands are Makira, San Christobal, Vella Lavella, Choiseul, Rennell, New Georgia, and the Santa Cruz group. The topography varies from rugged mountains on Guadalcanal to low coral atolls. The highest peak is Mt. Makarakomburu on Guadalcanal, at 8,127 feet. The climate is tropical, with hot northwest equatorial winds bringing heavy rainfall from December to March. From April to November, the islands are cooled by drier southeast trade winds. The annual average temperature is 81°F; annual rainfall is 120 inches.

Population

The population in 2000 was estimated at 470,000 with a density of only 39 persons per square mile. Population density varies significantly from island to island, as most mountainous and heavily wooded areas are inaccessible. Most of the population is concentrated along coastal areas. Melanesians account for about 93% of the population; Polynesians, 4%; Micronesians, 1.5%; Europeans, Chinese, and others, 1.5%. Melanesians tend to live on the larger islands, while Polynesians inhabit the smaller islands and the atolls. Honiara is the Solomon Islands' most ethnically diverse area, with people of Melanesian, Polynesian, Gilbertese, European, and Chinese origins. Christianity is the principal organized religion; the leading sects are Anglican, Roman Catholic, Baptist, United (Methodist/Presbyterian), and Seventh-Day Adventist. Melanesian pidgin English in much of the country is *lingua franca*, and English is spoken by 1–2% of population. There are also 120 indigenous languages.

Government

In 1893, the British government established a protectorate over Guadalcanal, Malaita, San Christobal, and the New Georgia group. The remainder of the islands were



Street scene in the Solomon Islands

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under German control. Some of those islands were transferred to the United Kingdom in 1900 and the area became known as the British Solomon Islands Protectorate. During World War II, many battles between Japan and the United States were fought on or near the islands. The impact the war made on society gave impetus to a pro-independence movement in the 1950s.

In 1970, the Solomon Islands' first general election was held, and a new constitution was introduced in 1974. On June 22, 1975, the islands officially ceased being a protectorate, and by 1976 the government was acting on its own.

The Solomon Islands became a member of the Commonwealth in July 1978. Under its independence constitution of 1978, the government is a parliamentary democracy

with a ministerial system and a unicameral National Parliament. The parliament has 47 seats. The prime minister is selected from the parliamentary majority party. The head of state is the British monarch, represented by a governor-general.

'The judicial system is a blend of British and traditional systems and consists of the High Court, magistrate's courts, and local courts.

The flag consists of two triangles, the upper one blue and the lower one green, separated by a diagonal gold stripe; on the blue triangle are five white five-pointed stars arranged in a quincunx.

Arts, Science, Education

Education is not compulsory, and many schools charge fees. Christian

missions (mainly Anglican) supported by government grants, continue to provide some primary schooling. In 1994, there were about 60,500 primary school students, but only 7,800 secondary school students. Higher education is available at the Solomon Islands Teacher College, the Honiara Technical Institute, and the University of the South Pacific Solomon Islands Center.

Commerce and Industry

The economy relies on the exports of copra, timber, and fish. At least 50% of the workforce depends on subsistence agriculture, fishing, and forestry for at least part of their livelihood. Cocoa, spices, and palm oil are also important export commodities.

The islands are rich in undeveloped mineral resources such as lead, zinc, nickel, and gold. In 1998 Ross Mining of Australia began producing gold at Gold Ridge on Guadalcanal. Minerals exploration in other areas continues, and there are hopes for further gold production.

Tourism could prove to be an important service industry for Solomon Islands, especially for marine activities such as diving. However, limitations of public roads and transportation systems are the biggest deterrents to building on tourism.

Foreign aid accounts for about 13% of Solomon Islands GDP. Principal aid donors are Australia, Japan, and the Republic of China and New Zealand.

Transportation

There are no railways, but the islands do have about 800 miles of roads and another 500 miles of private logging and plantation roads. Shipping services link the Solomon Islands with other Pacific islands, Australia, Japan, and Europe. Honiara and Rini Cove are the two main ports. Government vessels provide interisland transport and handle about one-third of the country's shipping. Henderson Field on Guadalcanal is the main civil airport.

Solomon Airlines has provided flights between the islands and to nearby Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu; however, the service was suspended in Fall of 2001 by Australia's Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) for not meeting safety requirements. Service may return once safety codes are met.

In the Solomon Islands, vehicular traffic moves on the left. Surfaced roads are found only around Honiara, located on Guadalcanal Island. These surfaced roads are two lane, not well marked, and are poorly lit at night. The remaining roads in the Solomon Islands are made of coral or gravel or are dirt tracks. Travelers must take care when driving off

main roads to avoid trespassing on communal land.

Communications

About 6,000 telephones operate on the islands, and radiotelephone service provides overseas links. The government operates five radio transmitters; there are no television broadcasts but satellite television from Australia is available at some hotels. Local weekly papers include *Solomons Star* and *Solomons Voice*.

Health

Hospitals and pharmacies in the Solomon Islands are limited to population centers and missions. The nearest reliable medical facilities are in Australia or New Zealand. Medical conditions resulting from diving accidents may require medical evacuation to Australia or New Zealand.

Malaria, tuberculosis, and hookworm are still health problems. Some urban children suffer from malnutrition due to a steady Western diet of processed starches and sugar. An outbreak of Dengue fever occurred in Spring 2002.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan.1	New Year's Day
Mar/Apr.	Good Friday*
Mar/Apr.	Easter*
May/June.	Whitsunday/ Pentecost*
May/June.	Whitmonday*
June	Queen's Birthday Celebrated*
July 7	Independence Day
Dec. 25	Christmas Day
Dec. 26	Thanksgiving Day

*Variable

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs & Duties

U.S. passport holders do not require visas to enter the Solomon Islands. Passports, onward/return tickets and proof of sufficient funds are required. Visitor permits are granted upon arrival at Henderson International Airport in Honiara. Visitors may enter any number of times provided the total period in the Solomon Islands does not exceed 90 days in a 12-month period. The Solomon Islands government strictly enforces immigration laws, and travelers may face fines and other penalties if they remain in the country beyond the authorized period.

Persons arriving on yachts should call the nearest immigration office to complete arrival forms for issuance of visitors permits. Travelers who anticipate the possibility of transiting or visiting Australia are advised to obtain an electronic travel authority (ETA) or visa for Australia before leaving the United States. The ETA is available to eligible U.S. citizens at time of ticket purchase through travel agents and airlines. For more information about entry requirements, travelers may contact the Solomon Islands Mission to the United Nations at 800 Second Avenue 4th Floor, New York, NY 10017-4709; Tel: (212) 599?6192.

The Solomon Islands' customs authorities may enforce strict regulations concerning temporary importation into or export from the Solomon Islands of items such as firearms and ammunition, sexually explicit material and certain prescription drugs. Other items may be subject to quarantine regulations or import duty. The Solomon Islands' government prohibits the export of military artifacts from World War II. It is advisable to contact the Solomon Islands' Mission to the United Nations for specific informa-

tion regarding customs requirements.

There is no U.S. Embassy in the Solomon Islands. However, there is a U.S. Consular Agency in Honiara. The Consular Agent, who has general information and forms (such as passport applications for forwarding to Port Moresby) may be contacted at B.J.S. Agencies Limited in Honiara, Tel (677) 23426; Fax (677) 21-027. Primary assistance for U.S. citizens is provided by the U.S. Embassy in Papua New Guinea, which is located on Douglas Street, adjacent to the Bank of Papua New Guinea, in Port Moresby. Use this address for courier service deliveries. The mailing address is P.O. Box

1492, Port Moresby, N.C.D. 121, Papua New Guinea; tel (675) 321-1455; fax (675) 321-1593.

U.S. citizens are encouraged to register with the U.S. Embassy in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, and to obtain updated information on travel and security from the Embassy. Information may also be obtained from the Consular Agent in Honiara. American citizens may submit consular inquiries via e-mail to consularportmoresby@state.gov.

Disaster Preparedness

The Solomon Islands lie in the South Pacific cyclonic trajectory, and is vulnerable to earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and sudden tidal

movements. The Pacific Cyclone season extends from November through March. General information regarding disaster preparedness is available via the Internet at <http://travel.state.gov/crisismg.html>, and from the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) home page at <http://www.fema.gov>.

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Colombo, Sri Lanka

SRI LANKA

Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

Major Cities:

Colombo, Kandy

Other Cities:

Anuradhapura, Galle, Jaffna, Matara, Negombo, Ratnapura, Trincomalee

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report for Sri Lanka. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

SRI LANKA has often been described as a tropical paradise. The vegetation of the coastal belt is lush and dramatic, and the mountainous areas of the interior are spectacular. Pleasant sea breezes temper the coast's tropical climate through most of the year; the hills and mountains in the island's center are cool at night. Arab traders of long ago knew the island as Serendib, which is the origin of the word serendipity, reflecting the unexpected pleasures of the land.

Sri Lanka, once known as the British Crown Colony of Ceylon, became independent in 1948, although it remained under dominion status. Its 1972 constitution proclaimed it

an independent republic, and changed the country's name. Finally, in 1978, a new constitution officially declared the island the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

MAJOR CITIES

Colombo

Colombo, the capital city, lies on a flat coastal plain on the southwestern side of the island. It grew up around the harbor, which has been expanded by a breakwater. The main business section is near the port in what is known as the Fort (the old fort walls no longer remain). The buildings in this area are typically British and Dutch colonial, and the streets are generally congested. Parking is a problem. The *Pettah*, or traditional bazaar, adjoins the main business area. It consists of narrow, crowded streets and small shops and stalls.

The original Sinhalese name, Kalantotla (meaning Kelani ferry) was corrupted to Kolambu by Arab traders, and was changed to Colombo by the Portuguese.

Main residential sections of the city are south and southeast of the busi-

ness area and are generally pleasant. Flowering trees line the streets, and old mansions with lovely gardens lend an exotic tropical air. Cinnamon Gardens is a wealthy residential and recreational area.

The country's first free trade zone is near Colombo International Airport, Katunayake. Its success prompted the establishment of additional zones at Biyagama, 15 miles from the capital, and near the southern port of Galle.

Colombo's port is one of the world's largest man-made harbors. It is a popular port of call for passenger ships and has become a major cargo transshipment hub.

The population of Sri Lanka's capital was estimated at 645,000 in 2000.

Colombo is known for its gem cutting and ivory carving. Other industries include food and tobacco processing, metal fabrication, engineering, and the manufacture of chemicals, textiles, glass, cement, leather goods, clothing, jewelry, and furniture. An oil refinery is located nearby.

Historically, Colombo has been known for over two thousand years, in its early days as an open anchorage for oceangoing ships of

Greco-Roman, Arab, and Chinese traders. Muslims settled here in the eighth century, and the Portuguese arrived in the 16th century, building a fort to protect their spice trade. The Dutch, also interested in the spice trade, gained control of the city in the 17th century. Colombo passed to the British in 1796, and it became capital of the Crown Colony of Ceylon in 1802. Colombo replaced Galle (Point de Galle) as the country's chief port in the 1880s, becoming a major refueling and supply center for merchant ships on the Europe-Far East route. During World War II, Colombo served as an Allied naval base, and became the capital of independent Ceylon in 1948.

Clothing

Clothing worn in Washington, DC, during the hottest summer weeks is suitable year round in Colombo, although men's office attire is more casual than that in Washington, DC. A short-sleeved shirt, with or without a tie, or a bush suit are most frequently worn by expatriate men here. A sports jacket or suit are suitable for business calls.

For up-country wear, light wool suits, wool slacks, sweaters, and flannel shirts may be needed. In Nuwara Eliya, the privately owned Hill Club requires men to wear jackets and ties to dinner and will provide these items for a small rental fee for those who arrive without.

Locally made shirts, shorts, ties, and socks are generally unsatisfactory, and should be brought from the U.S. Local tailoring of bush shirts, suits, and trousers is good, but fabric is generally not as satisfactory as that available in the U.S.

Women's office attire is the same as that worn in a southern American city during the summer months. As in the U.S., many of the air-conditioned offices can be cool. Women are not expected to wear hosiery at any functions, but this is a matter of personal choice and comfort. Casual clothing for women can be made locally either with imported or local batik material.

Sewing fabrics, with the exception of some batiks and polyesters, are limited. A good supply of wash-and-wear fabric, thread, zippers, buttons, trim, elastic, etc., should be brought from home.

Children's clothing needs are simple but, whenever possible, should be brought or ordered from the U.S. The fit of shoes is a particular problem, except for sandals.

Garment bags are useful for clothing protection. Extreme dampness during the monsoon season can cause clothes and shoes to mildew unless kept in air-conditioned rooms. Lightweight shoes and sandals are particularly desirable here. Sports shoes should be brought from home.

Clothing will not last as long here as in the U.S. The tropical climate and frequent laundering shortens the useful life of most items. Underwear, particularly with elastic, tends to wear out quickly.

Food

A variety of seasonal, fresh tropical fruits and vegetables is available at reasonable prices. Some vegetables are similar to those in temperate climates but may not have a familiar flavor. All raw or unpeeled vegetables and fruits must be soaked in disinfectant to reduce the danger of amoeba or other parasite infestation. Milton, a satisfactory brand-name disinfectant, is sometimes available. Clorox also may be used.

Because the local market is unpredictable, and food quality is not usually up to U.S. standards, most families prefer to have a stock of imported foods and frozen meats on hand, particularly basic cooking items.

Supplies & Services

In general, local dry cleaning is mediocre, although some Colombo hotels offer fairly good service. Because of the limited dry cleaning services and the warm climate, lightweight washable clothing

(including men's suits and ties) is preferable.

Dressmakers are available at reasonable fees for making women's and children's clothing and men's shirts. Normally, dressmakers prefer to work in their customers' homes and do not supply their own sewing machines or notions. Shoe repair is done by hand and is adequate and inexpensive. Shoes, particularly sandals, also can be made inexpensively.

In Colombo, many beauticians are familiar with Western styling. European or Australian products are generally used.

Religious Activities

English is spoken in many of the larger Colombo churches: Roman Catholic, Church of Sri Lanka (Episcopalian), Scots (Presbyterian), Baptist, Methodist, Christian Science, Mormon, and Dutch Reformed. No Orthodox churches are available. Sri Lanka has no synagogue. In Kandy, English services are held in Anglican, Roman Catholic, Baptist, and other churches. Most have Sunday school programs. Many churches also have services in Sinhala and Tamil.

Footwear and headgear should be removed before entering Buddhist shrines. Photographing statues of the Buddha is acceptable, but posing beside them is not. Discreet dress in public places is appreciated.

Domestic Help

Most Americans here employ domestic help, usually a combination cook-houseperson, or a cook and a houseperson and a part-time gardener. Total wages for these domestics average about \$100-\$150 a month. Uniforms and medical bills are added expenses. A nursemaid (nanny) charges about \$60 a month. Occasionally, a driver also is hired (about \$50 monthly).

A single person ordinarily would have a combination cook-houseperson and a part-time gardener. Some singles employ sewing nannies and

laundry people on a weekly basis at an added cost of \$10 to \$20 a month.

Education

Younger children of most foreigners resident in Colombo attend the Overseas Childrens School (OCS). At present, the school has an enrollment of over 450, representing more than 40 nations. Americans represent eight to 12% of the student. Originally established to cater to the needs of the British business community, this school has strong Western orientation, with most of the textbooks in the primary and middle school now coming from the United Kingdom and the United States. OCS, offering classes from nursery through 12th grade, has 75 teachers, of whom more than one-third are expatriates, with most being British and American.

The school, which at one time operated on an extremely limited budget, has made remarkable academic and financial strides since 1981. The school is self-funding from fees. In addition, it receives grants from the U.S. State Department's Office of Overseas Schools. It is located on a five-acre campus; more expatriate teachers are being recruited; teacher evaluations and training and curriculum development receive priority attention; and the supply of books, computers, and other teaching aids is expanding. The school is an active member of the Near East/South Asia Council of Overseas Schools and also of the European Council of International Schools and the Association for Advancement of International Education.

Students completing school at OCS can be expected to compete favorably with their peers for entrance into college, with International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma graduates likely to have access to the top colleges. Transfer students are generally not accepted into grade 12 unless they have successfully completed grade 11 in an IB program elsewhere.

The school offers French, Spanish, and Sinhala as the main foreign

languages in grades seven through 10, and students are able to follow mother-tongue courses for the IB diploma in grades 11 and 12. OCS also offers an extensive English course as a second-language program for nonnative speakers. OCS follows a two-semester school year starting at the beginning of September and ending in June. Parents should bring as detailed records as possible from their children's previous school(s), and a health record is required at the time of admission. Placement at grade level is based on an internally administered test.

Although the school provides guidance by learning and disability specialists, the physical layout of the campus makes it impossible for the school to accept children whose physical handicaps confine them to a wheel chair. Although the school does not require a specific uniform attire, a dress code exists, and students should look presentable. For physical education, white shorts and a T-shirt (available from the school) are required.

OSC has a good sports program and numerous other extracurricular activities.

Overseas Children's School's address is: Pelawatte, P.O. Box 9, Battaramulla, Sri Lanka.

A few American children attend the Colombo International School (CIS), a private British curriculum school with over 800 students. CIS was founded in 1982 and offers classes for students ages two to 18. The teacher student ratio is 1 to 9.

CIS offers the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), and achievement test classes to prepare students for admission to U.S. universities.

Extracurricular activities are an important part of school life, and sports, music, and drama are included in the school program.

The address of the Colombo International School is 28, Gregory's Road, Colombo 7, Sri Lanka.

Universities in Sri Lanka offer courses leading to bachelor's and master's degrees in Buddhism, Oriental studies, arts, science, law, engineering, agriculture, and medicine. Instructions are in Sinhala, Tamil, or English, depending on student demand. Courses are based on the British university system, which concentrates on a major subject and allows few outside studies. Although foreigners are officially welcomed, few if any Americans have attended in recent years.

Recreation

Colombo is the only large city in Sri Lanka. Bombay and Madras, the closest large cities abroad, are about one to two hours away by air. New Delhi can be reached by air via Madras or Bombay. Plane service is not available directly between Colombo and New Delhi. The Maldiv Islands are easily accessible by air and offer many resorts.

Sri Lanka has many interesting places for weekend outings or longer holiday trips. The principal spots in the hill country are Kandy, about 70 miles away (two-and-a-half hours by car, altitude 1,674 feet); Nuwara Eliya, about 110 miles away (five hours by car, altitude 6,185 feet); and Bandarawela, about 125 miles away (five hours by car, altitude 4,017 feet).

The Cultural Triangle of Sri Lanka's ancient cities is well worth seeing. Sigiriya (three-and-a-half hours from Colombo by car) is a rock fortress with famous frescoes. Sightseers also will enjoy the ancient ruins at Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa (five to six hours by car) and the Yala and Wilpatu wildlife sanctuaries (seven and three hours respectively, by car).

Perhaps the most awesome and forbidding region of Sri Lanka is Horton Plains, hard to reach but well worth the effort. Located about an hour's drive from Nuwara Eliya, Horton Plains is part of the Peak

Wilderness Sanctuary. One of the major attractions here is World's End, considered by many the finest view in all of Sri Lanka. For those who enjoy trout fishing and hiking, this is the place. Also, the Sinharaja Forest is one of the few tropical rain forests left in the world.

Hotel accommodations at tourist destinations outside Colombo are excellent. The government operates a large number of rest houses and, in certain areas (notably Nuwara Eliya, Horton Plains, and the game parks), bungalows are available for rent. The rest houses vary widely in quality; all are reasonably priced.

The Colombo Zoological Gardens has a fine and large collection of animals, birds, and reptiles housed in a beautiful setting. A special feature of the zoo is an exhibition of trained elephants every evening.

Sri Lanka has beaches on both east and west coasts; but the east coast beaches may not be accessible due to ethnic conflict. Swimming is unsafe at certain times of the year because of the strong currents generated by the monsoons. Scuba diving is good during the season. The most popular beaches on the west coast, which are safe from about November to May, are Mt. Lavinia (20 minutes from the city) and Bentota (about a one-hour drive). Hikkaduwa, near Bentota, features a coral garden.

Sports commonly found in other tropical areas are also found in Sri Lanka. The most popular sports available to foreign residents are tennis, golf, and swimming. Others are snorkeling, scuba diving, soccer, cricket, rugby, badminton, squash, fishing, and sailing. Instruction in karate is also available. Many of the sports require club membership.

Some of the clubs open to membership are the Royal Colombo Golf Club, Nuwara Eliya Golf Club (rated among the best in South Asia, in the mountains at 6,200 feet), Royal Colombo Yacht Club, Colombo Rowing Club, Otter Aquatic Club, Colombo Motor Yacht

Club, Gymkana Club, and the Colombo Swimming Club. In addition, the hotels offer yearly pool memberships. The Galle Face Hotel has a saltwater pool, and the Intercontinental, Lanka Oberoi, Hilton, Ramada Renaissance, and the Taj Samudra offer memberships in their sport centers.

Entertainment

A few movie theaters show Western movies, but most films are Indian or Sinhalese. Amateur dramatic groups and symphony, chamber, and choral groups give regular performances. Occasionally, entertainers from foreign countries (including the U.S.) also perform. Indian movie and dance concerts are fairly frequent.

Colombo has a few nightclubs, a range of restaurants serving ethnic foods (Italian, Chinese, French, Korean, German, Japanese, and Indian), and several hotels. Menu selection, culinary expertise, and musical entertainment are limited. Both Eastern and Western menus are available at major hotels.

The American Women's Association conducts charitable and social activities, and introduces new arrivals to other Americans and to local customs and shopping. All resident American women may join the association. Branches of the YMCA, YWCA, and the Salvation Army are also active. Some American women join the International Women's Club, which has tennis courts as well as social activities.

The national tourist agency—Ceylon Tourist Board—is located at 78, Steuart Place, P.O. Box 1504, Colombo 3.

Kandy

Kandy is the capital of the hill country. It is 1,674 feet above sea level, and 72 miles from Colombo. The average temperature here is 77°F, with pleasantly warm days and cool nights. Kandy is a mountain resort and the market center for an area producing tea, rubber, rice and

cacao. The main part of the city overlooks a scenic artificial lake built by Kandy's last king in 1806.

Kandy is noted for local handicrafts such as reed and lacquer work and silver and brassware. The population here is over 100,000.

Clothing

Although Kandy is cooler than Colombo, the same type of clothing is generally appropriate for both. A sweater may be necessary in the evening, especially in December and January. Ready-made clothing, except for batiks, is not readily available in Kandy. Tailoring is good, but some fabrics are available.

Food

Staples are generally available here. The local beef is quite good. Chicken, ham, pork, and bacon—available at Cargills, Elephant House, and almost all grocery stores—are also good. The imported food generally is expensive.

Supplies & Services

Some foreign and local toiletries, cosmetics, perfumes, etc., are available. A limited supply of medicines can be found at Cargills and at Lanka Medicals. Shoes, as well as most mechanical and electrical items, can be repaired. Beauty shops and dry cleaning facilities offer adequate services. Domestic help is available and is well trained. Salaries for domestic help are generally lower than in Colombo.

Kandy has a general hospital, seldom used by Americans, and the Lakeside Medical Center (a Seventh Day Adventist institution), which has acceptable facilities. Local specialists may be called in for consultation at the center or seen at the Channeled Practice Services, a facility permitting government physicians to have private patients. The Japanese have built and equipped a teaching hospital on the campus of the School of Medicine at Peradeniya. This provides additional services and facilities. For major medical and hospitalization problems, facilities are better in Colombo.

Recreation

The Temple of the Tooth, visited by Buddhist pilgrims from all over the world, is in Kandy. The sacred tooth relic of the Buddha is said to have been brought to Sri Lanka early in the fourth century, hidden in the hair of an Indian princess. The temple, which is Sri Lanka's holiest Buddhist shrine, was bombed in early 1998. The government accused the Tamil Tigers of committing the bombing.

Kandy, the island's chief city in medieval times, was the final stronghold of the Sinhala kings and the last place to fall under foreign rule. Things to see include the kings' audience hall, the four *devales* (temples), the artificial lake constructed by Sri Wickrema Rajasinghe (last king of Kandy) in 1806, the elephants' bathing place in Katugastota, the botanical gardens and university at Peradeniya, and the Kandyan Art Association.

The most spectacular religious festival, the Esala Perahera, generally takes place in July or August, depending on the astrologically auspicious moment, and ends on the day following the night of the full moon. By the last night, as many as 80 to 100 elephants, caparisoned in velvet, satin, and silk with silver ornaments, move in the procession. Chief of all elephants is the Maligawa (district where Kandy is located) tusker, bearing a replica of the casket which holds the sacred tooth relic. Temples in the Kandy area are Lankatilaka Vihare, Gadalendeniya Vihare, Galmadawa Vihare, and Degalkoruwa Vihare.

In Kandy, active sports may be enjoyed either at the Garden Club, which has tennis courts, or at the Hotel Suisse, which opens its pool and tennis courts to membership by monthly subscription and entrance fee. Newer hotels, e.g., Citadel, Mahaweli Reach, and Topaz, also have similar pool facilities. Nuwara Eliya, 48 miles (three hours) from Kandy, in Sri Lanka's beautiful tea country at an elevation of 6,000 feet, has an 18-hole golf course. Rugby,



Buddhist monks in Kandy, Sri Lanka

AP/Wide World Photos, Inc. Reproduced by permission.

soccer, and cricket matches are held in season.

Occasionally, English-language movies are shown in Kandy cinemas. French movies with English subtitles can be seen at the Kandy branch of Alliance Française. Classic American movies, shown periodically at the Kandy American Center, are open to a limited number of Americans. Occasionally, movies also are shown at the British Council Library.

Concerts by local or foreign artists, sponsored by various Kandy organizations, are scheduled about every two months. A local dance band plays on alternate nights at two Kandy hotels. The Kandy Lake Club is a gambling casino.

There are a few nice picnic spots near the city, particularly the Victoria Dam area. Mountains, beaches, and wildlife parks are from three to seven hours from Kandy by car.

OTHER CITIES

Situated 106 miles northeast of Colombo, **ANURADHAPURA** is near the Aruvi River. The city was founded in 437 B.C. and was the capital of the ancient Sinhalese

kings of Ceylon for four centuries. Today, it is one of the world's leading Buddhist centers. An ancient pipal tree here is thought to have grown from a piece of the Bo Tree at Buddha Gaya (in India), under which Guatama Buddha attained enlightenment. Interesting sites include a palace, ruins of a rock-hewn temple, large stupas, and other relics.

GALLE (formerly Point de Galle) is located at the extreme southern end of Sri Lanka on the Indian Ocean. With a population of over 168,000, Galle is an agricultural market center, exporting tea, rubber, coconut oil, cloves, and other products from the surrounding region. Known as early as 100 B.C. as a trade center for the Chinese and Arabs, Galle became important under Portuguese rule, 1057–1640, when it was the island's chief port. Under the Dutch, it was the capital of Ceylon from 1640 to 1656. The Dutch built a fort here to guard the harbor and it still stands today. The city came under British rule in 1796, and its commercial importance continued until the Suez Canal was opened in 1869. It further declined when the British built the modern harbor at Colombo in 1885.

JAFFNA is situated on a peninsula in the northernmost part of Sri Lanka. Separated from India by the

Palk Strait, Jaffna and the peninsula are densely populated. There are approximately 130,000 inhabitants here, most of whom are Tamil-speaking people. Tobacco, rice, coconuts, palmyra palm, and vegetables are grown in the region, and fishing is an important occupation. Industries include those for salt, cement, chemical, and tobacco production, as well as textile weaving and gold filigree work. Elephants, peppers, and other commodities are traded. Remains of the ancient Tamil culture, as well as traditions from the Portuguese and Dutch occupations in the 17th and 18th centuries, are found here.

Located in southern Sri Lanka, on the Indian Ocean, **MATARA** is 24 miles east of Galle. It has a population of more than 125,000. Matara is centered in a region rich with coconut palms and cinnamon trees. An old Portuguese fort is among the sites located here.

NEGOMBO, with a population of over 120,000, is located on the west coast of Sri Lanka at the mouth of the Negombo Lagoon, just north of Colombo. The city is a fishing center and a market for coconut products and cinnamon; handicrafts include ceramics and brassware. Many 17th-century Dutch buildings still stand in Negombo. Sri Lanka's international airport is located just outside the city.

Situated in southwest-central Sri Lanka, **RATNAPURA** is 42 miles southeast of Colombo. It is the center of the precious-stone industry. The Buddhist temple, Maha Saman Dewale, is nearby. Ratnapura has a population of over 40,000.

TRINCOMALEE is situated on Sri Lanka's east coast, on the Bay of Bengal. With a population exceeding 52,000, Trincomalee has one of the world's finest natural harbors. Exports traded here include tea, hides, and dried fish. A railroad terminus and an important road junction, Trincomalee (sometimes written Trinkomali) is also known for its coconut and rice plantations, and some pearl fishing. Early Tamil

settlers from south India built the Hindu Temple of a Thousand Columns in Trincomalee, but it was destroyed by the Portuguese in 1622. On its site, the Dutch built Fort Frederick in 1676. Captured by the British in 1795, the city was British naval headquarters in the Pacific theater during World War II. U.S. planes used its airfield for operations against the Japanese in Burma and Malaya (now part of Federation of Malaysia).

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Sri Lanka is a pear-shaped island in the Indian Ocean—18 miles from India at its closest point. The country, roughly the size of West Virginia, is 270 miles long and 140 miles wide at its extremities, and comprises 25,332 square miles. It lies in the tropical zone between 5° and 9°N and between 79° and 82°S.

Sri Lanka has many spots of scenic beauty and historic interest. Topographically, the island consists of two main sections: the mountainous south-central region which rises to more than 8,200 feet above sea level, and the low-lying northern, eastern, and southwestern coastal plains. Dense vegetation covers a large part of Sri Lanka, particularly the southern and western coasts. Rubber and coconut trees grow in the midlands and lowlands, and there are vast tea estates in the highlands.

Sri Lanka has a varied effect on Westerners who remain on the island a considerable time without a break. People who like hot weather and are active in sports usually enjoy themselves and keep physically fit and mentally alert. Those accustomed to seasonal changes find the tropical climate monotonous and enervating. The climate, except in the mountains, is hot and humid. In Colombo, the capital,

temperatures rarely rise above 90°F or drop below 70°F. Humidity is always high, often in the 90s. In the mountainous districts, the average temperature is about 60°F during the day but, at night, it cools off rapidly, sometimes dropping to near freezing in places like Nuwara Eliya (at an altitude of 6,200 feet).

The monsoons produce two main rainy seasons. The southwest monsoon lasts roughly from mid-May into early fall. During this period the southwestern part of the island, including Colombo, receives much of its average annual rainfall of 100 inches. The northeast monsoon lasts from about October or November through February. The northern and eastern parts of the island receive virtually all of their average annual rainfall of 60 inches at this time.

Monsoon showers range from gentle to torrential in the Colombo area. December through March are usually the driest months. Because of the massive Mahaweli hydroelectric and irrigation scheme, water shortages and interruptions of electricity during the dry months are less frequent than in the past.

Colombo's climate compares to the hot, humid summers in Washington, DC. Even during the cooler period (December and January), most Americans depend on electric fans or air-conditioning to keep comfortable.

Population

The population of Sri Lanka is 19.4 million (2000 est.) and, although it has more than doubled over the past 30 years, the overall growth rate is slowing. Currently it stands at 87%; this is somewhat understated since it takes into account outward migration to the Middle East.

Ethnically, 74% of the population is Sinhalese and speaks Sinhala, the national language; 18% is Tamil (people of South Indian origin) and speaks Tamil, an official language since 1978. About 70% of the Tamils are "Ceylon Tamils"—citizens

whose ancestors have lived in Sri Lanka for many generations and who have full voting rights. Most live in the northern and eastern provinces, but many Ceylon Tamils live in Colombo and throughout the island. The other 30% of the Tamil population are the so-called "Indian Tamils," whose ancestors were brought from South India in the late 19th and early 20th centuries to work on tea and rubber plantations. Most were disenfranchised in Sri Lanka by legislation passed in 1948. Because India also refused to recognize them as citizens, the Indian Tamils were considered stateless.

A 1964 agreement with India provided for repatriation of many to India and the granting of Sri Lankan citizenship to others on a 60-40 ratio. In 1988, Sri Lankan citizenship was extended to 230,000 stateless Indian Tamils.

Other minority groups include Sri Lankan Muslims (including both Moors and Malays and totaling 7% of the population) and Eurasians. Most Sinhalese are Buddhists, most Tamils are Hindu, and Moors and Malays are Muslims. Christians constitute 8% of the population, most of whom are Roman Catholic. Christians can be found in both the Sinhalese and Tamil communities.

Racial tension between the Sinhalese and Tamil communities erupted into violence in 1983 and continued in varying degrees of intensity until 1995, when the government and Tamil rebels announced a cease-fire. The peace only lasted a few months, however, before Tamil rebels renewed their attacks on government installations. Since 1983, over 51,000 people have been killed, and more than 300,000 Tamils have fled the island.

Government

The 450-year foreign presence on the island (Portuguese, Dutch, and British) has influenced Sri Lanka's government, jurisprudence, and administration. Sri Lanka became independent in 1948 after being a British colony for over 100 years. It

initially opted for dominion status in the Commonwealth, like nearby India and Pakistan. But, unlike India and Pakistan, it retained dominion status only until 1972 when the island was formally proclaimed a democratic republic and a unitary state with the office of governor-general converting to a ceremonial presidency. During that period, real power was vested in Parliament and in a prime minister under the British pattern. The 1972 constitution proclaimed Sinhala the official language (with some provision for the use of Tamil) and Buddhism the foremost religion (with religious freedom guaranteed to all).

Following the overwhelming 1977 electoral victory of the United National Party (UNP), a decision was made to revamp the constitutional system more along continental than British lines. The result was the 1978 constitution which established an executive (and active) presidency, abolished the upper house of legislature, and established a system of proportional representation as the basis for future parliamentary elections. The constitution also elevated Tamil to the status of an official national language.

An executive president, elected for a six-year term, serves as commander-in-chief of the armed forces, chief of state, and head of government. The position is based largely on the French model. The president appoints and heads a cabinet of ministers who are responsible to a 225-seat unicameral legislature. The president's chief lieutenant is the prime minister, who is the leader of the ruling party in Parliament.

Communal tension in Sri Lanka has remained high since July 1983, when the worst communal violence in the country's post-independence history occurred. Following the killing of 13 members of an army patrol (all Sinhalese) by Tamil terrorists fighting for a separate Tamil state in the north and east, Sinhalese mobs took to the streets of Colombo

and then throughout Sinhalese-majority areas, attacking Tamils and their property. Hundreds of Tamils were killed in the ensuing violence and tens of thousands were left homeless, as mobs attacked Tamils and their property throughout much of the island. The riots led to a burgeoning of Tamil militant groups in the north and east and to continued military and political confrontation between the Sri Lankan Government and the Tamil militants.

By mid-1987, the situation had reached an impasse. The government's policy of pressing the insurgents militarily, although attempting to negotiate with Tamil moderates, had not succeeded. In an attempt to break the deadlock, Sri Lanka brought India directly into its communal dispute. Under a July 29, 1987, accord signed by the President and the Indian Prime Minister, Sri Lanka made many concessions to Tamil demands, including devolution of some powers to the provinces, merger (subject to later referendum) of northern and eastern provinces, and official status for the Tamil language. India agreed to establish order in the north and east and to cease assisting Tamil insurgents.

A key element of the accord soon fell apart. The major Tamil militant group, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), within weeks declared its intent to continue its armed struggle for an independent Tamil Eelam. The 50,000-strong Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) found itself engaged in a bloody police action against the LTTE. After two-and-a-half years of conflict between the IPKF and LTTE, with over 1,000 deaths on each side, the situation had not completely resolved. By late 1989, the Indian troops were being withdrawn, but the army and LTTE continued to have confrontations.

In 1995 a cease-fire between the Tamil rebels and the Sri Lankan government was announced, with government promises to send an \$816-million aid package to the

northern part of the island. The peace process fell apart after a few months, when additional demands by the rebels went unfulfilled. After Tamil terrorists attacked two gunboats and an army base, the government went on the offensive by blockading the Tamil stronghold of Jaffna and attacking rebel positions. By the end of 1996 the death toll from almost 15 years of civil war had surpassed 50,000.

Presidential elections were held in December 1988 and Ranasinghe Premadasa won with just over 50% of the votes cast in an election marked by considerable violence instigated mostly by the radical revolutionary Janatha Viimukthi Peramuna (JVP). Despite JVP violence, a parliamentary general election was held in February 1989. President Premadasa's United National Party won 125 of the 225 seats in Parliament in the first national election held under the system of proportional representation, which had been established by the 1978 constitution.

The JVP began asserting itself in mid-1987, capitalizing on opposition in the Sinhala community to the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord, it launched an intimidation campaign. Using terrorist tactics, including assassinations, strikes, and other weapons of intimidation, it brought the country to a virtual standstill several times in 1988 and 1989. Several thousand people died in JVP-instigated violence and much property, particularly government-owned property, was destroyed. The deaths included government officials, members of political parties who supported the Accord, and innocent civilians. The government fought back, killing another several thousand people suspected to be JVP party members, supporters, or their families. In late 1989, the JVP party leaders had virtually all been killed or arrested, and the JVP threat appeared to have failed.

On May 1, 1993, President Premadasa was killed in a May Day Parade bombing. Prime Minister Wijetunga succeeded him, and

called for early elections in August 1994. Voters, however, chose a leftist coalition led by the Sri Lanka Freedom Party. Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga became president. She was reelected in 1999.

Sri Lanka's legal system reflects the interplay of cultural influences. The criminal law is fundamentally of British origin. The basic system of civil law, a legacy of the Dutch, is Roman-Dutch; but personal law (marriage, divorce, inheritance, etc.) is unique to each ethnic community. Thus Hindus, Christians, Muslims, and Buddhists have their own family codes. The judiciary is based on the British model.

Sri Lanka's judiciary consists of a Supreme Court which is also authorized to give advisory opinions, a Court of Appeals, a High Court, and a number of subordinate courts. The Supreme Court, composed of a chief justice and six to 10 associate justices, has original jurisdiction on all constitutional matters, as well as on such other matters as election petitions, breach of parliamentary privilege, protection of fundamental rights, and other matters over which Parliament has legislative power.

The Sri Lanka Administrative Service is a direct descendent of the highly regarded colonial Ceylon Civil Service. Each ministry has a secretary, usually a career civil servant, who provides continuity as ministers and governments change. The country is divided into 25 districts, each headed by a government agent (GA) responsible for regional government activities. In colonial days, the GA was virtually overlord of a district; today, democracy has brought an increased concern for mass public opinion and socially responsive administration. An innovation of the government elected in 1977 was the introduction of a system of district ministers, senior members of Parliament usually not from the district, who oversee development efforts in the region.

Sri Lanka is a member of the United Nations, World Health Organization (WHO), and United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), as well as the following international bodies: Asian Development Bank, Colombo Plan, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Group of 77, International Telecommunications Satellite Organization (INTELSAT), Nonaligned Movement, World Bank, and World Tourism Organization. The Sri Lankan capital is the home of the international headquarters of the Colombo Plan, a program to aid the economic development of Asian nations, which was launched at a conference in Colombo in 1950. The address is 12 Melbourne Avenue, P.O. Box 596, Colombo.

Sri Lanka maintains diplomatic relations abroad in over 30 foreign countries, including Iraq, the People's Republic of China, Bangladesh, Pakistan, the Philippines, Germany, Kenya, India, and the United States. There are over 30 foreign embassies in Colombo, including those of Australia, Canada, Cuba, Egypt, France, Germany, the Holy See, Japan, the Maldives, Myanmar, the Netherlands, Thailand, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The outer two-thirds of the flag of Sri Lanka has a dark red background with a gold lion, sword, and bo leaves (from the former Kingdom of Kandy). The inner third of the flag has vertical green and saffron bands (for the Muslims and Tamils). The flag is bordered and divided in gold.

Arts, Science, Education

Sri Lanka's artistic and intellectual life is lively in some areas. There are eight universities, one open university, and two university colleges; both arts and sciences are taught. Facilities include four medical schools. The Institute of Aesthetic Studies is a department of the University of Kelaniya, near Colombo.



Susan Rock. Reproduced by permission.

Street in the commercial district of Colombo

Instruction includes art, crafts, music, and dance.

The Ministry of Education operates 21 teacher training colleges; of these, four train instructors to teach English as a second language and 17 cover other areas. The Ministry of Higher Education directs 13 polytechnics and eight junior technical institutes. Curricula and direction at all educational levels are increasingly related to Sri Lanka's development.

The Natural Resources, Energy, and Science Authority, established in 1968 as the National Science Council, implements central government science policies. The Sri Lanka Institute of Scientific and Industrial Research (CISIR) is an autonomous, non-profit, industrial research institute, established by the government in 1955.

The Tea Research Institute established in 1925, the Rubber Research Institute (1910), and the Coconut Research Institute (1971) are all government non-profit organizations.

Private schools teach Eastern and Western dance and music. The country has several theaters, a major museum, and many special-

ized societies. Few art galleries exist, but interest is active in painting, batik, jewelry, sculpture, and indigenous handicrafts. A national dance troupe performs, and interest in a national theater, and national culture in general, is strong.

An active and healthy interest also flourishes in Western music, art, and drama. English-language plays are performed by a few amateur groups in Colombo, and drama groups welcome foreign members. Concerts of Eastern and Western music also are given occasionally, and Colombo has an amateur symphony orchestra; many foreigners have joined this latter group. Visiting artists regularly perform with the orchestra or give solo performances.

Commerce and Industry

Compared with the many developing countries in the region, Sri Lanka's economic potential is high. The island has rich agricultural and mineral resources and is surrounded by a bountiful sea. Population pressures are less severe than in neighboring areas, and the per capita gross domestic product (GDP) is about \$3,500 (2000 est.).

Agriculture accounts for about 21% of the GDP and employs about 38% of the population. Tea, rubber, and coconuts are the principal crops and the source of about 50% of export earnings. Rice is the major domestic food grain crop; improved seeds and yields have significantly reduced the need for rice imports.

Industrial production has grown substantially in recent years and now accounts for about 20% of the GDP. Garments, many of which are assembled in the free trade zone located just outside Colombo, account for most of Sri Lanka's exports of manufactured goods. Roughly 75% of the apparel exported is sent to the U.S. Other industrial exports include refined petroleum products and precious and semi-precious gems.

Services (i.e., transportation and tourism) and remittances from Sri Lankans working abroad are of increasing importance to the economy. Colombo's efficient port has become a major cargo transshipment hub and a significant foreign exchange earner. Tourism, which has been hurt by the security situation, remains an important source of employment and one of the best hopes for future economic growth.

The United National Party government has undertaken to reverse many basic economic policies followed by all previous governments since independence. Most significantly, the government has reduced its rice subsidy program and is placing greater reliance on the private sector in promoting economic development. The country relies on considerable international assistance from both multilateral and bilateral aid donors. Increased foreign investment, the huge Mahaweli irrigation development scheme now beginning to yield results, the successful free trade zones, and the growth of the tourist industry, have helped to reduce the country's serious unemployment problem. However, the economy has suffered in recent years due to the continuing ethnic conflict and political instability.

Sri Lanka has chronic, current account and government budget deficits. Foreign aid has helped to cover these gaps somewhat, but foreign borrowing also has been significant. External debt is estimated at about \$9.9 billion (2000 est.).

Import liberalization, part of the 1977–78 economic reforms, eliminated the scarcities and black-market activities which once plagued the island. The government's economic priorities are now to bring prices under better control, diversify and expand exports, increase national savings, and maintain the quality of life of its people. Although shortages of basic food items no longer occur, imported products on the local market are often expensive.

The address of the National Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka is P.O. Box 1375, Second Floor, YMBA Building, Colombo, Sri Lanka. The Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Sri Lanka is located at the People's Bank Bldg., 220 Deans Rd., Colombo 10.

Transportation

Air Lanka offers domestic service. Charter planes and helicopters are also available. The railway system, also a government enterprise, provides a reasonably satisfactory means of reaching a few points of interest on the island. First-class travel, although somewhat rigorous, should be used whenever possible; second-class accommodations frequently are the best available. The government-owned bus system, which is overcrowded and poorly maintained, normally is not used by foreign residents. Private buses offer little improvement.

Rental vehicles with a driver, although relatively expensive, may be engaged for excursion trips. Satisfactory and inexpensive three- and four-wheeled metered taxi service is available in Colombo.

Despite such problems as heavy traffic (bicycles, bullock carts, other vehicles, and pedestrians), lack of

spare parts, and indifferent servicing, most resident Americans rely on automobiles for transportation within and outside Colombo. Sri Lankan roads are generally narrow and inadequately maintained. The island has an extensive network of paved surfaces.

Small, right-hand-drive cars are recommended because of the narrow roads. The highest rated gasoline is about 93 octane. The most popular cars include Peugeot, Volkswagen, Mitsubishi, Nissan, Ford, (Australia, Germany, U.K.), and British Leyland. Parts and servicing are most readily available for Japanese vehicles. Heavy-duty tires and batteries, air-conditioning, tropical radiators, and extra undercoating against rust are worthwhile investments. Catalytic converters on newer models should be removed, since lead-free gasoline is not available.

As in England, traffic moves on the left side of the road. Sri Lanka permits import of left-hand-drive vehicles, but for safety and resale value, it is wise to import only right-hand-drive vehicles.

Third-party liability insurance is compulsory in Sri Lanka. Insurance policies are available only through the government-owned and -operated Sri Lanka Insurance Corporation and the National Insurance Corporation.

Communications

Local telephone service often is interrupted by breakdowns caused by age and weather conditions. Long-distance and international direct-dial services are available to all points in Sri Lanka, India, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Australia, Japan, Europe, and the U.S., provided an advance deposit has been made. Telegraph and cable service, available day and night, is satisfactory. Telex facilities are available at most good hotels.

Airmail service to and from the U.S. is generally satisfactory. The average transit time is eight to 10 days.

Radio broadcasting operates 17 and one-half hours daily, seven days a week. Programs offered by the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation cover local and international subjects and include a substantial amount of Western music, especially on FM. Programming and schedules follow British format, and some British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) programs and news features are relayed on local channels. Broadcasting is in English, Sinhala, and Tamil on shortwave, AM, and FM frequencies. Many interesting and informative programs are presented. Reasonably good worldwide radio reception is available on shortwave.

Sri Lanka initiated television transmission in 1978 and now has two stations. Each station operates from 5 p.m. until after 11 p.m. The programs on both channels consist of locally produced shows in English, Sinhala, and Tamil, and reruns of U.S. and U.K. serials in English. Regular, nightly news programs are broadcast in all three languages at different times.

Sri Lanka uses the PAL system of color TV; therefore, U.S. sets cannot operate here. Color sets are available locally through the duty-free complex; however it is a time-consuming process and purchases require Sri Lankan Foreign Ministry approval. Prices compare favorably with those in the U.S.

Most Americans bring videotape equipment to Sri Lanka. Many belong to local tape clubs which rent tapes (VHS/PAL system only) at reasonable prices.

Colombo newsstands sell current international editions of *Time* and *Newsweek*. The *International Herald Tribune*, *USA Today*, and *Asian Wall Street Journal* also are available.

Library facilities in Colombo are limited, but improving. The American Center library is designed to meet the needs of Sri Lankan students and academics. The Colombo municipal library system has

approximately 123,000 titles in English at any one time, and subscribes to some 400 English-language journals and newspapers. The British Council's large, 52,000-volume library includes a good selection of fiction. It subscribes to about 150 periodicals and newspapers. The Colombo Swimming Club operates a small library offering book selections to both children and adult members. A modest number of expensive current paperbacks are available at the large hotel bookshops.

Mildew, termites, and silverfish are a serious threat to books not kept in air-conditioned rooms. Valuable volumes should not be brought to Sri Lanka.

Health and Medicine

Privately owned hospitals, with 24-hour English-speaking Sri Lankan-trained physicians on duty, have outpatient departments, intensive care units, operating rooms, and diagnostic facilities. However, the hospitals are not up to American standards and are utilized rarely, except for routine lab work. Medical problems requiring sophisticated treatment are sent to the nearest adequate medical facility (in Bangkok).

The U.S. Embassy maintains a health unit in Colombo for official personnel and dependents. Some limited care is occasionally provided to unofficial Americans on a fee-for-service basis.

Private physicians are the primary source of medical assistance. Specialists from the government hospitals assist when needed. Some specialists are board-certified in the U.K. Fees for medical care and treatment are reasonable.

All dental work should be done prior to arrival in Sri Lanka. Local dentists have been consulted, with satisfactory results, by some members of the American community. However, dental care is substandard,

and no major dental work can be done.

Pharmaceutical supplies are not always available locally, so one should have an adequate supply of first aid materials, aspirin, or other necessary items; this includes vitamins and birth control pills.

Gastrointestinal disease is the major health problem here. Hepatitis A is common in the local population. Diarrhea is the most common illness among Americans living in the subcontinent, mainly because of contaminated food and water. City water is not potable and should be filtered and boiled for 10 minutes before using. One should thoroughly cook all meat and wash and disinfect all fruits and vegetables.

Sri Lanka has many kinds of insects. Mosquitoes carry malaria, Japanese B encephalitis, dengue fever, and filariasis. Flies carry filth that cause such endemic diseases as cholera and typhoid. Those coming here for an extended stay should bring a good supply of insecticides, pest strips, insect repellents, and fly swatters. Snakes, both poisonous and nonpoisonous, are found in Sri Lanka. Yards and lawns around the houses must be maintained by keeping grass cut and clearing leaves, which helps to deter nesting of snakes.

Parents with small children must exercise special caution as to safe play areas outdoors. The U.S. Embassy health unit maintains a stock of snake bite serum, which, if needed, is best administered in a hospital setting.

Malaria prophylaxis must be started two weeks before arrival in Sri Lanka. Also, make sure immunizations are up to date, especially those for gamma globulin, rabies, meningitis, and hepatitis B.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs & Duties

Several international airlines fly into Sri Lanka's Katunayake Airport about 20 miles northwest of Colombo (one hour by car). At present, no American carriers provide service. Air Lanka is the national airline.

A passport and an onward/return ticket and proof of sufficient funds are required. A no-cost visit visa, valid for 30 days, will be granted at the time of entry into Sri Lanka to bona fide tourists and business travelers. Visitors staying more than 30 days for any purpose must pay residency visa fees. Yellow fever and cholera immunizations are needed if arriving from an infected area. All travelers departing Sri Lanka (except diplomats and certain exempted travelers) must pay an airport tax, in cash. Sri Lankan law requires all persons, including foreigners, who are guests in private households to register in person at the nearest local police station. Individuals who stay in private households without registering may be temporarily detained for questioning. This requirement does not apply to individuals staying in hotels or guesthouses.

American citizens are advised not to travel north of a line drawn from Puttalam on the west coast through Anuradhapura in the central north and Nivaveli (just north of Trincomalee) in the east. Areas north of this line contain many land mines, making travel off paved roads very dangerous. In addition, the LTTE rather than the Government of Sri Lanka is effectively the civil administration in many sections of the north. Official travel by U.S. Government personnel to this area is restricted, and their unofficial travel is prohibited. Travel in the east in the area south of the Anuradhapura-Nivaveli line (including Trincomalee, Batticaloa and points south) poses significant safety risks. Roads are often sub-

standard, and police, medical and other emergency help is severely limited or not available. Communications within the eastern areas are also limited, with no cell phone accessibility and very limited land-line telephone access. Because of these considerations, the U.S. Embassy may not be able to provide consular services in a timely manner to American citizens who travel to the north and east.

Sri Lankan customs authorities may enforce strict regulations concerning temporary importation into or export from Sri Lanka of items such as firearms, antiquities, business equipment, obscene materials, currency, gems and precious metals. It is advisable to contact the Embassy of Sri Lanka in Washington, D.C., or one of Sri Lanka's consulates in the United States for specific information regarding customs requirements.

Americans living in or visiting Sri Lanka are encouraged to register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Colombo and obtain updated information on travel and security within Sri Lanka. The U.S. Embassy is located at 210 Galle Road, Colombo 3, Sri Lanka. The Embassy's telephone number during normal business hours Monday through Friday is (94)(1) 448-007. The after-hours and emergency telephone number is (94)(1) 447-601. The Consular Section fax number is (94)-(1)-436-943. The Embassy's Internet address is <http://usembassy.state.gov/srilanka>. The e-mail address for the consular section is consularcolombo@state.gov. The Embassy in Colombo also covers the Republic of the Maldives. U.S. citizens are strongly encouraged to register at the Embassy upon arrival in Sri Lanka or by e-mail.

Currency, Banking and Weights and Measures

Sri Lanka's monetary unit is the *rupee*. Strict currency controls require customs declaration of all foreign currency brought into and taken out of the country and severely limit local importation of foreign goods. Indian, Nepalese,

Pakistani, and Sri Lankan *rupees* are forbidden to be imported into or exported out of the country.

Sri Lanka operates on the metric system in calculating weights and measures.

The time in Sri Lanka is Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) plus five-and-one-half hours.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan. 14	Tamil Thai Pongal Day
Feb. 4	National Day
Feb/Mar.	Maha Sivarathri Day*
Mar/Apr.	Good Friday*
Mar/Apr.	Easter*
Apr.	Eve of Sinhala & Tamil New Year*
Apr.	Sinhala & Tamil New Year*
May 1	May Day
May 22	National Heroes' Day
Dec. 25	Christmas Day
.	Id al-Adha*
.	Ramadan*
.	Id-ul-Fitr
.	Mawlid an Nabi*
.	Wesak*
.	Divali*

* variable

The Poya Day (Full Moon Day) of each month is also considered a holiday.

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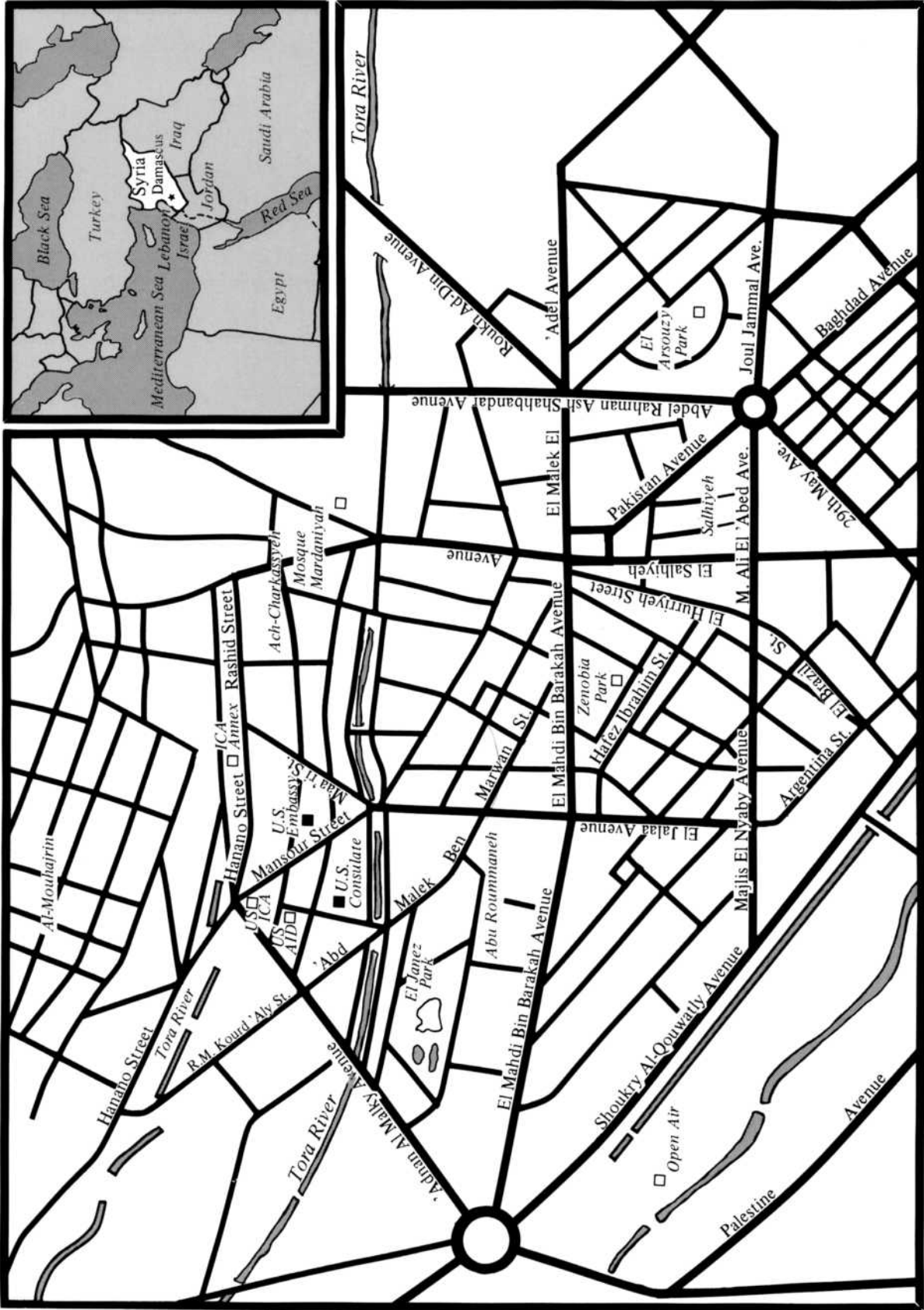
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Damascus, Syria

SYRIA

Syrian Arab Republic

Major Cities:

Damascus, Aleppo, Latakia

Other Cities:

Deir-ez-Zor, Der'ā, Hama, Hasakeh, Homs, Raqqa, Tartūs

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated April 1997. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

Archaeologists estimate that **SYRIA** is part of a civilization that may have existed as long ago as the third millennium B.C. Syria was occupied successively by Canaanites, Phoenicians, Hebrews, Arameans, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Nabataeans, Byzantines, and, in part, Crusaders before finally coming under the control of the Ottoman Turks. Syria is significant in the history of Christianity; Paul was converted on the road to Damascus and established the first organized Christian Church at Antioch in ancient Syria, from which he left on many of his missionary journeys.

The Syrians, after a long and turbulent existence under wars and occupation, proclaimed independence in 1941, and established autonomy a few years later when British and French troops were withdrawn from within Syrian borders. The country, made a French mandate in 1920 by the League of Nations, had been under the control of France's Vichy Government until British and French troops occupied it early in World War II. In 1958, Syria merged with Egypt as part of the United Arab Republic, but withdrew from that agreement in September 1961.

Syria has been directly involved in the Middle East unrest of the last 30 years. Its troops have aided Egypt in attacks on Israel (1973); have battled Christian forces in Lebanon (1976 and 1981); and have fought Israeli troops inside Lebanon (1982). More recently, the Syrian government sided with Iran during its long war with Iraq (1980–1988); became the first of the Arab countries to denounce the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait (1990); and used their considerable influence to help free U.S. hostages held in Lebanon (1991).

Life throughout Syria is a tapestry of modern and ancient aspects. The country possesses a rich and varied cultural heritage and meaningful economic potential.

MAJOR CITIES

Damascus

The origins of Damascus lie under the millennia of sands that have covered its secrets from the time of the Garden of Eden. According to local mythology, Eden sat astride the Barada River and was a fertile land blessed with a mild climate. Its claim to be the oldest, continuously-inhabited city is reinforced by its central location in relation to ancient civilizations and its acknowledged importance on the earliest trade routes. Damascus has a splendid covered bazaar. The Hamidiyyah Souk (bordered by Mahmat Pasha, the Street called Straight) is mentioned in the Bible as a thriving ancient marketplace.

Damascus is a city of sharp contrasts, with Roman arches shading Ottoman architecture on the same street featuring international five-star hotels. In the Old City, the narrow streets twist and wind around ancient gates and arches past fascinating homes and mosques. From the open stalls, shouts announcing new products and great prices compete with braying donkeys, passing street vendors and large crowds of people seeing the souk again or for a first time. Car horn cacophonies are



AP/Wide World Photos, Inc. Reproduced by permission.

Muslim men at an outside cafe in Damascus

standard musical fare in major metropolitan areas and Damascenes are proficient in this artform. With comforting regularity, the prayer calls mark the passing of time; the schedule adjusted, by tradition, for the moon and the weather.

Business hours and days are based on religion and culture. Friday is the official day of rest for the predominantly Muslim community; Jews observe the Sabbath; and Christians take Sunday off. Many shops open around 09:00 and close for several hours around lunch (14:00 to 17:00). The work day may end at 20:00 or later. These hours do not apply before or during the Eid holidays.

Food

Excellent fresh fruits and vegetables in season are available in vegetable souks and in small neighborhood shops. Damascenes love their food and Syrian food is among the best in the Middle East. Prepare to learn to cook with new spices and methods. Spices are available and fresh, so don't ship old spice - reward your taste buds with sharp and distinct fresh spice flavors.

There are a few butchers in most neighborhoods and the quality of

meats can be good. There is beef, chicken, goat, lamb, turkey, and veal in the marketplace. There are two pork butchers who will provide sides of pork. You will need to learn which cuts you want and enjoy experimenting with fresh meats. Some shops have begun to carry baked and smoked hams, bacon and prosciutto to satisfy the foreign community's demands. These products are imported and expensive.

Fresh fish is available in limited quantities and varieties. It is useful to know your fish before buying as most is brought on ice from the coast. Several salesmen come around the neighborhoods with their trucks laden with fish and shrimp. Once you make contacts, the fishmongers will help you choose. Frozen fish appears in the shops from time to time. Canned fish (i.e., anchovies, crab, salmon, sardines, smelts and tuna) can be found imported from the Far East.

Dairy products are abundant. Butter, whipping cream, creme fraiche, cream cheese, and long-life whole, low fat, and skimmed milk are always available. Yogurts and ice creams come in both the local and imported varieties, and butter is made in Syria, both salt-free and lightly salted. Many shops import

butter and cheeses from Denmark, England, Finland, France, Germany, and Bread is the staple of most cultures' diets and Syria is no exception. People consume the flat Arabic bread, French style baguettes, white flour and multi-grain buns and loaves. The Armenian bakers make a crusty Russian style wheat loaf. Most of these use no preservatives or salt, therefore they do not keep well.

Syrian sweets are world famous. Bakeries make large varieties of delicious pastries including baklava, macarons, meringue, cookies and cakes with almonds and pistachios, creams and cheeses, honey and other sweeteners (rose-water, for example).

Alcoholic beverages (liquor, beer and wine) are available through the local duty-free stores. Quite a variety is imported by these organizations. Syria and Lebanon produce wines and beers and certain liquors that can be purchased in most corner grocery stores.

Syrians enjoy smoking the argileh (water pipe) and use either the dark black tobacco made famous in Latakia and throughout Persia or the fruited brown tobacco found in the Gulf States.

Syria produces a large variety of soft drinks under license from Royal Crown and Crush, to all the carbonated mixers (tonic, soda, bitter lemon, etc.) Fruit drinks are popular and produced locally. There are tetra-pack boxes of orange, grapefruit, lemon, pineapple and mango juice in liter and quarter liter sizes, with and without sugar added.

Clothing

Damascenes are very social and enjoy dressing for any occasion. Styles vary from the very conservative to the resplendent. Clothes that are imported from the West can be very expensive, but are available. There are many styles of clothes that Syria imports. Local production is growing and Syria is a producer of cotton and other cloth products.

Men: Social life is informal. Gentlemen wear dark suits for most formal occasions and coat and tie is the accepted evening wear.

In the summer season, lightweight suits are desirable for office wear. It does get hot, even with air-conditioning in the work place. Winter is cold enough to warrant wool or wool blend suits. Damascus has reasonably good dry-cleaning services and only the most exotic clothing might be at risk.

Women: In Arabic culture, one can never go wrong with a more conservative outfit for different occasions. Nevertheless, Damascus is quite cosmopolitan and women enjoy wearing ornate cocktail dresses for evening and formal events. Several dressy outfits, short or long, should satisfy most needs. The ladies wear dresses or pantsuits for daily wear and it behooves you to remember the season and weather.

In summer, cotton and linen blends are probably the most comfortable for inside (climatized) and outside. Slacks are acceptable and popular with the younger Syrians for day wear. Shorts, tank-tops, and other revealing dress is not suitable for street wear (except maybe in the beach cities) and will make you much more uncomfortable than the weather. Your winter wardrobe should include a wool coat and a raincoat for the rainy season. Sweaters and medium weight wools are probably the most comfortable from November to March. Syrian women wear furs; if you bring one to Damascus, bring all the necessary supplies for cleaning and storage as these are difficult to find.

Bring comfortable walking shoes to Syria; walking is a social event and everybody walks. Women's shoes are available in the market but sizes may be difficult to find and styles are not always comparable to those in the U.S. American brand lingerie, panty hose and stockings are not imported. European lingerie is expensive and sizes vary from what you may be used to at home.

Children: All of the observations above apply to children's clothing. Children's clothes should include durable playwear and tennis shoes (sneakers) for school and home. Students at the Damascus Community School dress very much like the kids they see on TV; a lot like those you find at your local school or mall. Preschoolers find the largest variety in the market from which to choose and infant clothing is reasonably priced. You can keep up with their growing spurts by shopping locally.

Supplies and Services

American toilet articles and cosmetics are expensive, when available, in Syria. Gentlemen without brand preferences have little difficulty obtaining necessary items in the local markets. American products for women are rarely available, though European substitutes can usually be found

Most drugs and medications are available in Damascus, either in the generic lines or in specific European labels, and are almost always less expensive than in the U.S. Nevertheless, if you have specific medical requirements, you should check with your doctor and bring sufficient supplies until you become familiar with the local pharmacies. Contact lens solutions and supplies should be brought with you.

Damascus offers a good selection of dress makers and tailors. Quality and the speed of production vary widely and, as with any service sector, it is best to know your provider. Nevertheless, this enterprise gets generally high marks. Shoe and boot makers and repair shops are also available. Handmade riding boots cost about \$150 and men's loafers run from \$50 to \$100.

There are plenty of beauty and barber shops that are up on the latest European styles and provide full services including shampoos, cuts, sets, permanents, manicures, pedicures, and massages. The cost of these services is very reasonable

Religious Activities

The majority of Syrians are Sunni Muslim and there are many mosques that serve both the Sunni and the small Shi'a communities. Damascus has many cultures and religious traditions and was a home to the earliest Christian and Islamic communities. There is one Jewish synagogue, several Roman Catholic churches, even more Orthodox (Eastern) churches, including Armenian, Greek, Russian, and Syrian Orthodox, several Protestant churches including Anglican (Episcopalian), Baptist, Communitarian, and Presbyterian. Mormons maintain a house of prayer and a community center in Amman, Jordan. Most Far Eastern religions are not represented (have no official presence) in Damascus

Education

The Damascus Community School (DCS), organized in 1950, provides English language based education from Pre-K through 12th grade. The student base (290 pupils in 94-95) included 21 nationalities drawn from the diplomatic and business communities as well as the local community. 60% of the student body is Syrian. Teachers are primarily U.S.-certified Americans and overseas hires. There are 35 full time teachers hired from overseas, 10 local hires and a support staff of 15, including office personnel. The school is accredited by the Middle States Schools Organization and belongs to E.M.A.C. (Eastern Mediterranean Activities Council.) School transcripts from DCS serve as a basis for enrollment in U.S. schools.

School programs include computer sessions for all grade levels, liberal arts electives including drama, journalism, music and dance. Pupils can choose either Arabic or French language programs for the foreign language requirement. DCS offers English as a second language (E.S.L.) for foreign students.

The campus is located in a pleasant residential area and is centrally located. The campus' central courtyard is landscaped and comfortably

laid out for social interaction. The playground areas include a soccer field, basketball court and two jungle gym areas for the younger students. The school cafeteria provides, for a fee, daily hot lunches and a variety of snacks and drinks. The school opens in late August and maintains a 180-day schedule equivalent to the standard U.S. public school schedule. For enrollment at DCS a student is required to furnish a birth certificate, transcripts or previous school records; health certificate and/or medical records including vaccination and immunization schedules, two current photos and proof of residence in Damascus, Syria.

Sports

The Sheraton, Meridien and Ibla Cham Hotels all offer memberships, for a fee, to their pool and tennis complexes. All have resident trainers and coaches. Sheraton's compound has six hard surface courts, a large pool, a children's pool, and a children's playground. The Meridien has four soft surface (clay) courts, and a large pool and gardens. Locally owned and managed, the Ibla Cham has eight hard surface courts, two pools and an equestrian paddock with rental horses available to the public. For tennis players, it is best to bring balls, racket strings and handle wraps as they are very expensive, when available.

There are several riding clubs in the city, generally for more advanced riders. Horses can be purchased and stabled at these clubs for a fee. Riding wear and boots are made in the souk and are not expensive: However, saddles, tack, medicines and other gear should be shipped from the States.

Golf is not played much in Syria and the two courses are more than five hours away from Damascus. The Cham Palace has a bowling alley that is open to the public. Fishing opportunities are very limited except on the coast. Camping is permitted by the Syrian Government and is popular with many in the diplomatic community. There are won-

derful, undeveloped, areas throughout the country that campers regularly visit.

Runners can look forward to joining the Hash House Harriers based in the British Embassy Club. Running is becoming a popular sport with Syrians and joggers are out daily in the larger parks around the city. The Canadians have organized a mini-marathon (Terry Fox Run) for the past two years.

Sports equipment of all types, including shoes, is all imported and quite expensive. Sizes and styles are very limited

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Syria, a cradle of civilization and squarely on the crossroads between East and West, has something for everyone.

Bosra, on the Syrian-Jordanian border and two hours south of the city, features possibly the best preserved Roman amphitheater anywhere. A medieval Arab citadel surrounds the theater. Ramparts of this fort have protected the Roman architecture since the 12th century. This site hosts a musical arts festival each September. The area was an important agricultural center to the Romans. A recently discovered, Pompeii-like, volcanically covered, Roman city has excited the archeological and historical communities with some wonderful finds.

Krak des Chevaliers, described by Lawrence of Arabia as the Vatican of the Middle East, is two hours north of Damascus overlooking a large valley and the pass from Homs to the coast. This Crusader fortress, built on a promontory originally developed by the Emir of Homs in 1031 AD, is a classic example of the siege defenses of the Middle Ages. Well preserved and massive, the castle complex supported a community of over 4,000 knights and retainers and had a rock-hewn stable large enough for 500 horses. Crusader knights occupied it from 1110 AD and deeded it to the Hospitaliers who finally

capitulated to the Mameluke Sultan Baibars in 1271. The villages around the Krak are predominantly Catholic to this day.

Kuneitra, up on the Golan Heights, was the site of some of the fiercest fighting between Syria and Israel in both the '67 and '73 wars. The village has remained untouched since being placed under UN supervision in 1974. Several diplomatic missions have staged concerts and picnics on its fertile plain where one can see snow-capped mountains and skiers on the Israeli-occupied side of the Golan.

Maloula, less than an hour from Damascus, is the site of the early Christian convent dedicated to St. Takla. The Syrian icons and paintings are particularly interesting, and still produced here. Maloula has the distinction of being uniquely bilingual with Aramaic (the language of Jesus Christ and the New Testament writings) still spoken by a large portion of the population.

Palmyra, an oasis that served the silk and spice trade from Nineveh, Babylon, Persepolis and points east of the Mediterranean, has the distinction of being mentioned in the Old Testament books of Kings and Songs of Solomon. Its biblical name, Tadmor, recalls its importance as an early center of trading and culture. The name appears in the annals of Roman conquests and the Emperor Valerian was so taken by the city, when he visited in the third century, that he granted it free city-state status and renamed it Palmyra Valeriana.

Three hours from Damascus on the road to Baghdad, these ruins are an extraordinary example of the synthesis of Roman, Syrian and Persian cultures. At its peak it boasted a population of over 50,000. Tadmori tycoons controlled trade throughout Anatolia and Syria in the Eastern Empire. Witness to their power and fame lies in the valley of tombs just north of the ruins of Palmyra. Queen Zenobia, who rebelled against Rome and expanded the "Palmyran kingdom"

to Egypt and eastern Asia Minor, drew the wrath of the Emperor Aurelian who destroyed Palmyra in 273 AD. He returned to Rome with Zenobia in golden chains and paraded her through the city. On the Aurelian Arch in Rome, one can still see the humiliation of Palmyra's queen. The city's importance waned and it was bypassed by history after this period. Its extensive oasis provides a walk through history along hard paths beneath the date, fig and pomegranate trees.

Sednayah, the Santiago de Compostela of the Anti-Lebanon Mountains, is a picturesque village built around an old monastery that was a popular pilgrimage point during the Crusades. Christians considered it an essential stop on the way to Jerusalem and accrued plenary indulgences for the visit.

Many more sites and sights, too numerous to mention, make Syria a travelers' wonderland. Several worth mentioning include an ancient, beautifully painted and well-preserved synagogue, Dura Europos. It is one of the many interesting sites on the high plains of the Euphrates valley area. Crusader and Arabic fortresses dot the coastal plain, which are as impressive and massive as the Krak des Chevaliers. Roman ruins that are a day's march from each other feature well-preserved mosaics and unusual architectural syntheses.

Campers often choose to set up their tents near these sites and use the long weekends to explore little known and undeveloped areas. Hikers find many areas that provide a feast for their eyes as well as a feat for their feet. In the spring and fall many walking clubs take advantage of the Ghuta, an agriculturally developed oasis near Damascus, to enjoy the blossoms or the fruits of the lush orchards. Picnic and camping sites are not developed or equipped. You should plan to bring any camping or picnic gear that will make these outings more pleasant.

Outside Syria

Travel by car or plane is reasonably easy and inexpensive. Amman is four hours away by car. The Nabatean ruins at Petra, Roman ruins at Jerash, Jerusalem and Israel are only a few of the possibilities. Direct, short flights to Athens, Cairo, Dubai, Istanbul, Larnaca, Sanaa, and Vienna make tourism a relatively affordable hobby from Damascus.

Entertainment and Social Activities

Cultural life in Syria is multifaceted. The Syrian Government is in the process of building a multi-function arts complex that will include an opera house and a concert hall. Presently the Damascus Symphony performs at several different venues including the Asad Library auditorium. Some diplomatic missions sponsor artists and performers from their respective countries and a few have year-around schedules. The Russian Embassy has a once-a-month musical program that has featured classical quartets, classical and modern pianists, and full orchestras. USIS brings a variety of performers representative of the American music scene. Hotels sponsor travelling troupes. The Syrian Government's festivals in Aleppo, Bosra and during the Damascus Fair supplement the fall schedule. Most of these have a token fee or request a donation of \$2.00 to \$5.00.

Several formal dances or balls are held throughout the year, the highlight being the Marine Corps Birthday Ball that is well attended by the community. The oil companies sponsor a country and western night that includes foods flown in from the States and a live band.

Movie theaters in Damascus feature Egyptian, Jordanian and Syrian films as well as American, French and Italian. Most are in the original language and subtitled. Prices are inexpensive.

Life in Damascus can run late and is often organized around sumptuous meals. Food is a reflection of culture and civilization, and Damascus

has had over 7,000 years to develop its extensive and delicious cuisine. Arabic food, especially Lebanese and Syrian, are a gourmand's delight with flavor-filled sauces of creams and spices covering vine-ripened eggplant and zucchini stuffed with lamb, onions and pine-nuts. Restaurants of all categories and price ranges abound. There are few Oriental (Chinese and Japanese) restaurants in the city. The predominance of foreign food is either French or Italian. The hotels compete to provide bountiful buffets and schedule weeks featuring the foods of other countries, such as German week during Oktoberfest and a summer Fiesta Mexicana.

The American Women in Damascus (AWD), holds monthly meetings that feature programs on regional archeology, cultural life in Damascus, etc. This group often sponsors special activities including gourmet cooking presentations, handicrafts, card competitions (such as bridge, belot), exercise classes, old-city tours, and several fund-raising events throughout the year.

Ahlan wa Sahlan, sponsored by the wife of Syrian Vice President Khaddam, is another international group that is very active in Damascus and strives to include most foreigners in many social and cultural activities. Group meetings and locations are announced each month and programs include arts displays, music performances, haute cuisine demonstrations and tastings, and introductions to Syrian agroindustries including viticulture. There are nominal fees for membership in either of the above.

Aleppo

Aleppo, with a population of more than 2.2 million, is the second largest city in Syria. It played an important role in Islamic defenses during the Crusades and has competed with Damascus for predominance in area politics since the days of the Roman Empire. The citadel, an ancient fortress rising out of the center of town, dominates the view of the city. It casts its shadows on

the colorful bazaar that competes only with the souk in Damascus for variety.

Tourists use Aleppo as a base for visiting many “dead cities” of northern Syria dating back to Ugarit and Hittite ages. Ebla, an iron age center searched for by archaeologists for centuries and found recently, is just south of the city. Early Christian ascetics, such as Simon Stylites, made their base a few kilometers north of Aleppo.

The Aleppo Museum is second only to the National Museum in Damascus for collections in Ugarit, Hittite, early Greek and Roman artifacts from Syria. T.E. Lawrence and Agatha Christie sat on the balconies of the Baron Hotel, still open and popular, and wrote while sipping tea and admiring the sunsets. This train stop, now in the center of a congested part of downtown, is featured in “Murder on the Orient Express.”

Aleppo was a flourishing trade center during the 16th century, but its importance declined with the use of sea routes to India and the later opening of the Suez Canal. Twice, it was nearly destroyed by earthquakes—first in 1822, and again eight years later. Aleppo was the state of French mandate which united with Damascus in 1925 to form the state of Syria.

Located in the semi-desert region of northwest Syria, Aleppo is a commercial center where grains, cotton, and fruit are grown. A market for wool and hides, Aleppo manufactures silk, printed cotton textiles, cement, and dried fruits and nuts, especially pistachios.

Aleppo has an international airport and is connected to Damascus and Latakia by rail, as well as with Turkey and Iraq.

The University of Aleppo (founded in 1960), Aleppo Institute of Music (founded in 1955), and Muslim theological schools are located in the city. Landmarks include the 12th-

century Byzantine Citadel and the Great Mosque, built in 715.

Education

International School of Aleppo is a coeducational, day, company-sponsored school for children in kindergarten through grade 12. Founded in 1976 and sponsored by the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas, the school offers a modified U.S. curriculum to about 100 students. Of the 49 staff members, 10 are American.

The school year runs from September to June, with a two-week vacation at Christmas and a one-week spring break. International School is located in a southwest suburb of Aleppo. Facilities include three buildings, 22 classrooms, science laboratories, playing fields, tennis courts, and a 3,000-volume library. The address of International School of Aleppo is: P.O. Box 5466, Aleppo, Syria.

Latakia

Syria's principal port, Latakia, lies on the Mediterranean Sea. It is situated in the center of a rich agricultural region. Since the completion of its deep-water harbor in 1959, it has exported cereals, raw cotton, asphalt, bitumen, fruit, and Latakia tobacco, which has been cultivated since the 17th century. Sponge fishing, vegetable oil milling, and cotton ginning are among the city's industries.

Historically, Latakia was the ancient Phoenician city of Ramitha, and later prospered as the Roman city, Laodicea ad Mare. It was captured by the Crusaders in 1098, and flourished in the 12th century. The city was part of the Ottoman Empire from the 16th century until World War I. Latakia was the capital of the Territory of the Alaouites from 1920 to 1942. Its current population exceeds 300,000.

Near Latakia is the site of the Canaanite city of Ugarit, which has produced many interesting artifacts now on display in the Damascus

Museum. Ruins of a Crusader castle are also a short distance from Latakia. Beaches abound here, but chemical pollution from the port is widespread, and care must be used in selecting a swimming place.

OTHER CITIES

DEIR-EZ-ZOR (also spelled Dayr-ar-Zawr and Dayr al-Zur) is located in eastern Syria on the Euphrates River. A prosperous farming town with a cattle-breeding center, an agricultural school, and salt rock mines nearby, Deir-ez-Zor is also a hub for trans-desert travel, and has an airport. The modern city was constructed by the Ottoman Empire in 1867 to halt the incoming Arab tribes of the Euphrates region. France occupied Deir-ez-Zor in 1921, making it the seat of a large garrison. Taken by the British in 1941, it became part of independent Syria in 1946. The population is approximately 150,000.

DER'Ā (also spelled Dar'ā), the chief city of the Hawrān region, is located 65 miles south of the capital, near the border with Jordan. There is no industry here, but the city is a market center and rail junction. Der'ā has Greco-Roman era ruins, as well as a 13th-century mosque. A pivotal battle was waged here in 636 that led to the decimation of the Byzantine forces and the Arab conquest of Syria. The population of Der'ā is well over 50,000.

HAMA lies on the Orontes River, about 75 miles south of Aleppo. With a population over 250,000, Hama is the market center for an irrigated farm region that grows cotton, wheat, barley, millet, and maize. Famous old waterwheels, some as great as 90 feet in diameter, bring water from the Orontes for irrigation. Hama is a road and rail center, with an airport nearby. The city manufactures cotton, silk, and woolen textiles, towels, carpets, and dairy products. Historically, Hama was settled as early as the Bronze and Iron Ages. It was often mentioned in the Bible as Hamath, the

northern boundary of the Israelite tribes. As part of the Persian Empire, Hama was conquered by Alexander the Great. It also was part of the Byzantine and Ottoman empires. Following World War I, Hama became a constituent of the French Levant States (League of Nations) mandate and, in 1941, part of independent Syria. Landmarks here include the remains of a Roman aqueduct that is still in use, and the Great Mosque of Djami al-Nuri, which was a Christian basilica until 638.

HASAKEH (also spelled Hasakah and Hassaka) lies on the Khābūr River, 340 miles northeast of Damascus. This is a major road junction and hub of a large irrigated farming district. Assyrian refugees from Iraq settled here during the French mandate of Syria in the early 1930s. The population of Hasakeh exceeds 75,000.

HOMS is located in west-central Syria, about halfway between Damascus and Aleppo, and near the Lebanon border. Situated on the Orontes River, it is a commercial center situated in a fertile plain where grapes, wheat, barley, and onions are grown. Items manufactured in the city include petroleum products, flour, fertilizer, processed foods, and silk, cotton, and woolen textiles. With a population of over 480,000, Homs is also a road and rail junction. Historically, Homs was called Emesa and was the site of a great temple to the sun god Baal. The city came into prominence in the third century when a priest from the temple became the Roman emperor Heliogabalus. Homs was part of the Ottoman Empire from the 16th century until after World War I, when it was part of the French mandate of the League of Nations.

RAQQA (also spelled Raqqah or Rakkah) is the capital of the governorate of the same name, situated on the left bank of the Euphrates River, 100 miles southeast of Aleppo. The ancient Greeks were the first known inhabitants of the Raqqa area, calling it Nicephorium.

A number of palatial homes were built here in early Arab times, when it was a base of operations against the Byzantines. Modern development began with the construction of the nearby Tabaqah Dam on the Euphrates in 1968. There is a museum in Raqqa featuring finds from area archaeological digs. A government team of archaeologists has excavated and restored edifices from the 'Abbāsid period here. The population of Raqqa is roughly over 87,000.

TARTŪS (also spelled Tartous) is the country's second port, with a population over 55,000. Located 42 miles south of Latakia on the Mediterranean, Tartūs dates to at least the fourth century. The city's museum, built by the Crusaders and formerly called the Cathedral of Our Lady of Tortosa, is considered a fine example of crusader architecture of the period. The ruins of the Castle of the Templars are in the older district. Tartūs is also the hub of a fertile agricultural area and is a fishing port.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The Syrian Arab Republic is at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea and at the northern end of the Afro-Asian Rift Valley. It abuts Turkey on its northern border; Iraq on its east; Jordan on the south; Israel, Lebanon and the Mediterranean on the west. Syria's area, approximately 185,000 sq. km. (71,500 sq. mi.), comprises several distinct climatic conditions. The western coastal plain is a narrow, fertile stretch of land that is the most humid area of the country, with milder winters and summers than the rest of the country. Due east in the Orontes River valley, the northern extension of the Afro-Asian rift, is a rich agricultural area that continues into the Bekaa Valley to the

south. East of the Orontes valley begins the desert region.

The largest cities of Syria: Damascus, Homs, and Aleppo are located on the eastern side of the mountain spine created by the rift. Further to the east is the Syrian Desert with its ancient oasis-city, Palmyra. In the northeast, the Anatolian Mountains serve as a natural barrier between Syria and Turkey, and Syria and Iraq. Here is found the Jazira Valley watered by the Euphrates River that is the grain belt of Syria. The oil fields of Syria are also in this area.

Damascus, the capital and one of the oldest continually inhabited cities in the world, rests at around 700 m. (2,300 ft.) above sea level on the Barada River in the southwestern section of the country. Climatic conditions in Damascus are comparable to those of cities in the southwestern United States. There are four seasons in the city with spring, winter and fall generally lasting eight to twelve weeks apiece. Summers can be long, dry, and hot. Short winters can be cold and rainy, with occasional snow. Average annual rainfall in Damascus has been 255 mm. (10 in.) in the past decade.

Temperatures in the city range from lows of 0°C (32°F) at night to highs of 20°C (68°F) during the day in the winter, and in the summer from 16°C (60°F) to 38°C (100°F). Though snow falls infrequently in Damascus, it does snow in the mountains near the city and some roads are impassible during these storms. The climate variation in Syria allows a robust agriculture with year-round availability of fruits and vegetables, most staple grains, and cotton.

Population

Syria's population is estimated at 16.7 million (2001 est.), with approximately 60% in the urban centers and the remainder comprising a strong agrarian rural minority. Population in the Damascus metropolitan area is estimated at around four million; Aleppo, the sec-

ond largest city, has 1.5 million people; and Homs 400,000.

Roughly 90% of the citizens are Arab. Other minorities include Armenians, Circassians, Kurds, and Turks. Around 74% of the populace is Sunni Muslim. Alawis and other Muslim sects account for 16% and the Christians 10%. There is a small and dwindling community of Jews in Syria.

Arabic is the official language of the country. Many professionals and businesspersons speak English. French is still widely spoken by educated Syrians, particularly the older generation. Some Syrians, especially the Druze, speak Spanish. Kurdish, Armenian, Syriac, and Circassian are other minority languages in use in Syria.

Public Institutions

Syria has a presidential form of government with dominant executive power held by the President. The daily operation of government is directed by a Prime Minister and a Council of Ministers. Legislation is vested in a unicameral body, the Syrian People's Council, composed of 250 members elected from lists prepared in various governorates but constitutionally representing the population at large. Syria has a judicial system based originally on the French Napoleonic Code. The highest court of appeal is the Court of Cassation (equivalent to the Supreme Court of the United States).

The most important political party in Syria is the Ba'th Party (est. March 1963). Its political slogan proclaims the principles of Arab unity, freedom, and socialism. Various factions of the Ba'th Party have ruled the country since 1963. The Constitution guarantees the Ba'th party a majority in the People's Council. Several smaller political parties, including the Communist Party, have joined with factions of the Ba'th to create a majority in the People's Council and provide most of the ministerial-level officials in the government. Syria's armed forces

and security services are an important factor in the political scene.

Two of the most important economic organizations are the Chamber of Commerce and the Chamber of Industry, reflecting Syria's business and agriculture-based economy. Many governmental and religious social organizations operate orphanages and hospitals in addition to private (for profit) health care providers.

Arts, Science and Education

Damascus maintains one of the best museums in the Middle East, housing samples of its immense history from Neolithic times to the arts and crafts of today. Entering through the Qasr alHair al-Gharbi facade that has been rebuilt from an Omayyad desert palace in Palmyra, one finds Hittite, Assyrian, Phoenician, Greek, Roman, and Islamic antiquities. There is a reconstructed underground tomb (hypogea), a synagogue (Dura Europos) and an elaborately detailed old Damascene house from the last century. Next door to the museum are the Suleimaniye Mosque, madrasa (school), and hospice. This classic Ottoman complex was designed and built around 1560 in Syrian fashion with black and white striped masonry and contains one of the loveliest gardens in Damascus. The complex houses the Army Museum and a handicraft market that displays all the traditional crafts of Syria. The Azm Palace, near the Omayyad Mosque (Islam's first great house of prayer) is located in the old city. Also built in Turkish design in the 18th century, it houses displays of everyday Damascene life, now long gone. Museums throughout the country capture the enormous diversity of the cultures and ages of Syria. Archeological sites from the Bronze Age (Ebla) through Graeco-Roman (Palmyra and Bosra) and Islamic/Crusader (Sulaiman's Fort, Krak de Chevaliers) are not only sites to see but also venues for cultural events that occur throughout the year.

Contemporary and modern art galleries are found around Damascus with frequently scheduled exhibitions. Other exhibits take place at the Arab Cultural Center, the Asad Library, the People's Gallery, and the exhibition hall of the National Museum. There are more than thirty Arab Cultural Centers throughout the country. Several embassies also operate cultural centers in Damascus, including the British, French, German, Russian, and Spanish.

The American Cultural Center, which was first established in the 1950's, houses a library with approximately 5,500 books, 120 magazines, video tapes, cassette tapes, and microfilms. The USIS library collection features sections on art, literature, history, Arabic translations, and reference works. Magazines include the major journals (*Time*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News and World Report*); a variety of general interest publications; plus some highly specialized periodicals. Activities include film presentations, U.S. performing groups, art exhibits, and lectures.

A major opera house and conservatory are presently under construction in Damascus which will house the Damascus Music Conservatory (est. 1960), as well as one of the few symphonies and opera troupes of the Middle East. Scheduled for completion in 1996, it will offer a broad range of programs in the performing arts, including Arabic and Western music and dance. There is a music conservatory in Aleppo (est. 1964) as well. Music instructors of voice and instruments are available in Damascus, and instruments are available for purchase or rent.

Cultural activity in Damascus increases during the annual Damascus International Fair. Major cultural programs are sponsored by Bulgaria, France, Great Britain, Russia, Spain, and Yugoslavia. The Bosra Festival of the Performing Arts is held annually in September in the restored Roman amphitheater of Bosra, two hours drive south of Damascus.

Since independence, Syria's educational facilities have grown in quality and quantity. The literacy rate has increased to 70% (86% male, 56% female). Elementary education is theoretically compulsory; however, this is not enforced in cities and towns, and is not yet possible in all the smaller villages due to shortages of teachers and buildings. Bright Syrian students, nevertheless, are entitled to free education from elementary through university levels. The government has emphasized education as a major goal by establishing a system of teacher-training colleges. Vocational schools are available throughout the country. The Ministry of Education controls the curricula and teaching methods of primary and secondary schools, excluding those with exclusively foreign student populations or operating under a licensed foreign charter.

Damascus University and Syrian higher education date back to 1903 when Turkish rulers founded a school of medicine and pharmacy in Damascus. During the French Mandate, authorities added several more faculties to form the Syrian University, now known as Damascus University. This institution now encompasses nine separate locations in the city and enrolls 95,000 students, about 20% women.

Aleppo University, founded in 1961, was a joint effort by the Syrian Government and UNESCO, supplemented by the Ford Foundation. It is a modern university with faculties in engineering, agriculture, medicine, law, and letters. Enrollment exceeds 60,000. Tishrin University in Latakia, founded in 1977, includes the Maritime Institute and enrolls around 20,000. The Ba'th University of Homs, founded in 1979, is the newest in the Syrian university system. It features an agricultural facility in Hama and has a 10,000-member student body.

All universities are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Higher Education. Arabic is the language of instruction for all undergraduate work, although some French and

English literature courses are also taught in Arabic. Postgraduate work requires a functional knowledge of a foreign language. The system of education reflects French influence in organization, nomenclature of degrees, and method of teaching. Special Arabic classes for foreigners are offered at the Arabic Institute.

Commerce and Industry

Syria is a middle-income developing country, with a diversified economic base in agriculture and industry. Per capita gross domestic product is about \$3,100 (2000 est.).

Watered in the northeast by the Euphrates River and its tributaries, in the west by the Orontes and other mountain streams, and in the southwest by headwaters of the Yarmuk, Syria produces large quantities of wheat, barley, cotton, and other crops.

Situated astride the traditional trade routes linking Europe with the Arabian Peninsula and Asia, Syria has always had a large and dynamic merchant class. In the past decade, Syria has also become an important producer of crude oil. From the 1960s until recently, the government pursued nationalization policies to enlarge the industrial base. These included building cement factories, a steel mill, two oil refineries, a fertilizer plant, sugar refineries, grain silos, and flour mills that now supply most of the country's basic needs. Nationalization also affected Syria's financial, banking, and insurance sectors. Under government management, the competitiveness and efficiency of these enterprises have atrophied mainly due to monopolistic practices, overemployment, inadequate compensation of employees, and low rates of capital replenishment.

Syria's participation in the Gulf War coalition briefly gave the government access once again to substantial financial aid resources. These are being used to develop a

wide range of projects to rehabilitate the country's deteriorating infrastructure and public sector enterprises. That assistance, mostly from Arab countries and Japan, has allowed Syria to modernize its telecommunications systems, expand its electricity generation capacity to overcome serious power shortages, and recapitalize some public sector enterprises. However, nonpayment of debts to foreign creditors, including the U.S., has jeopardized the volume of future assistance.

Unlike other socialist governments, Syria never destroyed its merchant class, leaving agricultural production and trade in its hands. Thus, when the government passed a new investment incentive law in 1991 (Law #10), domestic private sector investment rose dramatically. Additional ad hoc economic liberalization measures have fostered this regeneration of private sector industry, such that private businesses now produce over half of Syria's GDP. However, Syria's inefficient and anachronistic government-run financial sector has severely inhibited Syrians, repatriation of capital invested abroad, as well as foreign investment. As the Syrian Government carries out the next steps of its incremental reform program, the private sector should respond with increased investment and it will take its rightful place at center state of the Syrian economy.

Today Syria exports crude petroleum, cotton, textiles, phosphates, sugar, and food products to Europe and to other Arab countries. Meanwhile, its main imports are raw materials essential for industry and agriculture, advanced oil field equipment, and heavy machinery used in the construction of infrastructure projects.

Transportation

Local

There is an extensive public transportation system within Damascus that includes buses and taxis, and "service" vans. City bus service is inexpensive, but generally crowded



Syrian man driving a three-wheel vehicle

Cory Langley. Reproduced by permission.

and hard to learn. The “service” system (shared vans that travel specific routes) is both cheap and efficient (vans are available practically every minute or two). It, too, however, requires knowledge of the established routes. Taxis, the most popular form of public transport for foreigners, are readily available and very inexpensive. Cabs are generally painted yellow and have a taxi emblem or light. They are also distinguishable by their red-lettered license plates. There are even radio-dispatched taxi services in the cities. Fares, usually on a meter, run from about 25SL to 50SL for most in-city travel. The fare to the airport is around 500SL and may be a fixed amount without the use of the meter. If the taxicab does not have a meter, fares should be agreed upon before entering the vehicle.

Although there are street names, most Syrians orient themselves by landmarks and well-known sites. If you know the street address of your destination, it is still useful to know a restaurant, hotel, government building, or embassy nearby that the locals use as reference.

Regional

It is relatively simple to travel throughout Syria using the public transportation systems. Climatized

buses with waiters offering on-board food and drink service, en route video presentations, and express destinations are available between major cities. Sample fares from Damascus to Aleppo average 100SL (\$2.38). Taxis are also available between most cities. One may either rent the whole vehicle or buy a seat. A Damascus to Aleppo taxi ride costs about 500SL (\$11.90); rental of the vehicle for the same trip is around 3,000SL (\$71.43).

Rental cars with drivers are available and moderately priced. One way trips to Aleppo and Latakia cost 4,500 to 6,500SL (\$108 to \$155) and round trips are prorated costing about 35% more than the one way fare. Trains operate on limited schedules to several cities around the country, but service and conditions are poor. Schedules of times and prices are available from the Ministry of Transportation.

All-weather roads exist between most Syrian cities and to many touristic sites throughout the country. The roads are of reasonable quality though most are traveled by heavy truck traffic and may be in varying states of repair. Driving is most dangerous at night when unlit parked cars or unlit moving cars are

traveling along the poorly lit highways.

International

International European carriers serve Damascus from Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Istanbul, London, Paris, Rome, and Vienna. Middle East carriers fly from Bahrain, Cairo, Dubai, Jeddah, Kuwait, Riyadh, Sanaa, Tunis, and other points. Syrian Air serves an expanded list of stops and has reciprocal agreements with smaller regional airlines that include flights to Larnaca and Beirut. These lists change every six months subject to economic and political considerations.

Communications

Telephones, Modems, and Fax

Syria’s telephone system is currently being revamped and updated. Generally, international service is good and local service is improving, though still subject to occasional interruption, throughout the country. Calls to the United States cost 125SL (approximately \$3.00) per minute from 8 am to 2 am local time. From 2 am to 8 am, the cost is 63SL per minute. PTT, the national telecommunications utility, generates phone bills almost one year late, and discrepancies are difficult to contest and resolve. Access to ATT, MCI, and Sprint is available from some numbers in Damascus and is recommended. Membership cards to any of these long distance companies should be obtained prior to arrival.

PTT requires that modem and fax users pay a 600SL fee for a data line

Radio and TV

Electronic media, i.e., radio and television, is government owned and operated in Syria. Radio Damascus, across several AM and FM bands, broadcasts primarily in Arabic, though there are several English and French language programs including short news presentations. Syrian TV has two channels. One channel broadcasts primarily in Arabic. Programming

includes Egyptian and Jordanian soap operas and features. The other channel has an eclectic mix of European and American serials and movies in either English or French. The European PAL and Middle East SECAM TV systems are used in Syria. Local specifications include 625 line screens, 220v, 50 cycle power units. U.S. standard (NTSC) television sets will not work and are not readily convertible. multi-system set that operates in SECAM and PAL is necessary. Local signals from adjacent countries can be picked up with a sufficiently large roof antenna

There are a few local cinemas that feature primarily Arabic movies and older American and French films that have been subtitled. They are not widely frequented by Westerners.

Printed Media

There is a limited selection of English, French, and Arab language newspapers and magazines available in Syria. Publications include the dailies: *International Herald Tribune*, *Middle East News*, *Syria Times*, and several from Cairo, Riyadh, and Amman. Weeklies include *The Economist*, *Newsweek*, *Paris Match*, and *Time*. There is some government censorship and papers arrive at the newsstands several days late. Technical journals (i.e., *Scientific American* et. al.) and special interest magazines (such as *Architectural Digest*, *Southern Living*, et. al.) are not generally available. Single copy prices can be considerably higher than you are accustomed to in the United States. Any subscriptions sent through international mail are subject to the same censorship regulations that are applied to newsstand sales and delivery may be additionally delayed.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

Private medical care in Damascus is adequate for routine problems and very inexpensive. U.S. prescription

drugs and medicines (or their European equivalents) are generally available across the counter in Syria. Though you may not find a specific drug, and there can be shortages, most drugs and medicines can be ordered by the local pharmacists and the prices are generally lower than they are in the United States.

Several Damascus hospitals are equipped and competent for emergency cases and routine care. Nursing care, however, is substandard. The regional medical authority recommends medical evacuation for major surgery, pregnancy confinement and delivery, long-term hospitalization, and high risk care

Community Health

The city services include potable water at the tap, trash removal, street sweeping, and periodic spraying for flying insects.

The water provided by the city main has been tested periodically (several times per year over the past three years) and found acceptably free of impurities and drinkable. Nevertheless, there is always a risk in any urban community that purification processes may fail. Water in Damascus need not be boiled, but anywhere else in Syria it is recommended that boiled and filtered or bottled water be consumed.

Trash dumpsters (large green receptacles) are available on most streets in the city. Collections are scheduled daily and city regulations require that all trash be disposed of in plastic bags. There is no rigid observation of these rules, though the population seems to make considerable effort to keep Damascus a clean city. Street sweepers dressed in orange overalls are apparent in most neighborhoods.

Seasonally, the city management sprays a concentrated mix to control the mosquito population that breeds on and around the Barada River. Flies can also be a problem in the warmer months. Spraying is done by large tank trucks that pass through the neighborhoods in the

evening and morning hours. Larger insects (ants, silverfish and cockroaches) can be problematic on the lower floors of apartment buildings.

Preventive measures to safeguard personal health in Syria include verifying that all persons have necessary inoculations before arriving and completing any inoculation programs that may require boosters. Though Syria has a program of childhood immunizations, many childhood diseases exist in country, including chicken pox, measles, and mumps. There are cases of tuberculosis and cholera reported.

Though Damascus is clean by most urban standards, normal precautions against diseases including amoebic dysentery, typhoid, various errant parasites and hepatitis should be taken. Fresh fruits and vegetables should be washed and soaked in Clorox or Miltons before use and consumption. Dining out requires some conscious decisions about what may or may not be eaten.

Seasonal weather changes that raise dry, dusty air can cause sinus and other upper-respiratory infections. These can be aggravated by the smog and strong desert winds. Humidifiers often relieve some of this discomfort and are recommended.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

The best way to reach Damascus is by air. Transfer points through Europe include Amsterdam, Athens, Frankfurt, London, Paris, and Rome. Alternatively one can arrive from Amman or Cairo, though these are neither as efficient nor as simple. Be sure to book your travel early and clearly as there are two peak travel seasons in Syria corresponding to the spring and fall, and peak travel season through Europe is in the summer. Travel to and through the Middle East is not as simple or efficient as in Europe or

the U.S. Make sure that you have all your necessary travel documents.

A passport and a visa are required. Visas must be obtained prior to arrival in Syria. The government of Syria does not allow persons with passports bearing an Israeli visa or entry/exit stamps to enter the country. Similar restrictions apply to persons born in the Gaza region or who are of Gaza descent. Entry into Syria via the land border with Israel is not possible. Foreigners who wish to stay 15 days or more in Syria must register with Syrian immigration authorities by their 15th day there. American men between the ages of 18 and 45 who are of Syrian birth or recent descent are subject to the Syrian compulsory military service requirement unless they receive a temporary or permanent exemption from the Syrian Embassy in the United States prior to their entry into Syria.

U.S. citizens are encouraged to carry a copy of their U.S. passports with them at all times, so that, if questioned by local officials, proof of identity and U.S. citizenship are readily available.

An AIDS test is not required for foreigners prior to arrival in Syria; however, tests are mandatory for foreigners age 15 to 60 who wish to reside in Syria. The AIDS test must be conducted in Syria at a facility approved by the Syrian Ministry of Health. A residence permit will not be issued until the absence of the HIV virus has been determined. Foreigners wishing to marry Syrian nationals in Syria must also be tested for HIV. For further entry information, travelers may contact the Embassy of the Syrian Arab Republic, 2215 Wyoming Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008, telephone (202) 232-6313 or check the Syrian Embassy's home page on the Internet at <http://www.syrianembassy.org>.

American citizens are cautioned that the Syrian government rigidly enforces restrictions on prior travel to Israel. Travelers with Israeli stamps in their passports, Jordanian

entry cachets, or cachets from other countries that suggest prior travel to Israel will cause Syrian immigration authorities to refuse the traveler admission to Syria. Likewise, the absence of entry stamps from a country adjacent to Israel, which the traveler has just visited, will cause the Syrian immigration officials to refuse admittance. American citizen travelers suspected of having traveled to Israel have been detained for questioning.

Syrian security officials are also sensitive about travel to Iraq. There have been instances in which Iraqi-Americans or Americans believed to have traveled to Iraq were detained for questioning at ports of entry/exit.

Syrian customs authorities may enforce strict regulations concerning temporary importation into or export from Syria of items such as weapons, narcotics, alcohol, tobacco, cheese, fruits, pharmaceuticals, modems, cosmetics, and some electrical appliances. It is advisable to contact the Embassy of Syria in Washington, D.C. for specific information regarding customs requirements.

Americans living in or visiting Syria are encouraged to register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Damascus and obtain updated information on travel and security within Syria. The U.S. Embassy is located in Abu Roumaneh, al-Mansur Street No. 2, P.O. Box 29, Damascus. The telephone numbers are [963] (11) 333-2814, 332-0783, 333-0788, and 333-3232. The fax number is [963] (11) 331-9678. The Embassy is open Sunday through Thursday.

Pets

Pets should arrive with all of the proper inoculations, including rabies. A certificate not older than 60 days from a licensed veterinarian showing current and valid inoculations is a requirement for animals entering the country. No quarantine is required. Non-diplomatic personnel should be prepared to pay duty

on imported pets as they are not considered personal property. The duty is calculated on the shipping charges, not on a declared value. There are veterinarians, though services may not meet U.S. standards. Animal medicines are not readily available and are more expensive than in the United States.

Dogs must always be walked on leashes since there is an official government dog-removal program. All housing in Damascus is apartment style. Very few are garden apartments with enclosed outdoor areas. Large animals may be uncomfortable in small, enclosed homes.

Currency, Banking, and Weights and Measures

The Syrian Lira or Pound (SL) is a controlled currency. It cannot be exchanged for any other currency except at government-approved exchange centers within Syria, and it cannot be changed back into foreign currency. Travelers must declare all foreign currency when they enter Syria. There are no foreign banks and few ATMs in Syria, and it is impossible to wire or otherwise transfer money from the United States to Syria. Credit cards are not generally accepted in Syria.

The current exchange rate is 46.00SL to US\$1.00 (May 2002).

Syria uses the metric system of weights and measures.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan. 1	New Year's Day
Feb. 22	Unity Day
Mar. 8	Revolution Day
Apr. 17	Independence Day
May 6	Martyrs' Day
Apr./May	Easter (Orthodox)*
May 1	Labor Day
May 6	Martyrs' Day
July 23	Egyptian Revolution Day
Sept. 1	United Arab Republic Day

Nov. 16. National Day
 Dec. 25. Christmas
 Hijra New Year*
 Ramadan*
 Id al-Fitr*
 Id al-Adha*
 Lailat al Meiraj*
 Mawlid an
 Nabi*

*Variable

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TAIWAN

Republic of China

Major Cities:

T'aipei, Kaohsiung, T'aichung, T'ainan

Other Cities:

Chiai, Chungli, Hsinchu, Hualien, Keelung, T'aitung

INTRODUCTION

The island nation of **TAIWAN** is a dynamic, vibrant country. Since its creation in 1949, Taiwan has transformed itself from an underdeveloped, agricultural island to an economic power that is a leading producer of high-technology goods. Taiwan has moved from being a recipient of U.S. aid in the 1950s and early 1960s to an aid donor and major foreign investor, especially in Asia. Today, Taiwan has one of the largest capitalist economies in the world. Taiwan is the world's 13th largest trading power and its population enjoys the highest standard of living in Asia after Japan and Singapore.

Taiwan is a popular tourist destination. Visitors from all over the world come to Taiwan to experience the country's well-preserved Chinese art, culture, beautiful natural scenery, and pleasant subtropical climate.

In recent years, Taiwan has cultivated better cultural and political relations with its giant neighbor, the People's Republic of China. The Taiwanese hope to ease years of hostility between the two countries and bring economic reform and development to the Chinese mainland.

MAJOR CITIES

T'aipei

With a metropolitan population of nearly 2.9 million, T'aipei is Taiwan's capital and largest city. T'aipei is located in extreme northern Taiwan in a basin crossed by the Hsintien, Keelung, and Tamsui rivers. The city's climate is characterized by a short, mild winter and a long warm-to-hot summer. Temperatures in T'aipei reach an average high of 96°F (36°C) in July and an average low of 52°F (10°C) in February.

T'aipei was first settled in the 17th century and had developed into a prosperous trading center by the mid-19th century. A wall was erected around the city in 1882. Taiwan was occupied by the Japanese in 1895 and T'aipei was chosen as the colonial capital. The city grew rapidly in size and population. By 1932, T'aipei had over 300,000 residents. The Japanese were forced from Taiwan in 1945. Chiang Kai-shek and his Nationalist Army fled to Taiwan from China in 1949 after being defeated by Mao Tse-tung's Communist forces during mainland China's civil war. T'aipei was designated as the capital of the new Republic of China.

Today, T'aipei is Taiwan's political, commercial, and cultural center. The city has also developed many thriving industries. T'aipei's industries produce a wide array of products including canned goods, handicrafts, machinery and household appliances, and electronic equipment. T'aipei is the transportation center for northern Taiwan. Excellent roads, railways, and air links connect T'aipei with other cities throughout the island. Most of Taiwan's institutions of higher learning are also located in T'aipei. These include the National Chengchi University, the National Taiwan Normal University, and the National Taiwan University.

Recreation

T'aipei is a bustling city that offers wonderful recreational activities. The city has many beautiful museums and temples that are of interest to visitors. The most popular museum in T'aipei is the National Palace Museum, which houses the largest collection of priceless Chinese art treasures in the world. Paintings, calligraphy, and beautiful artifacts of porcelain, jade, and bronze spanning several centuries are located in the museum. Another museum, the T'aipei Fine Arts Museum, contains many wonderful examples of contemporary Chinese art. The T'aipei Fine Arts Museum sponsors cultural exchanges

between Chinese artists and artists from all over the world. Other interesting museums in T'aipei include the Taiwan Provincial Museum, which offers exhibits chronicling the history of Taiwan's aboriginal tribes, and the National Museum of History.

Most Taiwanese are adherents of the Buddhist and Taoist religions. As a result, there are thousands of temples located throughout Taiwan. In T'aipei, there are three major temples. The Lungshan (Dragon Mountain) Temple is a Buddhist temple dedicated to Kuan Yin, the goddess of mercy. Many visitors will enjoy viewing this impressive structure, which is considered one of the most striking examples of Chinese temple architecture in Taiwan. The Confucian Temple, located in the heart of T'aipei, is an oasis of calm in the midst of hectic urban life. This temple, with its gorgeous formal gardens, offers T'aipei residents a quiet place to pray and reflect. Another beautiful structure, the Hsingtien (Soar to Heaven) Temple, is the largest Taoist temple in T'aipei.

T'aipei offers many sight-seeing opportunities. The Grand Hotel, one of T'aipei's largest hotels, is a favorite stop for tourists. The lobby of the hotel, with its fourteen-yard wide marble staircase, forty-two red pillars, and huge gold-loom carpet, is the largest in the world. Sightseers can walk through downtown T'aipei and view the gates of a wall that once encircled the city.

Also in downtown T'aipei is the impressive Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall. Constructed in 1980, this building exhibits classical Chinese architecture. The Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall is part of a large park and cultural complex that includes the National Concert Hall and National Theater.

The Presidential Office, a red-brick structure with tall spires, is also an impressive structure. In the plaza in front of the Presidential Office, the Taiwanese flag is raised in the morning and lowered at nightfall

during daily ceremonies. Visitors may enjoy viewing this event.

Another important tourist destination is the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall. This hall contains a fine art gallery of modern art, an auditorium, and a large library containing over 140,000 volumes. Animal lovers will enjoy visiting the T'aipei City Zoo, which is among the largest in Asia. The zoo has over 3,000 animals from 300 different species, in addition to a butterfly aviary.

On the outskirts of T'aipei, the Yangmingshan National Park attracts many residents and tourists alike. Situated on Yangming Mountain, the park has beautiful azalea and cherry trees which, when blooming, draw thousands of visitors.

Entertainment

Entertainment opportunities, such as concerts, shopping, and fine dining, are plentiful in T'aipei. Classical music performances by international artists and T'aipei's own City Symphony Orchestra are offered nightly at the National Concert Hall. Several dance troupes perform traditional Chinese folk dances frequently at the National Theater. The National Theater also hosts Chinese operas and dramatic plays which are of interest to visitors.

Shopping opportunities for gifts and souvenirs are plentiful throughout T'aipei and prices are generally reasonable. Shops along Can Ya Tsai and Chungshan North Road offer excellent coral, coral jewelry, curios, rare coins, jewels, and porcelain items. Jade can also be purchased in T'aipei, but it is very expensive. For the adventurous, a large flea market opens every Saturday and Sunday, under the city's Kuanghua Bridge. Jade and gems, among many other items, are available for sale. Trading at the flea market is done at a hectic pace and tourists should have some knowledge of appropriate prices before attempting to make a purchase. Tourists can find wonderful gift and souvenir items at the National Palace

Museum store. This store offers excellent reproductions of calligraphy and paintings found inside the museum and sells them at reasonable prices.

Opportunities for dining, from luxurious to simple cuisine, are readily available in T'aipei. Taiwan is noted for its fine Chinese dishes and over 1,000 excellent restaurants are available throughout the city.

Kaohsiung

Kaohsiung is Taiwan's principal international port and a major industrial city. Located in southwestern Taiwan, Kaohsiung has a population of approximately 1.5 million people and covers an area of 59 square miles making it the country's second largest city. Kaohsiung has a pleasant climate, with warm, mild winters and long summers. Yearly temperatures in the city average between 75°F (24°C) and 90°F (32°C).

Kaohsiung is the world's third largest container port after Hong Kong and Rotterdam (the Netherlands). The city is a major export center for the rice, sugar, groundnuts, bananas, and citrus fruits grown in southern Taiwan's fertile agricultural regions. Kaohsiung is home to several thriving industries. These industries produce aluminum, textiles, petrochemicals, refined sugar, paper, bricks and tile, fertilizers, and cement. A large industrial complex, the 5,500-acre Linhai Industrial Park, is located near Kaohsiung's excellent port facilities. This thriving industrial park contains many industries, including a steel mill and a large petrochemical facility. The city has several large fisheries and a thriving fish canning industry. Kaohsiung is also an educational center, with three universities, and four junior colleges.

Recreation

Kaohsiung offers ample sight-seeing opportunities. Shou Shan (Long Life Mountain) is located in the city and offers visitors excellent views of Kaohsiung. One of the most popular

tourist destinations in Kaohsiung is Lotus Lake. This resort area contains several beautiful, distinctive structures such as the Dragon and Tiger Pagodas, the Spring and Autumn Pavilions, and a large Confucian temple. For those who enjoy sun and surf, Kaohsiung's Hsi Tzu Bay beach offers visitors beautiful sand and clear waters.

Many tourist attractions are located outside of Kaohsiung proper. South of the city is a large mountain known as Fo Kuang Shan (Buddha Torch Mountain). This mountain contains a massive Buddha statue measuring 82 feet tall and is surrounded by nearly 500 other Buddhist figurines. Fo Kuang Shan is not only a noted tourist site, but an important pilgrimage destination for Buddhists from Taiwan and all of Southeast Asia.

Perhaps the largest and most popular tourist resort south of Kaohsiung is the Cheng Ching Lake Resort. Located only a few minutes from the city, Cheng Ching offers wonderful sight-seeing opportunities. The resort, which is spread out over several miles, contains several beautiful pavilions, a distinctive zig-zag-shaped bridge, a large aquarium, a recreational center, and an avenue filled with orchids that is perfect for a relaxing late-afternoon stroll. The Chung Hsing Pagoda, which is one of Taiwan's most famous monuments, is also located at the resort. Below the Chung Hsing Pagoda, an 18-hole golf course, owned by the Kaohsiung Golf and Country Club, allows visitors to play a game amid beautiful rolling hills.

T'aichung

Taiwan's third largest city, T'aichung, has a population of approximately 800,000. Located in west-central Taiwan, T'aichung was founded by a group of Chinese settlers in 1721 and given the name T'atun. The city received its current name in 1895 when the Japanese took control of Taiwan. The Japanese embarked on major construction projects in T'aichung and, by

1945, had transformed it into a modern city. From 1948 until 1977, T'aichung's population nearly tripled and today the city occupies an area of over 60 square miles. T'aichung is located in a rich agricultural region and is central Taiwan's principal trading center for bananas, sugar, and rice. T'aichung is linked by rail and roadway with T'aipei and other Taiwanese cities.

Recreation and Entertainment

T'aichung's major tourist attraction is the Happy Buddha of T'aichung, which, at 88 feet, is Taiwan's largest statue. Most recreational activities are located outside of the city, however. Souvenir shoppers will thoroughly enjoy visiting the Taiwan Provincial Government's Handicraft Exhibition Hall. Situated 12 miles south of T'aichung in the town of Tsaotun, this hall offers opportunities to buy lanterns, tableware, jewelry, jewel boxes, toys, and other handicrafts created by Taiwanese artisans.

For those who enjoy outdoor recreation, the Chitou Forest Recreation Area and Sun Moon Lake are two important destinations. The Chitou Forest Recreation Area, located 50 miles south of T'aichung, covers over 6,000 acres of land and is the site of Taiwan's largest bamboo forest. One notable attraction is a cypress tree that is nearly 3,000 years old and 151 feet tall. The interior of the tree is hollow and visitors are allowed to peer upward from an observation platform at the base of the tree. Approximately 50 miles southeast of T'aichung, the Sun Moon Lake is a popular resort area that offers ample sight-seeing opportunities. Among the notable structures at Sun Moon Lake are the Hsuan Chuang Temple, the Wen-Wu Temple, and the Tzu En Pagoda which, at 150 feet, is the tallest pagoda in Taiwan.

T'ainan

Situated in southwestern Taiwan, T'ainan is the country's oldest city. From 1684 to 1887, T'ainan served

as the capital of Taiwan. Today, with a population of approximately 695,000, T'ainan is Taiwan's fourth largest city. The city is nestled in a highly productive agricultural region and serves as southwestern Taiwan's trading center for peanuts, sugarcane, rice, and fruits. Several major industries are located in T'ainan. These industries produce a wide variety of products, including rubber goods, chemicals, textiles, refined sugar, plastics, processed foods, and electrical appliances. T'ainan's location near the Formosa Strait, the body of water separating Taiwan from the Chinese mainland, has led to the development of several large fisheries. The city has many artisans known for their gold and silver handicrafts.

Recreation and Entertainment

T'ainan is known as a city of temples, with over 200 temples in and around the city. Many tourists enjoy visiting these beautiful temples. T'ainan is the home of one of the country's oldest Buddhist temples, the Kaiyuan Temple. Another temple worth seeing is the Confucian Temple. Constructed in 1665, it is the oldest Confucian temple in Taiwan and is viewed by many experts as Taiwan's most beautiful example of Confucian temple architecture.

Two other tourist attractions are located a short drive from T'ainan. Located approximately 20 miles from T'ainan is Coral Lake. This lake is part of a 23.2 square mile resort complex that is popular among both tourists and native Taiwanese. This lake, which contains over one hundred islets, is a favorite boating spot for tourists, while the forested areas around Coral Lake are ideal for camping and hiking. Coral Lake is fed by the Tsengwen Reservoir, which is located 37 miles northeast of T'ainan and is also considered an interesting place to visit.

The Tsengwen Reservoir was created when a large hydroelectric dam was constructed on the Tsengwen River in 1973. With an area of nearly seven miles, the Tsengwen Reservoir is Taiwan's largest lake.

Cruising the Tsengwen Reservoir in rented motorboats is a popular tourist activity.

OTHER CITIES

The western city of **CHIAI** is located in a fertile agricultural region. Chiai has developed over the years into a trading center for rice and sugar grown near the city. The hills surrounding Chiai are heavily forested, which has led to the development of a thriving lumbering industry. Several industries are located in Chiai. These industries produce paper, plywood, cement, and tires. Chiai is linked by rail and roadway with T'aipei and Kaohsiung. In 1987, Chiai had a population of approximately 265,000.

CHUNGLI is situated on the Hsin-Chien River in northwestern Taiwan. It is one of northwestern Taiwan's principal industrial cities. Factories in Chungli produce textiles and milled rice. Sweet potatoes, rice, and tea are grown near the city. A major freeway and railway connects Chungli with T'aipei, which is located approximately 20 miles northeast of Chungli. Chungli had a population of 314,000 in 1998. Current population figures are unavailable.

HSINCHU is an industrial city in northwestern Taiwan. Industries within the city produce textiles, glass, cement, and fertilizers. Hsinchu is the site of Taiwan's largest oil field and, since 1980, has developed into a center for technology and research. The land surrounding Hsinchu is extremely fertile and supports the growth of citrus fruits, tea, and rice. The city had a population of just over 356,000 in 1998.

A major international port, **HUALIEN** is eastern Taiwan's largest city. Situated on the Pacific Coast, the city is connected to the western town of T'aichung by the East-West Cross-Island Highway. Hualien is the primary eastern departure point for tours to T'aichung via this scenic highway. Economic activity

around Hualien is centered around agriculture, particularly the growth of camphor, sugarcane, jute, and rice. Hualien is located in an area that is prone to severe earthquakes. The city was heavily damaged by an earthquake in 1951, but has been completely rebuilt. Hualien has an estimated population of over 360,000.

The northern city of **KEELUNG**, located approximately 16 miles northeast of T'aipei, is one of the country's major ports. Many imported products destined for T'aipei enter the country through Keelung's port facilities. The city's location near the East China Sea has led to the development of large shipbuilding and fishing industries. Other industries in the city produce cement and fertilizers. Keelung is connected with T'aipei and other Taiwanese cities via railway and several modern highways. The city receives a heavy amount of rainfall throughout the year, particularly from March through October. Keelung's primary tourist attraction is a 74 foot tall marble statue of the Buddhist goddess of mercy, Kuan Yin, which is situated on a hill above the city. Keelung has a population of approximately 385,000.

T'AITUNG is situated on the Peinan River in southeastern Taiwan. The city, which is located in a fertile agricultural region, has developed into a trading center for rice, peanuts, and sugarcane. T'aitung is home to several industries which produced milled sugar, and processed timber and jute. The city has excellent road, rail, and air links with Kaohsiung and T'aipei. T'aitung had an estimated population of over 109,000.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The island nation of Taiwan, formerly Formosa, lies approximately

100 miles southeast of the Chinese mainland. It is situated between the East and South China Seas. Taiwan also controls the Pescadores Islands on the western coast of Taiwan as well as twenty small islands off the coast of mainland China. Taiwan, the Pescadores and other island territories comprise a total area of 13,885 square miles, roughly the size of Connecticut and New Hampshire combined.

A mountain chain runs the entire length of Taiwan from north to south. The eastern sections of Taiwan are also very mountainous and covered with forests. However, the western side of the island contains numerous rivers, gentle slopes and fertile soil. Most of Taiwan's cities and agricultural production are located on the western side of the island.

Taiwan has a tropical climate. Summers are hot and humid with very heavy rainfall. The period between November and March is somewhat cooler and drier. The island periodically experiences damaging earthquakes and typhoons.

Population

In 2000, Taiwan had an estimated population of 22.3 million people. More than 84% of the population are native Taiwanese descendants of Chinese immigrants from crowded coastal regions of mainland China. Refugees who fled after the Communist takeover of the mainland comprise 14% of the population. A small minority of aborigines, mostly of Malayo-Polynesian descent, reside in mountainous regions of the island.

A vast majority of Taiwanese speak Mandarin Chinese. However, other Chinese dialects are spoken also. As a result of Japan's fifty-year control of Taiwan, many elderly Taiwanese speak Japanese.

Taoism and Buddhism are the predominant religions of Taiwan. Confucianism is widely practiced. A handful of Chinese Muslims also inhabit the island. Christian mis-



Susan Rock. Reproduced by permission.

Parade in commercial district of Keelung

sionaries have been active in Taiwan for many years. As a result, a Christian minority of 600,000 live in Taiwan. Most of these Christians are Protestant. Estimated life expectancy in 2001 was 74 years for males, 80 years for females.

History

The Chinese are believed to have traveled to Taiwan as early as 500 A.D. However, the island was sparsely populated until 1624. In that year, the Dutch began to use Taiwan as a trading post for their burgeoning commercial markets in Japan and China. Dutch colonists administered the island until 1661. During the years of Dutch administration, many Chinese began to emigrate to Taiwan to escape political turmoil on the mainland. Manchu China ruled Taiwan until it was declared a Chinese province in 1886. In 1895, after a disastrous war with Japan, China was forced to relinquish control of Taiwan to the Japanese.

Under Japanese administration, Taiwan developed efficient transportation networks and farming techniques. The Japanese created an advanced educational system and a thriving market economy. Following the defeat of Japan in World

War II, Taiwan was administered by General Chiang Kai-shek and his Nationalist Chinese forces.

When the Communist government of Mao Tse-tung seized control of the Chinese mainland in 1949, Chiang Kai-shek and nearly 500,000 Nationalist troops were forced to flee to Taiwan. They were soon followed by two million other refugees. In 1950, Chiang Kai-shek announced the creation of the Republic of China with Taipei as the capital. The United States established diplomatic relations and provided massive amounts of military and financial aid to the new nation. The Republic of China lost its United Nations membership in 1971 when the General Assembly voted to recognize the People's Republic of China as the sole legitimate representative of China. Taiwan suffered a severe blow when the United States broke off diplomatic relations with Taiwan in 1979 and established diplomatic ties with the People's Republic of China. However, commercial ties between Taiwan and the United States remain strong.

Government

For many years, Taiwan's government was a one-party system dominated by Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist (Kuomintang) party.

Chiang established the office of president in 1950 and served in that capacity until his death in 1975. He was succeeded by his son Chiang Ching-kuo, who governed Taiwan until his death in 1988. In March 1989, opposition political parties were legalized and Taiwan became a multi-party democracy. Lee Teng-hui was elected president in 1988 and re-elected to a six-year term in 1990. In 1996 he was reelected to a four-year term by popular vote in Taiwan's first direct election for president. In March 2000, Democratic Progressive Party candidate Chen Shui-bian became the first opposition party candidate to win the presidency. His victory resulted in the first-ever transition of the presidential office from one political party to another.

According to the 1947 constitution, the president and vice-president are elected by the National Assembly. The National Assembly is an elected body that had 334 delegates in 1997. It has the power to amend the constitution and the powers of initiative and referendum.

Taiwan's government consists of five administrative branches, or yuan. The Executive Yuan is responsible for policy and administration. It is elected by the president, with the consent of the Legislative Yuan. The 164-member Legislative Yuan is Taiwan's primary lawmaking body and the highest legislative organ in the state. In 1997, the Nationalist (Kuomintang) Party held 83 seats. The Nationalist Party's closest rival, the Democratic Progressive Party, has 54 seats.

The Control Yuan is an elected body which investigates political corruption and the efficiency of public service. The Judicial Yuan is the highest judicial body in Taiwan and is responsible for judging all criminal, civil and administrative cases. It includes a 17-member Council of Grand Justices who interpret the constitution. Also, the Judicial Yuan controls cases concerning disciplinary measures against public officials. The Examination Yuan supervises examinations for entry

into public offices and deals with personal questions of the civil service.

Martial law, which had been in effect for 38 years, was lifted in July 1987. The Taiwan government also ended its formal state of war with the People's Republic of China in May 1991. In December 1991, the terms of any remaining original "indefinite" deputies expired (Taiwan's original delegates of 1947 held their seats in perpetuity).

The flag of Taiwan consists of a red field with a blue rectangle in the upper-left corner. The blue rectangle contains Taiwan's national emblem, a twelve-point white sun.

Arts, Science, Education

Since 1968, a nine-year compulsory education system has been provided at government expense. In that year, the curriculum was revised to put more emphasis on science while maintaining Chinese cultural tradition. Six years of elementary school and three of junior high school are required of all students. In order to attend high school, junior high schoolers must pass examinations. Vocational schools offer three-year programs that stress industrial and commercial training, agriculture and fishing.

Taiwan has a highly developed system for college study. As of 1997, there are over 100 institutions of higher learning in Taiwan. Opportunities for graduate education are also increasing. An extensive series of examinations are conducted in order to select students for higher education.

In the 1980s, the Taiwanese government relaxed many restrictions that prevented students from studying abroad. Increasing numbers of students attend college in Japan, Europe and the United States. Taiwanese college and graduate students are particularly interested in engineering, computer science, nat-

ural science and business management programs.

There is also a system of education for adults. This is designed to improve the general knowledge of adults and increase the literacy rate. Courses in language, arithmetic, music and vocational skills are offered.

Taiwan has one of the world's highest literacy rates (91%).

Commerce and Industry

Since the 1960s, Taiwan's economy has experienced tremendous changes. Large amounts of foreign investment from Japan, Western Europe and the United States has transformed Taiwan from an agricultural to an industrial country. Taiwan is also intensively striving to develop its high-technology industries.

Foreign trade has been the backbone of Taiwan's economy for three decades. Taiwan's largest trading partner is the United States. Taiwan imports American farm products, raw materials and capital equipment while exporting textiles, clothing, electronic goods and light industrial products to the United States. The United States and Japan account for more than half of Taiwan's foreign trade. Other trading partners include Hong Kong, Germany, Great Britain, Kuwait, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia and Australia.

Taiwan's agricultural sector is highly productive. Although Taiwan is a small island, her arable land is extensively developed. Taiwan is self-sufficient in rice production, but imports other grains from the United States. Primary agricultural exports include rice, bananas, pineapples, sugarcane, sweet potatoes, peanuts, tea and asparagus. Also, Taiwan has a well-equipped fishing fleet and is one of the world's largest exporters of fresh fish.

Taiwan has few mineral deposits. Small reserves of coal, limestone, natural gas and marble are available. To fuel continued industrial growth, Taiwan imports large amounts of oil, chemicals and machinery.

In 2000, Taiwan had a gross domestic product (GDP) of \$386 billion dollars. Exports amounted to \$148.4 billion that year. Because of this heavy reliance on exports, Taiwan's economy is vulnerable to economic downturns in its principal markets.

The currency of Taiwan is the New Taiwan dollar.

Transportation

In 1995, Taiwan had an estimated 12,450 miles of roadway, of which 85% were paved. There are two modern expressways on the island. The North-South Freeway was completed in 1978 and links Taiwan's major cities. In July 1987, construction began on the Northern Taiwan Second Freeway. It opened to traffic in late 1992. There were approximately 4.1 million passenger cars and 850,000 commercial vehicles in use in 1995.

Domestic and international flights to Taiwan are readily available. Taiwan's largest airline is China Airlines (CAL). In addition to domestic flights, China Airlines supplies international service to the United States, Japan, the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, United Arab Emirates, South Korea, Indonesia, Thailand, Saudi Arabia and the Netherlands. Taiwan has two modern international airports. Chiang Kai-shek Airport, opened in 1979, is located at Taoyuan near T'aipei. Kaohsiung Airport is located on the southwestern corner of the island and offers daily flights to Hong Kong.

Taiwan has a well-developed shipping industry with four international ports at Kaohsiung, Hualien, Keelung and T'aichung.

Communications

Taiwan had an estimated 8.6 million radios and 6.7 million televisions in 1993. There were approximately 186 broadcasting stations in 1993. The main radio broadcasting service is the Broadcasting Corporation of China (BCC). BCC operates nine domestic stations and offers foreign services on shortwave frequencies. English transmissions can be heard on the Voice of Free China.

English newspapers and periodicals are available in T'aipei. These include: *China News*, *China Post*, *Free China Review*, *Free China Journal*, *Issues and Studies*, *National Palace Museum Bulletin*, and *Sinorama*.

Taiwan has excellent telephone and telegraph services. However, international calls made from Taiwan can be expensive.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan. 1	Founding of the Republic of China
Jan. 1& 2	New Year's Day
Feb.	Chinese New Year*
Feb.	Lantern Festival*
Mar. 12	Arbor Day
Mar. 29	Youth and Martyrs' Day
Apr.	Ching Ming Festival*
Apr/May	Matsu Festival*
May 1	Labor Day
June	Dragon Boat Festival*
July 1	Bank Holiday
Aug/Sept.	Chung Yuan Festival*
Sept. 28	Teacher's Day (Birthday of Confucius)
Sept/Oct.	Mid-autumn Moon festival*
October 10	National Day (Double Tenth Day)

October 25	Taiwan Restoration Day (Retrocession Day)
October 31	Birthday of President Chiang Kai-shek
November 12	Birthday of Dr. Sun Yat-sen
December 25	Constitution Day

*variable

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs & Duties

A passport is required. Travelers can obtain a visa prior to arrival in Taiwan at a Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (TECO) in the U.S. (maximum 60 day stay), apply for a landing visa upon arrival (maximum 30 day stay), or apply for entry under the Visa Waiver Program (14 day stay). Taiwan previously required that U.S. visitors to Taiwan hold passports valid for at least six months from the date of expected departure. In some instances, this is no longer the case: Taiwan now considers U.S. passports valid for return to the United States for six months beyond the expiration date of the passport. If the passport contains a Taiwan visa issued abroad, the traveler may be admitted for up to sixty days even if the passport will expire during the period of stay. If the traveler applies for a landing visa upon arrival, he or she will be admitted for 30 days or up to the day the passport expires, whichever comes first. A traveler who applies for entry under the Visa Waiver Program must have a passport valid for six months after the planned departure date.

No extension of stay or change of status is allowed if the traveler enters on the Visa Waiver Program.

Unofficial relations with the people of Taiwan are conducted through the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT), whose offices are authorized

by law to perform American citizen services. U.S. citizens are encouraged to register at AIT Taipei or AIT Kaohsiung, and to obtain updated information on travel and security. Registration can be done on-line by visiting the AIT web-site at <http://www.ait.org.tw>. The American Institute in Taiwan does not issue U.S. passports, but it accepts passport applications and forwards them to the Passport Agency in Honolulu for processing. Processing time takes three to four weeks. In an emergency, the American Institute in Taiwan can issue a travel letter to permit a U.S. citizen who has lost a passport to return to the United States or to travel to Hong Kong where he or she may apply for a passport at the U.S. Consulate General.

For assistance, U.S. citizen travelers may contact the American Institute in Taiwan at No.7 Lane 134, Hsin Yi Road Section 3, Taipei, Taiwan, telephone (886-2) 2709-2000; fax (886-2) 2709-0908; or the American Institute in Taiwan branch office at No. 2 Chung Cheng 3rd Road, 5th Floor, Kaohsiung, Taiwan, telephone (886-7) 238-7744; fax (886-7) 238-5237. AIT's citizens services section can also be contacted by e-mail at aitamcit@mail.ait.org.tw. In case of emergencies after working hours, the duty officer at the American Institute in Taiwan at Taipei may be contacted at telephone (886-2) 2709-2013.

Currency

The New Taiwan dollar (TWD) has an exchange rate of about 33.08TWD=US\$1 (2000).

Disaster Preparedness

Taiwan is subject to strong earthquakes that can occur anywhere on the island. Taiwan is also hit by typhoons, usually from July to October. Travelers planning a trip to Taiwan can obtain general information about natural disaster preparedness on the Internet from the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) at <http://www.fema.gov/>. Additional information about currently active typhoons can be obtained on the University of

Hawaii tropical storm page at <http://www.solar.ifa.hawaii.edu/Tropical/tropical.html>. The Central Weather Bureau of Taiwan also maintains a web site that provides information about typhoons and earthquakes. Its Internet address is <http://www.cwb.gov.tw>

The International Community Radio Taipei (ICRT) provides all of Taiwan with English-language programming 24 hours a day. In the event of an emergency or an approaching typhoon, travelers should tune their radios to FM 100.7.

RECOMMENDED READING

The following titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country:

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- . *Taiwan in Pictures*. Minneapolis, MN: Lerner Publications, 1989.

TAJIKISTAN

Republic of Tajikistan

Major City:

Dushanbe

Other Cities:

Khudzhand, Kurgan-Tyube

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated June 1997. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

The Republic of **TAJIKISTAN** declared its independence from the Soviet Union on September 9, 1991. Formerly known as the Tajikistan Soviet Socialist Republic, its independence was recognized by the United States on December 25, 1991 and an embassy was opened in the capital city, Dushanbe, in March 1992. Tajikistan became a member of the United Nations on March 2, 1992. Political unrest and armed conflict between Communist Party members and opposition forces have caused serious problems within the country. Many deaths have occurred. As a result, the U.S. Embassy was closed in October 1992.

MAJOR CITY

Dushanbe

Tajikistan's capital, Dushanbe, is located in the extreme west of the country about an hour's drive from the border with its western neighbor, Uzbekistan. Dushanbe was formed in 1922 when three small settlements of 5,000 people were united into one and became the capital of Tajikistan when it was formed as an autonomous republic in 1924. The city lies in a sheltered river valley at 2,300 feet above sea level, below the Hissar Mountains. The Varzob and Kofarnihon Rivers both flow through Dushanbe. Because of its sheltered location, Dushanbe is often spared the more extreme weather conditions prevalent elsewhere in the region. The cold winter, similar to Washington's, becomes a rainy spring which in turn becomes a hot, dry summer, with temperatures in some areas well over 100°F, followed by a pleasant, dry autumn. Warm, dry weather may suddenly become rainy and cool, and early frosts may be followed by warm, sunny weather.

With a 2000 estimated population of over 660,000, Dushanbe in its center retains the atmosphere of its

original planners in the 1920s—wide, tree-lined streets with mostly low-rise apartment houses and office buildings painted white or pastel colors. Although traffic has begun to pick up with increased availability of gasoline, it is still comparatively light. Because of the trees, walking or bicycle riding is pleasant much of the year. Outside the center part of the city, where the Chancery and Embassy homes are located, neighborhoods usually consist either of rundown high-rise apartments built in the Soviet area or poor-quality, single-family houses.

Food

The food supply in Tajikistan has been improving. Abundant, high-quality fruits and vegetables are in the markets during the summer and autumn, but greenhouses were destroyed in the civil war, and the economy is not strong enough to support the usual nonseasonal imports seen in other former Soviet countries. In season, you can purchase at very reasonable prices: strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, mulberries, rhubarb; many varieties (some you may not have seen previously) of cherries, apricots, peaches, pears, figs, apples, pomegranates, melons, persimmons, grapes, and glorious lemons.

All of the above are preserved by canning, drying, etc., and sold in shops and bazaars. There are walnuts, peanuts, almonds, and pistachios. There are grains and dried beans of many kinds available, but not enough to feed the whole population and not necessarily fine quality. There are beautiful tomatoes, cucumbers, carrots, beets, cauliflower, turnips, potatoes, onions, garlic, cabbage, leaf lettuce, and many radishes and radish-like vegetables we have not yet properly identified. There are green and red sweet peppers and red chili peppers. Fresh herbs such as basil, mint, dill, chives, and coriander are abundant, but many herbs and vegetables popular in America (thyme and broccoli, for example) are unknown here.

Fresh lamb, beef, and chicken are in the markets, but the animals sometimes led a hard life, a fact which is reflected in the meat. Local bread is whole-wheat "nan" similar to pita, which some find delicious. Regular loaves are sometimes obtainable, but homemade bread, with or without a machine, is better.

Local stores carry soft drinks, alcoholic drinks (vodka of all kinds and champagnes and cognacs are most popular) and some imported delicacies, such as chocolate, cheese, butter, and sausage. Tajikistan makes and bottles wines, but Tajiks prefer to drink dessert wines.

If there is a baby, bring baby food and equipment to make baby food from fresh foods.

Clothing

Women in Dushanbe love to dress up. Daily wear for villager and office worker alike will include plenty of sparkle from fabric and jewelry. High-heeled shoes are worn for all occasions. Men are less apt to dress up, but business suits are worn as appropriate. Many expatriates are in development work outside the city, so one is just as likely to find camouflage and field boots at an evening function as to find people in silk and embroidery harvesting crops.

Although most people in Tajikistan are Moslem, they are used to living with Europeans and tolerant of Western dress. Shorts on either men or women elicit stares, however.

The climate is extreme and not controlled in most buildings, so whatever style of dress you prefer, layers are essential. In winter, warm feet make a big difference. Wool socks—locals wear the colorful wool knitted "Pamiri" socks. In summer, light cottons are comfortable.

Tailoring is available, but materials found in the local markets are not always suitable to American taste. Local outfits, quilted coats, and silk trouser suits, are very attractive and wearable.

Dry-cleaners have not been able to remain in business, and shoe repair is of poor quality.

Supplies and Services

Although intensive shopping or borrowing sometimes results in finding the piece of equipment you lost or forgot to bring, it equally often does not. It is best to assume there are no supplies and services and pack everything you might need.

Religious Activities

Tajiks are mostly Moslem, but there are Baptist, Adventist, Korean Pentecostal, Catholic, German-speaking Catholic, and Russian orthodox churches here. The synagogue is closed. As far as post can tell, Buddhists and Hindus do not yet have places of worship in Dushanbe.

Education

The educational system in Tajikistan is in transition. Since funding is minimal and educational materials are unavailable, no expatriate children attend local schools at this time. There is a small group of English-speaking children from ages 5–10 who are educated by parents using the Calvert system and field trips to resources available in the community.

Older children might wish to consider the Woodstock school in India. It was created 140 years ago for the

children of American missionaries and is now a highly respected international residential school whose graduates attend the best universities in the world.

Recreation and Social Life

Dushanbe has endless opportunities to play outdoors. Hiking, camping, swimming in the many local lakes, cycling, running, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, skiing, or just visiting areas outside the capital to watch local activities such as wrestling, buzkashi (a game played on horseback with a dead goat) and picnics are all enjoyed by expatriates here. Tajiks welcome the involvement of foreigners in everything they do and are very proud of their hospitality.

Entertainment

There are concerts operas, plays, and films in Dushanbe, but at this time it is difficult to find out where and when they are. Since theaters are unheated, it is only the bravest who attend in the winter. In the summer, the most pleasant activities are in the gardens, especially music and dance programs organized by some of the small museums around town. Poetry readings are common but a high level of Tajik is needed to fully appreciate them.

Social Activities

It is easy to meet host country nationals, and there is a good understanding of the concept of "contact," including exchanges of visits to offices, followed by invitations to homes if the relationship is developing. Americans can be a little overwhelmed by Tajik hospitality.

Informal social life for young expatriates is active, and there is a nice mix of nationalities, including Tajik citizens at their parties. Dancing is required for almost every event, and the expatriate community has adapted well to the Tajik habit of "hitting the floor" as soon as the music starts.

The early days of too much vodka and too much fat seem to have given way to a new understanding that

these items are not highly valued by us, but customarily long, heavy meals are offered, and the guest is expected to toast and be toasted and to eat until the “plov” (rice with meat and vegetables) is served, after which he may go home without offending anyone.

Family occasions such as weddings, circumcisions, funerals, etc., are social occasions; anyone staying in Tajikistan will have a hard time not making Tajik friends, so he or she will be included. Again, a speech is expected, and a gift of some sort is appreciated.

Practical gifts for the household may be given, but fine objects from the U.S. are also appreciated. Urban Tajiks prize intellectual achievement, so a beautiful book—with pictures, since reading English is not everyone’s favorite pastime—is always welcome.

OTHER CITIES

KHUDZHAND (formerly Lenina-bad) is located on the Syr Darya River in the northwestern section of the country, 90 miles south of Tashkent, Uzbekistan. One of Central Asia’s oldest cities, it is now the second largest city in Tajikistan, with over 163,000 residents. The major industries consist of silk and cotton production and food canning and meat packing plants.

KURGAN-TYUBE, with a 1998 population of 59,000, is located in the southwestern part of the country, 40 miles south of Dushanbe. The agricultural sector of the economy is dependent on cotton and sheep. There are several industries in Kurgan-Tyube, most dealing with food processing or clothing manufacture.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The Republic of Tajikistan gained its independence during the breakup of the USSR and is part of former Soviet Central Asia. Tajikistan can be found at 36° 40’ northern latitude and 41° 14’ eastern longitude. Take an atlas or globe and locate Greece or southern Italy or Spain, trace a line eastward toward Eurasia, and there you will find Tajikistan nestled between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan to the north and west, Afghanistan to the south, and China to the east.

Tajikistan is home to some of the highest mountains in the world, including parts of the Kunlun, Himalayan, Tien-shan, and Pamir Ranges. Ninety-three percent of Tajikistan is mountainous with altitudes ranging from 1,000 feet to 27,000 feet, with fully 50% of Tajikistan’s territory at elevations above 10,000 feet. Earthquakes of varying degrees are frequent. The massive mountain ranges are cut by hundreds of canyons and gorges at the bottom of which run streams which flow into the larger river valleys where the majority of the country’s population lives and works.

The principal rivers of central Asia, the Amu-Darya and the Syr-Darya, both flow through Tajikistan, fed by the melting snow in the mountains of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Flooding sometimes occurs during the annual spring thaw.

Although located at the same latitude as Washington, D.C., Tajikistan’s climate is drier and varies with altitude. Most rain occurs between November and May. Therefore, the summer, while hot, is dry. The winters at the lower elevations are similar to Washington’s but snowfall rapidly increases with altitude. The climate of the mountainous Gorno-Badakhshan autonomous oblast (GBO), which

occupies the eastern half of Tajikistan is more extreme. The mountainous east receives 90% of Tajikistan’s yearly precipitation, and its average annual temperature is 49°F, whereas in Dushanbe it is 65°F.

Population

The population of Tajikistan was estimated at 6,194,00 in 2000. Although about 1.5 million people live in Tajikistan’s urban centers, nearly three-quarters of the population continues to live and work in rural areas. In 2000, Dushanbe had a population of 664,000, nearly 300,000 less than its population prior to the disintegration of the Soviet Union. As Dushanbe has returned to calm, former refugees have returned, swelling the ranks of the city’s inhabitants. However, some Russians and Uzbeks have probably left the city forever. The rest of Tajikistan’s population is spread fairly evenly throughout the western half of the country; approximately 1.7 million people live in the northern or Leninabad region, 1.7 million in the Khatlon region in the south, and 1.4 million in the districts of republican subordination (Nurek, Rogun, Kofarnihon, Varzob, Hissar, Gharm, Lenin, Tursunzade, and Tavildara). According to the official census, the population in the mountainous eastern half of Tajikistan is very sparse, with a reported population of only 220,000 in Gorno-Badakhshan, a territory that makes up almost half the area of the country.

The population is split almost evenly between men and women. With the highest birth rate in the former Soviet Union, 41% of the population is under the age of 14.

Perhaps the greatest population change in Tajikistan since the end of the Soviet era and civil war is found in the Republic’s ethnic composition. From 1989 to 1994, the percentage of Russians living in Tajikistan dropped from 7.6% of the population to 3.3% or less. Many with sufficient financial resources have already left the Republic, and

many of the remaining Russians are simply accumulating enough money to finance their own migration. The numbers of other, smaller, minority groups such as Tatars, Jews, and what the government refers to as “others,” which includes ethnic Germans, Koreans, Ukrainians, Armenians, etc., have also been dramatically reduced in the wake of the breakup of the Soviet Union and Tajikistan’s civil discord. Some minority groups have continued to thrive. The small Kyrgyz minority living in Tajikistan has not been uprooted, and the large Uzbek minority population has remained constant at 25% of the population. Even today, ethnic Tajiks make up only 65% of Tajikistan’s population; the situation is reversed in Uzbekistan, where the populations of two of that Republic’s most important cities, Samarkand and Bukhara, remain largely Tajik. Within the Tajik population, important social divisions exist according to an individual’s place of origin. Tajiks separate themselves into Kulyabis, Gharmis/Karategins, Khojandis, Pamiris, Bukharans, and Samarkandis, as well as a host of other names based on location of origin. The Kulyabis, who were not a powerful group during the Soviet era, provided the muscle to win the civil war. Since 1993, they have dominated the government, and there was a steady migration of Kulyabis from the underdeveloped south to the capital. Conversely, the traditionally powerful Khojand (formerly Leninobod) group experienced a decline in its power in the central government based in Dushanbe.

During the Soviet period, the term “industrial workers” included the agricultural workers, i.e., those working on state or collective farms. Tajikistan thus claimed that 55% of employees were industrial workers, 21.7% were “white-collar” workers, 22.9% worked in rural areas, and 0.2% were engaged in “individual working activity.” Most recent estimates indicate that the labor force is divided at 30% in services, 20% in industry and 50% in agriculture.

The collapse of Tajikistan’s economy and the closure or reduction in work at many of the country’s large factories, and the inability of the government to pay salaries and pensions have all contributed to large numbers of people moving into the private sector in small shops or in one of the various street markets in order to survive.

Tajikistan has also changed linguistically since the breakup of the Soviet Union. Under the Soviet Union, Russian was the language of the government. Tajik was declared the state language of Tajikistan only in 1989, and became the sole official language under the new constitution adopted in 1994. Russian, “the language of interethnic communication,” continues to be used widely in the government and in Tajikistan’s urban centers. Tajik belongs to the southwestern group of the Iranian family of the Indo-European language group. It has four groups of dialects; northern, spoken in Khojand, Samarkand, and Bukhara; central, spoken in the upper Zarafshan; southern, spoken in Karategin and Kulob; and southeastern, spoken in Darvaz and Vanj. Uzbek, the language of almost one-fourth of the population, belongs to the Turkish group of languages and is most prevalent in Naw, Jabar-asulov, and Tursunzade. Several languages are spoken in the Pamir mountains of Gorno-Badakhshan from the eastern Iranian language group, including Shugnan, Yazgulum, and Vakhani. Kyrgyz is also spoken in the Eastern Pamirs. Yagnobi, the Eastern Iranian language of the Yagnob Valley, is a very ancient dialect whose preservation has provided the clue to understanding ancient Sogdian dialect.

Although each regional, social, ethnic, and language group has its own traditions and beliefs, the principal religion in Tajikistan is Islam; Sunni Moslems predominate in western Tajikistan, while the population of Gorno-Badakhshan is largely Ismaili. The two Islamic holidays officially celebrated in Tajikistan, *Idi Kurbon*, and *Id-al-Fitr*, have become more popular with the

collapse of communism. However, many traditional holidays, such as Navruz (new year) actually date from pre-Islamic times. The urban population is, in general, not particularly religious, but Tajik society as a whole is becoming more conservative.

Public Institutions

Having emerged from the Soviet era and a crippling civil war, Tajikistan now calls itself a newly formed constitutional, democratic, and secular republic with presidential rule. Executive power is vested in the President, Prime Minister, and the Council of Ministers in Dushanbe, and executive committees in every region, city, and district. The Republic’s legislative branch is the *Majlisi Oli* or Parliament. Provinces, districts, and cities also have legislative bodies. Similarly, there are courts at the national, district, and city levels.

Tajikistan has seven officially registered political parties:

- Communist Party of Tajikistan
- Popular Party of Tajikistan
- Party of Political and Economic Renovation of Tajikistan
- Democratic Party of Tajikistan (one branch)
- Party of the Popular Unity of Tajikistan
- Union Party of Tajikistan
- Justice Party of Tajikistan

Tajikistan also has one political movement, the Congress of the Popular Unity of Tajikistan.

Three parties—the Islamic Revival Party, the Democratic Party of Tajikistan (one branch), and the “Rastokhez” (awakening) Party—were banned during the civil war and remain illegal.

The trade unions created under communism, the Unions of Artists,

Architects, etc., and the Societies for the Blind, Deaf, etc., continue to exist but are weak, and offices housing them are frequently deserted.

Tajikistan is a member of the UN, the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and many other international organizations. The International Red Cross is represented here, and Tajikistan also has a Red Crescent Society.

Arts, Science, and Education

The arts and sciences, as well as the education system in Tajikistan have suffered greatly in the wake of the breakup of the Soviet Union as government funding has disappeared. The Tajik Academy of Sciences and the education system were part of a centralized Soviet bureaucracy guided and controlled by Moscow. The end of the Soviet era and the subsequent political unrest left the arts, sciences, and education without direction or money.

There are, however, two live theaters, an opera house which houses a Western-style orchestra and ballet company in addition to the opera company, a film industry which produced a Cannes silver medal-winner in 1993, and numerous children's programs.

Poets are perhaps the most beloved of the artists, but lacking government patronage, they find it very difficult to support themselves. Still, occasional new works of poetry are published. Statues of poets replaced those of Lenin in Dushanbe.

Traditional music and dance are still alive, and professional musicians and dancers are paid to perform at weddings, receptions for visiting dignitaries, and other celebrations. Painters and craftspeople are trying to find supplies and markets. Only the best and most highly motivated will survive.



View of Dushanbe, Tajikistan

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The education system in Tajikistan is suffering from lack of funds from the central government for maintenance and salaries; lack of basic supplies such as books, pencils, and paper; and a lack of training among management staff who had previously received directives from Moscow. Although the education system continues to function, its resources have been severely reduced.

Commerce and Industry

Over six years of conflict and civil war have had a serious effect on the Tajikistan's economy. Per capita gross domestic product (GDP) in Tajikistan is about \$1,140 (2000 est), the lowest among the 15 other former Soviet republics. Nearly 80% of the population is living below the poverty line.

This country received substantial humanitarian assistance from the U.S., the United Nations High Commission on Refugees, the World Food Program, the European Union, and several nongovernmental organizations operating in various regions of Tajikistan. As the worst effects of the civil war are being ameliorated, these organizations are beginning to focus on develop-

mental aid. USAID established an office in Dushanbe with a permanent USAID representative in March 1995. The IMF and World Bank also have a presence in Dushanbe. But the country still struggles to revive some of its own industries.

Part of the old Silk Route, Tajikistan's Ferghana Valley has the oldest silk factory in the world. Following the breakup of the Soviet Union, it found itself unable to get its usual raw materials or to sell its production outside the immediate area. With foreign partnership, the quality of goods has increased.

Cotton production, which was forced during the Soviet period, continues to be Tajikistan's major cash crop. Wheat production, though growing, is still insufficient to feed the country. Vegetables, fruits, and nuts, both fresh and preserved, are grown for consumption and export.

One of the country's major nonagricultural industries is aluminum production based around a gigantic aluminum plant built during the Soviet era. Tajikistan provides most of the electricity but must import raw materials such as alumina, petroleum coke, and cryolite. Although production at the plant

has declined, Tajikistan continues to export aluminum.

The country does have a very small oil and natural gas industry; however, the entire yield is needed for use within the country. Additional oil and gas are imported from Uzbekistan.

Major export partners include Liechtenstein, Uzbekistan and Russia (1998). At least 32% of imports come from Europe, followed by Uzbekistan and Russia.

Tajikistan does have a limited number of joint ventures established between the Government of Tajikistan and/or local firms on the one hand, and foreign firms. The largest of these is the British Commonwealth Minerals gold mining project in Penjikent. South Korean and Italian firms have joint ventures in textiles. The USAID- financed Central Asian American Enterprise Fund (CAAEEF) found its first Tajik partner in a Pepsi bottling plant in Khojand; it is expected to make additional loans/investments to private Tajik enterprises. Foreign investment is hindered by poor communications and a lack of international banking facilities.

Most workers belong to member unions of the Federation of Trade Unions, a holdover from the Soviet era. They enjoy the right to strike, but before a union may legally call a strike, arbitration must take place. If arbitration fails, unions have the right to strike, but labor unions have generally disavowed the utility of strikes in a period of deepening economic crisis and high unemployment. They have espoused compromise between management and workers. Nevertheless, several unofficial wildcat strikes have occurred.

Attitudes on property ownership and investment are changing. Some state enterprises (by 1995, 8%) have privatized. Others are planning to privatize, primarily to be in a better position to attract outside investors. A few private companies have started up. Most large towns have a

thriving bazaar or two, where small entrepreneurs hawk cheap consumer goods imported from the Gulf, Iran, the subcontinent, China, or Russia. By 1996, almost all apartments and houses have been privatized. Although the constitution prohibits private land, some land has been given on long lease to private farmers whose heirs may inherit it but cannot sell it. Even farmers remaining on state farms and collective farms usually have a small garden plot. These private plots collectively produce most of the country's fruit and vegetables and a sizable amount of grain.

Transportation

Local

Rental vehicles can be obtained in Dushanbe, as car-owners are often willing to rent their vehicles and themselves as drivers to supplement their incomes. To the best of post's knowledge, however, cars that you drive yourself or four-wheel-drive vehicles suitable for long trips are not available for rent. Taxis are available in cities such as Dushanbe and Khojand, though fares depend on the price of fuel, time of day, and appearance of the passenger. Most city-dwellers get around in buses or trolleybuses that run during the day.

Local official vehicles are red, for fire trucks; white and red or sometimes deep yellow for ambulances; and white and blue for police. UN vehicles, ubiquitous here, are white Nissan Patrols, Toyota Land Cruisers, or Land Rovers.

Some people, including Americans, ride bicycles in Dushanbe and environs. The light traffic, broad streets, pleasant weather, and friendly people make Dushanbe a delightful city for bicycling. However, since conditions include poor roads and hilly terrain, a good quality mountain bike with air pump, extra tires and tire repair kits, warning lights, etc., is advised.

Regional

Vehicles in Tajikistan are driven on the right side of the road. Roads in Tajikistan have deteriorated badly since the civil war; much of the terrain is mountainous and rugged. Intercity ground transportation may be by bus, truck, or rail. Buses run from Dushanbe to Samarkand, Termez, and Penjikent on a fairly regular schedule. You can get to almost all population centers by bus if you have no fixed timetable and are willing to be uncomfortable. Bus drivers do not go into areas of central Asia where there is unrest, and make these decisions based on up-to-the-minute (usually accurate) rumors.

Trains leave Dushanbe on even-numbered days for Moscow (87 hours) via Samarkand (18+ hours), Tashkent (25 hours), and Oktyobinsk, Kazakstan. Passports and visas are required. Tickets are available from 20 days to 5 minutes before departure. Restaurants and bedding are available on the train. Railway officials suggest that travelers carefully watch their belongings at all times. Other trains go from Dushanbe to other destinations in central Asia, and there are still small narrow-gauge lines that are very local. Like everything else here, ground transportation is struggling to meet growing needs and maintain minimal standards with no new resources in the midst of radical change.

Air transportation is available from two airlines that are operated by former Aeroflot personnel: Tajikair and Khojand Airlines. The latter operates two (some days three) daily flights between Khojand and Dushanbe. Tashkent is less than a 3-hour drive from Khojand. Tajikair theoretically operates flights to and from Penjikent, Aini, Isfara, Jirghital, Gharm, Kulyab, and Khovaling at least weekly; Khorog daily (although the weather frequently prevents service), and to the neighboring capitals of Bishkek, Almaty, and Ashgabat. It also flies four times a week to and from Moscow and operates charter flights for local merchants to Karachi, New Delhi,

and the Middle East. Tajikistan International Airlines had operated New Delhi-Dushanbe-London flights briefly during 1994, but these are currently suspended, and it is not known if or when they will resume.

It is extremely important to check on schedules before formulating an itinerary.

Do not expect international standards of safety or adherence to procedures familiar to us, such as transporting your baggage to the aircraft for you, using seatbelts or even (sometimes) sitting down.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

Local telephone service varies with the exchange.

Radio and TV

Russian and Tajik TV stations broadcast intermittently. You need rabbit ears or an antenna to pick them up—there is no cable TV.

Russian radio stations can be picked up in Tajikistan, and VOA, BBC, Radio China, and numerous Christian broadcasting services are available on shortwave.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

Local bookstores sell books in Tajik, Uzbek, Persian, and Russian, but the selection is extremely poor. The books, which are printed in Tajikistan, are not the best quality. Imports from Russia, Iran, and Uzbekistan are better. There are several printing houses in Dushanbe and one each in Khojand and Kulyab. They specialize in local authors.

Theoretically, there are more than 30 local magazines and newspapers printed in Dushanbe. But because of the price of newsprint and the difficulty of finding advertisers or affluent readers for most of these publications, they are dormant. Journalists also run the risk of going to jail for expressing contrary

views. The central government subsidizes several newspapers, others specializing in sensational material from the Russian press survive on sales, and some regional newspapers in Tajik and Uzbek continue to find enough readers to continue printing.

There is no English-language press, nor are any Western newspapers and magazines sold locally.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

There is no acceptable local hospital, lab, dentist, or pharmacy in Tajikistan, although the clinic for microsurgery maintains a high standard.

The local health delivery system suffers from deficits of trained specialists, lack of medicines, broken equipment, and short work-hours.

The UN maintains a small clinic staffed by one doctor and two nurses for ambulatory care patients, serving the nondiplomatic expatriate community, as well as UN personnel.

Community Health

The Tajikistan Ministry of Health has advised all citizens to boil tap-water for drinking due to organic contaminants and the inability to adequately chlorinate the city water supply. Local water is deficient in iodine, and iodized salt is not available. Many local residents have enlarged thyroids due to chronic iodine deficiency. In Dushanbe, ground water contamination by heavy metals and chemicals is not a reported problem, although in outlying agricultural areas pesticides and fertilizers may be present. Use of these has been greatly curtailed since 1992, however. Locally bottled soft drinks and alcoholic beverages are also potential sources of contamination.

Fruits and vegetables should be soaked in chlorine water and washed with distilled water.

Untreated food and water are at risk for contamination by amoebas, Giardia, and other harmful bacteria.

The most frequent medical problems requiring treatment outside of Tajikistan have been for dental problems. There are good quality dental treatment centers in Moscow, dentists in New Delhi, one in Tashkent, and a clinic in Almaty of dentists trained by visiting Americans.

Some medicines are available for purchase in local pharmacies, but supply and quality are erratic. Individuals should bring all prescription and over-the-counter medicines they require on a regular basis.

Preventive Measures

Tajikistan had the highest prevalence of diphtheria in the world, but an intensive antidiphtheria campaign in 1995–96 brought the incidence down considerably. Other communicable diseases to be aware of in Tajikistan are cholera, malaria, rabies, polio, tuberculosis, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and typhoid. Booster immunizations should be up to date before arrival for diphtheria, polio, hepatitis A (havrix 1440 vaccine), hepatitis B, typhoid, and rabies. The latter should be completed before arriving. The vaccine for cholera is not recommended by WHO. There is no vaccine for malaria, but those persons traveling in south Tajikistan in the summer, including Dushanbe, should take a dose of chloroquine each week, wear insect repellent, and sleep under a mosquito net. Tuberculosis testing should be performed after departure.

Americans in Tajikistan are most likely to encounter episodes of diarrhea and respiratory infections. These are more likely to occur in conjunction with fatigue, hence rest is recommended, especially after arrival in Dushanbe. Despite all efforts to avoid diarrhea, it is a frequent problem among Americans.

Before coming to Tajikistan any specialists routinely visited should be consulted, including dentists and

eye doctors. A spare set of glasses should be brought. Those wearing contact lenses should have a supply of cleaner and soaking solution, as these are not available locally. Those taking prescription medications should bring an ample supply.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs & Duties

Travel to, from, and within Tajikistan is difficult and unreliable. Flights may be canceled or substantially delayed. Commercial charter flights are frequently overloaded with merchandise. International train connections are dangerous because of criminals operating onboard.

The most common route to Dushanbe is via Tashkent (which has reliable connections several times a week to Istanbul, Frankfurt, London, and other locations). From Tashkent, one can take the traveler overland to Khojand, which is near Tashkent but inside of Tajikistan. From Khojand, there are generally two (and sometimes more) flights daily to Dushanbe.

From Khojand, all baggage (including hand baggage) is weighed and subject to overweight charges for excess above 25 kilos. The excess usually costs \$1 U.S. per kilo to Dushanbe. There will be a \$3 fee for use of the "Deputatski Zal," which essentially confirms your reservation. The ticket from Khojand to Dushanbe must be paid for in cash, with U.S. currency preferred. Bills dated 1990 or later, with no tears or markings should be accepted; others may not be.

It is also possible to reach Dushanbe via Tajik Air from Moscow (usually three flights a week), Almaty (generally twice a week), and Ashgabat (usually one flight a week). Traveling through Moscow requires the use of Domadedova Airport, an extremely difficult location to deal with. Some Russian is virtually a

prerequisite to successfully finding your flight at Domadedova. The Almaty flights are often tightly booked.

A passport and visa are required. Entry into Tajikistan at points along the Gorno-Badakhshan border requires special authorization in advance. Without a visa, travelers cannot register at hotels and may be required to leave the country immediately. In the U.S., visas for Tajikistan are issued by the Russian Embassy, Consular Division, 1825 Phelps Place NW, Washington, D.C. 20008, telephone (202) 939-8907, or the Russian consulates in New York, San Francisco or Seattle. Tajik visas granted by these offices are valid for a stay of three days in Tajikistan. If travelers plan a longer stay, they may apply for a longer visa at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs after arriving in the country.

Travelers who intend to visit Tajikistan should obtain double-entry Russian, Kazakh or Uzbek visas prior to departure, depending on intended transit points.

The government of Tajikistan requires visitors who remain in country for more than 90 days to present a medical certificate showing that they are HIV-free, or to submit to an HIV test in Tajikistan. This testing requirement has not been implemented, but could be at any time. Because of the lack of medical supplies, submitting to an HIV test in Tajikistan could be risky.

Travelers to Tajikistan are subject to frequent document inspections. Therefore, U.S. citizens are strongly encouraged to carry a copy of their U.S. passports and Tajik visa with them at all times so that they may more readily prove that they are U.S. citizens. In accordance with the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations and certain bilateral agreements, local authorities must grant a United States consular officer access to any U.S. citizen who is arrested. U.S. citizens who are arrested or detained should ask for

the U.S. Embassy to be contacted immediately.

U.S. citizens are encouraged to register with the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy Almaty, Kazakhstan and obtain updated information on travel and security within Tajikistan. The U.S. Embassy in Almaty is located at 99/97A Furmanov Street, telephone 7(3272) 63-39-05. U.S. citizens may also register with the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Tajikistan by telephone or fax, but emergency consular services for U.S. citizens may be limited or unavailable. U.S. citizens are reminded that personnel for the U.S. Embassy to Tajikistan are resident in Almaty. Consequently, the U.S. presence in Tajikistan is not continuous. The U.S. Embassy is temporarily located at 10 Pavola Street, Dushanbe, telephone 011 (992)(372) 21-03-48/50/52 fax 011 (992)(372) 21-03-62.

Currency, Banking and Weights and Measures

As of October 2000, the new currency is the Tajik *somoni* (SM), which can be divided into 100 *dirams*. The somoni is issued in notes of 1, 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100. The diram is also issued in notes with denominations of 1, 5, 20 and 50. Exchange in January 2001 was 2.2SM=US\$1.

Currency can be changed at authorized exchange houses. Do not change currency on the street, as this is illegal, and Americans have been picked up in sting operations.

No Tajik bank has a particularly strong record for banking. Tajikistan is a cash economy; neither travelers checks nor credit cards are accepted. Electronic funds transfers are sometimes lost, and some banks do not permit the recipient of an EFT to withdraw the full amount of the EFT.

Tajikistan uses the metric system for weights and measures.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan. 1	New Year's Day
Mar. 8	Women's Day
Mar. 21 & 22	Noruz (Persian New Year)
May 1	Working People's Day
May 9	Victory Day
June 27	Day of National Unity
Sept. 9	Independence Day
Nov. 6	Constitution Day
.	Ramadan*
.	Id al-Fitr*

*variable

RECOMMENDED READING

These titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country. The Department of State does not endorse unofficial publications.

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Bangkok, Thailand

THAILAND

Kingdom of Thailand

Major Cities:

Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Songkhla, Udorn

Other Cities:

Khon Kaen, Lampang, Nakhon Pathom, Nakhon Ratchasima, Phet Buri, Phuket, Yala

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated April 1994. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

THAILAND is an exotic kingdom where the past and present mingle in harmony. The country once known as Siam came into being more than 1,000 years ago, when the Thai people descended from the hilly hinterlands of Burma (now Myanmar) and southern China. Here, in the fertile central plain and basin of the Chayo Phraya River, they created a number of independent kingdoms that were continually besieged by their Burmese and Khmer neighbors. Although the Thai were never colonized, they were forced to fight through the centuries to maintain their freedom.

In 1238, the Thai inflicted a devastating defeat on the Khmers and

created the kingdom of Sukhothai. At that time, Bangkok (the present capital) lay entirely beneath the waters of the Gulf of Thailand. In 1350, when the capital was moved to Ayutthaya, Bangkok was only a series of mud banks raised by alluvial deposits from the Chao Phraya.

Just 200 years ago, Siamese warriors, mounted on elephants, drove out the Burmese who had killed their king and sacked and destroyed Ayutthaya. The new king established a capital in Thonburi. Fifteen years later, Rama I, founder of the present Chakri dynasty, moved the seat of government across the river to Bangkok.

MAJOR CITIES

Bangkok

Bangkok, capital of Thailand, is the largest city in the kingdom and one of the largest in Southeast Asia. About seven and a half million people live in Bangkok and the surrounding metropolitan area. The city lies within a great bend of the Chao Phraya River (River of Kings), which empties into the Gulf of Thailand 35 miles to the south. Thonburi, on the west bank, is considered part of the metropolitan area.

Bangkok became the Thai capital in 1782. Called by the Thai "the city of angels," it is a national treasure house, containing most of the country's historic temples and major landmarks.

Bangkok is an exotic, energetic city of contrasts: high-rise apartment buildings and ancient temples; air-conditioned, modern department stores and crowded, narrow stalls of local markets; wide avenues teeming with traffic and crooked lanes bordered by canals, where small children bathe and fish; the blare of pop music and the tinkle of temple bells; spacious homes and primitive, thatched huts; the scents of jasmine and of fish drying in the sun; international restaurants, and food vendors squatting over small charcoal cooking pots on the sidewalk. A lifetime could be spent exploring Bangkok and its delightful mixture of cultures, customs, and peoples.

Bangkok (in Thai, Krung Thep) suffered heavy damage during World War II. It was seized by the Japanese in December 1941, only a few days after Pearl Harbor and, in 1944 and 1945, it became the target of frequent bombing raids by Allied planes.

Clothing

In Thailand's tropical climate, cotton and other lightweight washable clothing is comfortable and practical. Most types of summer fabrics, including lightweight knits, are worn for business, since all offices are air-conditioned.

Men find that shirts and ties, without jackets, are acceptable, as are wash-and-wear or safari suits. A dark business suit is usually worn for evening functions. Thai-style men's shirt-jackets, tailored in silk or cotton, can be worn to some evening events. Sports clothes are popular for casual wear, and can be bought locally. Shoes are available at reasonable prices, although larger sizes may have to be custom made.

Women need more clothing for Thailand than for a more temperate climate. Here, clothes need to be changed more frequently. Dresses in current styles are sold in boutiques and department stores, but usually only in sizes to fit petite Thai figures. Dressmakers can make equally comfortable and fashionable clothing. Prices range from reasonable to expensive, and results vary according to the design and the skill of the dressmaker. A wide variety of fabrics is sold in local shops. Thai cotton and silk are of high quality, and are popular for both daytime and evening wear.

Casual dresses, skirts, blouses, and slacks are suitable for almost all daytime occasions outside the office. Businesswomen will be appropriately dressed if they wear the same style of clothing that is acceptable in city offices in the U.S. Sleeveless and short-sleeved dresses with jackets are convenient for moving from the hot, humid outside air into air-conditioned buildings. Shoes purchased on the local market are reasonably priced, stylish, and comfortable, but are not always available in narrow widths or in larger sizes.

For informal social events, floor-length skirts, trousers, or dresses are popular. Occasionally,

more formal attire is needed, and can be easily made by dressmakers. Thais wear black only at funerals and when in mourning, and often show discomfort when a foreigner (not in mourning) wears this color. It is sometimes worn as part of fashion, but never as the dominant color.

Children need the same kind of clothing they would wear during hot summer months in the U.S. With few exceptions, most items can be purchased or made locally. Many parents order items through mail order catalogs.

Supplies & Services

Tailors and dressmakers are numerous; seamstresses will work in the home. Shoe repair services are available, but materials used are not of the quality found in the U.S. Dry cleaning and laundry services are adequate, as is repair service for small appliances.

Beauty salons and barbershops charge reasonable prices, and their personnel generally are well-trained.

Most personal and household items are found in Bangkok. Cosmetics, some toiletries, and bed and bath linens are costly. Attractive, locally made table linens, however, are moderately priced.

Religious Activities

Although Thailand is predominantly Buddhist, religious tolerance is practiced. The constitution requires the king to be a Buddhist, but also makes him the protector of all religions. Government offices and many businesses close on Sunday, not as a religious holiday, but as a day of rest.

Christian churches in Bangkok include many denominations, many of which hold regular services and Sunday school in English. Catholic, Protestant, Interdenominational, Seventh Day Adventist, Christian Science, and Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints religious groups are represented in Thailand. A Jewish Center and a Baha'i Center are located in Bangkok. Many

up-country areas also have Christian churches, which are often operated by missionaries.

Domestic Help

Most foreigners resident in Thailand employ at least one maid or cook. Single people usually can manage with one domestic who cooks, cleans, and does the laundry, but families often need more help. Drivers are not necessary, although they offer great relief from the strain and stress of driving in city traffic.

Domestics work six days a week, with the free day determined by the employer; most household help live in their own quarters in the employer's house or apartment. Knowledge of English varies. Salary depends on skills and previous experience, and ranges from the equivalent of \$115 to \$200 monthly. Most are also paid one month's salary bonus, or a fraction if they have worked less than a year, at Christmas.

Before employment, and every year thereafter, each employee should have a complete medical examination (available at local hospitals). The American Women's Club in Bangkok operates a registry to assist Americans in finding household employees. Employee liability insurance is recommended.

Education

The International School of Bangkok (ISB) is the major English-language school in Thailand. It is private, based on the American educational system, and supervised by a board of directors elected by parents. The school's constitution requires that at least three nationalities be represented on the board.

About 50% of the staff are hired locally, but some of the teachers are spouses of U.S. Government personnel stationed in Thailand. ISB's teachers and administrative staff have strong academic and teaching credentials.

The school offers kindergarten through grade 12, is accredited by



Grand Palace in Bangkok

Susan Rock. Reproduced by permission.

the Western Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, and is an academically excellent institution.

There is no longer a formal dress code, but all students are expected to be appropriately dressed and groomed while on campus or attending school-sponsored off-campus activities. Students are permitted to wear the national dress of their native countries. Uniforms are required only for physical education classes.

International School offers primarily a college preparatory program, although a limited number of vocational courses are available. Extracurricular sports and other activities are provided.

ISB participates in, and is a testing center for, the following national testing programs: Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National

Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMQT), College Board Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), Strong Vocational Interest Inventory (SVII), College Board Achievement Test (ACH), American College Test (ACT), College Board Advanced Placement Test, Secondary School Admission Test (SSAT), and Test of Academic Progress (TAP).

Six psychologist/counselors work with students and parents in academic and personal counseling. ISB's facilities for learning-disabled students are limited. If a child needs a self-contained classroom, a small (10–12 students) classroom, extensive occupational therapy, or psychiatric counseling, these services are not available at ISB or anywhere in Bangkok.

Ruamrudee International School is another institution offering an English-language curriculum. The

school, founded in 1963, is affiliated with the Catholic Church. A wide variety of elective and extracurricular activities are offered, as well as various sports.

Other schools in Bangkok include Holy Redeemer (Catholic), the Bangkok Pattana (British system), and La Petite École Française (French system).

Special Opportunities

Schools with instruction in English for handicapped children are not available, but a number of physical therapy clinics and wide range of Thai specialists can provide continuing care.

Several clubs in Bangkok offer English-language classes in the arts, sports, cooking, and crafts. The National Museum Volunteers group sponsors lectures on the ancient and modern history of Thailand, aspects



Courtesy of Ellen Bowden.

Floating market in Bangkok

of the country's culture and Buddhism, and Thai art. Qualified music teachers for many instruments are available, and a small music academy in Bangkok teaches theory and composition, and offers instruction in piano, voice, and stringed instruments.

Almost all Thai universities require a special entrance examination (which is in the Thai language) for undergraduate study. Most courses are taught in Thai. For these reasons, it is extremely difficult for an American student to enroll in a college degree program here.

Recreation

Facilities for many sports are available in Bangkok. Several commercial tennis and racquetball courts are located in the Sukhumvit area and in other parts of the city. Most golf courses are open to the public, and charge reasonable fees.

Privately owned health and exercise clubs are scattered throughout the city, some in the Sukhumvit district. Joggers use the paths at Lumpini Park, near the U.S. Embassy. Others jog on city streets in the early morning before traffic becomes heavy, or use the playing field at the International School of Bangkok. The Royal Bangkok Sports Club offers jogging tracks, horseback riding, an 18-hole golf course, and a swimming pool. However, there is a long waiting list (up to five years) for memberships, unless you pay a special, expensive fee.

There are bowling alleys and swimming pools in the residential areas. Ice skating and roller skating are available. Sporting goods can be bought locally, but prices are high.

Ballet, jazz, and aerobic classes for children and adults are offered at various Bangkok locations.

Spectator sports include Thai boxing, as well as other events ranging from tennis matches to gymnastic exhibitions.

Bangkok has a wealth of historic and scenic sites for the tourist to visit and enjoy. Local travel services have daily tours in modern air-conditioned buses. This is the best way, at first, to see the following sights: the *Wat Benchamabophit*, an ornate marble temple; *Wat Po*, which holds the large reclining Buddha image; *Wat Trai Mit*, temple of the Golden Buddha; *Wat Phra Keo*, in the Grand Palace where the emerald Buddha is housed; and many other picturesque and exotic temples.

Boat trips and *klong* (canal) tours can be arranged. These include taxi rides on the Chao Phraya River, and "long tail" boat trips through the *klongs* (where the visitor can see Thai houses built on stilts, and

observe a style of life based on water transportation networks). Cruises on converted rice barges also are possible.

A few examples of old Thai architecture have been preserved and now serve as museums. Among these are the Suan Pakkard Palace, which contains an antique collection of lacquer, pottery, and manuscripts; the Jim Thompson House, with its superb collection of objets d'art; and the Siam Society's Khamthieng House, an example of northern-style teak architecture. At the weekend market one can buy almost any conceivable article, from roasted beetles to antiques.

The following popular tourist attractions are within a day's drive of Bangkok:

The Ancient City and its outdoor museum, with replicas of nearly 100 ancient and modern monuments of Thailand erected on a scale of 1:1 up to 1:3.

The Rose Garden, featuring beautiful flower beds, a selection of hotels and restaurants, and a daily show recreating country life (Thai dancing, boxing, and cock-fighting).

Ayutthaya, the former capital of Thailand, only a two-hour drive from Bangkok. It has numerous ruins, some of which have been restored.

Bang Pa In, a former royal summer retreat with a collection of palaces and pavilions in various Thai, Chinese, Italian, and Victorian architectural styles.

Trips up-country and to the various beach resorts are a relaxing way to spend weekends and holidays. The following are some of the more frequently visited places:

Pattaya, a seaside resort with many excellent hotels and restaurants. Because of the rapid growth, however, the beaches are polluted and, unless one is willing to risk disease, water sports are limited to hotel pools. Scuba diving is popular, but



View of Bangkok, Thailand

© Richard T. Nowitz/Corbis. Reproduced by permission.

requires long boat rides to the outer islands to avoid the worst of the pollution. Nearby, at Bang Saroy, is the local affiliate of the International Game Fish Association, a point of contact for the serious angler.

Hua Hin, which can be reached by train, car, or bus. This resort, the oldest in Thailand, has beautiful white beaches, and mountain scenery. Golf, swimming, snorkeling, scuba diving, and boating are available.

Phuket, a large offshore island about 560 miles south of Bangkok. It has unspoiled sandy beaches and is a favorite spot for scuba diving and snorkeling. Large tin mines are found here.

Khao Yai, a forest and wildlife preserve, about 125 miles northeast of Bangkok. Accommodations include a hotel, bungalows, and camping facilities.

Pimai, called the Angkor Wat of Thailand. It has ruins dating back to the 11th century.

Chiang Mai, a 50-minute flight or a 13-hour overnight train trip from Bangkok. It can also be reached by car in eight hours. Here, one can visit the northern hill peoples and

the villages where artisans make umbrellas, silver bowls and jewelry, pottery, handwoven Thai silk and cotton, and carved teak furniture and other wooden objects. Located nearby is a young elephant training camp.

Tours organized by various groups are frequently offered to places outside the country, including Hong Kong, India, Nepal, Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia. Health and visa requirements change constantly, and must be checked before each trip.

Colorful festivals celebrating traditional Thai holidays include the following:

Songkran (mid-April), Thai New Year's Day. Young girls dressed in Thai national costumes go to the banks of the rivers in colorful processions. Water is sprinkled on Buddha images, monks, parents, and elders as a gesture of veneration. Sometimes the participants become too enthusiastic and throw buckets of water on passersby.

The Ploughing Ceremony which takes place during the sixth lunar month (May). It is an important festival, with historical roots embedded deeply in Thailand's traditional

dependence on the fertility of the land, and in Buddhist and Hindu rituals of kingship. After the king touches the sacred red and gold plough for good luck, the plough is drawn by garlanded bulls in a circular furrow on the Phra Mane Grounds, site of the weekend market. Brahmin priests chant as the animals are offered seven varieties of crops. The yield of the next year's harvest supposedly depends on which crops the bulls choose.

Loy Kratong, celebrated on the night of the full moon of the 12th lunar month (November). This festival marks the end of the rainy season and the end of hard work in the fields. People float their bad fortune away from them in tiny banana leaf or paper floats (*kratongs*), decorated with lit candles, flowers, and incense stick. The *kratongs* are sailed on rivers, canals, and ponds.

Ok Pansa (late October and early November), the end of the Buddhist Lent, during which monks must stay at a *wat* (temple) and not travel. At the end of Lent, Thai Buddhists can earn merit by presenting *kathin*, or offerings of food and other items for the *wat*, and new saffron robes for the monks. King Bhumibol Adulyadej, or another member of the royal family, presents *kathin* to several of Bangkok's large temples. Thai usually join together to purchase such offerings, often presenting them to a *wat* in another part of the country, and traveling there in festive procession.

Entertainment

Many activities and varied types of entertainment exist for children of all ages in Bangkok. Such attractions include Khao Din Zoo, one of the best in Southeast Asia; Magic Land, a Thai version of Disneyland; Siam Park, a combined amusement and water park; the Science Museum and Planetarium, with "hands on" exhibits; the Pasteur Institute's large collection of living poisonous snakes; and the monthly activities for children at the Nelson Hays Library.

Bangkok offers museums, art galleries, and occasional theater, dance, and music performances. The city also has discotheques and nightclubs.

Regular performances are sponsored at the Bangkok Community Theater, Music Society, Combined Choir, Alliance Française, and Bangkok Symphony. Americans interested in performing can join these groups.

The active American University Alumni Association regularly presents films, lectures, and displays, and holds classes in both Thai and English. Often, AUA sponsors performances of chamber music, jazz and popular music, and recitals by visiting American musicians. Various embassies and organizations offer Thai cultural programs throughout the year.

The Bangkok branch of the Interdenominational Christian Women's Club holds regular monthly luncheon programs. All are welcome; no dues are charged.

The Bhirasi Institute presents frequent art exhibits from Thailand and other countries. Local galleries show extensive work produced by Thailand's active artist community.

The Siam Society, organized to promote knowledge of the country's art, history, culture, and archaeology, provides activities toward these ends. The National Museum Volunteers plan trips and special programs.

At the International Club on Soi 21, Sukhumvit, there are tennis courts, a large swimming pool, a library, and a snack bar, open to all nationalities.

The American Women's Club welcomes any American woman or wife of a U.S. citizen residing in Thailand. The club has programs of local interest, operates a thrift shop, and maintains a servants' registry.

Americans participate in the activities of the Foreign Correspondents'

Club and the Hilltribe sale. An American who speaks serviceable Thai will have access to an even wider range of activities and local organizations.

Chiang Mai

Chiang Mai, with a population exceeding 160,000 is an important regional center for commerce and tourism. It is about 500 miles north of Bangkok, on a river plain surrounded by mountain ranges. Buddhist temples are found on almost every block, and city streets are crowded with bicycles, motorbikes, and converted pickup trucks used as taxis. Although Chiang Mai is undergoing a modernization process, with high-rise condominiums being constructed throughout the city, it still retains a measure of its traditional charm which makes it a popular tourist stop.

Chiang Mai, founded nearly seven centuries ago, was a major religious, cultural, and commercial center until 1556 when Burmese invasion reduced it to a vassal state. The Burmese were driven out in 1775, and Chiang Mai and the surrounding Lan Na Thai kingdom once again became part of northern Thailand.

The city is noted for its scenic splendor, ancient temples, the lilting dialect of its people and, especially, for its beautiful women. The Thai call it Shangri-La.

January is Chiang Mai's coolest month, and warm clothing is needed at that time. Temperatures start to rise in February, reaching their hottest in April with highs of 107°F. The rainy season, May through October, brings relief and heavy rainstorms. November and December are the best months with bright, sunny days and cool nights.

The northern provinces, where Chiang Mai is located, are mountainous, with transportation lines running primarily on a north-south axis along the wide river valleys. The region produces rice, tobacco, corn, sugarcane, and seasonal deli-



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Wat Kukam Temple in Chiang Mai

cacies such as strawberries. Opium and jade are major illicit products. Lumber, textiles, mining, cottage industry, and tourism are also important elements in the region's economy. About 500 Americans, many of them missionaries, reside in northern Thailand.

Education

The Chiang Mai International School (CMIS), licensed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and operated by the Church of Christ in Thailand, provides instruction from kindergarten through tenth grade. Instruction, using U.S. textbooks, is in English. Uniforms are not required, and jeans are acceptable attire.

The school, founded in 1954, offers classes in Thai language and culture. Currently no programs for either gifted or learning disabled students are available, nor does the

school have guidance/vocational counselors.

Depending on the number and ages of preschoolers and the availability of teachers, informal nursery schools and play groups are often organized. Tutors can be found to teach Thai in the home, and the Alliance Française offers classes in French. Special educational opportunities may be available at Chiang Mai or Payap universities, but no organized activities or classes in English are currently offered.

Recreation and Entertainment

Chiang Mai offers the sports enthusiast golf, tennis, windsurfing, swimming, squash, bowling, fishing, horseback riding, and horse racing. Club memberships are available at reasonable rates. Sports equipment and attire are expensive, and both brand and choice of size are limited.

Chiang Mai is a popular tourist and trekking center. The city has many important and interesting Buddhist temples. On the mountain above Chiang Mai is the royal family's winter palace, Phuping, and a well-known Buddhist temple, Suthep. Nearby are villages that specialize in lacquer-ware, silver-smithing, silk and cotton weaving, wood carving, and umbrella making.

Regional touring opportunities include visits to elephant training camps, unusual hill-tribe villages, scenic waterfalls and picnic spots, historic sites along the Mekong River, and the towns of Chiang Rai, Lampang, Mae Hong Son, Lamphun, and Sukhothai. Interesting treks and river trips also can be enjoyed, although security regulations may limit the possibilities.

Several local movie theaters have special sound rooms where original

English-language soundtracks are played. The U.S. Air Force detachment here receives films each week from the armed forces film circuit; these are screened for the official U.S. community Friday and Saturday evenings.

Three Thai TV stations are received in Chiang Mai, but unlike Bangkok, no simultaneous English-language FM soundtracks are broadcast. American sets must be converted to the European (PAL) system.

Radio Thailand Chiang Mai has English broadcasts both mornings and evenings. With a shortwave receiver, British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and Voice of America (VOA) can be picked up. No English-language newspapers are available, but two Bangkok English-language papers arrive daily.

Social activities among Americans are informal, and depend on individual inclination and initiative. There is an International Women's Group, which holds luncheon meetings, sponsors arts and crafts and cooking classes, and organizes other special activities. Chiang Mai has several Rotary Club and Lion's International chapters with active and multi-national memberships. Many club and sports activities bring together Thai and foreign nationals.

Songkhla

Songkhla lies at the tip of the Thailand peninsula, about 815 miles south of Bangkok. It is served by Thai Airways and has train connections to Bangkok and Malaysia from the rail junction at Hat Yai, a half-hour drive from the city. This port town has regular freight service to Bangkok. The main highway to Bangkok is paved and the main roads leading to other provinces in the south are generally good.

Sea breezes (from an inland sea to the north and the Gulf of Thailand to the east) give Songkhla a pleasant climate. The temperature stays in the 80s year round, with an occasional hot day. Rainfall is heavy

from October through December. January through March is dry, with scattered rains.

In this city of about 250,000, the foreign community is small, but it continues to grow as a result of oil exploration efforts in the Gulf of Thailand. Housing is limited, but usually good. There is a first-class hotel on the beach. Electric current (220v, 50 cycles) is basically reliable, but subject to interruptions. City water is undependable, and the better homes have wells.

Songkhla has a provincial hospital. A Seventh-Day Adventist hospital and a new, modern university medical facility are located in nearby Hat Yai. Local markets are well stocked with seafood and fresh foodstuffs. Pork and chicken are readily available, but quality beef is hard to find. Shopping for items not found in Songkhla markets can be done in Hat Yai or Penang, a large northern Malaysian city, only four hours away by car.

The area around Songkhla includes many fine beaches. There are tennis courts and a golf course in the city.

Udon

Udon, a city over 100,000, is one of the regional hubs of northeastern Thailand. It is 350 miles northeast of Bangkok and 30 miles south of the Mekong River border with Laos. Udon (Udonrdhani) is connected to Bangkok with daily air, rail, and bus service. The drive from Bangkok takes eight hours on the Friendship Highway.

This part of Thailand, where life moves at a leisurely pace, has three distinct seasons. The cool interval, with clear warm days and cool nights, is from November to February. The hot dry season is like "burning sand under glass," to quote Kipling; it extends from March through May. The rainy season normally begins in June and tapers off in October.

From 1965 to 1976, the Royal Thai Air Force Base in Udon housed a

large contingent of U.S. Air Force personnel. With the withdrawal of this contingent in 1976, the American population dropped drastically; about 50 Americans now live in the Udon area. These include retired military, missionaries, and Peace Corp volunteers, as well as diplomatic personnel.

Considerable economic growth in Udon has resulted in the construction of new retail establishments, restaurants, hotels, and housing, although the city is still relatively small in area and does not yet boast any high-rises. Udon has two Western-style supermarkets, as well as a number of smaller grocery shops selling a variety of Western-style products. In addition, traditional open markets offer a wide variety of fresh vegetables, meats, and other products. Bakeries carry local breads and cakes, but they differ somewhat from American versions.

Udon's one department store and local shops meet most household needs. Ready-made clothing is difficult to find, but many tailor and seamstress shops offer decent service at inexpensive prices. Auto repair shops perform excellent maintenance on American and foreign-made cars at a reasonable cost. Film may be developed locally, but slides must be sent to Bangkok.

One of Udon's four cinemas has a sound booth available where one can listen to the English soundtrack when an English-language film is shown. Local TV is in Thai, except for English subtitles during the evening news on one channel. English-language radio broadcasts can be heard on shortwave radio. Bangkok based English-language newspapers are available the evening of the date published. English-language video cassettes can be rented from stores in Bangkok; local shops carry a limited supply.

Udon has many very good Thai and Chinese restaurants, as well as several acceptable Western ones. Recreational facilities are limited, but numerous tennis courts and a short

nine-hole golf course are located just outside of town. Also available are four swimming pools, fishing parks, and a jogging path along the city reservoir. Nearby archaeological digs at Ban Chiang, and mountain campsites at Phu Kadueng National Park in Loei Province offer interesting weekend trips for the adventurous.

General Information

Most of Thailand lies north of Bangkok and is referred to as "up-country." In general, life outside of Bangkok is restful. Those bothered by the noise, smoke, heavy traffic, and crowded conditions of the capital will enjoy the tranquility and spaciousness of the up-country.

North of Bangkok are jade green rice fields that stretch for miles in all directions, crisscrossed by *klongs*. Beside the *klongs*, farmers build their houses on stilts, out of reach of the water, and plant a few fruit trees and vegetable gardens. Many plow their fields with the aid of huge, slow-moving water buffalo with long, curving horns, although an increasing number are using small machine plows. After the day's work, the farmers wash the mud of the paddy from their bodies in waters of the *klong*.

Beyond the rice lands, the teak-covered mountains reach to the northernmost part of Thailand. To the northeast, a high plateau rises abruptly from the plains and slopes eastward to the Mekong River, which separates Thailand from Laos. This plateau is dotted with scrubby trees. In many areas, water is scarce and the soil poor. The dry season makes unpaved roads dusty, and the monsoon turns them to mud.

The climate in the north and northeast varies more than in Bangkok. Lightweight blankets and sweaters are needed for the cool season, and summer clothing for the hot season.

Western-style housing varies up-country but, on the whole, it is good and steadily improving. Some new houses are being built, and ingenu-

ity can make older homes comfortable and attractive. Houses are usually two-story, with airy rooms and at least one air-conditioned bedroom. Most electrical systems are 200v, 50 cycle, but voltage fluctuates sharply. Power failures in some areas are frequent, and water shortages occur during the dry season. Most homes have telephones.

Hotels vary widely. Some are new and modern; others have only cold water and furnish no sheets. For trips around the provinces, one must pack sheets, towels, soap, and plenty of extra changes of clothing.

Provincial hospitals have facilities adequate only for emergency treatment, although Chiang Mai has excellent medical institutions. Routine medical care is available at four hospitals in Udorn. Most expatriates with serious medical problems, or those requiring surgery or extended treatment, seek medical care in Bangkok. Also, most foreigners go to Bangkok for inoculations and dental care.

Since only Bangkok and Chiang Mai have English-language schools, American parents up-country either send their children to boarding school, or teach them at home, using the Calvert system. In some communities with several children, arrangements are made for one parent to act as teacher for all children.

Even the larger up-country towns may have only small Western communities, and may offer limited social activities and recreational facilities. Many people develop hobbies such as painting, writing, and gardening. Others teach English, cooking, or handicrafts to children or adults. Families now living up-country suggest that newcomers bring musical instruments, games, books, and sports equipment. A shortwave radio is useful. Most of these items can be bought in Bangkok.

A few up-country places have only one or two American families, but this isolation seems to draw them closer together. Friendships seem

warmer and a spirit of neighborliness prevails, much as in pioneer days in America. English is not widely understood or spoken in the up-country.

A great advantage of living up-country is the chance to become well acquainted with Thai people, to learn their language, customs, and culture. Many Americans who have accepted the challenge of working in rural Thailand feel that the experience gives a satisfaction that far outweighs the occasional inconvenience.

OTHER CITIES

KHON KAEN is the capital of Khon Kaen Province in east-central Thailand. The city lies on a railroad, 100 miles north of Nakhon Ratchasima. A university opened here in 1964. Khon Kaen's population is estimated over 210,000.

The capital of its province, **LAMPANG** is on the left bank of the Wang River and near a railroad, 45 miles southeast of Chiang Mai. Located in northwestern Thailand, the city is linked by a highway with Chiang Rai. Lampang is a commercial center with sugar-refining facilities.

Situated in southwestern Thailand, **NAKHON PATHOM** (also spelled Nagara Pathom) is the capital of Nakhon Pathom Province. The city is about 38 miles northwest of Bangkok and has, among its landmarks, a large temple.

Formerly ruled by Cambodia (officially called Democratic Kampuchea), the ancient walled city of **NAKHON RATCHASIMA** (also called Khorat or Korat) is the capital of its province, and lies on the Mum River, 100 miles east of Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya. Nakhon Ratchasima's population exceeds 280,000. A railroad junction point, the city is a trading and distributing center for the eastern region of the country.

PHET BURI (also spelled Petch-aburi or Bejraburi) is a seaport and provincial capital on the northwestern shore of the Gulf of Thailand. A railroad connects it with Bangkok, 60 miles southwest.

The seaport town of **PHUKET** is the capital of Phuket Province in southwestern Thailand. As one of the major Thai ports on the Indian Ocean, Phuket exports fish, rubber, charcoal, and tin.

Situated in southern Thailand, near the Malaysian border and 22 miles south of Pattani, **YALA** is a provincial capital. It is on the Pattani River and on the railway that runs from Songkhla to northeastern Malaysia. The residents of Yala are Malay in their language and culture and Islamic in religion. The city's exports include rubber and tin.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The Kingdom of Thailand, formerly Siam, is located at a strategic crossroads in Southeast Asia. With an area of about 200,000 square miles, it is the region's second largest nation. Its boundaries adjoin Myanmar on the north and west, Laos on the east and northeast, Cambodia on the southeast, and Malaysia and the Gulf of Thailand on the south.

Topographically, Thailand presents a varied landscape of forested mountains, dry plateaus, fertile river plains, and sandy beaches. Mountain ranges run along the border with Myanmar and down to Malaysia. Another range splits the country in half from north to south. Major deforestation has occurred throughout Thailand. However, the government has attempted to save the forests by imposing a ban on commercial logging.

The Chao Phraya River originates in the north and flows southward. It

irrigates the fertile rice lands of the central plains through a network of *klongs*. This long waterway also serves as the main water transportation route through the central part of the country. It empties into the Gulf of Thailand near the international port of Bangkok. Day and night, the river teems with traffic: ships of many lands; round-bottom barges loaded with rice, sugar, rubber, teak, and coconut; brightly painted river taxis; and tiny *sampans* piled high with fruits and vegetables for the city market.

Because it is located between the equator and about 20°N latitude, Thailand is warm and humid and classified as tropical monsoon. A pronounced rainy season lasts from July through October. From November through February, the northeast monsoon brings a cooler, drier period, when humidity drops from an average high of 95.2% to an average low of 58.5%. During this season, temperatures range from the mid-60s in the morning to the mid-80s during the day. March through June is usually hot and humid, and temperatures often reach 100°F.

Thailand's warm, humid climate, particularly during the rainy season, can cause mildew. However, air-conditioning generally prevents serious problems. The usual tropical insects and small lizards live on ceilings and walls; the lizards eat mosquitoes and other insects and do no damage or harm. Ants of all varieties abound. Ticks are a problem for pet owners.

Population

In 2000, Thailand's population was estimated at 61.2 million. Most people are native-born Thai whose ancestors migrated from southern China in the sixth and seventh centuries A.D. Over the centuries, they have developed an independent culture and identity that is uniquely national in character. The most significant minority are the Chinese, who comprise 14% of the population and live throughout Thailand. Small minorities include the

Malays, Mon, Khmer, Indians, Vietnamese, and various hill tribe peoples. About 20% of the population live in cities, with a disproportionately large number—six million—concentrated in metropolitan Bangkok. Villages and small towns dot the greater part of the landscape. The annual population growth rate has declined dramatically from over 3% a year in 1960 to less than 1% in 2001.

The Thai, historically governed by strong central rule tempered by Buddhist precepts of reciprocity between the king and his people, retain a traditional reverence for their monarch. Throughout their history, the Thai have encountered and borrowed selectively from regional and, later, Western civilizations, producing a rich cultural synthesis that is uniquely Thai. That their country maintained its independence despite pressures from colonial powers is a matter of great pride. A strong sense of cultural and national identity has helped to protect this society from massive disruption as it shifts from an agrarian economy to a developing, urbanizing, industrial state.

Social interactions are governed by formal expressions of courtesy, and deference to age and social status. Thais greet one another with a *wai*, performed by placing the palms of the hands together in front of the face and bowing slightly. The younger, or the one of lower station in life, customarily initiates the greeting. The word used is *sa-wat-dee kha*, spoken by women, and *sa-wat-dee krap*, by men. When taking leave, the same words and *wai* are repeated. It is good manners to remove shoes on entering a Thai home, and this custom is obligatory before entering a temple or shrine.

It is impolite to touch a Thai, even a child, on the head or shoulders, to point or shake a finger at another person, or to talk loudly or shout. To point one's feet at, or step over, another person is considered an insult. A woman should never touch a Buddhist monk, hand anything

directly to him, or allow her clothing to brush against his robe. Sitting or standing on Buddha images is considered a sacrilegious act, punishable by a fine or jail sentence. Pointing fingers at, or touching, any image of the Buddha is viewed as an expression of bad manners.

The royal family is of particular importance to all Thais. It is not acceptable to speak out against the King. Such behavior is punishable under *lese majeste* laws. Talking about any member of the royal family in derogatory terms, even in casual conversation, is also not acceptable. Everyone at a gathering stands when the King's anthem is played.

Thai is a tonal language, with a root monosyllabic vocabulary enriched by the addition of Sanskrit and other loan words. It is not inflected, and the absence of tenses and cases makes it relatively easy for Americans to pick up a rudimentary command of Thai, despite the difficulties introduced by the tone system. The regional dialects, as well as the closely related Lao language, can be hard to understand but, in this age of radio and television, almost all Thai people now understand some Bangkok or Central Thai. English, the second language of most educated Thais, is taught in schools and universities.

Thailand is a religious nation; 95% of its people are Buddhist. A mixture of Theravada Buddhism, Hinduism, and animism permeates all levels and aspects of society. It is a stabilizing force both at national and at local levels, where it provides a focus for community life, particularly in rural areas.

The *wat* (temple) is used not only for spiritual purposes, but for ceremonies of birth, marriage, and death. It also is used for recreation and welfare activities and, in remote areas, still serves as a school. Thai Buddhist men gain merit by spending from three months to several years in the saffron robes of the monk, adhering to Buddhist moral

and religious precepts, or *Dhamma*, and performing meritorious acts.

Most Chinese and Vietnamese in Thailand are adherents of Mahayana Buddhism. Less than 0.5% of the population are Christian. Thai Muslims, about 4% of the total population, are concentrated in the four southern provinces along the Malaysian border.

Most scholars believe that the Thai (also known as the Siamese) people migrated from the hilly hinterlands of southern China into what is now Thailand over 1,000 years ago. Settling first in the fertile central plain and basin of the Chao Phraya River, they created a series of independent kingdoms that competed with their Burmese and Khmer neighbors.

In the 13th century, the Thai defeated the Khmer and created a kingdom with its capital at Sukhothai. A second kingdom, founded in 1351 at Ayudhaya, later eclipsed Sukhothai in importance. The Burmese, in April 1767, sacked and captured Ayudhaya, killing the Thai king. Six months later the Siamese drove out the Burmese and General Phraya Taksin established a new capital in Thonburi, across the river from what is now Bangkok. In 1782, Rama I, who replaced Taksin and founded the current Chakri dynasty, moved the capital across the river to its present location. Although Westerners have long called the city Bangkok after a small fishing village once nearby, the Thai name of the capital is Krung Thep, or City of Angels. The Grand Palace lies in an area called Rattanakosin, or the Jewel of Indra, the name also used to designate the Chakri era's history and culture.

Government

In Thailand's pre-modern Buddhist state, the king was a living Buddha, or *Bodhisatta*, for his subjects, and a living embodiment of Buddhist law (*Dhamma*). He was protector of the monastic orders, and performed regular ceremonies to assure the progression of the seasons and fertility

of the land. Considered to be between human and divine, he was the apex of an earthly hierarchy below which the Thai social and political order was formed. Kings of the Chakri dynasty (late 19th and early 20th centuries) were a powerful modernizing force, introducing important reforms and innovations while protecting the country from encroachment by imperialistic forces in the region.

The modern period began in 1932 with the advent of constitutional monarchy and experiments with the parliamentary system. Since 1946, American-born King Bhumibol Adulyadej (Rama IX), as chief of state, has ruled in conformity with provisions of the constitution. The king has little direct power, but he plays an important symbolic, unifying role, and he continues to be the protector of Buddhism, performing regular ceremonial roles and is the patron of all religions. Legislative power lies with a democratically elected government led by a prime minister.

Since 1932, Thailand has lived under a succession of unstable governments in which the military has played a dominant role. Changes of government frequently came through coups and the groups seizing power rewrote the constitution to suit their own purposes. A relatively stable time occurred in the 1980s when Prime Minister General Prem Tinsulanonda presided over eight years of coalition governments. The military last seized power in 1991, but with citizen protests and royal intervention, civilian rule was restored in 1992.

The most significant development since then was the ratification of the current constitution in 1997. Thailand has revised their Constitution 16 times since 1932. The recent reforms involve the political process as well as expanded the rights and civil liberties of Thai citizens. They include the establishment of a National Counter Corruption Commission, a Constitutional Court, a national Human Rights Commis-

sion, and a new national Election Commission.

The Ratha Sapha (National Assembly) has two chambers: the Saphaputhan Ratsadon (House of Representatives), with 438 members, and the Wuthisapha (Senate) with 200 members.

House terms last for four years. However, the prime minister may choose to dissolve the House and call elections before that date. Elections for the country's first elected Senate were held in March 2000. All members of the Senate are elected concurrently for a set term of six years, and members are not eligible for reelection.

With the exception of the Democrat Party, Thailand's oldest organized political party, Thai political parties have tended to be centered on individual personalities rather than ideologies.

Thailand's legal system blends principles of traditional Thai and Western laws; Koranic law is applied in the far south, where Muslims constitute the majority of the population. The Supreme Court is the highest court of appeals, and its judges are appointed by the king.

The flag of Thailand is comprised of five horizontal bands—red, white, dark blue, white, and red, in that order. The central blue band is twice the width of the others.

Arts, Science, Education

The literacy rate for Thais aged 15 and over is 90%. Ninety-seven percent of those eligible for first grade enter school and 65% of these complete the primary grades. 60%, however, enroll in secondary and higher education. Bangkok is the home of 10 state-run universities and numerous private colleges and universities. Chiang Mai, Khon Kaen, and Songkhla each have an important regional university. The language of instruction is Thai, except for selected graduate economics and

business programs that offer courses in English.

The predominant sources of modern Thai culture are Hinduism and Theravada Buddhism, as transmitted through contact with ancient Mon, Ceylonese, and Khmer civilizations centered in what are now Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Cambodia. A perceptible Chinese influence also exerts itself in many aspects of Thai culture. In southern Thailand, long traversed by Muslim traders, elements of the classical Islamic tradition have been incorporated into the culture.

Art objects in Thailand traditionally were created and used for religious purposes—decoration of temples, sacred manuscripts, and religious statues—and for the use of royalty and nobility. As a result of the sacking of Ayutthaya in 1767 and the destruction of many cultural artifacts, Thai art for this period is scarce, but later periods are well represented in museum and other collections. After the late 1940s, schools of modern Thai art began to show marked Western influences. Although many artists paint in styles derived from Western models, others are experimenting with expressing traditional Buddhist themes in contemporary forms. Traditional techniques are preserved and taught at Silpakorn University and the Department of Fine Arts in Bangkok.

The National Museum in Bangkok contains an extensive collection of Thai art, including prehistoric objects, sculpture, pottery, and paintings representing various periods and objects (furnishings, carriages, etc.) from previous royal families. The Jim Thompson House (dedicated to the man who popularized Thai silk throughout the world) and Suan Pakkard Palace exhibit private collections which contain some of the finest examples of Thai antiques.

The Museum Volunteer Group and the Siam Society give lectures and arrange study work groups on Thai culture. A number of cultural societ-

ies, including the Alliance Française, British Council, Goethe Institute, Japan Foundation, and American University Alumni Association show movies from their respective countries, usually in their native languages, and sponsor The Bangkok Community Theater, an amateur group, which presents a number of plays each year. The Bangkok Combined Choir presents an annual performance of Handel's *Messiah*. The Bangkok Music Society schedules recitals all year and the Bangkok Symphony Orchestra's yearly season includes at least four concerts.

Many private galleries show the works of contemporary artists and artisans. Air-conditioned theaters show American, Thai, Indian, and Japanese movies daily. In recent years, the more traditional forms of Thai art, music, and dance have been revived. The Royal Siamese classical dances, now in great demand, are performed frequently by troupes of the Department of Fine Arts, dance schools, and private groups. The more traditional forms of painting and handicrafts, including work with silver, silk, bronze, lacquer, and ceramics, also are enjoying a resurgence.

Commerce and Industry

In the earlier part of the 1990s, the Thailand economy was one of Southeast Asia's strongest. But financial crisis hit, beginning in 1997. By the end of 1998, the economy had collapsed by 10.8%, local currency lost half its value, and about 70% of Thailand's domestic financial institutions were either shut down, taken over by the government, or merged with other institutions. Per capita income dropped from \$3,000 in 1996 to \$1,800 in 1998.

With over \$17 billion dollars of aid from the International Monetary Fund, the economy has stabilized and has begun to move forward at a slow, but relatively steady rate.

About 54% of the labor force is involved in agriculture. The most important crop is rice, which is both the staple food and the principal export. Other agricultural commodities produced in significant amounts include: fish and fishery products, cassava (tapioca), rubber, maize (corn), and sugar. Exports of processed foods such as canned tuna, pineapples, and frozen shrimp are on the rise.

Thailand's manufacturing sector has revived with rapid increases in production of such goods as computers and electronics, garments and footwear, furniture, wood products, canned food, toys, plastic products, gems, and jewelry. High-technology products such as integrated circuits and parts, electrical appliances, and vehicles are now leading Thailand's strong growth in exports.

Tourism is still one of Thailand's single largest earners of foreign exchange. Many new luxury hotels and other tourist facilities have opened in order to serve the growing number of tourists from Japan, Europe, the U.S., and Taiwan.

The U.S. is Thailand's leading export market, followed by Japan and Singapore. Leading Thai exports are fishery products (especially canned tuna), textiles, integrated circuits, jewelry/precious stones, and footwear. Japan supplies most of Thailand's imports, followed by the U.S. Leading Thai imports are machinery and parts, aircraft, chemicals, textile fibers (especially cotton), and fish.

American investment has played a significant role in the Thai economy. Two American companies, ESSO (Exxon) and Caltex (a joint venture of Chevron and Texaco), are among the four largest gasoline retailers in Thailand. Seagate Technology has made Thailand its worldwide base for production of computer disk drives, and AT&T has constructed the world's largest corded telephone manufacturing plant outside Bangkok. American consumer brands such as Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Gillette, Johnson and Johnson, and

Colgate-Palmolive are well established in Thailand, selling products that are either imported or manufactured by local subsidiaries. American investment has not increased as rapidly as that of Japan or Taiwan, although the U.S. is still considered the largest or second largest foreign investor in Thailand.

Transportation

Bangkok is served by several international air carriers, and there are domestic airlines providing service between Thai cities. Comfortable, air-conditioned buses also are available, traveling to major cities and resort areas. Daily first-class train service to major cities is also available.

Canals, or *klongs*, have traditionally provided an important mode of transportation in parts of central and southern Thailand. Although most canals in Bangkok have been filled in, or are no longer navigable, water-taxi routes starting from points along the banks of the Chao Phraya River link the capital city to the large number of *klongs* in the countryside. Water taxis and small motorboats provide a low-cost and efficient means of transporting passenger and light-cargo traffic, and are a pleasant way to explore a style of Thai life not visible from the roads. These boats do not carry life jackets.

Roads in Bangkok are generally good. However, because the city is below sea level, major drainage problems arise during the rainy season, when certain streets become, or revert to, canals; when others flood; and when large potholes and drain openings go unrepaired for many weeks. Roads vary from the Friendship Highway and the main north-south roads, all in good condition, to unpaved, ungraded surfaces, often impassable by flooding during the rainy season.

Bangkok traffic is heavy and, when not halted at intersections in the city's infamous and interminable traffic jams, moves at a reasonable

pace. The billows of black smoke emitted by public buses, exhaust fumes from other vehicles, and the mixture of large passenger cars, motorcycles, bikes, *samlors*, public buses, and pedestrians make driving one of the least attractive and most fatiguing aspects of life in Bangkok. The perpetual, severe congestion forces people to arrange the day's activities around traffic problems, and often exceeds the limits of time, tolerance, frustration, and fatigue.

Public transportation in Bangkok includes buses (always crowded and driven aggressively); *samlors* (two-passenger, three-wheel vehicles used in emergencies for short trips); and taxis.

Taxis are usually air-conditioned to some degree. The state of repair of the taxi, the driver's knowledge of the local major destinations, English competence, and basic driving ability (including possession of a driver's license) can vary widely from taxi to taxi. The traveler should negotiate the fare before entering the vehicle and, upon completion of the trip, remain seated in the taxi until change is received. Meters are not required by law.

Taxis dispatched from hotels are air-conditioned and more comfortable, but the rates are two or three times the fare for a regular taxi. Hotel taxis are, however, particularly useful for late night trips or journeys to the airport because they can be booked in advance. You can rent air-conditioned cars and minibuses, with or without drivers, for trips in and out of Bangkok.

Local police cars vary in color; fire trucks are red. Traffic, when directed, is controlled by traffic lights or police officers.

Personally owned vehicles should be air-conditioned for comfort. The extremely hot, humid, and polluted air makes driving with open windows difficult.

Traffic moves on the left. Right-hand-drive cars are safer,

especially on the open highways, but left-hand-drive cars can be used. Station wagons and larger vehicles are not recommended, since they are difficult to maneuver or park in certain areas of Bangkok. They also cost more to operate and are difficult to sell.

Japanese and European cars can be purchased locally, although often with a wait of three to four months for delivery. If an American car is shipped, it should have a tropical radiator. Unleaded gas is not available. Adequate repairs are done on the local market. Labor costs are low, but most replacement parts for non-Japanese cars are expensive. Tires are available locally at reasonable prices.

Cars must carry adequate property damage and liability insurance. Several Bangkok firms are licensed to issue policies in Thailand, but many Americans order from well-known firms in the U.S. Third-party liability insurance is required; full comprehensive coverage is recommended.

Automobiles brought into the country must be registered promptly upon arrival, and cannot be driven without Thai license tags. Since it takes up to three months to obtain a Thai driver's license, an international or U.S. permit can be used in the interim.

Communications

Telephone service to the U.S. is good. Sometimes you can be put right through and at other times there is a one- to two-hour delay while the call is routed through the international operator. Calls may be placed from home, hotel, or the Central Radio Telephone Service of the General Post Office on New Road in Bangkok. Telegrams and cables can be sent from any post office and from most hotels; messages must be submitted in written form. Airmail service to the U.S. takes three to 10 days, and transit time for surface mail is from 10 to 20 days.

Thai television operates on the PAL system; American-made color sets must be adjusted before use. Modification to PAL can be done locally, but it is expensive and the results are not always satisfactory. Reception is fair when an outside antenna is used. Sets purchased locally are expensive.

Bangkok has five television stations. The stations carry some American and British programs, and English translations of the news, which the viewer receives by tuning in the appropriate channel and listening to the English soundtrack on FM radio.

A number of Thai-language and a few English-language radio stations operate on FM stereo and regular AM frequencies. Shortwave carries Voice of America (VOA) and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC).

Bangkok has two English-language dailies: the *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation Review*. Both offer home delivery and use Western wire services to supplement domestic news. *Time* and *Newsweek* (international editions), the *International Herald Tribune*, and *USA Today* are available by subscription or direct purchase at newsstands.

Health and Medicine

Bangkok has a full range of trained, English-speaking medical and dental specialists. Hospitals used by the American community are modern and well-equipped. In Bangkok, only a limited number of medical specialists are qualified to offer care to the physically handicapped or mentally disabled. In other cities, there are hospitals which are adequate for routine treatment; more complicated cases are often treated in Bangkok.

Most diseases in Thailand are also common in the U.S., but some occur with greater frequency because of climatic and sanitary conditions. Heat rashes, fungus infections,

colds and other respiratory infections, and intestinal disorders are common. Careful attention to sanitation and hand cleanliness is the best preventive against intestinal disorders.

Lack of vehicle pollution control plus severe industrial pollution have created a serious air pollution problem in Bangkok. Persons with chronic respiratory problems should seek medical advice before arriving for an extended stay, since these conditions usually become much worse here.

In large cities, household water comes from purification plants, but the possibility of contamination in the distribution system always exists. Boiled or bottled water must be used for drinking, making ice cubes, and brushing teeth. During times of flooding, drinking water becomes contaminated by seepage into the delivery pipes and diarrheal diseases invariably increase in frequency. Since the water here contains no fluoride, pregnant women and all children under 18 should use a fluoride supplement.

Fresh milk and ice cream are sources of many infectious diseases. Canned and powdered milk are safe to use, as are the products of Foremost Dairy, sold in most local supermarkets. Meat, especially pork, should be cooked thoroughly, and raw fruits and vegetables must be washed with soap and water and then soaked in chlorine or an iodine solution prior to cooking or peeling.

Mosquitoes are profuse throughout the country, but malaria is not a problem in the major cities or resort areas. Suppressants are available when traveling to border regions. Hepatitis is transmitted by contaminated food and water, but gamma globulin shots reduce its incidence and severity dramatically.

Rabies shots for pets are not compulsory, but rabid dogs are common here. All foreign residents, especially children, should (in advance of arrival) receive pre-exposure rabies immunizations. Any person

bitten or scratched by a fur-bearing animal or bat should seek medical care immediately. Cats, dogs, and other animals susceptible to rabies should have rabies shots before they are brought to Thailand as pets.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan. 1	New Year's Day
Feb.	Chinese New Year*
Apr. 6	Chakri Day
Apr.	Songkran Day*
May 1	Labor Day
May	Royal Ploughing Ceremony*
May	Visakha Bucha Day*
July	Khao Phansa (Buddhist Lent)*
Aug. 12	Her Majesty the Queen's Birthday & Mother's Day
Oct. 23	Chulalongkorn Day
Dec. 5	His Majesty the King's Birthday & Father's Day
Dec. 10	Constitution Day
Dec. 31	New Year's Eve*

*variable

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Several international air carriers serve Bangkok. The most commonly traveled route for Americans is via Tokyo and Hong Kong.

U.S. citizen tourists staying for less than 30 days do not require a visa, but must possess a passport and onward/return ticket. A Passenger Service Charge, currently 500 baht (USD equivalent as of September 2001: \$11.50), must be paid in Thai baht when departing the country from any of Thailand's international airports. Thailand's Entry/Exit information is subject to change

without notice. For further information on Thailand's entry/exit requirements, please contact the Royal Thai Embassy, 1024 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20007, telephone (202) 944-3600, or the Internet web site <http://www.thaiembdc.org>, or the Thai consulates in Chicago, Los Angeles, or New York City.

Thai customs authorities may enforce strict regulations concerning temporary importation into or export from Thailand of items such as firearms, explosives, narcotics and drugs, radio equipment, books or other printed material and video or audio recordings which might be considered subversive to national security, obscene, or in any way harmful to the public interest and cultural property. It is advisable to contact the Embassy of Thailand in Washington, D.C. or one of the Thai consulates in the United States for specific information regarding customs requirements.

Americans living in or visiting Thailand are encouraged to register either online or in person at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok or the U.S. Consulate General in Chiang Mai. At both locations updated information on travel and security in Thailand is available. The Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy is located at 95 Wireless Road in Bangkok; the U.S. mailing address is APO AP 96546-0001. The central switchboard number is (66-2) 205-4000; the American Citizen Services Unit number is (66-2) 205-4049; and the fax number is (66-2) 205-4103. The web site for the U.S. Embassy is <<http://usa.or.th>>. American citizens can register online via the web site. Questions regarding American Citizens Services can be submitted by E-mail to <acsbkk@state.gov>. The U.S. Consulate General in Chiang Mai is located at 387 Wichayanond Road; the U.S. mailing address is Box, C, APO AP 96546. The telephone number is (66-53) 252-629 and the fax number is (66-53) 252-633.

Pets

Thailand has no quarantine restrictions on entering pets, but does require a rabies inoculation certificate and a certificate of good health issued not more than one week prior to arrival. Bangkok's tropical climate poses numerous health hazards for pets. Dogs especially are susceptible to such afflictions as heartworm, roundworm, and other parasites. Fleas and ticks also abound. Local veterinary clinics are not always up to U.S. standards. Bangkok has a high incidence of rabies, and local pet purchases are discouraged. Pet goods are available at local pet shops.

Firearms & Ammunition

Any weapon that can be fired must be registered with authorities. Foreigners should not import antique weapons. Firearms imported into Thailand must be exported upon the owners departure, and cannot be disposed of by sale or gift within the country. Weapons are restricted to pistols and revolvers with minimum four-inch barrel length and maximum .45 caliber bore (one of each caliber); target rifles, not larger than .22 caliber (one of each type); hunting rifles neither operable in full automatic mode, larger than .375 caliber, nor configured as a military weapon (one of each caliber); shotguns, one of each designed for skeet or trap shooting, and one of each designed for hunting; and a total of 1,000 rounds of ammunition.

Social Customs & Laws

Thailand's traditional greeting is the *wai*, made by placing the palms together and raising them to a level determined by the relative status of those being greeted. The handshake is becoming more popular among cosmopolitan Thais.

It is a criminal offense to make negative comments about the King or other members of the royal family. Thais hold the King in the highest regard, and it is a serious crime to make critical or defamatory comments about him. This particular crime -- dubbed "lese majeste" -- is punishable by a prison sentence of

three to fifteen years. Purposely tearing or destroying Thai bank notes, which carry an image of the King, may be considered such an offense.

Currency, Banking & Weights and Measures

The time in Thailand is Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) plus seven.

The basic unit of Thai currency is the *baht*, divided into 100 *satangs*. All normal banking services are provided by several foreign and Thai banks; many have sidewalk currency exchange windows.

Thailand uses the metric system for most weights and measures, but some local units remain in force, particularly in the provinces. Some of the more important local measures are the *rai* (.4 acres), the square *wah* (four square meters), and the *picul* (60 kilograms).

RECOMMENDED READING

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TONGA

Kingdom of Tonga

Major City:

Nuku'alofa

Other Cities:

Tofua

INTRODUCTION

TONGA is located south of Western Samoa, and less than a quarter of the nation's 169 islands are populated today. Some of the Tongan islands may have been settled since at least 500 BC. The Tongan realm reached its zenith in the 13th century, when its control extended over part of the Lau group in Fiji, Rotuma, Futuna, 'Uvea, Tokelau, Samoa, and Niue. The Dutch first encountered Tonga in 1616, and Captain James Cook visited the islands in 1773 and 1777. Between the 1790s and the 1820s, civil war broke out among rival dynasties for control of the monarchy; it finally ended in 1845. Tonga entered into a treaty of friendship and protection with Great Britain in 1900. During World War II, New Zealand and US troops were stationed on Tongatapu, which became a hub for shipping. Coconuts, bananas, and vanilla became the main economic resources. Two more treaties of friendship between the United Kingdom and Tonga were signed in 1958 and 1960. On June 4, 1970, Tonga became an independent member of the Commonwealth of Nations. Tourism has become an important source of earnings, but Tonga still relies on foreign aid.

MAJOR CITY

Nuku'alofa

Tonga's only urban and commercial center is Nuku'alofa, located on the island of Tongatapu. Nuku'alofa is 430 miles from Suva, Fiji, and about 1,100 miles from Auckland, New Zealand. Tongatapu covers about 100 square miles and is the traditional residence of the king and high chiefs. The other islands traditionally supplied Tongatapu with agricultural produce throughout the year. Tongatapu became known as the "land of chiefs" while the outer islands were referred to as the "land of servants." Nuku'alofa was originally a fortress for the western part of the island. Raiders from the nearby Ha'apai island group periodically attacked the fort in the late 18th century and entirely destroyed it around 1807. Almost two-thirds of the country's population now lives on Tongatapu, and the Nuku'alofa area has about 40,000 inhabitants. The town has the majority of Tonga's hotels, restaurants, shops, bars, and other urban features, but its sprawl now covers nearby agricultural land and wetlands, and shacks line the edge of town. Nuku'alofa and Neiafu are Tonga's only ports of entry for foreign vessels. Nuku'alofa has a deepwater

harbor that is protected by reefs. The Pacific Forum Line and the Warner Pacific Line maintain scheduled service from Australia and New Zealand to Tonga via the Samoas or other islands. Tonga's main air field is Fuaamotu International Airport, 13 miles by road from Nuku'alofa. The government-owned Friendly Island Airways conducts flights between Tongatapu, Ha'apai, 'Eua, Vava'u, and Niuatoputapu. The town's economy is based on exports of copra, bananas, and vanilla and the sale of local handicrafts at the Malae (Park) Market.

Recreation and Entertainment

Basketball, boxing, cricket, rugby, soccer, and volleyball are all popular in Tonga. Fishing and sailing are popular recreations. Rugby matches are played at the Teufaiva Outdoor Stadium on Friday and Saturday afternoons from mid-spring until mid-summer. There are several dive sites to the north of Tongatapu along the many islands, reefs, and shoals. Four of Tonga's five national marine reserves are located in the reefs north of Tongatapu.

The Royal Palace is a white wooden Victorian building landscaped with expansive lawns and Norfolk Island pines. The palace was manufactured in New Zealand in 1867 and



Local market in Nuku'alofa

Susan Rock. Reproduced by permission.

transported to Nuku'alofa. The Royal Chapel was built behind the palace in 1882, and it has served as the site of Tonga's coronations since then. The palatial estate is not open to visitors but is visible from the waterfront. The royal tombs are located less than a mile south of the palace. The site has contained the graves of the monarchs (and their immediate families) since 1893. The graveyard lies in a large park adjacent to the Basilica of St. Anthony of Padua but is not open to the public. The basilica was constructed by volunteers in the late 1970s. The Tongan War Memorial at the Town Common is dedicated to the memory of Tongans who perished in World War II. The Nuku'alofa Talamahu Market is the country's main produce market.

The Tongan National Center in nearby Vaiola displays Tongan history, artifacts, and portraits of the monarchs. There are also demonstrations of traditional basket weaving, tapa making, wood, bone, and coral carving, painting, and kava preparation. Kava is a popular Tongan beverage, a mild tranquilizer made from the ground root of the pepper plant. Visitors to Tonga often enjoy a traditional evening of suckling pig, crayfish, chicken, and assorted accompaniments.

The famous 1789 mutiny on the British ship *Bounty* took place in the waters between the Ha'apai and Nokuma island groups. The former site of the Nuku'alofa fortress is on the slopes of Mt. Zion near the palace, but a radio tower now stands in its place.

The Tongans' ancient tombs consisted of great rectangular platforms of recessed coral limestone blocks erected in tiers. A traditional stone-lined burial vault would be dug into the sand on top of the platform. The Paepae'o Tele'a site on Tongatapu is the grandest of these ancient burial grounds, with its terraced platforms. This particular tomb, however, was probably erected as a memorial since it contains no burial vaults.

European and indigenous culture and living patterns have blended in Nuku'alofa, but in the rest of Tonga village life and kinship ties continue to be important. Heilala is a week-long series of celebrations, parades, sports competitions, and cultural events that take place during the time around the king's birthday (July 4). The Pangai public waterfront area is used for royal ceremonies, festivals, and local soccer and cricket matches. Singing and music are popular forms of entertainment.

The annual National Music Festival in June is a two-week competition with over ten different categories of performance. Tonga, along with some other South Pacific nations close to the International Dateline, is preparing an elaborate celebration to greet the new millennium. Since 1971, the Ministry of Education has operated a joint library service with the University of the South Pacific. The library is in Nuku'alofa and contains approximately 7,000 volumes. The Tonga College Museum's collection includes artifacts of Tonga's history. There are libraries at the Basilica of St. Anthony of Padua, and at the New Zealand and Australian high commissions. Nuku'alofa also has one small cinema.

OTHER CITIES

Largely uninhabited, **TOFUA**'s claim to fame is mutiny. It is believed that the famous Mutiny on the *Bounty* happened here in 1789, when quartermaster John Norton was clubbed to death (on Mutiny of the Bounty Beach) and Captain William Bligh and his men began their 4063 mile trip to Timor. Tofua is the largest island in the group and is fairly well covered with rainforest. Hikers can enjoy a large variety of plant and birdlife. Tofua is also the site of Tonga's most active volcano, which features a steaming lake in its crater.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The Tonga archipelago lies scattered east of Fiji in the South Pacific Ocean. The islands run roughly north-south in two parallel chains. There are 172 islands, of which 45 are inhabited. The total area of the islands is 289 square miles, or more than four times the size of Washington, D.C. The western islands are

volcanic, and the eastern islands are coralline and encircled by reefs. The volcanic islands reach a height of 3,389 feet on Kao. Fonuafo'ou, about 40 miles northwest of Nuku'alofa, is famous for its periodic submergences and reappearances, as a result of earthquakes and volcanic action. The climate is subtropical, with the cooler season lasting from May to November. The average daily temperature ranges from 50°F in winter to 90°F in summer. Most rainfall occurs between December and March. The annual average rainfall on Tongatapu is 70 inches; on Niuaotupapu, 74 inches; and on Vava'u, 110 inches.

Population

There are an estimated 110,000 people living in Tonga, for a density of 385 people per square mile. There has been considerable migration to urban areas, and many Tongans emigrate to work abroad. About 99% of the population is Tongan, a homogeneous Polynesian people. The remainder of the population is European, part-European, Chinese, or non-Tongan Pacific islander. Christianity is the dominant religion in Tonga. The largest denomination is the Free Wesley Church of Tonga, which is headed by the Tongan monarch and claims one-third of the population as members. There are also smaller numbers of Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Seventh-Day Adventists, Mormons, and Polynesian Christian denominations. Tongan and English are the national languages. Tongan is similar to Samoan and was unwritten until the 19th century. English is taught as a second language in elementary and secondary schools, so most Tongans have some understanding of spoken and written English.

Government

Hereditary absolute kings (known as Tu'i Tonga) have ruled in Tonga since the 10th century. Over the centuries the dynasty was split up so that by the early 19th century, three lines of kings all sought domi-

nance. In 1831 Taufa'ahu Tupou united the islands by conquest and took the name George. As George Tupou I, he became ruler in 1845 and was made constitutional monarch in 1875. In 1900, during the reign of George II, the first treaty of friendship was concluded between the United Kingdom and Tonga. Tonga was made a British protectorate but had full freedom over internal affairs. In 1970, Tonga ceased being a protectorate and became an independent member of the Commonwealth of Nations. The 1875 constitution divided the government into three main branches: the sovereign, Privy Council, and cabinet; the Legislative Assembly; and the judiciary. The King-in-Council is the chief executive body, and the cabinet, presided over by the prime minister, makes executive decisions of lesser importance. King Taufa'ahu Tupou IV has ruled since December 1965. The prime minister is appointed by the king. Only nine of the 30 Legislative Assembly seats are determined by popular election (12 are reserved for cabinet ministers and nine are for nobles). A pro-democracy movement has gained support since 1993. The Supreme Court exercises jurisdiction in major civil and criminal cases. Other cases are heard in the Magistrate's Court or in Land Court.

Tonga's flag is crimson with a cross of the same color mounted in a white canton.

Arts, Science, Education

Primary education is compulsory for all Tongans, and there are over 100 public primary schools. Elementary education is conducted in Tongan, and English is also taught. Adult literacy is over 90%. There is a teacher training college. Hango Agricultural College is part of the Free Wesleyan Church Education System. Tonga Maritime Polytechnical Institute is located in Nuku'alofa.

Commerce and Industry

Tonga's main exports are copra (dried coconut meat) and other coconut products, bananas, and vanilla beans. Gourds (squash and pumpkins) have also become a major export crop (especially to the Japanese market), accounting for nearly half of all exports in 1995. Fishing is relatively undeveloped and has become more important in recent years. Tourism is a major source of foreign earnings, but the economy still relies on foreign aid.

The Tonga Chamber of Commerce can be reached at P.O. Box 838, Nuku'alofa, Tonga, South Pacific.

Transportation

About 75% of Tonga's surfaced roads are on Tongatapu. There are no bridges, but causeways connect three islands in the Vava'u group.

Traffic moves on the left in Tonga. While roads in Nuku'alofa are paved, most other roads are not. Animals and unwary pedestrians walking in the road make night driving on unlit secondary roads hazardous.

Communications

Tonga Telecom has offices in Nuku'alofa, Pangai (Ha'apai), Neiafu (Vava'u), 'Ohonua ('Eua), and Hihifo (Niuaotupapu) where international telecommunications services are available. An internal radiotelephone system connects Nuku'alofa, 'Eua, Nokuma, Ha'afeva, and Vava'u. Radio Tonga broadcasts in Tongan, English, Fijian, and Samoan. Television reception is available only by satellite. The government's *Tonga Chronicle* is the main weekly newspaper. There are also church newspapers and a few private publications.

Health

Vaiola Hospital is located in Nuku'alofa. There is one govern-

ment medical department hospital each in Tongatapu, Vava'u, Ha'apai, and 'Eua. Tongans receive medical and most dental treatment free of charge. Tuberculosis, filariasis, typhoid fever, dysentery, and various eye and skin diseases remain common health problems.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs & Duties

A passport and onward/return ticket are required. Visas are not required for stays up to 30 days. Tonga collects a departure tax. For further information about entry requirements, travelers, particularly those planning to enter by sea, may wish to contact the Consulate General of Tonga at 360 Post Street, Suite 604, San Francisco, California 94108; telephone 415-781-0365.

Tonga's customs authorities may enforce strict regulations concerning temporary importation into or export from Tonga of items such as firearms, explosives, motor vehicles,

eggs, and certain types of alcohol. It is advisable to contact the Consulate General of Tonga in San Francisco for specific information regarding customs requirements.

U.S. citizens are encouraged to carry a copy of their U.S. passports with them at all times, so that, if questioned by local officials, proof of identity and U.S. citizenship are readily available. U.S. citizens who are detained are encouraged to request that a consular officer from the U.S. Embassy in Suva, Fiji be notified

There is no U.S. Embassy or other U.S. diplomatic or consular post in Tonga. Assistance for U.S. citizens in Tonga is provided by the U.S. Embassy in Fiji, which is located at 31 Loftus Street in Fiji's capital city of Suva. The telephone number is (679) 314-466; the fax number is (679) 314-466. Americans may register with the U.S. Embassy in Suva, Fiji and obtain up-to-date information on travel and security in Tonga from the Embassy. Information may also be obtained by visiting the Embassy's home page at <http://www.amembassy-fiji.gov>.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan. 1	New Year's Day
Mar/Apr.	Good Friday*
Mar/Apr.	Easter*
Mar/Apr.	Easter Monday*
Apr. 25.	ANZAC Day
May 4	Crown Prince's Birthday
June 4	Independence Day
July 4	King's Birthday
Nov. 4	Constitution Day
Dec. 4	Tupou I Day
Dec. 25 & 26	Christmas

*Variable

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TURKMENISTAN

Republic of Turkmenistan

Major City:

Ashgabat

Other Cities:

Chardzhou, Mary, Nebit-Dag, Tashauz

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated April 1997. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

Bordered by Kazakstan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Iran and the Caspian Sea, Turkmenistan is in the heart of Central Asia. Long on history—Alexander the Great passed through (and, according to local legend, his horse Bucephalus was from here); the Parthian Kingdom, a nemesis of the Romans, was located here; and later the Silk Road passed through the area—Turkmenistan is one of the newest countries in the world. It is now struggling to transform its political and economic systems to meet the challenges of the future.

The most significant geographic feature is the Kara Kum Desert, which covers 80% of the country's total

land area. During the summer, temperatures consistently exceed 40 degrees centigrade. Turkmenistan possesses significant natural resources. It has the fourth largest reserves of natural gas in the world, significant oil reserves, and a variety of mineral resources. It is also located in one of the world's high seismic regions and has suffered serious earthquakes.

MAJOR CITIES

Ashgabat

Ashgabat is located on the border between Turkmenistan and Iran, at 58° 20' E and 37° 58' N. Immediately south is the Kopet Dag Mountain range. To the north, on the other side of the Kara Kum Canal, lies the Kara Kum Desert. The city is in the foothills at an altitude of 775 feet. Ashgabat is the country's largest city with a population of over 460,000.

There are surprising numbers of trees and parks in the city, considering the inhospitable climate. From Friday through Sunday, wedding parties pose in front of the Magtymguly Statue (in honor of a famous 18th century Turkmen poet) near the Museum of Fine Arts.

The city boasts three small museums: the Turkmen History and Ethnography Museum, the Fine Art Museum, and the Carpet Museum. There is also an Exhibition Hall featuring works by contemporary Turkmen artists.

The Hippodrome on the eastern edge of town offers Ahal Teke horse racing in the early fall and late spring. A soccer club, Kopet Dag, plays in the stadium in the center of town.

Because of its history of catastrophic earthquakes, Ashgabat architecture tends toward low-level buildings; huge high-rise apartment blocks, such as those seen in many parts of the former Soviet Union, are a recent development.

Fifteen kilometers west of Ashgabat are the ruins of Nisa. This Parthian city was founded in the 3rd century BC. The palace fortifications are punctuated by the remains of a series of towers. Among the buildings that can be identified at the site are a palace, two Zoroastrian temples, kitchens, and a treasury.

Twelve kilometers east of Ashgabat on the south side of the road to Mary lies Anau. There are 3 mounds at this site. The easiest to spot is the site of a 15 century AD mosque which was destroyed in the

1948 earthquake. On and off, Anau is excavated by an American team from the University of Pennsylvania.

Food

Fresh meat, fish, poultry and produce are limited and often of poor quality. During the winter months, fresh vegetables consist of beets, cabbage, potatoes, carrots, turnips, tomatoes, cucumbers and onions. Fruit is limited to lemons, oranges, grapes and apples. During the summer, there is a slight improvement in selection, including eggplant, sweet peppers, melons, cherries, apricots and peaches.

The quality of the fruits and vegetables in the markets is low by U.S. standards, much of it being bruised or broken. Produce with broken skins not be consumed due to hazardous levels of nitrates, as well as parasites and worm eggs, on the surface of the fruits and vegetables.

Beef, lamb and pork are available in the local markets, though not always in familiar cuts. Because it is displayed in the open air, all meat should be cooked thoroughly before eating. Chicken and other poultry is of very inferior quality. Fish is rarely seen in the markets.

Milk, butter and cheese are locally produced but are unpasteurized, so are considered unsafe. Eggs are available, though they should be thoroughly cooked before eating.

There are a number of small Turkish-run stores which stock bread, juices and other canned goods, but the selection is limited and inconsistent.

Turkish beer is usually available locally, and Turkish wine can occasionally be obtained from local Turkish firms. Imported soft drinks are also usually available, although in limited flavors (cola, orange and lemon/lime).

Clothing

For the summer, bring lightweight, washable clothing. Cotton is the most comfortable fabric. For winter,

bring sweaters, a coat, and waterproof shoes or boots. The streets are very uneven, so comfortable walking shoes are important for all seasons. Purchasing clothing and shoes locally is not an option.

Dress for work and social occasions is relaxed in Turkmenistan. Turkmen rarely wear suits in the summer, although most office workers do wear ties. Slacks and skirts are acceptable attire for women. Tank tops and shorts worn in public will inevitably draw unwanted attention and are discouraged.

Supplies and Services

There are dry-cleaning establishments, though they are expensive and the results are inconsistent. Shoe repairs are available, but materials are not up to U.S. standards. Repairs take a long time, are not guaranteed, and often require extensive paperwork.

Some household products are sold in the Turkish stores, but they are of inconsistent quality and are not always available.

Religious Activities

There are two Russian Orthodox Churches in Ashgabat which have regular Sunday services. Several large mosques are under construction. There are Bahai, Jewish and Christian communities, but none has permanent facilities for meeting.

Education

The Ashgabat International School, run by Quality Schools International, opened in September 1994. It offers English language education for students from five to thirteen years of age.

The curriculum includes English (reading, grammar, composition, keyboarding, and spelling), mathematics, cultural studies (history, geography, economics, etc.), science, computer literacy, art, music, and physical education.

For additional information contact Quality Schools International in care of the U.S. Embassy in Ash-

gabat, or by phoning them at 7-3632-445580. They can also be contacted by writing to Box 2002, Sanaa, Yemen (phone: 967-1-234 437).

Turkmenistan's public schools welcome foreign pupils. However, the language of instruction is either Russian or Turkmen. The schools are short of textbooks and all supplies. From an American point of view, the curriculum is rigid. The foreign families that have tried the local schools have not been satisfied.

Recreation and Social Life

During the racing season (in the spring and fall), you can watch the famous Ahal-Teke horses in action. While horses are for rent at the race track and at rental stables, they are not pleasure riding horses.

Just north of the city is a reservoir lake which is used for recreation, swimming, boating, sailing, and sunning. However, as summer progresses the water is increasingly polluted and it reaches the point where it is no longer usable for recreation.

Jogging is popular among foreigners, though not among the Turkmen. Joggers—especially women—should expect to draw much attention and occasional harassment. The Ashgabat Hash House Harriers meet every other Sunday for a family-style run through the countryside.

Bicycle riding is an increasingly popular sport and means of transportation, though in the winter the cold weather and slick streets could present problems. The city is very flat, so multiple gears are not necessary.

Entertainment

There are two drama theaters, one Russian and one Turkmen, and an opera/ballet theater in Ashgabat. Tickets are not expensive. The season runs from October to April.

There are three concert venues and classical music concerts are held frequently. There are movie the-

aters which show foreign films dubbed into the local languages, but they are uncomfortable and are rarely if ever frequented by Americans.

Some of the larger hotels have good-quality restaurants, ranging in price from \$10-\$30/person. (Dollars only can be used in the major hotels; none accepts credit cards and only a few accept local currency.)

There are other, smaller restaurants popular among the Western community. Most serve a variation of Turkish cuisine at very low prices.

Because of the lack of structured entertainment facilities, socializing with family and friends is the most popular form of entertaining.

Social Activities

There are few Americans in Turkmenistan, and no organizations which provide social activities geared specifically for them. A newly-organized International Women’s Club welcomes women’s participation.

OTHER CITIES

CHARDZHOU, with a population of 164,000, is Turkmenistan’s second largest city. Situated in the eastern part of the country, on the border with Uzbekistan, the city is an important rail and cotton trading center. The industrial sector consists mainly of cotton, silk, and chemical factories.

MARY, located 180 miles east of Ashkhabad, had a population of 94,000 in 2000. Until 1937, the city was known as Merv. Mary is the administrative center of an extensive cotton growing region. Its location on the Kara-Kum Canal and on a rail line have made the city an important transport center.

NEBIT-DAG, which means “oil mountain”, has been the center of the country’s oil industry since the 1930s. The city is located in western

Turkmenistan, at the foot of the Great Balkan mountain range. The 2000 population of Nebit-Dag was 89,000.

TASHAUZ is in the northern section of the country, on the border with Uzbekistan. As the only city in the region, it is a transport and administrative center. Tashauz has 114,000 residents.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Situated in Central Asia, Turkmenistan lies north of the Kopet Dag mountain range between the Caspian Sea and the Amu Darya River. The country has borders with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan on the north and northeast; Iran and Afghanistan on the south and southeast. Turkmenistan has an area of 488,100 square kilometers or 188,417 square miles (slightly larger than the state of California).

The most significant geographic feature is the Kara Kum Desert. One of the world’s largest deserts, it covers 350,000 square kilometers or 80% of the country’s total land area. The temperatures in the desert stay in the upper 40s centigrade from June through August. The Repetek Sandy Desert Biosphere Reserve near Charjew, which was set up in 1928, monitors the unique desert flora and fauna found in the Kara Kum.

The Kopet Dag mountain range to the south forms a 2,000 meter high natural border between Iran and Turkmenistan. The stark slopes are home to a number of endangered species, including leopards and mountain sheep. Most of the mountains are inaccessible, as they fall within restricted border areas.

Cities, towns, and farms are confined to the Amu Darya (historic Oxus) river valley and to the narrow

strip of arable land along the Iranian and Afghan borders.

The “silk roads” ran from the central regions of China through Turkmenistan to the Mediterranean coast during the ancient and middle ages. The caravans carried silk, tea, china and lacquerware to the European markets. Significant ruins related to these trade routes are located outside the present day cities of Mary (Merv) and Dashhowuz.

Precipitation in the inhabited regions averages 19 centimeters per year. Most of this falls between December and April. As you would expect in a desert climate, it does get very hot. In June, July, and August it is often uncomfortable to be outside during the day as the temperatures consistently exceed 40°C. At times in August, the “Afghan Winds” come from the east and the temperature can soar into the high 40’s. However, by late September the temperatures cool and pleasant “autumn-like” weather prevails.

The winter, which begins in late November, can be chilly, wet, and muddy with temperatures between 0°C and 15°C in the daytime, with occasional light snow. Because the snow doesn’t stay on the ground for long, the terrain on and near the Embassy housing compound can be quite muddy.

In Turkmenistan, there are the usual insects and snakes associated with a desert climate: scorpions, spiders, sandflies, cobras and other poisonous snakes. There are also mosquitoes and flies. All of the houses on the compound are screened and there have been no unusual problems with insects or vermin in homes. Care should be taken, though, if exploring the desert or countryside because poisonous snakes have often been seen there.

Turkmenistan is in one of the world’s high seismic regions. During the past 100 years there have been four disastrous earthquakes with intensities of 6+ on the Richter

Scale, each one resulting in great loss of life and property. In 1948, Ashgabat suffered a quake of tremendous strength. All but six buildings were destroyed and the entire city shifted two meters to the north. More than 30,000 of the 130,000 residents died and an additional 85,000 were injured.

Population

In 2000, Turkmenistan had an estimated population of approximately 4,436,000. The Turkmen trace their ancestry back to the Oguz tribe, one of the early Turkic tribes to move west from north Asia. The Oguz came to present-day Turkmenistan in the 9th or 10th Century A.D. That same tribe founded the Seljuk Empire and was the first Turkic group to colonize Anatolia. With the fall of the Seljuk Empire to the Mongols in the 13th Century, the Turkmen entered a period of tribal fragmentation and foreign domination which did not end until independence in 1991.

From the 14th to the 19th Centuries, the area was dominated by Persians (in the south) and the Khanae of Khiva and Emirate of Bokhara (in the north and east, respectively). Through it all the nomadic Turkmen tribes lived a largely isolated existence on the margins of the Kara Kum Desert.

The Turkmen were the last of the Central Asians to fall under Russian domination in the 19th century. The battle of Goektepe (some 40 miles west of Ashgabat) in 1880, ended Ahal Teke resistance and allowed the Russians to consolidate their Central Asian dominions. The nomadic life of the Turkmen did not change markedly under the Russians until the Bolshevik Revolution. Forced collectivization in the 1930s resulted in tens of thousands of deaths.

The Soviets were ambivalent about ethnic identification. At first, they did not recognize a Turkmen nationality and identified people by their tribe. Later, they created the "national" republics, largely as an

effort to prevent the development of a pan-Turkic nationality in Central Asia. Since creation of the Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic in the thirties, the Turkmen nationality has been recognized in the USSR.

Today of the five or six Turkmen tribes which flourished 500 years ago, basically two tribes remain, each of them divided into two distinct groups: the Ahal and Mary Teke; and the Western and Northern omud. The Teke is the largest of the modern Turkmen tribes. Its two subgroups, however, share little in common and are political and economic rivals. The Ahal Teke occupy most of the Ahal Region, a populous area in the south center of the country which includes the capital, Ashgabat. The Mary Teke occupy much of the Mary region, located to the east of Ahal and bordering on both Iran and Afghanistan.

The western Yomud occupy much of the Balkan Region, which borders on the Caspian Sea. Their territory extends southward into Iran. The northern Yomud live in Dashhowuz Region in the north. The Yomud were separated in the 19th century during the wars against Russia.

Remnants of the other Turkmen tribes still live in the country: The Ersari in Lebap Region, bordering on Uzbekistan and occupying much of the Amu Darya River Valley, the Salor and Saryk in Mary and Lebap regions; the Choudour in the north and east; and smaller groups like the Alili and Ata. The emblems of the five major historical tribes (Teke, Yomud, Ersari, Salor and Saryk), best known from being the focal point of carpet designs, are preserved in the national flag of Turkmenistan.

The value that modern Turkmen place on tribal identity varies considerably according to age, location and social status. Not surprisingly, the young, urban and well-educated are less likely to consider tribal origins important than the old, rural and less-educated. Still, it is the rare Turkmen who completely discards tribal identity. Fully one quar-

ter of Turkmen marriages in Ashgabat are between relatives, a clear reflection of tribal loyalty.

Accents, intonation, vocabulary, and grammatical style are strong tribal/regional identifiers. Dress, particularly among women, can be another giveaway: color choices, embroidery patterns, and jewelry styles vary from tribe to tribe. Names can also give a hint of tribal identity. Preferences for given and surnames and the use of name endings (-geldy, -murad) vary from region to region.

There exists a small, but important, group—the russified Turkmen elite—which has genuinely lost most of its tribal identity. These Turkmen, many of whom occupy key government positions, speak Russian in the home and are barely conversant in Turkmen.

Turkmen social events revolve around the family. Memorials, weddings, and birthdays are celebrated with large parties called "toi." The menu for such occasions consists of traditional nomadic food. A favorite party specialty is dograma, a thick soup made from dry bread, raw onions, and mutton fat. A "must" at any Turkmen meal for foreigners is the local version of the ubiquitous Central Asian lamb and rice dish "plov."

Public Institutions

Turkmenistan formally declared its independence from the USSR on October 27, 1991. It became an independent state when the Soviet Union disbanded on December 25, 1991. President Niyazov, who was elected (uncontested) on October 27, 1990, was previously Chairman of Turkmenistan's Supreme Soviet and First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Republic's Communist Party. He won reelection for a 5-year term in June 1992. In January 1994, a referendum was held which ensured that President Niyazov will remain in office until June 2002.

Democratization in Turkmenistan has proceeded at a very slow pace. It

remains as single party state, with the Democratic Party of Turkmenistan (formerly the Communist Party), chaired by the president, as the only registered party. Criticism of government policy is not tolerated and the press is completely government-controlled and tightly censored.

Most government power is vested in the presidency. There is no vice president or prime minister. The president is advised by a cabinet of ministers and a number of offices within the presidential apparatus. According to the Constitution, the Chairman of the Parliament (Mejlis) assumes the presidency upon the death or permanent incapacitation of the president and then calls an election to replace him/her.

The Mejlis consists of 50 members, half of whom work permanently and half of whom are called for short sessions two or three times a year. The Mejlis was chosen in December 1994 elections with only one candidate per constituency. While largely a rubber stamp for presidential decisions and decrees, the Mejlis is slowly developing into a professional parliament. Mejlis members serve for five years.

The Turkmen constitution adopted two traditional advisory/legislative organs. One is the Council of Elders (Aksakal Maslahaty) which is used as a sounding board by the president to validate policies. The other is the People's Council (Halk Maslahaty) which is identified in the constitution as the supreme representative body of popular rule. Chaired by the president and composed of ministers, Mejlis members, Supreme Court judges and some 60 directly elected members, the Halk Maslahaty approves policy directions and constitutional amendments. It meets twice a year.

The court system in Turkmenistan has not been reformed since Soviet days. It consists of a supreme court, regional courts (including one solely for the capital city of Ashgabat), and at the lowest level, 61 district and city courts. There are also military

courts to handle crimes involving military discipline, criminal cases concerning military personnel and crimes by civilians against military personnel; and a supreme economic court, which hears cases involving disputes between state economic enterprises and ministries. The president appoints all judges for a term of five years without legislative review, except for the chairman (chief justice) of the supreme court, and he has the sole authority to remove them from the bench before the completion of their terms.

Arts, Science, and Education

Turkmen maintain the traditional arts of their nomadic and "silk road" ancestors.

Poets, both traditional and contemporary, have the status of national heroes. The work of Magtymguly, an 18th century poet, is especially honored. Turkmen love to recite poetry and use it often in their speech.

Folk dancing is highly regarded, and dancing groups make frequent appearances during local holidays and at important social events. Turkmen folk music features the "dutar," a two string wooden instrument shaped like a mandolin.

Silversmiths, weavers, and carpet makers are the most highly appreciated artisans. There are very few traditional jewelers left. Traditional Turkmen jewelry-making include fire-gilding, painting an amalgam of gold and mercury on the silver and then heating the piece over charcoal fire.

Carpets from Turkmenistan are known in the West as "Bokhara" rugs. They are made of wool or silk and usually come in various shades of red with white and black making up the tribal symbols and design. Their geometric patterns have been copied by virtually every major rug-producing country in the world. It is accepted that the carpets on the market now are of modern vintage,

with genuine antiques only rarely found outside the museums.

There are schools of classical music (including opera) and dance in Ashgabat, and a regular music season in the winter. Unfortunately, none of the performing arts receives state funding so performances are often notable for their lack of proper costumes, instruments or stage props. There is a privately financed chamber music group which has concerts throughout the year.

There are two universities in Turkmenistan, the principal one being the Magtymguly State University in Ashgabat. There are a number of scientific and technical institutions, as well as training institutes for teachers.

The education system is undergoing changes, the most significant being a reduction of the number of years students spend in formal education. Students leave secondary school at age 16, and they complete university or institute training by the age of 20.

While Turkmen is the official language, there is a dual primary and secondary school system: some teach in Turkmen, and some in Russian. As of January 1996, education in the Turkmen language school system is compulsory through grade nine; in the Russian language system, through grade 10 (both equivalent, in theory at least, to a secondary education in the U.S.). The Turkmen Government has made the study of English a high priority, resulting in an increase in schools teaching English. There is one "magnet" high school where the entire curriculum is in English.

Commerce and Industry

Turkmenistan is rich in natural resources including natural gas, oil, iodine-bromine, sodium sulfate, salts, sulphur, potassium, gold, platinum, molybdenum, and coal.



Mosque in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

AP/Wide World Photos, Inc. Reproduced by permission.

Turkmenistan's major exports are cotton, gas, oil products, food products, chemical raw materials, and small manufactured products such as carpets, textiles, leathers, and furs. Major imports are machinery, agricultural and industrial equipment and vehicles, metals, chemicals, synthetic rubber, raw materials and processed products (nonfood), timber, paper, small manufactured goods and food products, raw material for food flavoring, and sugar. The country's major trading partners are Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Turkey, and Iran.

Natural gas was first discovered here in the 1960s. Turkmenistan has the world's fifth largest proven gas reserves and enormous unexploited oil reserves. These extensive and largely untapped hydrocarbon reserves promise to provide hard currency earnings in the future, and mining for precious metals and other minerals also hold potential.

Cotton production was increased during Soviet rule through extensive irrigation, albeit at the cost of environmental degradation. The government is now seeking ways to diversify agriculture and reduce the number of acres under cotton cultivation while maintaining current levels of production through increased efficiency and introduction of new technology. Other key economic sectors include textiles, Caspian Sea fisheries, and the production of karakul lamb pelts. Agriculture accounts for 25% of GDP and about 44% of total employment.

Turkmenistan is among the top ten cotton producers in the world and cotton provides 17% of GDP. Other important products include grains, vegetables, fruit, and livestock. Livestock accounted for nearly one-fourth of total gross agricultural production in 1992. Inefficiencies exist in processing agricultural goods: only 8% of fruit and vegetables, and 4% of cotton are processed, and much produce spoils because

processing plants are located too far from the farms. The government is strongly promoting investment in cotton processing, with a goal of raising the percentage of the cotton processed locally to 15% of GDP. Agricultural yields are comparatively low, due to years of inefficient water use, salinization, inappropriate land irrigation, and overdevelopment of cotton cultivation.

The large degree of specialization of the agricultural sector has rendered the economy heavily dependent on food imports. Efforts are underway to make the country self-sufficient in grains and to introduce sugar beets to reduce dependence on imported sugar.

Industry is dominated by the extraction of fuel and minerals. Other industrial activities include textiles and chemicals. Industry accounts for only 19% of total employment.

Turkmenistan hopes to create a market economy with a strong private sector, with the state retaining control of strategic sectors (e.g., hydrocarbons). However, given the low level of industrialization prior to independence, and shortage of resources for investment, the privatization process will be a long one. Land privatization began in February 1993 and in December 1993 the government announced gradual privatization of the trade and services sector. In early 1996 the government announced an aggressive program of privatization in agriculture to begin after the 1996 harvest season. The transportation industry has been designated as the next industrial/commercial sector to be privatized.

Turkmenistan's major trading partners remain Ukraine and Russia, although trade with Turkey and Iran has increased significantly since independence. Turkmenistan's 2000 exports were valued at \$2.4 billion and its imports at \$1.6 billion, yielding a positive balance of trade. It must be noted that most of the gas exports were to Ukraine, Georgia and Armenia which pay over time in a mixture of cash and commodities. The U.S. granted Turkmenistan Most Favored Nation (MFN) trading status in October 1993, but bilateral trade remains quite low although there are no significant trade barriers. In 1995 Turkmenistan exported goods valued at \$23 million to the U.S. and imported \$14 million of goods from the U.S.

Turkmenistan has agreements with the World Bank, the IMF, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Asian Development Bank, the Islamic Development Bank. Among U.S. institutions Turkmenistan has agreements with the Export-Import Bank, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation and the Trade and Development Agency.

Transportation

Local

Taxis are available in Ashgabat, but they are not recommended. There have been numerous reported incidents of both men and women passengers being molested or mugged by local taxi drivers.

Ashgabat has a shortage of public transportation, due to the poor condition of the buses. Bus service is available to cities outside of Ashgabat, but the buses are overcrowded and uncomfortable. There is no bus service from the city center to the housing compound.

Regional

Traffic in Turkmenistan may not be as bad as you have experienced in other developing countries. Generally, drivers adhere to traffic signals and speed limits, though they don't always stay in the proper lanes! The main city streets are very well maintained. Side streets can be dangerously ill-kept, however, with open man holes, huge potholes, no lighting and other obstacles. Pedestrian traffic can also present a hazard, as individuals stand well into the roadway hitching rides or hailing taxis.

Major intercity highways are in reasonable shape, but can be very dangerous, particularly at night when there is no lighting whatsoever. No driving be done outside the city after dark. Long vehicle trips should not be undertaken alone.

There are four land routes out of Ashgabat. For Americans, the road to the south stops at the Iranian border. The road to the west leads to the Caspian Sea, an eight-hour drive through the desert. The northern road goes directly across the Kara-Kum, ending six hours later in Dashhowuz. The road to the east leads to Mary, Turkmenistan's second largest city, near the site of ancient Merv (5 hours by car).

It is possible to take trains across the country, but they are in bad condition. They are not air-conditioned,

there is no food or drink available, and the toilets are unusable.

Flights within the country and the CIS region are possible via Turkmen Airlines. Many of their planes are former Soviet aircraft and can be quite uncomfortable, although new Boeing 737 and 757 aircraft service major international routes (Istanbul, New Delhi, London, Abu Dhabi). Their safety record is good, though they can be quite unreliable, with last-minute cancellations leaving travelers stranded until the next available flight. However, the flights within the country, and even on the limited routes to neighboring countries, are frequent and inexpensive.

Turkish Air flies four times a week to Istanbul; Lufthansa has a twice weekly flight to Frankfurt; and PIA flies to several cities in Pakistan

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

Direct dialing and operator assisted calls can be made from Turkmenistan though both methods are very expensive (\$4.00-7.00/minute). Fax is also available.

Radio and TV

Local television programs are in either Turkmen or Russian, as are the local radio broadcasts. A multi-system or PAL/Secam television set is necessary to receive these broadcasts.

BBC and VOA can be heard, but the reception is very poor.

Newspapers, Magazines and Technical Journals

There are no locally published English-language newspapers or magazines, and only rarely is English reading material sold in bookstores. Some hotels carry limited English-language newspapers (e.g., USA Today), but generally, such material is unavailable.

The local press does not subscribe to international news wire services,

and carries scant international news.

The National Library has a collection of several thousand books and a number of dated magazines in English in its foreign language collection. The University also has English-language books in its library, primarily for the use of its foreign language students.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

Local medical care and facilities are extremely poor, due to lack of equipment, staff and sanitary conditions. The VIP Hospital, considered the best in Ashgabat, is considered one of the poorest in the former Soviet Union.

Local dentistry lacks modern techniques, equipment, medication, and basic sanitation.

Community Health

Community sanitation levels are low. Tap water is not potable, and restaurant food is often of questionable safety. There have been cases of Typhoid, as well as numerous incidents of E. coli contamination and other gastrointestinal ailments. Care should be taken in eating in restaurants, and all produce should be soaked in iodine or bleach tablets before consumption at home.

Western standards of public cleanliness are not observed in Turkmenistan. Public toilets are in poor condition and those on planes and trains are often virtually unusable. Though the main streets are swept each day, on the side streets garbage is often placed unwrapped in open containers outside residential buildings for collection once a week.

Turkmenistan's health indicators are among the worst in the former Soviet Republics. Infant mortality is reported to be 50 per 1,000 and anemia is common. There is a high rate of Hepatitis A and B. Amoebas and gastroenteric disease is common. Cutaneous Leishmaniasis, a para-

site quite common throughout Central Asia spread by sandfly bites, is prevalent. Typhus, spread by body lice, and crub Typhus, spread by mites, are both considered endemic in Turkmenistan. Rabies is present in Ashgabat.

At a minimum this includes Hepatitis A and B, Typhus, Typhoid, Diphtheria/Tetanus and Rabies.

Leishmania is a parasite found throughout Central Asia. It is quite common and is spread by sandfly bites. Typhus, a disease spread by body lice, and Scrub Typhus, spread by mites, are both considered endemic in Turkmenistan. Hepatitis A and other water borne diseases are common. In general, the immunization status is lower than in the U.S., and everyone coming to Ashgabat should have all routine vaccinations before arrival.

Preventative Measures

The water is considered dangerously contaminated. Foodstuffs can be exposed to a variety of contaminating agents, such as flies and rodents. Due to unregulated pesticide and fertilizer use there is a hazardous nitrate level on fruits and vegetables. Therefore, personnel are advised to buy only undamaged fruit and vegetables and clean them carefully with a mild detergent, followed by soaking in a chlorine solution for 15 minutes, then rinsing with potable water before consuming or storing in the refrigerator. Raw meat should be purchased as early in the day as possible to avoid contamination, and should be cooked thoroughly before consuming.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs & Duties

Turkish Air, Lufthansa and Pakistan Air fly from various locations to Ashgabat. The most common route from the U.S. is through a European transit point (usually

Frankfurt) to Istanbul, then to Ashgabat on Turkish Air.

American citizens must have a valid passport and visa to enter and exit Turkmenistan. To apply for a visa, all U.S. citizens must complete an application and have a letter of invitation approved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in Ashgabat. A letter of invitation must be submitted to the MFA on behalf of an American citizen by an individual or organization in Turkmenistan. The MFA requires at least ten working days for approval. The U.S. Embassy in Ashgabat does not issue letters of invitation to citizens interested in private travel to Turkmenistan. Applications for a Turkmen visa can be submitted to the Turkmen Embassy in Washington, D.C. or directly to the MFA in Ashgabat. Recent travelers to Turkmenistan have found it difficult to secure visa issuance from the Embassy of Turkmenistan in Washington, D.C. A traveler with a stamped and approved invitation letter from the MFA may also obtain a visa at the Ashgabat Airport upon arrival in Turkmenistan.

The price for the visa will vary according to the intended length of stay. The visa can be extended from its initial validity for any period of time up to one year at the MFA in Ashgabat for an additional charge. Any traveler arriving without a visa or without the needed documents to obtain a visa will be denied entry and may be held at the airport or border until the traveler has secured transportation out of Turkmenistan. Travelers departing Turkmenistan must have a valid visa or they will be denied exit while they extend the validity of the visa. In addition, U.S. citizens traveling in Turkmenistan should be aware that they may require special permission from the MFA to travel to some areas of the country that have been restricted by the Government of Turkmenistan.

For complete information concerning entry and exit requirements, as well as internal travel restrictions, U.S. citizens should contact the

Embassy of Turkmenistan at 2207 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington D.C. 20008, telephone (202) 588-1500. The Embassy may also be reached at its homepage on the Internet: <http://www.turkmenistanembassy.org>.

There are local Turkmen registration requirements. Americans who plan to stay more than five days in Turkmenistan must register with the Office of Visas and Registration (OVIR). OVIR offices are located in all of Turkmenistan's five major cities: Ashgabat, Dashoguz, Mary, Turkmenabat and Turkmenbashi. Visitors who do not register may have to pay fines upon departure. According to the MFA, all foreigners staying in Turkmenistan more than 3 months must be tested for HIV. Testing should be performed upon arrival in Turkmenistan. Before extending a visa, the MFA requires a certificate from the Blood Transfusion Center located on 53 Gerogly Street, Ashgabat. U.S. test results are not accepted. Previous travelers have reported sporadic enforcement of this regulation.

Turkmenistan customs authorities may enforce strict regulations concerning temporary importation into or export from Turkmenistan of items such as carpets, jewelry, musical instruments, pieces of art, archaeological artifacts, antiques, etc. It is advisable to contact the Embassy of Turkmenistan in Washington, D.C. for specific information regarding customs requirements. Travelers who want to take carpets out of Turkmenistan must obtain a certificate from the Carpet Museum in central Ashgabat indicating that the carpet is not of historical value. In addition, buyers may have to pay a tax calculated on the size of the carpet.

Americans living in or visiting Turkmenistan are encouraged to register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Ashgabat to obtain updated information on travel and security within Turkmenistan. Registration with the Embassy can assure quick communication during an emergency and

help replacement of a lost and/or stolen passport. The U.S. Embassy is located at 9 Pushkin Street, off Magtymguly Street, tel. (993-12) 35-00-45; fax (993-12) 51-13-05. The Consular Section can also be contacted by e-mail at: consularashgab@state.gov. The Embassy's Internet address is <http://www.usemb-ashgabat.usia.co.at/>

Pets

There is no quarantine requirement in Turkmenistan. All dogs and cats must be accompanied by a certificate of good health, bearing the seal of the local board of health and signed by a veterinarian. The certificate must be issued not more than 10 days prior to the animal's arrival in country. A valid rabies certificate is also necessary. Pets are not allowed in the local hotels.

The national currency is the Manat, which circulates in 20, 50, 100, 500, 100 and 5000 denomination notes (a 10,000 note may be introduced shortly). Exchange is about 5,200M=US\$1 (January 2001).

The government exercises strict controls over import and export of Manat and foreign currencies.

Dollar transactions are permitted at the banks, hotels, airlines, phone company and some restaurants. All other merchants are required to accept payment in Manat.

Credit cards are not accepted at most local hotels or restaurants. Turkish Airlines will accept an American Express Card or Visa Gold Card as payment for a Turkish Airlines ticket to Istanbul.

The metric system is used in Turkmenistan for all forms of measurement.

Disaster Preparedness

Turkmenistan is an earthquake-prone country. Building practices within Turkmenistan do not generally meet U.S. seismic standards. In addition, local authorities do not have sufficient resources to respond to a large-scale disaster. American citizens traveling to Turkmenistan

are encouraged to register with the U.S. Embassy Consular Section. Registration can assist the Embassy in quickly contacting American citizens during an emergency. General information about natural disaster preparedness is available via the Internet from the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) at <http://www.fema.gov>.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

- Jan.1New Year's Day
- Jan. 12Memorial Day
- Feb. 19National Flag Day
- Mar. 8Women's Day
- Mar. 21Novruz Bairam
- Apr. 6Drop of Water is a Grain of Gold Holiday
- Apr. 27Horse Day
- May 8-9Victory Days
- May 18Revival and Unity Day
- Oct 6Remembrance Day
- Oct. 27Independence Day
- Nov. 17Youth Day
- Nov. 30Harvest Holiday
- Dec. 12Neutrality Day
-Ramadan*
-Id al-Fitr*
-Id al-Adha*

*variable

RECOMMENDED READING

These titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country. The Department of State does not endorse unofficial publications.

- Akchurin, Marat. *Red Odyssey: A Journey through the Soviet Republics*. HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.: New York, 1992
- Akiner, Shirin, ed. *Cultural Change and Continuity in Central Asia*. New York: Keegan Paul, 1991.
- Alladatov, D.A. *Turkmenistan: A Land of White Gold*. Ashkhabad: Turkmenistan Pub. House, 1972.
- Blunt, Wilfrid. *The Golden Road to Samarkand*. Viking Press: New York, 1973
- Hopkirk, Peter. *The Great Game: The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia*. Kodansha International: New York, 1992
- Kalter, Johannes. *The Arts and Crafts of Turkestan*. Thames and Hudson, Inc.: New York, 1984
- Katz, Zev, ed. *Handbook of Major Soviet Nationalities*. New York: Free Press, 1975.
- Mackie/Thompson. *Turkmen Tribal Carpets and Traditions*. Textile Museum: Washington, DC, 1980
- Maslow, Johnathan. *Sacred Horses: The Memoirs of a Turkmen Cowboy*. Random House: New York, 1993

TUVALU

Tuvalu

Major City:
Funafuti

INTRODUCTION

Formerly known as the Ellice Islands, **TUVALU** is a group of nine scattered atolls whose only export product is copra (dried coconut meat). The islands were probably first settled by Polynesians between the 14th and 17th centuries. After determining the inhabitants' wishes, the Ellice Islands (together with the Gilberts, now known as Kiribati) came under British protection in 1892. After the Japanese occupied the Gilbert Islands in 1942, US forces occupied the Ellice group in 1943 and drove the Japanese out of the Gilberts. After the war, the ethnic differences between the Micronesians of the Gilberts and the Polynesians of the Ellice Islands led the Ellice Islanders to demand separation, which won approval in 1974. Tuvalu later became an independent member of the Commonwealth of Nations on October 1, 1979.

MAJOR CITY

Funafuti

Funafuti, the capital of Tuvalu, is the largest and most populated island, with about 4,000 inhabit-

ants. The village of Fongafale is the main settlement, with a hotel, hospital, and an airstrip (recently upgraded with Commonwealth assistance). About 40% of the island of Funafuti is uninhabitable because the United Kingdom authorized the United States to dig an airstrip out of the coral bed during World War II. There is a deepwater port at Funafuti which accepts vessels with a draft of up to 30 feet. A passenger and cargo vessel based there occasionally sails to Suva, Fiji. Tuvalu's only airfield is located on Funafuti, and the airstrip occupies about one-third of the island's land area. In 1992, a new runway replaced the grass strip. There are flights to the Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Fiji, and Nauru, but no internal air service is available. There are only a dozen cars on the island. The residents of Funafuti have a higher income level than those of the other islands, who mainly live at a subsistence level. Although the soil is sandy and not very fertile, the island still manages to produce copra for export.

Recreation and Entertainment

Soccer, rugby, and cricket are played along Funafuti's airstrip. A siren warns players to clear the area when an airplane is approaching.

Tuvalu is too small and remote for the development of a tourist industry. Only about 1,000–1,200 tourists per year visit the country, which has just one hotel with 17 rooms.

Funafuti's *maneava* (meeting house) is the site where the council of the island's elders gets together to discuss important issues and to socialize. The country's only library is in Funafuti and it also houses national archives. Young men's clubs and women's committees are standard features of social life, concerning themselves with sailing, fishing, and crafts.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Tuvalu is a cluster of nine islands, plus islets, located in the southwestern Pacific Ocean just south of the Equator. The country is located about halfway between Australia and Hawaii. Tuvalu is one of the world's smallest nations in terms of land area (about 10 square miles), but its territory covers some 500,000 square miles of ocean.

The entire country is low-lying atolls, none of which is more than 16 feet above sea level. Some scientists predict that within 50 years, Tuvalu will be one of the first island nations to vanish as a result of erosion and global warming.

Few of the atolls are more than a half mile wide. On five atolls, the reefs enclose sizable lagoons. There are no rivers. Since copra (dried coconut meat) is the country's primary export, coconut palm trees cover much of the land. The climate is tropical, with little seasonal variation. The annual average temperature is 86°F, and rainfall averages 140 inches per year. The wet season is from November to February. Severe cyclones struck in 1894, 1972, and 1990.

Population

There are about 10,750 inhabitants, with a population density of 1,011 per square mile. About half the population lives on Funafuti. Only about 15% of the population lives on Vaitupu, followed by Niutao (11%), Nanunea (11%), Nukufetau, Nanumanga, Nui, Nukulaelae, and Niulakita. Some 1,000 Tuvaluans work abroad. Unemployment is expected to rise as the phosphate mining on Nauru declines and Tuvaluans employed there return home. New Zealand permits Tuvaluans to live and work there for up to three years. The islanders are almost entirely Polynesian, with strong cultural ties to the Samoans and Tokelauans. Nearly all Tuvaluans are Protestant, members of the Church of Tuvalu, a Congregationalist group. There are small numbers of Roman Catholics, Seventh-Day Adventists, and Baha'is. The Tuvaluan language, closely related to Samoan, and English are the principal languages.

Government

In 1892, the United Kingdom proclaimed the Ellice Islands (as Tuvalu was then known), together with the Gilberts, as a British protectorate. The proclamation was

made after ascertaining the inhabitants' wishes. After World War II, US forces occupied the islands. Political differences between the Gilbert Islanders and the Ellice Islanders led the Ellice Islanders to demand a separation, which they declared by a vote in 1974. In 1975, the Ellice Islands were established as the separate British colony of Tuvalu. After a constitutional conference in 1978, Tuvalu became an independent member of the Commonwealth of Nations in 1979. The head of government is the British monarch, who is represented by a governor-general. The unicameral House of Assembly has twelve members elected to four-year terms. A prime minister and deputy prime minister are elected from the members of parliament. A simple code of law, based on mission legislation and traditional councils, is observed by native courts. There are island courts that deal with land disputes. The High Court of Justice hears appeals from district courts.

Tuvalu's flag is a light blue field with the British Union Jack in the upper quarter near the hoist. Nine yellow stars are arranged on the field in the same pattern as Tuvalu's nine islands.

Arts, Science, Education

Education begins at age seven and is compulsory for nine years. Secondary education is provided at Motofoua, a former church school on Vaitupu now jointly administered by the government. The Tuvalu Maritime School was opened in 1979 with Australian aid. The school trains young Tuvaluans with the skills needed to serve overseas on a merchant ship. Fiji's University of the South Pacific also has an extension center at Funafuti.

Commerce and Industry

The United Nations ranks Tuvalu among the least developed nations

of the world. Many Tuvaluans in the smaller villages and islands are self-sufficient and live without a money-based economy. Tuvaluans intensively utilize their limited natural resources, namely coconuts and fish. Nearly every part of the coconut palm is utilized to make a useful object. Taro is also grown in pits.

Money sent home from Tuvaluans working abroad can account for up to 30% of the country's annual foreign exchange earnings. The sale of collectible postage stamps contributes up to 40% of foreign revenue, and the remainder comes mainly as foreign aid.

In 1998, Tuvalu began licensing foreign use of its area code for "900" lines. In 2000, leasing of its ".tv" Internet domain name began. Royalties from these new technology sources could raise GDP three or more times over the next decade.

Transportation

Traffic moves on the left in Tuvalu. The few roads on these tiny islands are generally unpaved. Most roads are little more than tracks, although Funafuti has about five miles of coral-impacted roads for the island's few cars and trucks. Animals and unwary pedestrians walking in the road make night driving on unlit secondary roads hazardous.

Funafuti and Nukufetau are the only seaports, used mainly by freighters in the copra industry. All the islands are served by Tuvalu's interisland ferry.

Communications

There is an interisland telephone service. The government-owned Tuvalu Broadcasting Service on Funafuti transmits in Tuvaluan and English. There is no television service. The government publishes a biweekly called *Tuvalu Echoes*.

Health

There are no serious tropical diseases on the islands except for a dwindling number of leprosy and dysentery cases.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

A passport, onward/return ticket, and proof of sufficient funds for the trip are required. Visitor permits are issued upon arrival. For further information about entry requirements, travelers may wish to contact the British Embassy in

Washington, D.C. at 202-588-7800. This is particularly true for those persons planning to enter by sea.

There is no U.S. Embassy or diplomatic post in Tuvalu. Assistance for U.S. citizens in Tuvalu is provided by the U.S. Embassy in Fiji, which is located at 31 Loftus Street in Fiji's capital city of Suva. The telephone number is (679) 314-466; the fax number is (679)300-081. Americans may register with the U.S. Embassy in Suva, Fiji and obtain up-to-date information on travel and security in Tuvalu from the Embassy. Information may also be obtained by visiting the Embassy's home page at <http://www.amembassy-fiji.gov>.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

- Jan. 1 New Year's Day
- Mar. Commonwealth Day*
- Mar/Apr. Good Friday*
- Mar/Apr. Easter*
- Mar/Apr. Easter Monday*
- June Queen's Birthday Celebrated*
- Aug. (1st Mon) Children's Day
- Oct. 1 Tuvalu Day
- Nov. Prince of Wales Birthday Celebrated*

*Variable

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Major Cities:

Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah

Other City:

Al-Ain, Ras al-Khaimah

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated January 1996. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

The **UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (UAE)** lies between Qatar and Oman on the southeastern shore of the Persian Gulf. Until the exploitation of large oil reserves, the small population engaged in pearling, trading, nomadic herding and oasis agriculture. Britain held a degree of political control over the sheikhdoms of the region from early in the nineteenth century until the emirates joined to form an independent federation in 1971. Before independence the British called the region the Trucial Coast or Trucial Oman, and Arabs called it the Oman Coast.

The seven emirates which comprise the U.A.E. differ markedly in size, population, and natural resources.

Their rulers, though united under one national flag, maintain a large degree of autonomy and have imprinted their individual characters on the development of their emirates. This diversity gives the social and political scene in the country a unique and dynamic flavor. The UAE's efforts to reach an effective balance between Federal and Emirate authorities is reminiscent of the political development of the United States, where to this day individual states and the Federal government continue to find new ways to make "one out of many."

Because Abu Dhabi is the largest emirate in size and population, and possesses the most oil resources, it plays a dominant role in the federation's political and economic affairs. A small fishing and pearling settlement before the discovery of oil, Abu Dhabi city has grown since independence into a modern capital with broad, tree-lined streets amid rows of skyscrapers lining the Corniche. The sedate character of the city is shaped by the dominant presence of central government institutions, financial institutions, and oil companies. In contrast, the mood in Dubai is more socially vibrant, economically open and cosmopolitan. Bustling markets, an active shipping trade, and a lively sporting and entertainment calendar put Dubai in the region's economic and social

fast lane. In both cities, a walk downtown reveals the large proportion of foreigners working in the country.

Americans coming to the UAE will find a small country in the midst of rapid social and economic transformation. The seven emirates are each distinct in resources and character, ranging from the poorer, smaller emirates of the north to the dynamic commercial center of Dubai and the staid, oil-rich Abu Dhabi. These last two cities are pockets of wealth where five-star hotels feature cuisine from around the world and shops sell expensive fashions from Europe and electronics from Japan. Despite outward appearances like this, however, the UAE is still a developing country in important respects. For example, while the telephone system has the latest technologies, public hospitals are for the most part far below standard in many areas. And while UAE citizens control the country, it is foreign nationals from places like New Delhi, Dhaka, Manila, and Cairo who actually sit behind cash registers, build skyscrapers, and repair plumbing. In this sense, since the majority of the country's residents are foreigners, it is easy for foreigners to feel at home.

MAJOR CITIES

Abu Dhabi

In 2000, Abu Dhabi, the U.A.E. capital, and its surrounding metropolitan area had a population of 928,000. It is located on a small, flat island connected to the mainland by two bridges. The island is about 30 square miles in area, much of it reclaimed land, crisscrossed by an expanding road network. First a fishing village, then a small oil company town, Abu Dhabi is now a medium-sized city, which is still expanding. Most buildings are high-rise apartments, offices, and residential areas with single- and three-unit dwellings (townhouses).

Food

Several American and European-style supermarkets stock most basic items. Spinneys, Prisunic, Abela, Choitram's, and Al-Kamal are modern supermarkets that sell American, French, Mexican, Japanese, and Arab foods. Fresh foods include meat, seafood, produce, and dairy products, which are available year round. A wide and varied array of packaged and canned foods is available as in any comparable supermarket in the U.S. Fresh meat is flown in from Australia and Europe. Frozen meats and vegetables are also available. Except for occasional shortages of certain items, you will find almost any food item in Abu Dhabi stores, including an increasing amount of American brands. Pork products are available in special "non-Muslim" sections of some stores.

Clothing

Local shops and boutiques carry various types of clothing, usually European brands and styles, but they are expensive, and quality varies. Cotton or cotton-blend clothes are strongly recommended for summer; synthetics are too hot to wear. A sweater or shawl is useful for overly air-conditioned receptions. It is cool during winter (December–February), and houses hold dampness. Light woolens and synthetics



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View of Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

are comfortable, and sweaters are useful.

Shoes, including sandals, to suit American tastes are difficult to find, and the sand makes them wear fast. A good supply is needed throughout your tour. Locally made sandals and shoes are inexpensive, but not durable.

Dry-cleaning facilities are adequate, but bring as few items that need dry-cleaning as possible. White and light-colored fabrics are subject to stains from rusty water, but filter attachments help prevent this problem.

Men: "Gulf or Red Sea rig," sometimes specified for dressy summer occasions, consists of an open-necked dress shirt and dress trousers with cummerbund. A business suit with tie is normally worn during working hours and is suitable for most evening functions.

Women: Use discretion when choosing clothes for the U.A.E., which is a Moslem country with conservative dress customs. Low-cut, short hemlines, sleeveless tops, or revealing/see-through clothes are not worn in public. Slacks are worn in public, but shorts are not advised, except for recreation. Typical

evening dresses (bare shoulders, low-cut, etc.) may be worn at private functions, depending on the guest list and location. Tailored dresses are always appropriate.

Children: Teenage girls in the American school are expected to wear knee-length clothes. Bring the same type of clothes as children would wear in Washington, D.C., but light, winter clothes—sweaters, jackets, and long pants, etc. Children's shoes are expensive.

Supplies and Services

Unless you have strong brand preferences, most items needed can be purchased in either Abu Dhabi or Dubai, but are expensive.

Tailoring and dressmaking can be reasonable. Shoe repair is available, but quality is fair. Beauty and barbershops are available and reasonably hygienic.

Religious Activities

Catholic, Anglican, and Syrian Orthodox services are held in Abu Dhabi in English, French, Arabic, and various Indian dialects. The Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM), a nondenominational American missionary group, also holds regular services.

Education

School-aged American children may attend the American Community School (ACS), which offers pre-kindergarten through grade 12. Of the about 500 pupils enrolled, nearly 40% are American. The remainder of the student body is multinational. All instruction is in English, and the American curriculum is followed. French is taught in the high school only, and the Arabic language and culture is taught from the lower school.

The typical school year is from September to June. Classes are held Saturday through Wednesday, from 7:25 am to 2:25 pm. As a college preparatory high school, ACS does not have programs for students with special needs. The school has two large and well-equipped science labs, a large art room, a photogra-

phy lab, a music room with two adjacent practice rooms, and a cafeteria/all-purpose room, two computer labs, a gymnasium with stage, an athletic field, tennis courts, and a swimming pool.

Both the lower school (pre-kindergarten through grade 6) and the upper school (grades 7 through 11) are accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. The school went through re-accreditation that was completed in the fall of 1993 (which will include grade 12). The curriculum reflects that of a small American School in the U.S. The courses offered in the high school are college preparatory, and the academic load is demanding.

Several other schools exist in Abu Dhabi, some of which are listed below:

National College of Choueifat
P.O. Box 7212
Abu Dhabi, U.A.E.

Al-Worood School
P.O. Box 46673
Abu Dhabi, U.A.E.
(Accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary schools)

International School of Abu Dhabi
P.O. Box 25898
Abu Dhabi, U.A.E.
(Opened in September 1992; U.S. curriculum; no U.S. accreditation as yet.)

Al Manhal Canadian School
P.O. Box 3110
Abu Dhabi, U.A.E.
(Accreditation by the Minister of Education—Ontario)

Special Educational Opportunities

No special programs are available for students with learning disabilities.

Sports

Water-skiing, scuba diving, sailing, bowling, tennis, squash, handball, etc., are offered by various recre-

ation clubs around town. Sports activities (with the exception of water sports) diminish during the long, hot summers when outdoor activities are kept to a minimum. Swimming pools in major recreation clubs are temperature controlled. Good fishing is available in local waters. Both Dubai and Abu Dhabi have ice-skating rinks. To save money, bring your own sports equipment and clothing, although most items can be purchased locally.

Recreation clubs include The Club, Hiltonia, Meridien, Intercontinental Hotel, Palm Beach, Sheraton Hotel, the Marina, Dhahi Health (Al Ain Palace Hotel) and the Khalidiya Palace Hotel.

An organized slow-pitch softball league is sponsored by some of the major American oil companies. Games are played during the cool season.

The Abu Dhabi Golf Club is an 18-hole sand course with Astroturf for fairway shots. An entrance fee of is required; as is an annual membership fee, which is higher for men than for women. There is a 12-month waiting period for men and 4 months for women. Golf enthusiasts with handicaps stand a better chance of admission. A new golf course is being planned.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Except for a small area on the east coast, scattered oases, and the northern tip of the country, the U.A.E. is desert. The mainland across from Abu Dhabi island is especially desolate. Nevertheless, driving trips to the oasis of Al-Ain, about 100 miles inland, to the beaches of Fujairah and Khor-Fakkan on the east coast, and northward to the greener areas of Ras-Al-Khaimah all provide interesting changes of scenery. Camping on the east coast is popular. A Hilton Hotel at Fujairah and the Oceanic Hotel at Khor-Fakkan are modern, attractive lodges that help to ensure overnighting for noncampers as well. At these sites, one can find boating,

fishing, picnicking, swimming, and tennis.

Dubai, Al-Ain, and Ras-Al-Khaimah all have small but interesting museums, and Sharjah has an archeology museum. Al-Ain has an extensive, well-run zoo, which is worth a visit during cool weather, as well as "Fun City," an amusement park popular with families. Dubai also has a small zoo, and with its picturesque creek filled with dhows and with its historic wind towers, offers weekend diversions. Several archeological sites have been discovered and can be reached easily. The Heritage Village in the Bateen airport area and the Abu Dhabi Women's Handicrafts Center are worthwhile visiting. Visitors can stay overnight in Al-Ain at either the Hilton Hotel or the Intercontinental Hotel and in Dubai at one of the several large, modern hotels there. A shopping trip to the souks in any Arab country is a must. The U.A.E. is no exception. The gold souk in Dubai has a large selection of 18 and 21/22 carat gold. Sharjah has a new souk, an impressive building in its use of mosaic tiles and traditional designs. There you will find a varied selection of Persian handmade carpets and tribal rugs, plus hundreds of other items, mostly imported.

A visit to Oman is worth the effort. An agricultural and trading center for centuries, Oman's more settled population has had time to develop interesting architecture and crafts, which are lacking among the Bedouin population of the U.A.E. The old souks and towns retain an unspoiled atmosphere. The Musandam peninsula, which juts out into the Strait of Hormuz, can be reached by four-wheel-drive vehicles and is rightly considered the "Norway" of the Middle East with its spectacular "fjord-like" sea inlets.

Entertainment

The Abu Dhabi Cultural Foundation offers various cultural activities throughout the year. Most hotels have good restaurants and disco nightclubs. Performing artists are sponsored by the hotels, USIS,

the British Council, the French Cultural Center, and private businesses. Performances usually take place in the hotels.

Local groups include the Abu Dhabi Choral Group, Emirates Natural History Group, the Thespians of Abu Dhabi Society or TOADS (drama), and various sporting societies.

Social Activities

The diplomatic and foreign community is large. The American community, although not formally organized, participates with the U.S. Embassy staff in such events as U.S. Navy ship visits and Fourth of July activities. The ACS is also a focus of American activity. Girl Scout and Boy Scout troops and a PTA are active.

International contacts can be made at any cultural activity, but more specifically, at the Emirates Natural History Group and the Women in Abu Dhabi monthly meetings. Both organizations present guest speakers, activities, slide shows, and exhibits. They also sponsor excursions for members to places of interest.

Dubai

Dubai is actually just one of the U.A.E.'s largest metropolitan areas. It is a tri-city region of over one million people, that includes not only Dubai, but the contiguous cities of Sharjah and Ajman as well. This metropolitan area is the commercial center of the U.A.E. For decades, the Dubai-Sharjah-Ajman area has been an important stop on the Eastern trade routes.

Food

Several large Western-style grocery stores operate in Dubai. Safeway, Spinneys, and Choitram's carry American and international brands of food and fresh meat, produce, and dairy products. There are also large, open-air markets that sell fresh produce, meat, and fish.

Religious Activities

Services are held in English at the Protestant and Catholic churches.

Education

The American School of Dubai has about 650 (about 55% are American) students from kindergarten to grade 11. Send records in advance to:

The Headmaster
Jumairah International School
P.O. Box 2222
Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

The school follows the U.S. curriculum and calendar. It is owned by a group of companies and accredited by both the Middle States and Southern States School Associations. Classes are held Sunday through Thursday from 7:50 am to 2:45 pm, September to June.

The National College of Choueifat at Sharjah, some 10 miles from Dubai, has classes for students ages 4-18. An offshoot of the parent school in Beirut, which was founded in 1886, the school prepares students for the International Baccalaureate Degree, O and A levels. The medium of instruction is English, French, and Arabic. The academic year is from September to June. The school week is Saturday through Wednesday from 8 am to 4 pm. For more information, write to:

The Director
National College of Choueifat
P.O. Box 2077
Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

Sports

Water sports are popular, and, for most people, they are the only outdoor activities during the hottest part of the year. Most sports activities center around five social clubs.

The Hilton Beach Club is popular among the foreign community at large. In addition to beach facilities, it has two swimming pools, lighted tennis courts, squash courts, exercising and fitness center, and a restaurant/bar. Family membership is over \$1,100 plus an entrance fee of over \$500.

The Metropolitan Beach Club offers tennis, squash, billiards, gymnasium, sauna, windsurfing, and a swimming pool. Annual membership fee is About \$900 plus \$200 joining fee, and over \$600 plus \$130 joining fee for singles.

The Emirates Golf Club Dubai offers a 27-hole golf course, tennis courts, squash courts, gymnasium, and a swimming pool. Annual subscription for a family with two children is about \$4,100; single man \$3,000; single lady \$2,100.

The Dubai Country Club has a 36-hole sand golf course, tennis and squash courts, and a swimming pool. The club has a restaurant/bar, which is open daily. Membership is limited to 1,500 people, and waiting periods of several months occur. Family memberships is \$1,096 annually; \$712 for a single man and \$438 for a single woman.

The Dubai Offshore Sailing Club has limited facilities for those who like sailing. Owning a boat is a prerequisite for membership. The Club has three boats for rent by members only. It has a bar, restaurant, moorings, and a small beach with showers and changing rooms. Annual dues are about \$410 to join and \$136 annually.

Several hotels offer swimming, sports, and health club services at individual rates of about \$500 a year.

Entertainment

Dubai has many good restaurants offering Chinese, Japanese, Continental, Indian, Pakistani, and Arab cuisine. Several hotels, including the Hilton, Hyatt Regency, Intercontinental, and Sheraton, offer extensive luncheon buffets, which feature Arab-style "mezzas" (smorgasbord). Several nightclubs have bands and dancing nightly. Most hotels offer live entertainment in the evenings.

A new cinema, Al-Nask, now shows current English-language movies.

Three lending libraries are available: the Dubai Municipal Library,

the British Council Library, and the Dubai Lending Library.

Social Activities

Most of the estimated 4,500 Americans in the U.A.E. live in the Dubai-Sharjah area, and many important U.S. firms have offices in Dubai. This American community, coupled with a Consular Corps representing 20 countries, insures an active social life for Americans in Dubai.

Sharjah

Sharjah, chief city in the emirate of the same name, is the third largest city in the U.A.E., with a population of 314,000 (2000 est.). A former British protectorate, the city was the site of a British base until 1971. Once the principal town in the area, Sharjah declined until oil was discovered offshore in 1974. Connected by roads to the northern emirates, Sharjah experienced a construction boom in the mid-1970s. Tourism is also important in Sharjah. In recent years, a deep water port has been constructed at Khor-Fakkan and light industries expanded. The U.A.E.'s fisheries research station is located here.

Education

Two English-language schools are located in Sharjah. The International School of Choueifat at Sharjah, some 10 miles from Dubai, has classes for students in pre-kindergarten through grade 13. An offshoot of the parent school in Beirut which was founded in 1886, the school offers a British curriculum and prepares students for the International Baccalaureate degree. The medium of instruction is English, French, and Arabic. The academic year is from September to June. School days run from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., five days per week, Saturday through Wednesday. Enrollment is 1,300; there are 77 full-time instructors. Facilities include 16 buildings, science and computer laboratories, a covered play area, and a 5,000-volume library. The school's address is: P.O. Box 2077, Sharjah, U.A.E.

OTHER CITY

AL-AIN, (population 226,000, 1995 est.) is the largest city in the Buraimi Oasis, an area which spans the border between Abu Dhabi and Oman. Surrounded by red sand dunes and a breathtaking mountain range, it has earned the nickname "The Garden City Of The Gulf." As the birthplace of Shaikh Zayed, the current ruler of Abu Dhabi, funding for a variety of cultural, educational, and social attractions has been quite substantial and travelers can enjoy all the modern accommodations of a larger city while still experiencing the uniqueness of the Arab culture.

The Al-Ain Zoo and Aquarium is a favorite attraction which showcases such animals as Arabian antelope and deer; oryx, eland, gazelle and lechwe; and big cats, such as lion, tigers, pumas, black and spotted leopards and jaguars. A large Camel Souk (market) can be found in Al-Ain. It's open every Friday, since that is the same day as the famous camel races during the winter months. Tour guides are usually around to arrange camel safaris that range from a short trek of an hour or two to an overnight journey with a stay in a Bedouin tent.

The Al-Ain Museum is a great touring site for those interested in Bedouin history and culture. The museum contains exhibits on life in pre-oil days, as well as jewelry, weaponry, and musical instruments of the Bedouins. The museum also holds the collection of rare and unusual gifts received by the Shaikh, including the Order of Isabel the Catholic and a bullet from a Palestinian commando leader who hijacked three aircraft to Jordan in 1970.

Al-Hili Fun City, the largest theme park in the Gulf area, has been called the Disneyland of the Middle East. Located just northeast of city center, the park has a nice variety of thrill rides ranging from roller coasters to large slides. A Dynamic Motion Theater is also part of the

parks attractions. Admission is just about US\$3.

There are several small public parks within the city, including, Al-Slmi Park, Al-Jahli Park (for ladies and children only), Al-Basra Park (ladies), and Al-Maqam Park (ladies).

The mountain range above Al-Ain is Jabal Hafit. It is the highest point in the country and tourists can reach the peak along an excellent mountain road. Several picnic and parking areas are located along the road. The slopes around the mountain contain caves that can be explored through group tours. Visitors can also enjoy the hot springs at the bottom of the mountain. The Ain Al-Fayadah Resort, located on the west of the mountain, offers typical tourist accommodations. There are two swimming pools in the resort, one for men and one for women. Other facilities include a bowling center and Western and Eastern style restaurants.

If you have a chance, Buraimi, the Omani sister city to Al-Ain, can be visited without a separate visa. The Buraimi Souk offers a provincial open air market of fruits and vegetables and a small-town atmosphere that is quite different from Al-Ain.

Al-Ain is a two hour drive east from Abu Dhabi. There are plenty of buses and taxis within the city.

RAS AL-KHAIMAH city is an ancient seaport near which archaeological remains have been discovered. The city and the emirate are the most agricultural in the U.A.E., producing vegetables, dates, fruit, and tobacco. The city's industries include cement factories, a lime factory, and an explosives plant. In 1982, oil and gas were discovered offshore. The city's population is about 130,000 (2000 est.). The Ras al-Khaimah English Speaking School, founded in 1976, offers a U.K. curriculum for nursery school through grade six. The school's mailing address is: P.O. Box 975, Ras al-Khaimah, U.A.E.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.) became a sovereign, independent country on December 2, 1971, after being a British protectorate. It comprises a federation of seven small Arabian emirates formerly known as the Trucial States: Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm al-Qaiwain, Ras al-Khaimah, and Fujairah.

The U.A.E. (about the size of Maine) has an area of about 34,000 square miles, with a 386-mile coastline on the Arabian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman. All the main towns, with the exception of the oasis of Al-Ain, are on the coast. Apart from a mountain range in the north and scattered oases, much of the U.A.E.'s territory is sandy desert, and salt marshes. A few offshore islands belong to or are claimed by the U.A.E.

Rainfall is low, but coastal humidity is uncomfortably high. May to October is extremely hot, with shade temperatures of 29°C (85°F) to 50°C (122°F) and frequent 100% humidity. During the cool season (December–February) the weather is damp and seems colder than the 10°C (50°F) the thermometer sometimes indicates. During the rest of the year, the climate is pleasant, except for occasional sandstorms and hot, dry winds, which blow off the Empty Quarter of Arabia.

Population

Figures published in 2000 put the population of the country at more than 2.4 million, with about 60% males and 40% females. Recent population figures show a total of more than 2 million. U.A.E. citizens constituted about 20% of the total. The other 80% represent different nationalities who live here, which include foreign Pakistanis, Indians, and Iranians, Filipinos, and various Arab and European nationalities.

Many men from India, Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan, and Oman have left their families to seek their fortunes in the U.A.E., working at unskilled and semiskilled jobs, and earning wages higher than any they could hope to earn in their own countries. This influx, coupled with the Arab tradition of secluding women, creates the overwhelmingly male crowds seen on streets in the souk (market place), in restaurants, and in other public places.

Islam is the predominant religion throughout the country, but with such a large foreign population, Hinduism and Christianity are also evident. Churches (which include the Roman Catholic, Anglican/Episcopalian, and other denominations) conduct their services in English and several other languages. Arabic is the official language, but English, Persian, Hindi, Tagalog, and Urdu are widely spoken.

Public Institutions

The U.A.E. is governed by a Supreme Council composed of the rulers of the seven emirates. There is an executive Council of Ministers and a consultative Federal National Council consisting of 40 nominated members. The Constitution guarantees basic personal, legal, and social rights. It also defines the role of the Federal Government and its relationship to individual emirate governments.

The Federal Government has responsibility for foreign affairs; armed forces and defense; internal security; law and government affairs in the capital; affairs of Federal employees and the judiciary; Federal finance, taxes, fees, and royalties; postal and telegraphic services; road construction and maintenance of main highways; air traffic control and licensing; education; public health and medical services; currency, information; and passport, immigration, and nationality matters.

The U.A.E., whose armed forces consists of 60,000 troops, contributes a few hundred troops to the Gulf

Cooperation Council's "Peninsula Shield" force, headquartered in Saudi Arabia. These forces participated in the Gulf War.

In the past, many of these services were performed by the individual emirates. Now, however, the Federal Government, headquartered in Abu Dhabi and organized into functional ministries, is active throughout the country. Ministers are drawn from ruling families and leading citizens of the seven emirates. The individual emirates, however, retain a remarkable measure of control over their own internal and economic affairs, including petroleum concessions, industrial development, public works and utilities, security, customs, and town planning.

Civil and criminal legal systems have been codified. There is a dual system of Sharia (religious) and secular courts, each of which deals with criminal and civil law. Secular Courts fuse Sharia law with legal principles found in Jordanian, Egyptian, Sudanese, and English legal systems. No political parties or organizations exist.

Rapid modernization, enormous strides in education, and the influx of a large foreign population have changed the face of the society but have not fundamentally altered this traditional political system.

Arts, Science, and Education

The rapid introduction of large amounts of wealth, technology, and foreign workers into the UAE has resulted in the wholesale transformation of social and cultural life. Before this transformation, the Oman Coast's urban culture was influenced by Oman and Iran. What local traditions that existed were often oral, employing poetry, singing, and story-telling. Material culture, from architecture to handicrafts, was at a basic level. Since most settlements were on the coast and relied on the products of the local waters for a livelihood, much of what can be considered tra-

ditional UAE culture revolves around pearling, fishing, and seafaring. In addition, Bedouin influences are also strong, and the ruling family's Bedouin origins ensure that the culture and sports of the desert (camel racing, falconry, and Bedouin song and dance, for example) are closely intertwined with the national image and an integral part of national celebrations.

The government supports a number of organizations dedicated to preserving U.A.E. traditional handicrafts and folklore practices. The U.A.E. Women's Association operates a handicraft center in Abu Dhabi where basketry and weaving are carried out. Sharjah, which was the region's most important city in the 19th century, has made a special effort to rebuild its traditional urban quarters. Visitors can get an idea of the way of life before the coming of oil by walking through the city's renovated Old Souq and the Ethnographic Museum, the former house of a wealthy pearling family. Archeologists continue to find evidence of early habitation of the region, and museums in Al Ain and Sharjah, for example, have displays of many artifacts. An as evidence to how far they have come since the coming of oil, the UAE has produced artists in the fields of painting, theater, music, and literature who contribute to the cultural development of their country and the enrichment of Arab culture in general.

The few Western-style cultural outlets include English-language movie theaters, and touring singers and theater troupes whose performances are sponsored by major hotels in Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

As in other parts of the Islamic world, for many years mosques served as a center for teaching in Coastal Oman—principally reading, writing, and recitation of the Quran, Islam's Holy Book. In the early part of the 20th century, leading pearl merchants established schools staffed by foreign teachers in the main coastal towns. The first school offering a comprehensive curricu-

lum was built by the British in 1953. For a period during the 1950s and 1960s, Kuwait and other Arab States contributed to the educational system. (Only recently have UAE nationals begun replacing Arabs as school teachers at all levels.) The founding of the UAE saw a tremendous expansion of education, with spending for this area second only to defense in the first national budgets.

Education through the secondary level is compulsory and free through college for UAE nationals. United Arab Emirates University opened in 1977 in Al Ain and has faculties in arts, science, education, political science, business administration, Islamic jurisprudence, agriculture, medicine, and engineering. Enrollment in 1991-92 was around 10,000, with more than twice as many women as men. Many UAE nationals pursue higher degrees overseas, most going to the U.S. Technical and agricultural training is provided at the Higher Colleges of Technology, which have branches in Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Al Ain. There are many private schools (including American Schools in Abu Dhabi and Dubai), which cater to the various foreign communities. The literacy rate in 1995 was estimated at 79%.

Commerce and Industry

The U.A.E.'s economy depends on its oil income, estimated at \$20.6 billion in 2000, giving its citizens one of the world's highest per capita GDP income figures at about \$22,800.

The major centers of economic activity are Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Sharjah. Abu Dhabi produces about 85% of the country's oil and imports building materials, machinery, food, electrical appliances, cars, medicines, and almost everything else. Dubai, which produces most of the rest of the U.A.E.'s oil, also engages in a sizable reexport trade. It reexports textiles, consumer electronics, cameras, watches, gold, motorscooters, and perfumes to Iran, India,

Pakistan, and other Gulf states. Most reexport trade is carried by motorized dhows (locally built triangular-rigged sailing vessels). Dubai has been called the Hong Kong of the Gulf because of its mercantile and entrepot activity and the atmosphere of free enterprise that prevails there. Dubai also has the Jebel Ali Free Zone, the largest and most successful in the Middle East. Sharjah has become a big gas producer and is the manufacturing center of the U.A.E.

The Abu Dhabi port, Mina Zayid, is being expanded and will have 29 berths. However, it remains underused. Sharjah and Fujairah have developed ports on the Arabian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, respectively, which feature facilities for containerized cargo. In addition to Dubai's large central port of Mina Rashid, the Dubai government built a huge 180-berth port in the Jebel Ali Free Zone.

The demand for goods, most of which must be imported, resulted in rapid inflation during the 1970s and early 1980s. With the later fall in oil prices; however, the economy went into recession, and local prices have now stabilized, although at a level high, by U.S. standards.

The typical Abu Dhabi investor shuns long-term industrial investments in favor of commerce or housing construction projects, which offer more immediate returns. Although houses with Western-style floor plans are still in short supply, apartments in high-rise buildings are readily available. Rents in Abu Dhabi are kept at artificially high levels by a government-run scheme designed to benefit U.A.E. nationals who own rental property.

Industrial development in the U.A.E. is still in its early stages and is concentrated in hydrocarbon-related projects. Dubai has constructed an aluminum plant and a drydock capable of handling the largest supertankers.

In recent years, the U.A.E. has expanded its agricultural produc-

tion significantly through the extensive application of large, government subsidies, and seasonal surpluses of some vegetables are even exported. A project established by the Arid Lands Research Center of the University of Arizona has produced good results with hydroponic cultivation of vegetables; another team from the same university has a prototype commercial farm based on saltwater irrigation near Fujairah. Other horticultural projects are flourishing in Al-Ain and Digdaga. An import tax on vegetables now exists to protect the market for locally grown vegetables. The government is encouraging livestock and poultry production and expanded commercial fishing. It is unlikely, however, that the U.A.E. will become self-sufficient in foodstuffs.

Transportation

Local

Although getting around by taxi is relatively easy, most travelers prefer the convenience of a personally owned vehicle. Taxis are plentiful and fares reasonable but costly for intercity travel. Meters are used for trips within Abu Dhabi. Taxis are scarce during peak hours, late at night, and in the early hours of the morning, particularly off the main streets. Not all drivers understand English. Al-Ghazal taxis offer round-the-clock service and are similar to a limousine service. They may be booked by telephone or found outside major hotels. Some areas in the cities are served by public buses, but most travelers prefer to use personally owned vehicles.

Regional

Abu Dhabi emirate covers 30,000 square miles, or almost 90% of the U.A.E. land area, with the remaining emirates making up only 4,000 square miles. The bulk of the population is concentrated in eight main towns—the seven emirate capitals and the oasis of Al-Ain in Abu Dhabi emirate. A network of good, hard-surfaced roads connects these cities.

Abu Dhabi proper is linked with Al-Ain and the other emirates by four-lane divided highways. Other highways link the U.A.E. with neighboring Oman, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia. The U.A.E. has six international airports. The two largest airports are located in the cities of Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

The UAE has an excellent telecommunications infrastructure, with direct-dial international links and services such as pagers, mobile phones, faxes, and connection to the Internet. There are locally based operators for AT&T, MCI, and Sprint.

Radio and TV

Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Ras Al-Khaimah, and Umm Al-Kuwait all have radio stations. Abu Dhabi's AM band broadcasts in Arabic, French, Urdu, Bengali, and Tagalog and 2 hours in English. English is also broadcast on the FM band for 17 hours and on SW for 2 hours. Dubai broadcasts in English on FM and Arabic on AM band. Ras Al-Khaimah and Umm Al-Kuwait broadcast Arabic on the AM band. Many Americans also listen to the BBC and VOA on shortwave radios; however, reception is sometimes poor.

The emirates of Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Sharjah have TV stations. Abu Dhabi and Dubai have two channels each, one in Arabic, and the other mostly in English. U.A.E. viewers with good antennas can also receive transmissions from neighboring countries.

The U.A.E. now abides by intellectual property agreements. Pirated audio and video cassettes, once prevalent in the market, have largely disappeared from store shelves. Selections of legitimately licensed product are only fair, but are improving. Prices for CD's and cassette tapes are roughly equivalent to U.S. prices. Prerecorded video tapes are more expensive, and

selection is sparse, though improving. All music and video programs sold in the UAE are subject to Government censorship.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

The country has five Arabic daily papers, three in Abu Dhabi, one in Dubai, and one in Sharjah. Abu Dhabi has one English-language daily paper and Dubai has two, all of which are available throughout the U.A.E. All papers feature stories from the Western wire services, such as Reuters, AP, and UPI. News is fairly current, but some may be censored. *The International Herald Tribune*, *USA Today*, and *Wall Street Journal* can be purchased locally 1–3 days after publication. The major British dailies can also be purchased.

Distribution of *Time*, *Newsweek*, and the *Economist* is timely, although articles offending local moral or political sensitivities are censored. Some bookstores carry a wide selection of English-language magazines, but at high prices (i.e., five or more times U.S. prices).

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

Abu Dhabi and Dubai have several government hospitals, including OB/GYN hospitals, capable of handling emergencies and routine medical care. However, they are not up to Western standards. Personnel at the hospitals are usually recruited from Egypt, Lebanon, India, and the Philippines.

There are several private clinics and laboratories available. Dental clinics staffed by dentists from the U.S., Sweden, U.K., and France are satisfactory.

Local pharmacies are well stocked with medications from Europe. However, bring your own supply of prescription medication.

Community Health

The government is working to improve the water and sewage systems, and residential areas are fumigated regularly.

Preventive Measures

Tap water in Abu Dhabi and Dubai is generally safe to drink; however, tanks and pipes may be rusty or contaminated. Most people prefer to drink bottled water, which is available for inexpensive home delivery. Malaria is a risk only in the mountainous area near the Omani border.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs & Duties

Most major airlines have daily flights from Europe to Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

A passport and visa are required. In addition, an AIDS test is required for work or residence permits; testing must be performed after arrival. A U.S. AIDS test is not accepted. For further information, travelers can contact the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates, Suite 700, 1255 22nd Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037, telephone (202) 243-2400.

UAE customs authorities enforce strict regulations concerning temporary importation into or export from UAE of items such as firearms, including fireworks, pornographic materials, medications, religious materials and communication equipment. It is advisable to contact the Embassy of UAE in Washington for specific information regarding customs requirements.

Americans living in or visiting the UAE are encouraged to register with the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Abu Dhabi or the Consulate General in Dubai, where they can obtain updated information on travel and security within the UAE. the U.S. Embassy in Abu Dhabi is located on 11th St., also known as Al-Sudan St., P.O. Box 4009. The telephone number is

(971) (2) 443-6691, and the Consular Section fax number is (971) (2) 443-5786. The after hours telephone number is (971) (2) 443-4457. The Embassy internet web site is <http://www.usembabu.gov.ae>. The U.S. Consulate General in Dubai is located on the 21st floor of the Dubai World Trade Center, P.O. Box 9343. The telephone number is (971) (4) 331-3115, and the Consular Section fax number is (971) (4) 331-6935. The workweek for both the Embassy in Abu Dhabi and Consulate in Dubai is Saturday through Wednesday.

Social Customs & Laws

Taking photographs of anything that could be perceived as being of military or security interest may result in problems with authorities.

The penalties for possession, use, or trafficking in illegal substances are strict in the UAE, and convicted offenders can expect jail sentences and heavy fines. Legislation enacted in January 1996 imposes the death sentence for convicted drug traffickers. A variety of drugs normally taken under a doctor's supervision in the United States are classified as narcotics in the UAE. A doctor's prescription should be carried along with any medication that is brought into the country.

In addition, the UAE's tough anti-narcotics program also includes poppy seeds on its list of controlled substances. The importation and possession of poppy seeds in any and all forms is strictly prohibited. Persons found to possess even very small quantities of any controlled substances listed by the UAE are subject to prosecution by the authorities and may be given lengthy prison terms of up to 15 years. Travelers with questions regarding the items on the list of controlled substances should contact the U.S. Embassy in Abu Dhabi or the U.S. Consulate General in Dubai.

If suspected of being under the influence of drugs, individuals may be required to submit to blood and/or urine tests so that local authori-

ties may make a determination as to usage. UAE authorities have been known to arrest travelers upon their arrival into the UAE and, based on recent prior drug use, to prosecute these travelers.

Crimes of fraud, including passing bad checks and non-payment of bills (including hotel bills), are regarded seriously in the UAE and can result in imprisonment, as well as fines. Penalties are generally assessed according to religious law. If imprisoned, bail is generally not available to non-residents of the UAE.

Drinking or possession of alcohol without a Ministry of Interior liquor permit is illegal and could result in arrest and/or fines and imprisonment. Alcohol is served at bars in most major hotels. However, this alcoholic beverage service is for those persons who are staying at the hotel. Persons not staying at the hotel who come in to use the facility's bar technically are required to have their own personal liquor license. Liquor licenses are obtainable only by non-Muslim persons who possess UAE residency permits. Drinking and driving is considered a serious offense.

While individuals are free to worship as they choose, and facilities are available for that purpose, religious proselytizing is not permitted. Persons violating this law, even unknowingly, may be arrested and imprisoned.

Pets

UAE customs authorities also impose additional requirements for the importation of pets into the country. Prior permission in the form of a permit from the UAE Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries must be secured before the pet's travel. To obtain the permit, the following items will need to be submitted to the UAE Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries at the following address: P.O. Box 213, Abu Dhabi, UAE, telephone number 971-2-662-781 or 971-2-485-438. a) the pet's travel itinerary; b) copies of veterinary health certificates, showing that the animal is free of

disease and indicating all shots which have been given to the pet; c) the sex and color of the pet; and d) a completed import permit application form (available from the ministry).

Some American and British brands of pet food and cat litter are stocked in all supermarkets.

Firearms & Ammunition

No weapons or ammunition may be imported or acquired in the country.

Currency, Banking and Weights and Measures

Basic currency is the U.A.E. dirham (DH), which is divided into 100 fils. The dirhams come in 500, 200, 100, 10, and 5-bill denominations, and coins in 1 Dirham, 50, 25, 10, and 5 fils. Exchange generally averages about DH 3.67 = US\$1 (1998). Many banks provide full banking services. Dollar and sterling travelers checks are readily available.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan.1	New Year's Day
Aug. 6.	Sheikh Zayed Accession Day
Dec. 2 & 3	U.A.E. National Day
.	Mawlid an Nabi*
.	Id al-Fitr*
.	Waqfa*
.	Id al-Adha*
.	Muharram*

*variable

RECOMMENDED READING

These titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country. The Department of State does not endorse unofficial publications.

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UZBEKISTAN

Republic of Uzbekistan

Major City:

Tashkent

Other Cities:

Andizhan, Bukhara, Samarkand, Karakalpakstan

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated November 1995. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

Many of the cities of the fabled Silk Road—Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva—are located in **UZBEKISTAN**, and many famous conquerors passed through the land. Alexander the Great stopped near Samarkand on his way to India in the 4th Century B.C. and married Roxanna, the daughter of a local chieftain. Genghis Khan and his Mongols arrived in 1220 and leveled everything in their path, leaving only one tower in Bukhara standing from earlier ages. Timur, known in the west as Tamerlane, was born in Shahrisabz, turned Samarkand into the cultural capital of the world, and established the greatest empire of the time (14th century), becoming the most feared warrior since Geng-

his Khan. His grandson, Ulug Beg, helped found the modern science of astronomy, and his grandson Bobur went to India to establish the Moghul Empire. Alisher Navoi, the greatest Uzbek writer, wrote not only in Persian but in Uzbek; as the first to do so, he did what Luther did for German and is venerated as Shakespeare is in Britain.

Russian incursions into Central Asia began in the mid-1800s, when the demand for cotton led Slavic settlers and Imperial troops into the region. The power of traditional entities such as the Khanates of Kokand and Khiva and the Emirate of Bukhara waned as Imperial Russia strengthened its grip. In the wake of the October Revolution, the Red Army enforced Bolshevik control. The Basmachi movement offered fierce resistance. Total Soviet control came in the 1930s with the imposition of collectivization and a culture of repression; many perished in the purges, and others fled abroad. In Stalinist times, Soviet authorities resettled displaced and deported peoples from other parts of the USSR in Uzbekistan, including Ukrainian Kulaks, Crimean Tatars, Volga Germans, Koreans, Meskhetian Turks, Armenians, and others. Moscow used Uzbekistan as a resource base, promoting a cotton monoculture and shipping natural resources to

Russia for processing. During these years, it had one of the lowest levels of per capita income among Soviet republics. In the wake of the failed Moscow coup attempt in August 1991, Uzbekistan declared its independence.

MAJOR CITY

Tashkent

Tashkent is the capital of Uzbekistan and its largest city, with a population of approximately 2,495,000, making it the fourth largest city in the former Soviet Union, behind Moscow, St. Petersburg, and approximately the same size as Kiev. Tashkent sits in the Chirchik River Valley (the River feeds into the Syr Darya), and two main canals, the Ankhor and the Bozsu, run through the city. Though the climate is semi-arid, the extensive system of canals, parks, gardens, and tree-lined avenues gave Tashkent the reputation of being one of the greenest cities in the USSR. The spring rains usually subside by mid-May; the greatest heat, often over 104°F (40°C), comes in July and early August, but nighttime temperatures are much lower. Fall can extend into November and early December, with a short January-February winter occasioned by

scattered snow falls but few sustained freezing spells.

While located on a historical site along the Silk Road, Tashkent can be considered a relatively modern city. It was a small community before the Russians conquered it and made it their administrative center in 1865, a time when Samarkand and Bukhara were the main cities in Central Asia. The Russians then developed the city in a primarily Imperial Russian architectural style. After the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia in 1917, a core of radicals established a Soviet which controlled Tashkent, the first foothold of Bolshevism in a region generally hostile to the revolutionary ideas. During World War II, when much of the European part of the Soviet Union crumbled and starved under the Nazi onslaught, Tashkent became known as the "City of Bread." In 1966, a devastating earthquake leveled much of the old city. The 14 other republics of the USSR were each given a section of Tashkent to rebuild; the resulting lack of coordination contributed to Tashkent's current dispersed layout. Remnants of the old city can be found in the neighborhoods northwest of the center of town. The architecture elsewhere, however, is decidedly contemporary Soviet. In addition to the central city administration ("hokimiat"), there are 13 district hokimiats which provide many of the services normally associated with city administration. Long-term residents of Tashkent will often identify more with their makhallah (neighborhood/district) and the chaikhana (tea-house) there than with any city-wide institution or identity.

Tashkent boasts the only underground metro system in Central Asia; ongoing construction aims to add a third line to the two presently in place. The Supreme Soviet recently voted to spend \$500 million to construct a new airport complex in an effort to bolster Tashkent's potential as an air gateway between Europe and Asia.

Many of the Russians, Ukrainians and other nationalities who came to rebuild the city in the aftermath of the earthquake preferred the warmer climate and decided to settle here, further diluting the Central Asian character of the City. As a result of the lengthy Russian presence and the use of Tashkent as a regional center for Central Asia, Tashkent is home for over 100 nationalities and retains the flavor of an international city. It is here that you will find the largest concentration of Russians (17% vs. 8% countrywide). The smaller Korean community makes its presence known in the marketplaces and in restaurants around town.

Despite its size and status as a capital, Tashkent can seem surprisingly provincial—there is little night life and few restaurants. Ample parks and other recreational facilities, however, help to offset this reality and make life interesting in this city.

Food

Fresh vegetables and fruits are available in season in Tashkent year 'round. Available fruits include pomegranates, grapes, pears, cherries (bing and sour), apples, oranges, lemons, limes, nectarines, melons, peaches, plums, apricots, raspberries and strawberries. Canned fruits are available but most residents prefer to can their own. Vegetables in the market include eggplant, pumpkin, squash, green beans, potatoes, carrots, cabbage, tomatoes, cucumbers, radishes, onions, garlic, green and red peppers, cauliflower and leaf lettuce. Potatoes, cabbage, carrots and tomatoes are available year 'round.

Beef, lamb, pork and chickens are generally available in the markets; the quality ranges from average to poor. Ham, bacon and sausage are also available at Tashkent's main market. Smoked fish is available throughout the year, but may involve health risks; fresh fish, of varying quality, is seasonally available. There is no other seafood. Eggs are available and good, usually fresh. Locally produced butter, milk

and other dairy products are scarce; and due to improper hygienic conditions in handling and packaging, their use is not recommended (except for hard cheese). Occasionally, Turkish butter, long life milk and imported cheeses are available. Flour and sugar are rationed items and not always available. Bread is plentiful through state-controlled bread stores, and is heavier than American-type bread, is preservative-free, tasty and freezes well. About five or six different kinds, including a French-type loaf and an Uzbekistan-style pita, are baked fresh and shelved several times during the day.

Hard currency shops stock limited supplies of hard liquor and wines, and beer is usually available from those shops or from street vendors. Prices are somewhat high. Coca-Cola has recently opened a bottling plant in Tashkent and a limited variety of other Western products, including Pepsi-Cola, is available. Locally produced soft drinks are plentiful and good.

Clothing

Tashkent is not a particularly fashion-conscious city; good quality clothing is not available, and many residents who are well dressed make their own.

Men: Social life is informal; black-tie affairs are rare. Men wear coats and ties and dark suits for more formal occasions. A lined raincoat is useful; heavy winter coats are occasionally necessary. In summer, lightweight suits are useful for the office, and short-sleeved shirts are acceptable. In winter, light- to medium-weight wool or wool-synthetic blend suits are useful.

As in Southern Europe, men do not wear shorts outside of their own house. Use discretion while playing sports or hiking in the mountains, and change to trousers.

Women: There are two dress codes, one for most parts of Tashkent and one for everywhere else. In Tashkent: It is acceptable in many places to wear short skirts, tops with bared

shoulders, and pants. Outside Tashkent: The dress is much more closed. A dress or skirt should be below the knee; short sleeves are fine, but the shoulder and front should be fully covered. Pants are acceptable if covered by a long top, as is done in Uzbek or Pakistani national dress. Women do not need to cover their heads, as is the case in more Muslim countries.

In Tashkent, there are few occasions for cocktail dresses, but dressy evening outfits will be used. In summer, cotton, linen, blends and knits in casual styles are most comfortable for office and home wear. Revealing dresses or shorts are not suitable for street wear, particularly in bazaar (market) areas. Younger Uzbek women wear slacks, and they are acceptable in restaurants, modern shopping areas, etc., in Tashkent only. For winter, medium- to heavyweight woolens will be comfortable, as will be a warm coat. Dresses, skirts, blouses, sweaters, jackets, suits, slacks, etc., are all worn. Although houses have central heat, winter dampness makes it feel much colder than it actually is. Wool stoles and sweaters are also useful on many winter evenings. Tashkent has no storage facilities for furs.

Walking shoes with low heels are good for shopping and sight-seeing. Shoes are not worn inside homes and are removed at the entrance. Rubbers or wet-weather-type shoe/boots are essential. Lingerie, pantyhose and the like are not available locally.

Supplies and Services

Toilet articles and cosmetics are few and far between, as are drugs and medications, and cleaning products.

Dressmaking and tailoring are available; work can be good and is reasonable. Shoe repair in Tashkent can be satisfactory. Dry-cleaning is available, but of poor quality.

Adequate beauty shops abound. Some Americans take their own shampoo, or shampoo at home and go to the shop for a cut and/or set only. Most hairdressers don't speak

enough English to understand instructions. Barbershops are also available; prices are much lower than in the U.S.

Much of Tashkent commerce is conducted in "bazaars," open-air markets around town. Tashkent has five main bazaars, with many smaller ones scattered through the city. There are also stores that have essential and local mass-produced goods. There are places to buy handicrafts and souvenirs, but they are limited and not necessarily oriented to the needs and desires of tourists.

With the freeing of most food prices, bazaars have the widest selection of foods and offer the best quality. Buyers should be aware of the sanitary conditions of the food.

For goods, bazaar sales are catch as catch can; what may appear new could well be broken, and what may appear antique probably is an imitation. Prices are never fixed, and first demands should never be paid; intuition and desire are the best guides.

Tashkent does not have hard-currency stores that offer the range of goods found in a U.S. convenience store. There are small stores scattered around the city which sell Western alcohol (beer, some wine and spirits), soft drinks, cigarettes, sweets and some dairy products. Some carry consumer electronics and a variety of other luxuries. Selection is limited and prices are very high by U.S. standards.

Despite its storied Silk Road heritage and legendary cities, Uzbekistan has surprisingly little to offer to the casual buyer or tourist; even finding post cards can be demanding and unsuccessful. The best quality goods—from rugs and tapestries to silk and pottery—can be obtained directly from factories, mostly located outside Tashkent.

Religious Activities

Uzbekistan is a Muslim country. There are, however, communities of Christians—Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant—and Jews, all of

which maintain places of worship and conduct services.

Education

A small international school opened its doors in September 1994 to approximately 50 students. It will be somewhat larger in 1995-96, with kindergarten through grade ten, using correspondence courses. The school is not accredited.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Samarkand. Timur's capital city is a four-hour drive or an hour's flight from Tashkent, either of which could facilitate a day trip. The five main sites are: Gur Emir, Tamerlane's tomb; the Registan, the most magnificent Square in Central Asia; Shah-i-Zinda, Tomb of the Living King; Bibi-Kanim Mosque; and Ulug Beg's Observatory. The best way to travel by car is to hire a driver with vehicle for the day; they are quite available, and reasonable. It's more convenient to travel to Samarkand by plane; but once there, a car will be needed. Guides are available for hire at the Intourist Hotel or the Business Center.

Bukhara. Bukhara is another 2-3 hours by car beyond Samarkand; the flight from Tashkent is 1.5 hours one way. It is possible to visit many of the sites of Bukhara on foot, but one might wish to arrange a vehicle for airport pickup and transfer to outlying sites. Guides are available. Sites include the Pool in the City Square, the Tower before which Genghis Khan bowed, the unique 11th century Mausoleum, various madrassas, and the Summer Palace located a few kilometers outside of town.

Khiva. Khiva is less accessible than either Samarkand or Bukhara. One must fly about two hours to Urgench, and travel the last 25 kilometers by bus, minibus or taxi. Old Khiva is a museum city, in which the many madrassas, palace and other ancient buildings have been restored. The Museum of Applied Arts, well worth a visit, is near the palace tower, which provides a good view of the city. One of the city's

mosques boasts 200 carved wooden pillars.

Shahrisabz. The birthplace of Tamerlane has several monuments of note, including the remains of Timur's massive gate. Shahrisabz is 80 kilometers from Samarkand over a steep mountain pass which is closed in winter, but offers a great view from spring through early fall.

While most people have heard of the Silk Road cities, few know of the beauty and serenity of the mountains and nature preserves within an hour or two of Tashkent. In all cases, it is best to drive, by either personal or hired vehicle. Popular destinations include:

Chirvak. A reservoir which offers swimming, sail boating, wind surfing and hang gliding.

Chimgan. An area for skiing in the winter and hiking in the summer. The Beldeersai chairlift is 2 km long and offers intermediate and advanced ski slopes. Helicopter skiing can be arranged.

Chatkal Nature Reserve. This reserve facilitates hiking and has a beautiful ranger station/caravanse-rai with river swimming.

For travel outside Uzbekistan, there are frequent direct flights to such places as London, Moscow, Frankfurt, Tel Aviv, Kuala Lumpur, Seoul, New Delhi, Islamabad/Peshawar and Sharja (providing access to Abu Dhabi and Dubai).

Entertainment

Aside from the ballet, concerts and theater described in the section on Arts and Education, Tashkent offers dinner shows at many restaurants around the city. The food served at these establishments is adequate, although the variety is quite limited and the quality average to poor, as are the sanitary standards. Oftentimes, music is provided—either live or recorded—for dancing after the floor show. The larger hotels have “night bars” where people can gather until the early morning hours. There are also theaters

which screen movies in the local languages; some even boast an occasional screening in English

Social Activities

A sports center is located about five minutes from the U.S. Embassy. For a nominal monthly fee, one may use its outdoor Olympic-sized swimming pool and gyms catering to weightlifters, boxers and gymnasts. Tennis courts, and lessons, are available. The Hippodrome has facilities for boarding horses, but horses available locally for riding are definitely not for the amateur.

Since outside social activities are limited, many people entertain at home with dinners, cocktail parties, card parties, and the like. Currently, there is a Hash House Harriers event on Sundays, with the group gathering—on a rotating basis—at a participant's home after the run/walk.

An international women's group meets monthly; the group can offer programs relating to archeological, cultural and social aspects of life in Uzbekistan, as well as various special activities such as gourmet cooking, handicrafts, exercise, bridge lessons, etc., depending on the interest of the group.

OTHER CITIES

ANDIZHAN is a cotton growing and transport (road and rail) center. Located in the Fergana Valley, the city is 155 miles southeast of Tashkent. The region is subject to earthquakes and the city was rebuilt after a severe 1902 quake caused massive destruction. Andizhan has over 300,000 residents.

BUKHARA, 140 miles west of Samarkand, is a historic city. Once known as an Islamic intellectual center and holy place, the city has many magnificent ancient monuments. The population of Bukhara is more than 230,000.

SAMARKAND, located 180 miles southwest of Tashkent, is one of the

oldest cities in Central Asia. Many of its ancient monuments and buildings, dating from the 13th century, represent some of the best of Central Asian architecture. With a population of 370,000, Samarkand is the second largest Uzbek city. Now a rail and industrial center, much of the city's industry is dependent on the area's agricultural crops. Major industries include cotton and silk processing, canning, and the production of fertilizers, textiles, and wine. The city has a university and is known as a center for karakul sheep breeding research.

Spanning the delta of the Amu Darya and comprising nearly one-third of the territory of Uzbekistan, **KARAKALPAKSTAN** is an autonomous republic within the Republic of Uzbekistan. Karakalpakstan has its own legislature and executive branches, as well as its own constitution, but its autonomy does not apply in areas such as foreign affairs, defense or security. About 1.2 million people live in Karakalpakstan, a third of them Karakalpaks, who are closer ethnically and linguistically to Kazaks than to Uzbeks. Karakalpakstan has borne the brunt of the ecological damage associated with the Aral Sea disaster.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Located between the Amu Darya (OXUS) and Syr-Darya Rivers, Uzbekistan lies at the heart of Central Asia. Along its borders are Afghanistan to the south, Turkmenistan to the west and south, Kazakhstan to the north and Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to the east. Covering an area of 500,000 sq. km, Uzbekistan is roughly the size of California. Most of the country is desert (the Kyzylkum and the Karakum) or irrigated steppe, but it has rugged mountains in the east (a branch of the Tien Shan range). The

area has a severe continental climate that is dry and hot in the summer months and cool and wet in the winter. In the long summer, daytime temperatures often reach 40°C (104°F); during the short winter, daytime temperatures generally stay above freezing, but on occasion can dip well below, and snow is not unusual. Spring and fall are the most comfortable seasons. In all seasons, the differences between daytime and nighttime temperature and humidity is much greater than most parts of the U.S.

Population

Uzbekistan has an estimated population of 24.4 million people. Of these, approximately 16 million are ethnic Uzbeks and between one and two million are Russian. The rest of the population is made up of Tajiks, Tatars, Kazaks, and Karakalpaks, along with over 100 other ethnic groups. Most of the population lives in the eastern part of the country, particularly the Fergana Valley, and in the parts of the desert made habitable by heavy irrigation.

The Uzbeks (as well as the Karakalpaks, Kazaks, Turkmen and Tatars) are a Turkic people and speak a Turkic language. The language and culture in Uzbekistan has also been strongly influenced by the Mongols and Persians (Iranians, Tajiks). The Uzbek language employed Arabic script until 1929 and the Latin alphabet for a decade, but since 1940 it has been written in Cyrillic; the Supreme Soviet recently decreed that the transition back to the Latin script should occur by the year 2000. Although Uzbek is the official language of the country, Russian is also widely spoken in the cities, particularly among the educated elite and government officials. The historical towns of Bukhara and Samarkand are primarily Tajik speaking; and in the countryside, Russian is hardly spoken at all.

Aral Sea Crisis

The Aral Sea lies between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan in a vast geological depression, fed by the Amu

Darya and Syr Darya Rivers, with no outlet. Before its drastic decline, the Aral Sea was the fourth largest inland water lake in the world. In the past 30 years, the Aral Sea has lost nearly two-thirds of its volume and half of its previous surface area; its level has dropped nearly 50 feet, splitting it in two. Its salinity has increased nearly threefold. The almost total use of water from the Amu Darya and Syr Darya Rivers for irrigation purposes has been exacerbated by excessive use of chemicals for growing cotton and rice, much of which returns to the Rivers upstream. The desiccation of the Aral Sea has wiped out its fishing industry and destroyed nearby ecosystems. Toxic blowing salts from the exposed seabed and the pollution of surface and groundwater have caused serious health problems and damaged agricultural production. The United Nations Environment Program has stated that, in terms of its ecological, economic, and social consequences, the Aral Sea is one of the most staggering disasters of the twentieth century. Restoring the Aral Sea to its pre-disaster (1960) conditions is generally considered impossible, given expanding populations and pressures for increased agricultural production.

All five republics of Central Asia depend on the two river systems, but Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan are heavily dependent upon existing allocations of water. International and regional efforts to stabilize the ecological situation on the basis of available river flows and more efficient irrigation techniques will take years to achieve, so international assistance also focuses on the health problems among those living near the Aral Sea.

Public Institutions

Uzbekistan's political institutions, inherited from the Soviet Union when Uzbekistan declared independence on September 1, 1991, are gradually evolving away from their Soviet models. A new constitution was adopted in December 1992, and

a new parliamentary election law passed a year later provided the basis for electing a new parliament, the Oliy Majlis, which met for the first time in February 1995. The Constitution provides for a strong President; in addition, opposition parties and public criticism of the President have been suppressed. President Islam Karimov was elected for five years in December 1991, and his term was extended until 2000 by referendum in March 1995. While many Soviet laws are still valid, they are steadily being replaced by new ones, and even some of the new laws (especially those affecting business) have been revised. Radical changes are rare, but the changes in public life are continuous and cumulative.

Social Customs

There is no question that Uzbekistan is a male-dominated society. Much of the local social life revolves around the chaikhanas (tea-houses). While foreign women are allowed in, the chaikhanas basically serve as a men's club where they congregate and talk; local women do not frequent the establishments. When there are large social gatherings of mixed company, the women and men usually sit in separate groupings (again, exceptions are made for "honored foreign guests"). Mosques are segregated during regular prayers, and head coverings for women may be required. Women should take the lead in greetings and in offering a handshake; Uzbek women normally do not shake hands, and well-behaved men do not take the lead in greeting unknown women. Women should avoid walking alone in the evening or in crowded public places such as the bazaar, and should dress more conservatively there.

Uzbeks are a very friendly people, especially when foreigners take the trouble to learn a few introductory greetings in Uzbek. Most people will be happy to help with directions, and Uzbeks often invite people to their homes. On such occasions, small gifts, especially for children would be appreciated but not

expected; your hosts are more likely to offer you small gifts/souvenirs.

The standard Uzbek celebratory meal is lengthy and expansive; be careful not to eat too much during the first several rounds. The end of the meal is near when the plov (national dish of rice with some vegetables and sheep meat) is served, followed by tea. Plov is traditionally eaten from a communal plate using the right hand as a scoop, with a garnish of sliced tomatoes and onions. Uzbeks fill their tea bowls only halfway, so the guest knows that he or she is not expected to leave immediately upon finishing.

Arts and Education

In the last decades of the Soviet Union, Tashkent had become one of its most vibrant and progressive artistic and intellectual centers, because of the rich mix of Asian and European cultures here, especially, because intellectuals and artists who did not end up in the Gulag but who were exiled from Moscow frequently moved to Tashkent. Since independence in September 1991, state subsidies for the arts and for education have fallen precipitously; and a good number of European-nationality artists, intellectuals, and journalists have emigrated. Furthermore, independent Uzbekistan is experiencing the cultural dislocation common to post-colonial situations. The dominant Soviet/Russian culture is beginning to wane, and Uzbek culture is moving to the fore. Tashkent, as well as Samarkand and Bokhara, as they have long been, are the artistic and intellectual centers of Uzbekistan.

Uzbek culture, long repressed under the Soviet Empire, strongly emphasizes tradition and ceremony, especially on the life-cycle occasions of weddings, circumcisions, and funerals. For the first two, the celebration features traditional Uzbek music, poetry, and dance. Professional artists who perform at these events are highly regarded in the Uzbek community—and highly paid. A wedding celebration, with its procession



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Museum and mosque in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

of musicians, is an event not to be missed.

Tashkent is the most Europeanized city in the country. The National Museum of Art has a representative selection of Russian, Soviet, European, and Uzbek paintings and other objects from the 17th century to the present. The museum occasionally hosts temporary exhibits from other countries. The Museum of Applied Arts, housed partly in a restored 19th-century trader's mansion, has a permanent exhibit of the traditional arts and contemporary glass and ceramic products of Uzbekistan. Both of these museums have small but interesting consignment shops which sell Central Asian and Russian antiques, carpets, jewelry, and contemporary arts and crafts. Handwritten signs in these shops note that it is illegal to take anything out of the country which was made before 1947.

Uzbekistan's rich collection of Central Asian antiquities and jewelry has been put into storage awaiting the opening of the Uzbekistan Historical Museum, which will be housed in the former Lenin Museum, a lattice-covered modernist cube located across the street from Independence Square. Tash-

kent also has a Museum of Natural History, a Museum of Military History, the Museum of Ancient Oriental Manuscripts, as well as other small, specialized museums. Several small, private art galleries also exist and are gathering spots for the artistic and bohemian communities of the capital. The Archduke Romanov's home as Governor of Turkestan in the 1890s has been fully restored and is now used as a reception hall by the Foreign Ministry. The Samarkand Museum, abutting the world-famous Registan ensemble of medieval buildings, has one of the best displayed and richest exhibits of the arts of daily life in all of Central Asia.

The Navoi State Opera and Ballet Theater is the most prestigious in the country and has a full season of Western opera, ballet and symphony productions, which sometimes star visiting artists from Russia. Tashkent also has ten theaters with regular repertoires. The most popular are Ilkhom Theater, Young Spectator's Theater, Khidoyatov Uzbek Drama Theater, and Gorky Russian Drama Theater, and Russian Operetta Theater. The Conservatory of Music, one of the best of the former Soviet Union, sponsors numerous concerts and recitals dur-

ing the year. All performances in Tashkent begin at 5 or 6 p.m., and audiences are home before 10 p.m.

Uzbekistan may become a major tourist destination because of its world-class monuments of medieval Islamic architecture. Samarkand is the richest city with its Registan ensemble, the ruins of Bibi Khanum Mosque, the tomb of Amir Timur (Tamerlane), and the haunting Street of Mausoleums. Bokhara and Khiva, great cities of the Silk Route, also merit visits. UNESCO has begun a 20-year project to restore properly these World Heritage sites and to develop a responsible tourism industry.

As elsewhere in the former Soviet Union, education had high priority in Uzbekistan. With independence, the language of instruction is shifting from Russian to Uzbek, and a number of non-Uzbek nationality educators and scholars have emigrated. Some students and educators complain that the quality of education and the integrity of academic administration have fallen. All education is under the Ministry of Higher Education or the Ministry of Public Education. No private schools are accredited, although a few private academies exist, especially to teach business subjects. Tashkent has an extensive system of specialized high schools for students gifted in the sciences, the arts, and languages.

There are four important universities in Tashkent: The University of World Economy and Diplomacy (the elite school for government service), Tashkent State Economics University, Tashkent State University, and the University of World Languages. There are also many institutes and think tanks in Tashkent, including the prestigious Oriental Studies Institute. Tashkent State University has recently decentralized and upgraded provincial training centers to the status of state universities.

Commerce and Industry

Since its independence in 1991, Uzbekistan has been engaged in the process of converting from a planned to a market economy. The government regularly states its determination to complete this process, but that it must be done carefully, in keeping with Uzbekistan's unique conditions, to maintain social stability. The result has been slower and more centrally-managed reform than in some other former Soviet republics. Following introduction of Uzbekistan's own currency, the som, in summer 1994, macroeconomic stabilization measures met with IMF approval and led to an agreement in early 1995.

Uzbekistan's economy is primarily based on agriculture and agro-processing, accounting for about one-half of the GNP. Uzbekistan is the world's third largest producer of cotton (second largest exporter after the U.S.), and cotton accounts for over 40% of the agricultural production. Much of the industrial production is linked to agriculture, including the production of cotton harvesting equipment, textiles, and chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Uzbekistan also has promising mineral reserves, including significant amounts of gold, uranium, silver, copper, lead, zinc, wolfram and tungsten. Uzbekistan is a net exporter of natural gas and hopes to achieve oil self-sufficiency.

Although Uzbekistan is a large net exporter of fruits and vegetables, mostly to the former Soviet Union, it must import four million tons of wheat each year, much of it from the United States. Uzbekistan hopes to reach wheat self-sufficiency in the near future by increasing yields and shifting land from cotton to wheat cultivation. However, it is likely that the country will remain a net importer in the near term.

Uzbekistan has a very liberal investment code which, in theory, allows for, among other things, free and full repatriation of profits and tax holidays of 2-5 years, depending

upon the type of investment. However, in practice, even negotiating and registering joint ventures is a cumbersome process (taking anywhere from three to six months). This requires the approval of numerous government agencies and usually at the highest levels of government. Repatriation of funds, the system for which is still unclear, is complicated by the limited amount of foreign exchange in the country. Uzbekistan signed a Bilateral Investment Treaty with the U.S. in late 1994.

The government has targeted oil and gas, mining, processing of agricultural commodities, textiles and tourism as priority areas for foreign investment. However, foreign ownership is limited in "strategic" industries, such as in the mining, energy, cotton processing and oil and gas sectors.

American firms currently operating in Uzbekistan include Newmont Mining, Bateman Engineering, M.W. Kellogg/Dresser, Coca-Cola, Pepsico, Price Waterhouse, Deloitte Touche, KPMG Peat Marwick, and others. Prospects for long-term opportunities in this market are excellent and we expect to see the number of American firms in this market increase dramatically over the next several years.

Transportation

Local

The public transportation system within Tashkent consists of buses, trolleybuses, trams, taxis and a metro system. City bus service is one class and inexpensive; however, it is not recommended for use because of crowding and petty crime. The underground "metro" system, the only one in Central Asia, currently has two lines; a third is under construction. It, too, is inexpensive, and the crowds can be intense at rush hour, but it is reliable. Taxis, used frequently by Americans, are readily available during daylight hours. They are marked with the checkerboard stamp on the side. Accepting rides

from “private” taxis late at night can be dangerous and is discouraged. If the taxi is not equipped with a meter, the fare should be determined prior to the journey.

Regional

All-weather roads exist between the larger cities and points of interest. But most of these roads are in poor repair and can wreak havoc on your auto. Highway driving at night is dangerous due to pedestrians, and unlit parked and moving vehicles.

The use of personal vehicles for overnight trips outside the city is discouraged unless someone will be with the car at all times; vandalism is prolific. Cars and drivers are available for hire on an hourly, daily, or several-day basis for a reasonable fee.

Communications

Telephones

The quality of the phone lines in Uzbekistan is abysmal, and for local calls, you will frequently need to try many times before making contact. Making long-distance calls can be a frustrating experience if you are not a Russian speaker. The operator often demands that the calls be paid for beforehand and places a 10-minute limit on calls. Direct-dial capability is available, but can be an extremely frustrating experience due to the low number and quality of lines.

Radio and TV

Both radio and TV in Uzbekistan are government-operated in Uzbek and Russian. Shortwave reception of STAR TV, BBC-TV, BBC-Radio and VOA are, at best, sporadic. However, in August 1993, an Uzbek-American joint venture, Kamalak-TV, began offering cable service with eight channels in addition to the five available on local TV, and have promised to add CNN.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

Subscriptions to the *International Herald Tribune*, *Newsweek* and *The Economist* through a private expe-

diter arrive a few days late and are very expensive. There are currently no English-language periodicals available in Tashkent. Avoid having magazines or newspapers sent through international mail.

Health and Medicine

A subscription international clinic has recently been established, under the operation of a nurse practitioner. There are no doctors, medical or dental facilities of western standards, or adequately stocked pharmacies in Uzbekistan.

Residents of Tashkent should take appropriate precautions against the health conditions existing in Tashkent. Following are recommended vaccines for Uzbekistan:

Diphtheria, Tetanus: boosters every 10 years.

Hepatitis A: a series of three shots over a 6-month period.

Hepatitis B: a series of three shots over a 6-month span.

Meningococcal: every three years.

Rabies: three injections over a one-month period; booster recommended every 2 years.

Tuberculin skin test: if initial test comes up positive, further investigation required.

Typhoid: oral every 5 years; not completely effective; water still needs to be treated.

Food Preparation and Storage

Tap water, restaurant water, and ice throughout Uzbekistan are unsafe, particularly during the warmer months. All water should be filtered and treated. A distiller, which boils the water and produces sediment-free water, is recommended. Another option is to boil the water and use a basic charcoal filter, such as the Brita system, which removes sediment and improves taste. Make

sure plates, glasses and flatware in restaurants are dry.

Produce which will be peeled should be washed. Other vegetables and fruit should be soaked in a chlorine (three drops Clorox per liter) for 15 minutes. (State Department no longer recommends iodine.)

Meat in local markets has been exposed to dust and flies; it should be rinsed well, allowed to dry, and cooked very thoroughly. Eggs should be washed well just before use.

Dairy products in state stores or hard currency shops should be safe, having been pasteurized, but are poorly handled; those in the market normally have not been pasteurized. Fresh milk should be brought to a boil before being used. Soft cheese should be avoided; hard cheese is okay.

Remember to wash hands before preparing food and before eating.

Brush teeth with “safe” water (boiled, distilled, or chlorine-filtered).

Be aware of problematic snacks at receptions (cream-filled pastries; chicken, etc.).

Community Health

Garbage is usually dumped on the street and is collected infrequently. Flies, rodents and mosquitoes can be a problem, as can cockroaches, ants, and other household pests. Stray cats and dogs might be infested with parasites; if you want to take one of them into your home, have it checked by the veterinarian.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs & Duties

The best way to reach Tashkent is by air from Frankfurt or Istanbul, but London, Moscow and other points can also be convenient. Make reservations as far in advance as possible.

A passport and visa are required; official invitations from a sponsoring organization or individual are no longer required for American citizens. Visas are issued by Uzbek embassies and consulates abroad. Visitors coming from countries where Uzbekistan does not have diplomatic or consular representation should obtain visas in a third country. Visas are not available upon arrival at any Uzbek airport.

Importantly, Uzbek visas indicate not only the validity of the visa, but also the period of time a person is allowed to stay in Uzbekistan on a given trip. Although Uzbek visas given to private American citizens are generally valid for four years with multiple entries, a visitor will have to leave the country after the number of days indicated as the duration of stay on the visa. Therefore, it is important to indicate your intended period of stay when applying for your Uzbek visa.

Further visa information is available at the Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan, located at 1746 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036; telephone (202) 887-5300; <http://www.uzbekistan.org>; or the Uzbek Consulate in New York, located at 866 United Nations Plaza, Suite 327A, New York, N.Y. 10017; telephone (212) 754-6178 or (212) 754-7403; <http://www.uzbek-consul.org>.

All travelers, even those simply transiting Uzbekistan for less than 72 hours, must obtain an Uzbek visa before traveling to Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan has suspended the 72-hour transit rule that allowed travelers with visas from other members of the Commonwealth of Independent States to transit Uzbekistan without an Uzbek visa.

On December 1, 2001, the Uzbek Government imposed travel restrictions on large parts of the Surkhandarya Oblast region bordering Afghanistan, including the border city of Termez. Foreign citizens intending to travel to this region must obtain a special permission card from the Ministry of For-

eign Affairs, the Ministry of Internal Affairs or Uzbek embassies and consulates abroad.

All travelers present in Uzbekistan for more than three days must register with the Office of Entry, Exit, and Citizenship. Hotel guests are registered automatically, but all other travelers are responsible for registering themselves. Visitors without proper registration are subject to fines and possible harassment by local authorities. Uzbek law mandates that visitors carry a medical certificate attesting that they are not infected with HIV. However, this requirement is only sporadically enforced.

Travelers to Uzbekistan are subject to frequent document inspections. Therefore, U.S. citizens are strongly encouraged to carry a copy of their U.S. passport and their Uzbek visa with them at all times so that they may more readily prove that they are U.S. citizens.

Uzbek customs authorities may enforce strict regulations concerning temporary import or export from Uzbekistan of items such as armaments and ammunition, space technology, encryption devices, X-ray and isotope equipment, nuclear materials, poisons, drugs, precious and semi-precious metals, nullified securities, pieces of art and antiques of historical value. It is advisable to contact the Embassy of Uzbekistan in Washington, D.C. or the Consulate of Uzbekistan in New York for specific information regarding customs requirements.

Foreigners must complete a customs declaration upon entering Uzbekistan and may face fines upon departure if unable to produce certificates verifying legal conversion of foreign currency. Old U.S. dollar bills (prior to 1990) and/or those in poor condition (with tears, writing or stamps) are not acceptable forms of currency in Uzbekistan. Although payment in U.S. dollars is required for certain hotel charges, plane tickets, and visa fees, other dollar transactions, as well as black market currency exchanges, are prohibited.

Americans are encouraged to register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy and obtain updated information on travel and security in Uzbekistan. The U.S. Embassy in Tashkent, is located at Ulitsa Chilanzarskaya, 82. The main Embassy telephone number is (998 71) 120-5450, fax (998 71) 120-6335; the Consular Section's direct line is (998 71) 120-5444, e-mail address: consular@usembassy.us. Current information may also be obtained from the Embassy web site at <http://www.usembassy.uz>.

Pets

Pets should arrive with all inoculations, including rabies, up to date. Vaccines are not available locally. A health certificate from a veterinarian and certificate showing a current and valid rabies inoculation are required for dogs and cats entering the country. No quarantine is required.

There is no dog food of American quality and standards available in Uzbekistan. Appropriate food for your pets should be shipped with consumables.

Veterinarian services in Tashkent are below U.S. standards, and have been used by Americans with varying degrees of success.

Currency, Banking, and Weights and Measures

In general, Uzbekistan is a cash-only economy, with the majority of transactions in the local currency, the Sum. Many vendors and merchants, however, will request payment in cash dollars once they discover you are American. Prices for goods that are available for sums are usually quite reasonable by Western standards; because of low prices and constantly changing exchange rates, it is recommended to exchange only small amounts of cash per accommodation transaction.

Travelers checks are generally not accepted in Uzbekistan. Credit cards are not widely accepted in Tashkent; the few shops which do accept credit cards add a service

charge to the price of the merchandise to cover costs.

Uzbekistan uses the metric system of weights and measures. A metric tape measure is useful.

Disaster Preparedness

Uzbekistan is an earthquake-prone country. General information about natural disaster preparedness is available via the Internet from the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) at <http://www.fema.gov/>.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan. 1	New Year's Day
Jan. 7	Christmas (Orthodox)
Mar. 8	Women's Day
Mar. 21	Novruz
Apr/May	Good Friday*
Apr/May	Easter*
May 1	Labor Day
May 9	Victory Day
Sept. 1	Independence Day
Oct. 1	Teacher's Day
Nov. 18	Flag Day
Dec. 8	Constitution Day
.	Id al-Adha*
.	Ramadan*
.	Id al-Fitr*
.	Hijra New Year*
.	Mawlid an Nabi*

*variable

RECOMMENDED READING

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Akiner, Shirin, ed. *Cultural Change and Continuity in Central Asia*. New York: Keegan Paul, 1991.

Allworth, Edward, ed. *Central Asia: 120 Years of Russian Rule*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1989.

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———. *The Nationality Question in Soviet Central Asia*. New York: Praeger, 1973.

———. *Uzbek Literary Politics*. The Hague: Mouton, 1964.

Bacon, Elizabeth. *Central Asians under Russian Rule: A Study in Culture Change*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980.

Bailey, F.M. *Mission to Tashkent*. Memoires of a British agent who was trapped in Tashkent during the Bolshevik Revolution. Solid political and social history as well as an exciting read.

Critchlow, James. *Nationalism in Uzbekistan*. Westview Press. One of the best modern political histories of Uzbekistan.

Fierman, William, Ed. *Soviet Central Asia: The Failed Transformation*. Westview Press. 1991. An excellent collection by outstanding Western commentators on Soviet Central Asia.

———. *Language Planning and National Development: The Uzbek Experience*. New York: Mouton de Grayter, 1991.

Grousett, Rene. *Empire of the Steppes: A History of Central Asia*. A classic account of the peoples of the Steppe, from the 13th-18th centuries.

Hopkirk, Kathleen. *Central Asia: A Traveler's Companion*. John Murray (Publishers) Inc. 1993. An alphabetical handbook to the region and an epic tale of violence and treachery, courage, faith and vision.

Hopkirk, Peter. *Foreign Devils on the Silk Road*, Kodansha Int'l. Set on the Silk Road, especially the Chinese Central Asian

region. Describes the great explorers who found artistic artifacts in Chinese Central Asia and took them home.

———. *The Great Game*. Kodansha International. Great Britain and Russia in 19th Century Central Asia.

———. *Setting the East Ablaze*, Kodansha Int'l. Set in Tashkent, describes the sovietization of Central Asia.

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Khodjajev, E., and V. Mizhiritsky. *Uzbekistan: Questions and Answers*. Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 1987.

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McClean, Fitzroy. *Eastern Approaches*. British Diplomat in Moscow travels in Central Asia.

Medlin, William K., William M. Cave, and Finley Carpenter. *Education and Development in Central Asia: A Case Study of Social Change in Uzbekistan*. Leiden: Brill, 1971.

Nahaylo, Bohdan and Victor Swoboda. *Soviet Disunion: A History of the Nationalities Problem in the USSR*. The Free Press, New York. 1990. An important and timely book about the many nations of the Soviet Union which are not Russian and which are currently campaigning for the restoration of their national rights and the transformation of the USSR from a Soviet Russian empire into a confederation of "free and equal" peoples.

Uzbekistan. Moscow: Novosti Press Agency Pub. House, 1987.

Whittell, Giles. *Central Asia: The Practical Handbook*. Cadogan Guide.

VANUATU

Republic of Vanuatu

Major City:
Port-Vila

INTRODUCTION

VANUATU is probably best known to Americans as the setting for James Michener's 1947 novel *Tales of the South Pacific* that was later made into a musical, but the islands have a long history and a diverse population. Human habitation of the Vanuatu island group may have begun as far back as 4,000 years ago. In 1606, the Portuguese were the first Europeans to discover the island group. Europeans did not return until 1768, and in 1774 the British Captain James Cook named the islands the New Hebrides. During the 1860s, planters in Australia, Fiji, New Caledonia, and the Samoa Islands encouraged long-term indentured labor of the islanders, a term called "black-birding." Missionaries and settlers then came. A mixture of French and British interests in the islands brought a unique form of government where France and the United Kingdom jointly administered the islands from 1906 until the arrival of Americans in World War II. Indigenous political activity developed in the post-war years. In early 1980, several northern islands seceded before the upcoming fixed date for independence that year. On July 30, 1980, New Hebrides became the independent Republic of Vanuatu. The new government restored order and

arrested the secessionists, who had been secretly supported by France.

MAJOR CITY

Port-Vila

Port-Vila, the capital of Vanuatu, is located on the island of Efate, the most populous island. The capital is perched on the sides of steep hills along the shores of a horseshoe bay. The town was little more than a row of warehouses along a dirt path until the 1890s, when drought and malaria caused the island's population to relocate its business district from Havannah Harbour. Port-Vila was made the seat of government in 1906. During the 1920s, Port-Vila had a reputation of being a wild frontier town, complete with drunken brawls, gambling, and sporadic gunfights and public executions. During the 1930s, the town was an enclave for the resident Europeans, and Ni-Vanuatu residents were only permitted to live there if they had employment in the town.

Port-Vila has a population of 23,000. In February 1987, a cyclone damaged 95% of the buildings in Port-Vila. Bauerfeld, on Efate, and Pekoa, on Espiritu Santo, are the

main airfields. Port-Vila and Luganville are the principal seaports. Agriculture and services account for most of the domestic economy. There is high-grade manganese ore on Efaté, but it is not currently mined. Tourism is regarded as a secondary part of the economy, and has developed since the 1980s. The country's Financial Centre, a tax haven created by the British in 1971, is the third-largest source of the national government's revenue. Its creation was the catalyst for an increase in construction in Port-Vila area during the 1970s—a new wharf significantly increased cruise ship traffic.

Clothing

Though most Ni-Vanuatu wear Western style clothing, there may be special circumstances within small communities of natives.

For instance, the chief of the small Paama Island community (about 600 people) in the capital of Port Vila has recently banned women from wearing pants, saying that such clothing is an unwelcome Western influence. The all male, honorary police force of the community will uphold the ban. However, there has been no indication, as of yet, that non-Paama women will be cited for wearing pants.

Recreation and Entertainment

Tennis and golf are sports that are popular around Port-Vila. Tennis matches on the international circuit are occasionally held in Vanuatu. Korman Stadium was built for the 4th South Pacific Mini Games that were held in Port-Vila in December 1993. Basketball, boxing, volleyball, and soccer are played there. Netball, handball, squash, and rugby are also played in town. Scuba diving and snorkeling are popular tourist activities, and there are several shipwreck dive sites near Port-Vila.

Port-Vila's panorama, tropical flora, and historic French persuasion make it one of the South Pacific's most picturesque cities. The central business district is concentrated in a half-mile strip along Kumel Highway that follows the waterfront's contour. An area known as Chinatown in central Port-Vila is the commercial center of the islands' Chinese merchant community. The waterfront market is the country's largest, and offers a wide variety of produce, as well as flowers, handicrafts, and artifacts. Independence Park is lined with English-style buildings and is the site of weekend cricket matches. Port-Vila's Quartier Français (French Quarter) contains several houses and the city's town hall, all built in the French colonial style.

Port-Vila has several fine restaurants encompassing Continental French, Vietnamese, and Chinese cuisine. The city also has many nakamals, or kava bars (kava is a popular beverage in the South Pacific, a mild tranquilizer made from ground pepper roots). Movie theaters and other places for nighttime entertainment are available. A new tourist attraction at Vatusala on Efate provides demonstrations of traditional village activities. Several islands of Vanuatu have caves decorated with ancient paintings.

A cultural center in Port-Vila has a library of both French and English books. The library's reading room

contains French and English periodicals and articles on Vanuatu's history. The center also houses a collection of fine Melanesian art and artifacts. There is also a display of preserved native flora and fauna, photographs, and a collection of valuable stamps. The Michoutouchkine and Pilioko Foundation Art Gallery has a display of Pacific art, carvings, masks, prints, and embroideries.

Dancing is an important part of the traditional culture of the Ni-Vanuatu people.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Vanuatu is an irregular Y-shaped chain of 84 islands in the South Pacific Ocean, about three-quarters of the way from Hawaii to Australia. The island chain extends for about 500 miles and lies 600 miles west of Fiji and 250 miles northeast of New Caledonia. The total land area of the islands is 5,699 square miles (about the size of Connecticut), with a total coastline of 1,571 miles. The largest island is Espiritu Santo (sometimes just called Santo), with an area of 1,524 square miles. The islands are of coral and volcanic origin. There are active volcanos on Ambrym, Lopevi, and Tanna. Earthquakes are common, with the most recent severe one happening in 1994. Earthquakes in 1875 and 1948 created tsunamis that wiped out entire villages. The tropical climate is moderated by southeastern trade winds, which blow from May to October. Average temperatures in Port-Vila range from 77°F in winter to 84°F in summer. Cyclones strike the islands an average of 2.5 times each year. In 1987, Cyclone Uma hit Port-Vila and caused widespread damage and many fatalities.

Population

There are approximately 193,000 inhabitants. Only 70 of the islands are inhabited. Two-thirds of Vanuatu's population live on Efate, Espiritu Santo, Malekula, and Tanna. The Ni-Vanuatu are the Melanesian inhabitants of the country, and make up about 95% of the population. Europeans (mostly French) and other Pacific Islanders account for the remainder. About 80% of the population is Christian; the largest sects are Presbyterian, Anglican, and Roman Catholic. In the 1940s, an indigenous cult became popular, especially on Tanna. There was a belief in a mythical messianic figure named John Frum, who could obtain industrial goods through magic. There are 105 languages spoken among Vanuatu's small population, some of which have never been classified. The three official languages are English, French, and Bislama (also known as pidgin English or Bichelama). A child may speak as many as four different languages, and public life is often complicated by language problems.

Government

The Anglo-French Convention of 1887 established a joint naval commission over New Hebrides (as Vanuatu was then known) to protect the lives and interests of islanders. In 1906, the Anglo-French Condominium was established. Indigenous political activity developed after World War II, with increasing concern over land alienation and European dominance. In 1975, a representative assembly replaced the nominated advisory council under which New Hebrides had been governed. Self-government was agreed upon in 1978, and independence was attained in 1980. Under the 1980 constitution, the head of state is the president; the head of government is the prime minister. The unicameral legislature consists of 50 members, elected to four-year terms by popular vote. The judicial system is based on British criminal procedure and the French penal code. The Supreme



Village scene in Vanuatu

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Court has a chief justice and three other judges; there is also an appeals court.

Vanuatu's flag has a red upper section and a green lower section divided horizontally by a gold stripe running within a black border and widening at the hoist into a black triangle. A pig's tusk and two crossed yellow mele leaves are depicted on the black triangle.

Arts, Science, Education

Children are instructed in either English or French during elementary school, then switch to the other language for secondary school. About 90% of Ni-Vanuatu children attend elementary school, but less than 10% go to secondary schools. Cooperative units have organized a training center at Port-Vila for such skills as accounting, management, law, and marketing. The University of the South Pacific has an annex in Port-Vila with a Pacific languages curriculum that attracts students from all over Oceania. For higher education, especially medical or technical training, selected students go to Fiji, Australia, and New Zealand.

Commerce and Industry

Subsistence farming provides a living for most of the population. Fishing and tourism are the other mainstays of the economy. Mineral deposits are negligible; the country has no known petroleum deposits, but the government is encouraging gold and copper mining. A small light industry sector caters to the local market. Offshore banking, insurance, and trusts generate a significant amount of the country's income, due to the lack of taxes, duties, and controls. The government attracts international investors through tax exemptions and the ability to repatriate funds.

Transportation

Only Port Vila and the town of Luganville, located on Espiritu Santo Island, have surfaced roads on which a speed limit of 50 kilometers an hour is enforced. Surfaced roads are two lane and can be narrow in spots; care should be taken especially when driving at night or along unfamiliar routes. The roads found in all other areas are unsurfaced and dirt tracks. Drivers on all roads should give way to traffic coming from the right. Travelers must

take care when driving off main roads to avoid trespassing on communal land.

Travel between the islands is mainly done by light plane and boat. There are 31 small airfields that serve all the main islands. The chief airports are on Efate and Espiritu Santo, but these are still too small to accommodate jumbo jets, limiting the number of flights to and from the islands. Port-Vila and Luganville are the main seaports. Small ships provide interisland service. Vanuatu maintains a policy of open registry for merchant ships, allowing foreign shipowners to avoid the higher costs and regulations of registration under their own flags.

Communications

Vanuatu has an Intelsat satellite earth station that links the country to the rest of the world. Radio Vanuatu broadcasts daily in English, French, and Bislama through AM, FM, and shortwave transmissions. A single television station is also available. The weekly government newspaper is *Vanuatu Weekly Hebdomadaire*. The only private newspaper is the English-language *Trading Post*.

Health

Port-Vila and Luganville have the country's main medical facilities. There are five hospitals (with approximately 370 beds) and about 90 clinics, health centers, and dispensaries scattered throughout the islands. Vanuatu has only about 15 physicians.

Medical conditions resulting from diving accidents may require medical evacuation to Australia or New Zealand. A hyperbaric recompression chamber is located in Luganville on Espiritu Santo Island.

Malaria is a significant danger in most areas. Leprosy, tuberculosis, filariasis, and venereal diseases are also medical problems in Vanuatu.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs & Duties

A passport and onward/return ticket are required. Visas are not required for stays up to 30 days. Travelers who anticipate the possibility of transiting or visiting Australia are advised to obtain an Electronic Travel Authority (ETA) or visa for Australia before leaving the United States. The ETA is available to eligible U.S. citizens at time of ticket purchase through travel agents and airlines. For more information about entry requirements, travelers, particularly those planning to enter by sailing vessel, may consult the Vanuatu Mission to the United Nations at 42 Broadway, Room No. 1200-18, New York, NY 10004; tel (212) 425-9652, fax (212) 422-3427.

.Vanuatu customs authorities may enforce strict regulations concerning temporary importation into or export from Vanuatu of items such as firearms and ammunition, sexually explicit material and certain prescription medications. Other goods may be subject to quarantine or import duty. The government of Vanuatu prohibits the export of artifacts from the Second World War without prior permission. It is advisable to contact the Vanuatu Mission to the United Nations for specific information regarding customs requirements.

There is no U.S. Embassy or diplomatic post in Vanuatu. Assistance for U.S. citizens is provided by the U.S. Embassy in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, which is located on Douglas Street, adjacent to the Bank of Papua New Guinea. This address should be used for courier service deliveries. The mailing address is P.O. Box 1492, Port Moresby, N.C.D. 121, Papua New Guinea; Tel: (675) 321-1455; fax (675) 321-1593. There is a voluntary American Warden located in Port Vila who has general information and forms (such as passport application forms). The U.S. Embassy in Port Moresby can provide information on how to get in touch with the warden in Vanuatu.

Americans are encouraged to register with the U.S. Embassy in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, and to obtain updated information on travel and security in Vanuatu from the Embassy. Information can also be obtained from the homepage of the U.S. Embassy in Port Moresby at <http://www.altnews.com.au/usembassy>.

Disaster Preparedness

Vanuatu lies in the South Pacific cyclonic trajectory, and is vulnerable to earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and sudden tidal movements. The Pacific Cyclone season extends from November through March. General information regarding disaster preparedness is available via the Internet at <http://travel.state.gov/crisismg.html>, and

from the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) home page at <http://www.fema.gov>.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

- Jan.1 New Year's Day
 - Mar.
(2nd Mon) Commonwealth Day*
 - Mar/Apr. Good Friday*
 - Mar/Apr. Easter*
 - Mar/Apr. Easter Monday*
 - May 1 May Day
 - May/June Ascension Day*
 - July 24 Children's Day
 - July 30 Independence Day
 - Aug.15. Feast of the Assumption
 - Oct. 5. Constitution Day
 - Nov. 29 National Unity Day
 - Dec. 25 Christmas
 - Dec. Family Day
- *Variable

RECOMMENDED READING

Harcombe, David. *Vanuatu: a Travel Survival Kit*. Hawthorn, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 1995.

VIETNAM

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam

Major Cities:

Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Haiphong, Da Nang, Huế

Other Cities:

Dalat, Nha Trang, Qui Nhon

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report 1999 for Vietnam. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

VIETNAM is a land of beautiful plains, mountains, and coastline and the site of a once-powerful and rich civilization. Throughout history, Vietnam has been invaded and occupied by various foreign powers. Many Americans were unfamiliar with Vietnam until the mid-1960s, when the United States became embroiled in a conflict between Communist North Vietnam and non-Communist South Vietnam. The United States, an ally of South Vietnam, launched a series of air strikes against North Vietnam in 1965 and sent the first group of combat troops to South Vietnam during that same year. Over the next several years, the United States became increasingly involved in the

conflict. By 1969, 543,000 American combat troops were serving in Vietnam. From 1965–1973, the United States and its South Vietnamese allies fought many bitter and bloody battles against the powerful North Vietnamese Army. On January 27, 1973, the United States and North Vietnam signed a peace agreement which allowed the United States to withdraw its troops from Vietnam. The last American troops left Vietnam on March 29, 1973. The United States involvement in the Vietnam War claimed the lives of 58,000 Americans. The war between North Vietnam and South Vietnam resumed in early 1974, with the North Vietnamese quickly gaining the upper hand. The South Vietnamese army, suffering from high casualties and a lack of ammunition and spare parts, was soon defeated. On April 30, 1975, North Vietnamese Army troops entered Saigon, South Vietnam's capital, to accept the surrender of the South Vietnamese government. The Socialist Republic of Vietnam, created from the former Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam), was established as a new nation in July 1976.

Relations between the United States and Vietnam have been deeply strained since the war. Following the fall of South Vietnam in

1975, the United States imposed an economic embargo against Vietnam which prevented trade between the two countries or American business investment in Vietnam. The demise of communism in Eastern Europe in 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 deprived Vietnam of vital export markets and economic aid and prompted the Vietnamese to seek new economic ties with the United States. Throughout 1992 and early 1993, the United States and Vietnam have begun negotiations to relax or lift the American embargo and establish diplomatic relations. The United States has stated that it will not lift the embargo until the fate of American servicemen missing since the Vietnam War is known. The Vietnamese government has agreed to cooperate in this endeavor.

MAJOR CITIES

Hanoi

Hanoi is the capital of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and has a rapidly increasing population of approximately 3,000,000. It is located in the north of the country along the Red River. It is in an alluvial plain approximately 150 kilometers from the coast and is



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Street scene in Hanoi

surrounded by rural countryside consisting largely of rice paddies.

Utilities

Electricity in Hanoi is 220v/50-cycle AC (with two round pin electrical plugs). Voltage regulators are recommended for most appliances, especially computers, as electrical power in Hanoi is unstable and prone to voltage fluctuations, which could damage sensitive electronic equipment. Small UPS (uninterrupted power supply) units and a full range of transformers are available on the local market.

Food

Fresh meat and dairy products are not considered safe, as the Vietnamese have no adequate inspection system and processing facilities are often crude. However, a number of employees do consume meat and seafood purchased from the local open-air markets without any health problems. Imported seafood and meat, primarily from Australia and New Zealand, are always available fresh or frozen at, of course, a much higher price. Long life UHT milk (whole, low fat and skim) from New Zealand, powdered milk, and butter are readily available.

Most other basic foodstuffs are available in the supermarkets and

delicatessens. The limited selection of Western fruits and vegetables varies from season to season. Principal items which must be imported are traditional holiday foods, ethnic foods, dietary products, baby foods, cereals (those locally available are often stale), snack foods, sports drinks, and treats for children and pets. Personal care and cleaning products are generally available, but U.S. products or equivalents are sometimes scarce and sell at twice the average U.S. price. Seldom will you find a wide selection of products available at one location. Thus, from time to time, you will need to shop around before you find a certain item on your grocery list.

There is also a duty free shop operated by the Vietnamese Government for foreign officials, amply stocked with a variety of canned sodas, liquor, a limited variety of food items, and small appliances.

Clothing

By and large, dress in Hanoi is very similar to that in the U.S. for both business and recreational activities. A word of warning - even though the temperature may not indicate it, winters in Hanoi can be very chilly. Include some warm jackets, sweaters, scarves and hats in your luggage. Also, bring an adequate

supply of dress and sports shoes for everyone.

Women: There are a number of reputable women's clothing shops, which sell off the rack or made to order clothes in a variety of material.

Supplies and Services

Stock up on toiletries, particularly sunscreen lotion and mosquito repellent, paper and plastic products, vitamins, makeup, prescription medicines, and cooking and baking spices and seasoning.

Dry cleaning is good and relatively inexpensive. Shoe repairs are fair. You can get a replacement battery for your watch, but it won't last more than 6 months. Men can get their hair cut on the streets with a head and shoulder massage thrown in for less than \$2. Women's hair cuts range from \$3 to \$20. There are several good unisex beauty shops in town with both Vietnamese and "international" hair stylists offering a complete range of services. Automobile servicing is good, especially for Japanese cars. Picture framing is good and inexpensive.

Domestic Help

Below are examples of staff responsibilities and average salaries (as of January 1999). Salaries are stated in U.S. dollar equivalents and usually are paid in U.S. dollars. Domestic employees usually put in a 6-day workweek. At the higher end of the salary range are staff who speak good English, demonstrate initiative, and have several years experience working for Westerners. Giving your staff a "TET bonus"-equivalent to one month's salary is standard practice in Vietnam. Locally employed domestics do not live in.

Cook/Housekeeper: \$120-220 per month. Plans the meals with you; shops for food; supervises any work done in your house; supervises other household staff; keeps a kitchen account book; does the laundry; and cleans the house.

Maid: \$100-120 per month. Cleans the house; washes dishes; irons clothes; may prepare meals on the cook's day off; may do some marketing. It is possible to have part-time domestic help for one-two days per week for well under \$100/month.

Nanny: \$100-120 per month. Takes care of the children. May help with some light cooking and general housecleaning if the family is small.

Driver: \$100-130 per month. Acts as chauffeur. Purchases the gas and oil. Keeps your car in good operating condition. May also tend the garden and help out during social functions.

Day/Night Watchmen: \$75-80 per month. Screens visitors and guards your house.

Religious Activities

Hanoi has a large Catholic cathedral, but the regular services are only in Vietnamese and French. However, a nondenominational Christian service in English is held every Sunday at 10:30 a.m. on the Van Phuc Diplomatic Compound. Protestant services in English are conducted every Sunday in the Dae-woo Hotel. Islamic services are held every Friday. Jewish services are not available.

Education

United Nations International School (UNIS). Children from kindergarten (prep-1) through grade 12 attend the United Nations International School. Student enrollment for the 1999-2000 school year is 346. The curriculum does not follow any specific national system, but is similar to American elementary and middle school programs. The school has based its curriculum on that used by the United Nations School in New York, as a lead-in to the International Baccalaureate (IB) Program. Currently more than half of the 49 full-time teachers are American or Canadian. The high school is fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and the European Council of International Schools. All instruction is in English. Students are not required to wear uniforms.

Address: Lower School 2C Van Phuc Kim Ma Road, Hanoi Tel: (84-4) 823-0820 Fax: (84-4) 846-1285. Upper School, Hanoi Amsterdam Giang Vo, Hanoi Tel: (84-4) 823-4910 or 823-5782 Fax: (84-4) 846-3635. E-mail: UNIS@netnam.org.vn

Hanoi International School (HIS): In its third year of operation, HIS offers an academic program to meet the individual needs of students from pre-school through high school. The Pre-School program for 3 and 4-year-olds offers a balanced day of free and structured play, storytime, and directed group time. The school's International Baccalaureate (IB) program is divided into IB Early-Years (kindergarten to fifth grade), IB Middle-Years (grades six to ten), and the two-year pre-university IB diploma curriculum (grades eleven to twelve). The school year begins in October and ends in June. All students speak and study in English. The newly-renovated campus includes a library, computer center, science laboratory, music room, sports facilities and playing fields. HIS has an international staff of 13 full-time and 7 part-time teachers from the U.S., Canada, Europe and Asia.

Address: (Local) Lieu Giai Street Hanoi, Vietnam Tel: (84-4) 832-7379 Fax: (84-4) 832-7535. In the U.S., PO. Box 2876, Reston, Virginia 20195 No E-mail.

Morning Star International Kindergarten (MSIK): Opened in 1995, MSIK is a bilingual/multicultural education center for children ages 15 months to 5 years old. The teaching staff encourages the kids to develop basic skills in learning through playing and to develop confidence in themselves and their heritage. The regular year begins in early September and ends in mid June. The summer program begins in June and ends in late August. Lunch is served at 11:30 a.m. Snacks are available both in the morning and in the afternoon.

Located in the Thanh Cong area, the campus facility includes a number of large sunlit air-conditioned

rooms and a spacious outdoor area. A variety of playground equipment and indoor activity materials are provided for recreation and learning.

Schedule Options: 2-1/2 to 5 years old. Full Time, Full Day, Monday to Friday 8:00a.m. to 4:00p.m.; Full Time, Half Day, Monday to Friday 8:00a.m. to 12:30p.m.

15 months to 2-1/2 years old. Full Time, Monday to Friday 9:00a.m. to 12:00p.m; Part Time, Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9:00a.m. to 12:00p.m.

Address: G 6 Thanh Cong Ba Dinh District Hanoi, Vietnam Tel: (84-4) 831-0879 Fax: (84-4) 835-0955. E-mail: mornings@netnam.org.vn Home page: <http://www.destination-vietnam.com/morningstar.htm>

Lycee Francais Alexandre Yersin: Recognized by the French Ministry of National Education and operated in collaboration with the French Embassy in Hanoi, the French International School of Hanoi (FISH) provides an academic curriculum in French for pre-school to high school aged children. FISH has a teaching staff of 35. Enrollment for the 1998-99 school year was approximately 300 (which includes 31 nationalities with the majority being French). Classrooms are large and fully air-conditioned. The cafeteria offers a choice of Vietnamese or Western food. The kindergarten has a well-equipped playground with flowers and trees. The new school building houses a gymnasium, two state-of-the-art laboratories, a well equipped library, and a research and information center with multimedia computer equipment.

Classes begin in September and finish around June 20.

Address: Truong Phap Quoc Te Ptth Hanoi Amsterdam Giang Vo, Hanoi Vietnam. Tel: (84-4) 843-6779 Fax: (84-4) 823-2023 E-mail: yersin@netnam.org.vn or lfay@hn.vnn.vn.

Special Educational Opportunities

Language training is available through a number of local resources.

The Hanoi Fine Arts Institute offers instructions in a variety of art mediums, including Vietnamese lacquer ware and the application of watercolor on silk.

UNIS offers a number of evening courses. You can study art, learn a foreign language, play tennis, do aerobics, surf the Internet, and lots more.

Sports

Tennis: There are plenty of tennis courts in Hanoi, but the demand still exceeds the supply, unless you are able to play during the week in the daytime. Most courts are in good condition and adequately-maintained. Court surfaces are either hard or carpeted. There are, unfortunately, no indoor tennis facilities. Bring a supply of shoes and socks, tennis balls, strings, grips, etc. Tennis equipment and clothes are locally available, but there isn't much of a selection and what is acceptable is more expensive than in the U.S. Court fees vary between \$3 and \$5 during the day, with evening hours (5:00-10:00 p.m.) at double rates. If you provide the string, you can get your racquet restrung in Hanoi for \$1.00. Most Vietnamese tennis coaches will charge \$10/hour. All service apartments, major hotels, and some of the diplomatic missions have tennis courts.

Golf: About 35km west of Hanoi is Kings Island - a scenic 18-hole golf course. The golf club is situated at the base of Ba Vi National Park and is surrounded by historic temples and pagodas, natural caves, waterfalls, hiking trails, hot springs, and ethnic minority villages. A new highway to the course is almost finished, making it about an hour's drive from Hanoi on Highway #11. Facilities include a swimming pool, tennis courts, a fully-stocked pro shop with golf club and shoe rentals, and a clubhouse which serves both Asian and Western food. Member-

ship fee is US \$15,000. Special package day tours allow non-members to play for \$55 during the week and \$80 on the weekend.

Swimming: Most of the larger hotels and service apartments have swimming pools. The schools do not. Avid swimmers usually join a health club with swimming privileges included in the package. One of the larger hotels in the city has the only indoor swimming pool with a retractable roof.

Bowling: There are three large bowling centers. One is located in a hotel just across from the U.S. Embassy (24 lanes) and another is within walking distance. A game costs \$3.00 and bowling shoes rent for \$1.00.

Health Clubs: Virtually every hotel and apartment complex has an exercise room with state-of-the-art equipment, showers, saunas, and whirlpools. Annual fees range from \$550-1200.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Several scenic and historic sights, including national parks and pagodas, can be done via a day trip from Hanoi. Although road conditions and traffic flow are steadily improving, travel can be a bit uncomfortable and stressful, due to poor road conditions. There are also several craft villages within a one-hour drive from Hanoi to view paper making, snake farming, noodle-making, and silk weaving. Also a popular attraction are the nearby factories for making costume jewelry, ceramics, lacquer ware and crystal.

Halong Bay: A five hour drive from Hanoi, Halong Bay is considered by many to be one of the most scenic areas in Asia. The bay consists of hundreds of small islands filled with caves and grottoes full of stalactites and stalagmites. Cat Ba, one of the largest islands in Halong Bay, is home to one of Vietnam's national parks and includes a large seven acre freshwater lake in the center of the island.

Sapa: Built originally as a hill station, Sapa now is one of Vietnam's major tourist attractions in the northernmost part of the country. By road (and some of it very bumpy), Sapa is a 12-14 hour scenic drive from Hanoi. For those travelers who prefer a more comfortable, faster ride up north, the overnight train from Hanoi to Sapa and back is perfectly safe and hassle free. During the weekend, you can mingle with the colorfully dressed hill tribe people (mostly women) who come into Sapa to peddle their home-made garments and textiles. Using Sapa as a base, you can also hike to several minority tribe villages, while taking in the panoramic view of Vietnam's Hoang Lien Mountains.

Vietnam is a photographer's paradise. Camera shops are everywhere. Film can be developed inexpensively in a couple of hours.

Entertainment

There are enough Western restaurants in town to titillate the gourmet's taste buds, ranging from traditional French cuisine to nouveau California fare. There are also some very good Asian restaurants for Vietnamese, Japanese, Korean, and Chinese food. For fast-food lovers, Hanoi offers several restaurants/delis for pizzas, hamburgers and hotdogs, and sub-sandwiches. Hanoi even has a Baskin-Robbins ice cream store.

American Club: The American Community Association (ACA) supervises the operations of the American Club and the Video Club. Patrons and their guests can enjoy an informal meal in the air-conditioned restaurant/bar area or outdoors in the bamboo pavilion. Also on the premises are areas set up for a variety of sports, including darts, billiards, badminton, basketball, and sandlot volleyball. Next to the pavilion is a newly-constructed playground for the younger children. Membership is open to all Embassy employees (American and Vietnamese) and to the expatriate business and diplomatic community (\$60 for singles/\$100 for families).

An additional \$50 fee is charged to join the Video Club, which offers a good selection of movies for both adults and children at a rental fee of \$1.00 per tape.

Social Activities

American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham): The largest business group in Vietnam, AmCham offers opportunities to help international corporations operate and thrive here. There are 230 members in the Hanoi Chapter and 300 in HCMC. Through its committees, AmCham adopts positions on a variety of general business issues in Vietnam. These committees work on such issues as reducing tax burdens for U.S. companies, individuals and their staff. Efforts have also been made to improve access to foreign exchange and to reduce bureaucracy and red tape in business dealings with the Vietnamese Government. Both the chapters in Hanoi and HCMC host a number of working luncheons with keynote speakers throughout the year. AmCham also organizes social activities, including an annual formal dinner/dance.

The Hanoi International Women's Club (HIWC): Open to all foreign women, the Club has approximately 325 members. The IWC promotes goodwill between the host country and the expatriate community through its annual Christmas Charity Bazaar and work throughout the year with local orphanages and rural support systems. The IWC also organizes monthly luncheons, coffee mornings, and orientation programs for newcomers. A non-profit organization, the annual membership fee is \$10 (which basically covers the cost of sending out the IWC monthly newsletters).

International Business Women's Club: A fledgling group of Hanoi's working women - expatriate and Vietnamese - exchange thoughts and network during an informal luncheon meeting once a month.

Ho Chi Minh City

Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) is Vietnam's largest city and river port, covering an area of 761 square miles on the Right Bank of the Saigon River, stretching from the shores of the South China Sea to within a couple miles of the Cambodian border. With a teeming population of 6 million, it is also the economic capital and cultural trendsetter of Vietnam. There are 22 districts (15 urban and 7 rural) with 75% of the population in the urban districts. Only a few degrees above the Equator, the city has a tropical, monsoon climate with an average annual temperature of 83°F.

April is the hottest month with an average temperature of 86°F. There are two seasons-rainy (from June to November) and dry (from December to April). Average number of rainy days annually is 159, with 90% of the rainfall occurring in the rainy season.

Food

The information on food in Hanoi generally applies also to HCMC. There is, however, a wider selection of fruits and vegetables available in HCMC, due to the proximity of HCMC to Dalat, where most of the fruits and vegetables are cultivated.

Clothing

See Hanoi for general information on clothing, but note that HCMC does not have a cold season.

Religious Activities

Houses of worship are available for Buddhists, Catholics, Muslims, and Protestants, but services for most are conducted in Vietnamese. Protestant worshipers can attend services in English on Sunday conducted for foreigners only. There is also a small international Jewish community that observes Jewish holidays. Our Lady Cathedral has a bilingual Vietnamese-English Mass on Sunday mornings.

Education

Fundino Kids Club (FKC): FKC provides high quality, innovative childcare and recreation for chil-

dren 1 to 5 years old. The eye-pleasing, up-beat Clubhouse and grounds are all on one level and colorfully and cleverly decorated with lots of primary colors using a dinosaur theme. There are currently 52 kids enrolled, including one physically handicapped and one developmentally-disabled child. All students are required to wear the Club uniform-T-shirt with a Fundino dinosaur emblem and denim shorts. Fundino's staff consists of 3 full-time expatriate teachers (one with special education training) and 8 Vietnamese assistants. Indoor facilities include a large floor and wall-padded playroom for the tots, a small kitchen for lunch and snacks, a library, and individual rooms for art, music, reading, computer and dance instruction. The spacious outdoor area includes an elaborate playground and wading pool for the older kids. FKC is open after hours to their kids as well as non-registered children, e.g. older siblings who attend other schools. Parents can sign up a child as a "Club Member" and pay a \$5.00 fee (which covers cost of general program, food and drink). Fundino's also caters birthday parties and special events.

Class Schedule: Play & Learn and Mums & Bubs (younger kids attended by a parent or nanny pay a reduced fee) operate Monday through Friday, except for Vietnamese Public Holidays.

Play & Learn 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Age 2-3yrs and 3-5yrs) Mums & Bubs 8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. (Age 1-2yrs) 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. Address: 11B Nguyen Gia Thieu, Ward 6 District 3, HCMC. Tel: 930-0514 Fax: 930-0513 E-mail: none.

Saigon South International School (SSIS): This is a pre-kindergarten through 6th grade, coeducational school located in District 7 (the industrial zone). SSIS is the only school in HCMC which provides an American-based curriculum, with modifications made to accommodate the school's non-American population. In its first year of operation, the school currently shares a building and spa-

cious school grounds with two other schools (Vietnamese and Japanese). Even though the three schools occupy the same campus, they do operate autonomously. Shared facilities include a library media center, a swimming pool, two playgrounds, and a grass soccer field. Students are required to wear uniforms. Potable water is available on campus. However, students must bring their lunches, snacks and beverages to school. At the moment, SSIS does not have any programs for children with special needs.

Address: Phu My Hung Corp. Saigon South Parkway Tan Phu Ward, District 7, HCMC Tel: (84-8) 872-8410 Fax: (84-8) 872-5580 E-mail: none.

Class Schedule: Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. -3:00 p.m.

International School Ho Chi Minh City (IS): Operating in two locations, the Senior Campus for grades 2 through 11 (grade 12 was added for the 1999-2000 term) is located in An Phu. The Junior Campus for pre-school to grade 1 is in District 3. The combined teaching staff totals 59 expatriate and 3 Vietnamese teachers for approximately 350 students. IS is a privately-owned co-educational, non-denominational institution. It operates an international curriculum with the International Baccalaureate diploma program offered in grades 11 and 12. All students (except for grade 11) are required to wear uniforms. Lunch can be purchased from the School's canteen. For recess the School provides its students with nutritional snacks. Potable drinking water is available on both campuses.

Senior Campus Address: 649A Vo Truong Toan St., An Phu, Thu Duc, HCMC Tel: (84-8) 898-9100 Fax: (84-8) 887-4022 E-mail: none.

Junior Campus Address: 236 bis Nam Ky Khoi Nghia St., District 3, HCMC. Tel: (84-8) 822-5858 Fax: (84-8) 823-0000 E-mail: none.

Sports

Tennis: All major hotels and service apartments have either hard or carpeted tennis courts. However, the current supply does not meet the demand, unless you can play during the daytime. Sports center and service apartment court fees range from \$3.00 (before 5:00 p.m.) to \$5.00 (after 5:00 p.m.). Hotels charge \$6.00 and \$12.00, respectively. Tennis pro fees range between \$5-\$8/hour.

Golf: There are three excellent golf clubs in the area. Dong Nai (18-hole) is approximately 1-1/2 hour drive from the city. The other two-Song Bei (18-hole) and Thu Duc (36-hole) are approximately a 45-minute drive. All three golf facilities have a clubhouse with a restaurant. Weekend greens fees are \$85, with weekday specials starting at \$45. Caddies are available at all three clubs. A fourth golf club-Saigon South (9-hole) opened for business in 1999.

Bowling: There are several bowling centers scattered around the city. Fees are the same as in Hanoi.

Swimming: With year-round temperatures in the mid-80s, swimming and/or lounging around the pool can be a great stress reliever. Having said that, you will still, however, need earplugs or a Walkman to deafen the cacophony of round-the-clock street and construction noise.

Jogging and biking: Unfortunately, the city's hazardous traffic conditions preclude all but the foolhardy from jogging and biking safely anywhere in town. Joggers and bikers are relegated to the safe interior facilities of health centers or travelling some distance outside the city.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Hoi An: A 45-minute ride outside of Danang, Hoi An was once a prosperous trading town frequented by the Japanese, Portuguese, Dutch, French and Chinese, Hoi An is now a quaint, artistic tourist attraction. For architecture buffs, there are a

number of well-preserved historic sites in Hoi An over 200 years old, including private homes, chapels, temples, pagodas, bridges and tombs. For the shoppers, Hoi An has lots of art and craft shops, streetside cafes, a large outdoor market, and quality garment tailors who can produce quality dresses, trousers and shirts quickly at very reasonable prices.

Dalat: Approximately 6 hours by road or one hour by plane from HCMC, Dalat enjoys year round spring weather. Dalat offers something for everyone. There is an 18-hole golf course, botanical gardens, ancient palaces and pagodas, and a large central market full of fresh vegetables, fruits and flowers. After a hearty meal, you can walk along small paths behind waterfalls or in the streets of the French Quarter up on the hill.

Hue: The former capital of Vietnam prior to WWII, Hue is surrounded by a large number of historic Imperial landmarks. Hue is a 2-hour plane ride from HCMC and is probably the largest city in Vietnam with the least amount of street traffic. Visitors to Hue can safely explore the inner city on foot. Cyclos can be used to tour the Forbidden Purple City and the Citadel. Bicycles or motor scooters can be rented from hotels for the short trips to the numerous Imperial tombs and pagodas.

Nha Trang: This sleepy little resort town has beautiful sandy white beaches with turquoise water, small outer-lying islands and coral reefs to explore, and the best fresh fruit milkshakes and ice cream in Vietnam. You can navigate around town by foot, cyclo, bicycle or motor scooter without a hassle. Nha Trang is a one-hour plane ride from HCMC.

Entertainment

HCMC has a larger variety of restaurants than Hanoi, including fast food chains (KFC and Jollibee), Tex-Mex, European, Indian, and Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Thai) cuisine. There are also numerous

nightclubs (some with live jazz ensembles), discos, and, of course, karaokes. A couple of the numerous video rental stores in the city stock movies in English. HCMC also has three large water parks and an 18-hole miniature golf course near the airport.

Social Activities

American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham): See Hanoi section.

Saigon International Women's Club (SIWC): The Saigon Chapter has approximately 600 members. (See Hanoi International Women's Club for activities.)

Haiphong

Vietnam's third largest city, Haiphong, is located in northern Vietnam approximately 10 miles from the Gulf of Tonkin. The city is one of Vietnam's major ports and a principal industrial city. Industries in Haiphong produce a number of products, including glass, cement, cotton, and chemicals. The city's location near the Gulf of Tonkin has led to the development of a large fishing industry. Haiphong was heavily bombed from 1965 to 1972 by American warplanes, but much of the damage has been repaired. In 1992, Haiphong had a population of approximately 783,000.

Recreation and Entertainment

Recreational activities in and around Haiphong are somewhat limited. The city offers many opportunities for souvenir shopping. Markets and stores in Haiphong sell pearl jewelry, brass figurines, carpets, and products made of buffalo horns and tortoise shells. The prices for many of these souvenirs is very reasonable. Other souvenirs can be purchased in the nearby village of Bao Ha. Villagers in Bao Ha are noted for their exquisite wood carvings of religious figures, lions, dragons, and buffalo. These carvings are very well-made and reasonably priced.



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Tomb of Tu Duc in Hué

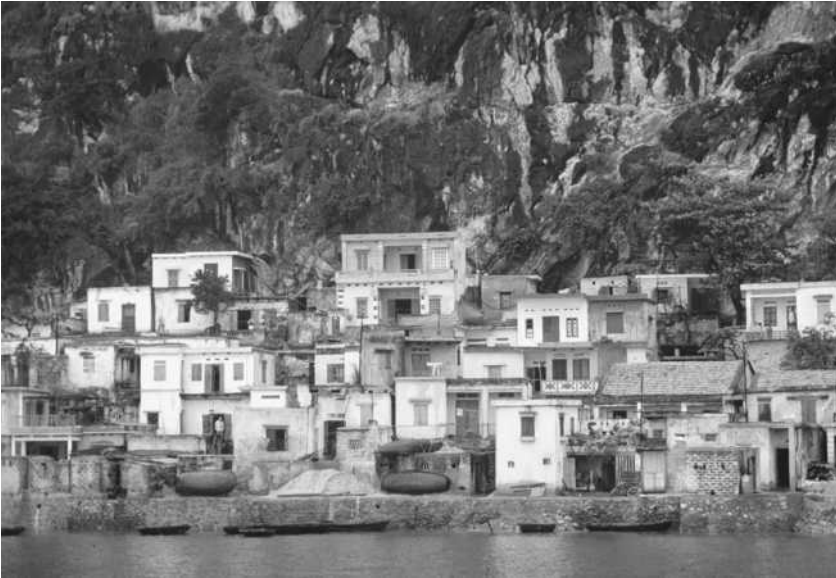
Haiphong has two primary tourist attractions. The Hang Kenh Communal House is one of the city's most interesting architectural structures. It is composed of over 500 intricate wood sculptures. Also, the 300-year-old Du Hang Pagoda is open to visitors. It is considered Haiphong's finest example of Vietnamese temple architecture. The Du Hang Pagoda contains a beautifully carved altar and several interesting statues of Buddha. A stone stela (tablet) in the pagoda lists the names of those who have served as caretakers for the pagoda over the centuries.

For tourists who enjoy sand and surf, the Do Son Beach is a pleasant

place to visit. Located approximately 13 miles southeast of Haiphong, Do Son Beach is a popular resort for Vietnamese and foreigners alike. It has miles of beautiful sandy beaches and several nice hotels.

Da Nang

Da Nang is located in central Vietnam and is the country's fourth largest city. The city became the site of a major American military base during the Vietnam War. Today, Da Nang is one of Vietnam's largest ports. Several industries are located in Da Nang. These industries produce beverages, machinery, and textiles. The city is a transportation



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Village nearby Haiphong

hub for central Vietnam. Roads and railways link Da Nang with Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. In 1993, Da Nang had a population of approximately 383,000.

Recreation

Da Nang has many attractions that are of interest to visitors. Among the most interesting sites are the Marble Mountains. The Marble Mountains consist of five hills composed of marble. According to local traditions, these five hills represent the five elements of the universe (water, fire, metal, wood, and earth). Several caves containing Buddhist Shrines are located on the largest of the Marble Mountains, Thuy Son. These shrines, each of them unique, are open to visitors. Tours of the caves are conducted daily. Located near the Marble Mountains is China Beach (Non Nuoc Beach). This beach was a favorite relaxation and picnic spot for American soldiers during the Vietnam War.

Da Nang's Cham Museum is well worth a visit. This museum contains sculpture from the fourth through fourteenth centuries. Each room of the museum is dedicated to sculpture and artifacts from a particular period in Vietnamese history. An English-language booklet explaining the origin and history of

the museum's artifacts is available from tour guides.

Entertainment

Opportunities for entertainment in Da Nang are rather sparse. Several restaurants in the city serve good traditional Vietnamese or French cuisine. Vegetarian dishes can be found at food stalls in the city. Da Nang has many shops and handicraft markets that fulfill the needs of most souvenir shoppers. Many tourists enjoy visiting Cho Con, Da Nang's central market. Among the products available to customers include flowers, household items, fruit, stationary, and ceramics. Bamboo handicrafts, rugs, and wood carvings, sold in Da Nang, make excellent souvenirs. Nightclubs are available in downtown Da Nang. On occasion, the city's Municipal Theatre offers performances of classical Vietnamese drama.

Huế

The city of Huế is situated on the Huong River in central Vietnam. Huế served as the capital of Vietnam from 1802 to 1945. Today, it is one of Vietnam's educational, religious, and cultural centers. The city was heavily damaged during the Vietnam War when it was a major focus of the North Vietnamese Tet

offensive in 1968. Although many priceless treasures, buildings, museums, and shrines were destroyed, some of the damage has been repaired. Huế experiences a very hot and dry climate, particularly during the summer. From September to April, the city receives heavy rainfall. Huế had a population of approximately 220,000 in 1992.

Recreation

Huế offers extensive opportunities for sight-seeing. Tourists may visit the Forbidden Purple City. This palace was used exclusively by emperors and their families. The entire complex was practically leveled during the Tet Offensive of 1968, but parts of the building's library have been reconstructed. Located near the Forbidden Purple City, the Thai Hoa Palace is a beautiful structure which escaped damage during the war and is open to visitors. Constructed in 1805, the Thai Hoa Palace has an ornate red lacquer ceiling with gold inlays.

The Imperial Museum is well worth a visit. Although many priceless artifacts were destroyed during the Vietnam War, some of the museum's treasures survived without damage. Among the items on display are furniture, clothing, and a sedan chair used by Vietnamese emperors.

Huế was the final resting place of seven Vietnamese emperors. As a result, many tombs are located in the city. Most of the tombs contain not only the remains of the emperor, but also an altar containing some of the personal treasures possessed by the emperor and a temple for personal devotions. One of the most impressive of all tombs is the Tomb of Minh Mang. This tomb has beautiful architecture and magnificent stone carvings. Another tomb, the Tomb of Khai Dinh, is frequently visited by tourists. Although the exterior of the tomb is unimpressive, the interior contains magnificent frescoes made of colorful glass and ceramic fragments. The Tomb of Khai Dinh also contains a bronze statue of the emperor adorned in royal clothing.

Entertainment

Western-style entertainment in Hué is very limited. Most entertainment activity centers around shopping in the city's huge Dong Ba Market. A wide variety of products are available at this market, including the large conical hats that are worn by many Vietnamese. Hué's Gold and Silver Trade Department sells beautiful gold and silver handicrafts.

Several restaurants serving traditional Vietnamese, French, and vegetarian cuisine are located in Hué. Good food is also available at food stalls throughout the city. The prices of food in Hué is very reasonable.

OTHER CITIES

The city of **DALAT** is located in the central highland region of southern Vietnam. Dalat is situated in a forested region amid beautiful lakes and waterfalls. It enjoys a pleasant, cool climate, with a rainy season between July and October. The city is noted for its fresh vegetables, strawberry jam, candied plums, wine, artichokes, tea, and tropical flowers and is a popular tourist destination. Coffee, rubber, and tea plantations near the city are an important contributor to the local economy. Dalat is the home of a major university. Road and air connections link Dalat with Ho Chi Minh City. Dalat has an estimated population of 125,000.

NHA TRANG is situated at the mouth of the Cai River in southeastern Vietnam. The city's location near the South China Sea has led to its development as a major port city. Fishing is the primary industry in Nha Trang and the city is noted for its excellent seafood. The region near Nha Trang is very fertile and supports the growth of coffee, coconuts, sesame seeds, and cashew nuts. These agricultural products are exported through the city's port. Tourists are attracted to Nha Trang's beautiful, sandy beaches and the coastal waters are condu-

cive to snorkeling, fishing, and scuba diving. The city is connected by road, air, and rail with Ho Chi Minh City. Nha Trang had a population of roughly 221,000 in 1992.

The city of **QUI NHON** is located in central Vietnam and is an important port city. Qui Nhon has very few industries, the largest of which are salt evaporation and fishing. The city offers weekly flights to Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. In 1992, Qui Nhon had a population of 163,400.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Area and Geography

Like a dragon floating in the sea, Vietnam winds its way some 1,030 miles up from the South China Sea to the Gulf of Tonkin, with its head caressing the border of China to the north and its back resting snugly against her Southeast Asian neighbors Laos and Cambodia to the west. The total land area of Vietnam covers about 128,000 square miles (larger than Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina combined). Vietnam's main cities, for population and importance, are Hanoi, Haiphong, Hue, and Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon).

Vietnam's northern terrain is mostly mountainous or hilly, with some highland areas covered by a thick green blanket of jungle (about half the total land area). The Red River Delta and coastal plains in the lowland part of the North are heavily populated and intensively cultivated (almost entirely by rice fields). Although much of this Delta Region is seasonally flooded, a complex network of dikes and levees help to prevent serious flood damage.

The southern part of Vietnam is dominated by the estuary of the Mekong River system and is low, flat, and frequently marshy. The

rich soil in the Mekong Delta is the most fertile in the country. Areas immediately north and east of Ho Chi Minh City in the Mekong Delta are much more varied-with low-lying tropical rain forest, upland forest, and the rugged Annamite Mountain chain.

Vietnam is largely a tropical monsoon country. In the north, a hot rainy season prevails from May to September. The average temperature in Hanoi is about 86°F during this period, with very high humidity. Due to the lack of proper drainage, flooding caused by heavy rainfall and/or typhoons can create hazardous conditions to one's health and property. Flooded streets slow down traffic and provoke accidents. Houses and furnishings can suffer as a result of leaky roofs and other sources of water damage. Food supplies are also affected. During the cooler, dry season in the north from December to March, the average temperature is 68°F, with overnight minimums sometimes around 40°-42°F. Due to the lack of heating in most shops and offices during the dry season, it will feel considerably colder.

In the south, Ho Chi Minh City and the Mekong Delta experience a year-round tropical climate with daily temperatures normally exceeding 88°F. The rainy season in Danang and Hue in the center of the country lasts from October to March.

Population

In 2000 Vietnam's rapidly growing population was estimated at nearly 80 million, making it the twelfth most populous country in the world. The population makeup is roughly 85% ethnic Vietnamese, 3% ethnic Chinese, and the remaining 12% a mixture of over 50 ethno-linguistic groups, including Khmer, Cham and Muong. The largest single minority group - the Chinese - live mostly in the Cho Lon District of Ho Chi Minh City and other large cities. Vietnam's infant mortality rate is 36/1000. Life expectancy for males is 63 years and 67 years for females.

Vietnam has one of the most complex ethno-linguistic mixes in all of Asia. Aside from the Kinh or Vietnamese, the rest of the country's 54 nationalities inhabit the Central Highlands and the mountainous regions in the north. The official language is Vietnamese—a hybrid of Mon-Khmer, Tai and Chinese. English is increasingly favored as a second language. In addition to English, many Vietnamese officials and businessmen speak some French, Russian or Chinese.

The predominant religion practiced by 90% of the Vietnamese is Mahayana Buddhism, which is often referred to as a way of life or a philosophy rather than a religion. It advocates moderation in all facets of life and sees material objects as standing in the way of greater happiness. Buddhists believe in reincarnation, with the actions of your current life determining the role of your next life.

By living simply and selflessly, a person will be reincarnated many times over. This continues over many lifetimes until the soul reaches a stage of eternal happiness - nirvana. Other religions practiced in Vietnam are Confucianism, Taoism, Catholicism, Animism, Cao Daim, and Islam.

Culture

The Vietnamese family unit (particularly in the rural areas) is patriarchal in nature with strong familial ties. It is not unusual to find three or four generations living in the same household. Personal names are written with the family name first, middle name second, and the first name last. It is common practice to address people by their first names, e.g. a woman by the name of Nguyen Anh Tuyet would be addressed as “Miss Tuyet.”

Observing the following local customs will help keep you from embarrassing yourself with the Vietnamese. Crossing your index and middle finger (our way of wishing it were so) is considered to be a lewd gesture. Direct eye contact is

seen as a sign of disrespect. Touching someone, especially on the head, is not welcomed. Motioning for someone to come with your palm up is considered rude. Handing a pair of chopsticks or a toothpick to someone is considered bad luck. And, last but not least, the Vietnamese (like most other Asians) do not like to “lose face.” When they don't understand a request or question, they will still respond affirmatively so as not to lose face. Although they might disagree, they will nod affirmatively just to avoid confrontation. The Vietnamese are not prone to show their emotions in public.

Public Institutions

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) is a one-party state controlled by the Vietnamese Communist Party, with the Political Bureau (Politburo) as the central organ of the Party. Its national flag is red with a large yellow star in the center. The Party's constitutionally mandated leading role and the occupancy of nearly all the senior Government positions by Party officials ensures the primacy of Politburo guidelines. The National Assembly (chosen in quadrennial elections) elected non-Party members for the first time in 1997. But, despite some increased activism, it remains largely controlled by the Party. Party intrusion into Government operations has diminished somewhat, allowing Government officials to have more latitude in implementing policy. The Party and State have also diminished their intrusion into the daily lives of the people.

Vietnam's administrative bodies are divided into the following four levels: 1) central; 2) provincial and municipal (Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Danang, and Haiphong); 3) quarters (urban) and districts (rural); and 4) precincts (urban) and communes (rural). Vietnam has 61 provinces, 3 municipalities under central government control, one special zone, urban quarters and rural districts, and urban precincts and rural communes. All these different levels have a fair degree of independence in implementation of

policy and administration of local resources.

There are a number of “mass organizations.” The Women's Union (approximately half of the total labor force), the Farmer's Union, and the Youth Union are called on to represent the interests of various sectors of the Vietnamese public and serve as a political link between the people and the Communist Party on the one hand, and the Party and Vietnamese Government on the other. The Vietnam Fatherland Front, an umbrella organization under the Communist Party, coordinates and oversees the activities of these mass organizations. The Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) represents the commercial interests of both state-owned industries and the private sector and informally advises the Vietnamese Government on economic policy.

Vietnam obtained membership in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in July 1995 and in the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in November 1998. The SRV also belongs to the following international organizations: The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), UN Development Program (UNDP), UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), WHO (World Health Organization), World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), ADB (Asian Development Bank), INTELSAT, Mekong Committee, Nonaligned Movement, and the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council. Vietnam also has observer status in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

Arts, Science and Education

The art scene in Vietnam reflects the perception of a people surrounded by a rich cultural heritage

who at the same time are striving to stake their place in the modern world. There are dozens of art galleries in Hanoi-many with high-quality paintings available, but just as many with trendy commercialized “souvenir” artwork churned out for the tourist trade. Other popular art forms include ceramics, religious wood carving sculptures and lacquer ware. Hanoi's Art Museum contains a smattering of work from different eras but probably does not have as good a collection as some of the private galleries. Also of interest are Hanoi's History Museum which contains artifacts from 1,000 years ago and the recently opened Ethnological Museum.

The capital city of Hanoi is sometimes referred to as “Asia's architectural pearl,” with its mixture of traditional Southeast Asian/Chinese Art Deco and French Colonial styles. Juxtaposed among these quaint and pastel-colored turn of the century houses and office buildings are the recently constructed hotels and high-rise buildings of shiny steel and glass. There is an international movement - Friends of Vietnam's Heritage - actively engaged in preserving the architecture of the past in the face of the temptation to tear it down to build more commercial enterprises.

The Opera House is one center of culture in Hanoi. It is the home of the Hanoi Symphony Orchestra. International cultural groups also perform at the Opera House or at Hanoi's Music Conservatory. There are several smaller theaters for traditional Vietnamese opera (“cheo”) and water puppet performances.

Although the quality of education has improved significantly here, Vietnam's reputation as a highly educated country exceeds the reality. Vietnam's population is probably better educated than other countries enduring similar levels of economic development. But, for the most part, the academic curriculum in this country still focuses on rote memory and “the one right answer.” Since economic reforms officially began in 1986, literacy levels have

fallen due to families, particularly in the rural areas, pulling their children out of the classroom to earn money. Schools operate on double and sometimes triple shifts, meaning very little actual classroom time for many students. Educational facilities are frequently inadequate. Oftentimes families cannot afford the fees for attending school beyond the very basic levels.

The National University has many branches, the most prestigious of which is located in Hanoi. The SRV is striving to improve its comparatively low level of technological knowledge, particularly in the field of computer science.

Initiated in Vietnam in 1992, the Fulbright Program enrolls some 30 Vietnamese officials, scholars and professionals annually in graduate programs at leading American universities. Last year the program began funding American graduate student research in Vietnam. This year's Fulbright agenda included placing American lecturers at seven Vietnamese universities to teach and consult in various disciplines. In addition, there is a Fulbright run program in Hanoi, which trains mostly provincial level officials in economic decision-making.

Commerce and Industry

After a decade of political isolation brought on by its invasion of Cambodia, Vietnam began to open its doors in 1986, seeking both to enter the marketplace and participate in the international community. As in China, reforms started with the agricultural sector and an opportunity for farmers to hold land for extended periods of time and decide on what crops to plant and how to sell much of what they produced. The “doi moi” (renovation) reforms also tried to create an atmosphere to attract foreign investment.

Agriculture, especially wet-rice cultivation, accounts for nearly 30% of overall production and employs the great majority of the population.

Important cash crops include coffee, rubber, tea, and mulberry (for silk production). Vietnam has significant deposits of crude oil and natural gas lying mainly off the southern coast, as well as coal and limestone. Other minerals are present, but not in marketable quantities, using locally available technology. Sixty per cent of the industrial sector is still in the hands of state-owned companies. The country's main exports are garments, textiles, crude oil, rice, seafood products, coffee, footwear, and other agricultural products. Export of light manufactured goods, especially textiles, footwear, and processed foods, is growing in importance. Major imports include petroleum products, industrial machinery, vehicles, consumer electronics, telecommunications equipment, fertilizers, and pharmaceuticals.

European and Asian investors came first, and remain among Vietnam's top ten investors even today. The U.S. trade embargo was not lifted until February 1994, after a long period in which the U.S. sought to strengthen Vietnamese commitments to cooperate on the humanitarian MIA issue. Vietnam also focused on re-establishing both regional and international ties, establishing diplomatic relations with over 100 countries. As a member of ASEAN, Vietnam committed itself to the ASEAN Free Trade Agreement (AFTA) as a part of the requirements for further economic reforms and tariff reductions.

Vietnam's reform process had already slowed by 1997, due to a two-year process in which Vietnam moved from a generation of 80-year-old leaders to a government and party led by men in their sixties. The new leadership pledged to continue the reform process and has not rolled back any of the earlier reform policies. But they have yet to move past the earlier stages of reform to attack the inefficiencies of a State-run system, preferring instead to sustain a lower level of growth while maintaining basic social stability and control by the Communist party.

The initial boom in foreign investment began to create the trappings of modernity in larger cities like Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC). Hanoi, Haiphong, Hue and Danang got new hotels, taxi cabs and the start of a tourism industry. The hotel boom, most notably in Hanoi and HCMC, became a bust in 1997-98 when the over supply of three, four, and five-star facilities tumbled room rates. Unfortunately, this did not fill Hanoi's 3,000 new, higher-end hotel rooms because tourist levels had already begun to fall as a result of the Asian financial crisis. This crisis has also taken a deep bite out of foreign investment levels, which have been declining since 1996. By the end of 1997, U.S. investment in Vietnam reached \$1.4 billion, putting us seventh behind the French and a host of regional countries with significantly more money invested than the U.S. Two-way trade at about \$700-800 million is a fraction of its potential because of the absence of normal trade relations (formerly called MFN or most favored nation status).

Negotiation of a bilateral trade agreement has been a priority for the U.S. and Vietnam since the opening of our respective embassies in August 1995 and the commitments of then Secretary of State Christopher and Foreign Minister Cam to concentrate next on economic normalization. Movement has been slow, following the U.S. presentation of a draft agreement in April 1997. However, both sides remain committed to moving forward.

Another area of mutual interest, which has yet to be realized, is the negotiation of a Civil Aviation Agreement. Thus far, U.S. proposals have not been viewed favorably by the SRV in civil aviation negotiations. On the positive side, however, we have concluded a copyright agreement, providing reciprocal protection to published works, and are hoping to conclude a counter-narcotics agreement and a framework for science and technology cooperation.

Transportation

Automobiles

Having your own car or recreational van will add a great deal of convenience and independence to your life. Retaining a full-time driver is highly recommended, particularly if you have school-aged children with extracurricular activities and active social lives. A valid U.S. driver's license is required to obtain a local driver's permit. (International driver's licenses are not valid in Vietnam.) Please note that you may not import a vehicle over four years old.

Driving in Vietnam is stressful and requires a great deal of care and vigilance to avoid accidents. Most people do not obey standard rules of the road. Traffic moves on the right, but operators sometimes do not stay on their own side of the road. There are very few traffic lights or stop signs. In principle, the bigger you are, the more right of way you have. Another basic rule of thumb for driving in Vietnam: Those behind need to watch out for those in front or alongside. If you plan on operating a motorcycle or riding a bicycle, bring a sturdy helmet. Department of Transportation approved helmets provide excellent protection; however, some people find that the limitation of peripheral vision from a full face helmet is not always a good trade off in Vietnam given the need to watch for lane intrusion from all directions. An open-faced helmet or even a bicycle helmet may be appropriate, but riding bareheaded is not.

Virtually everyone in HCMC owns a motor scooter and operates it like there's no tomorrow. With this seemingly endless stream of motor vehicles, HCMC is, without a doubt, one of the noisiest cities in the world. At first glance, one might think HCMC's mostly straight and perpendicular roads would be safer to navigate than Hanoi's winding streets, but one quickly realizes that havoc reigns supreme down south. People make U-turns wherever they please. Motor scooters dodge in and out pushing your nerves to the limit. If that weren't enough, the

motor scooter operators drive significantly faster and are terrifyingly more reckless than in Hanoi. And, if the speed doesn't get to you, the abundant exhaust fumes will.

Local

Taxis are plentiful and the taxi drivers usually understand enough English to take you where you want to go. Cities still have many cyclos or pedicabs you can use for short distances and/or more scenic rides. There are also "hugging" motor scooter rides available for the more adventuresome traveler (riding behind a Vietnamese on a 100cc Honda Dream).

Regional

Using local buses is not recommended. They are not only crowded and uncomfortable, but are also considered unsafe for most foreigners. Trains in Vietnam only service coastal cities. Not only are they limited in service, but they run slowly on a narrow gauge track and, except for a special group of cars used from Hanoi to Sapa in the northwest highlands, are uncomfortable, unsafe, and noisy. Vietnam Airlines and its sister company, Pacific Airlines, monopolize the domestic air service, and enforce a double-tier price structure, which subsidizes Vietnamese travelers' fares. Suffering financial difficulties, Vietnam Airlines sometimes cancels flights without notice, often leaving passengers stranded.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

Local and international telephone service is available and reliable. International direct dial service is excellent. A 3-minute call to the U.S., however, costs approximately \$15 (one of the highest rates in the world). Direct calls from the U.S. can be received in Hanoi and cost approximately \$1.50 per minute.

Radio and TV

The Vietnamese Government operates two radio stations, which broadcast classical music, traditional Vietnamese music, the news

in Vietnamese, and American pop music a couple of hours per day.

There are four Vietnamese television channels. With the significant increase in the expatriate population during the past couple of years, installation of satellite dishes on detached houses and service apartments has brought a myriad of international television channels to Vietnam, including but not limited to-CNN, CNBC, MTV, and Hong Kong's Star World and Star Sports (which show selected British, Australian and American programs). Other channels available come from China, France, Australia, Indonesia, India and Malaysia. In Hanoi, one can obtain cable service from Vietnam TV for an initial fee of \$250.00 and a monthly fee of about \$30.00.

In HCMC, the following cable channels can be viewed in all major hotels and service apartments: CNN, CNBC, DIS, HBO, MTV, TNT, National Geographic and the Cartoon Network. Other channels come from Australia, France, Japan, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the UK. Radio stations play both Vietnamese and Western music.

Locally purchased televisions and VCRs use the NTSC PAL system. Both PAL-system and multi-system televisions and VCRs are available here at reasonable prices.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

Personnel are advised to bring reading material from home because English language books and magazines are scarce. Moreover, what little supply of English language material is available in Vietnam costs two to three times what we would pay in the U.S.

The local print and broadcast media are run by the Communist Party and Government of Vietnam. Reporting of local developments is therefore heavily controlled and coverage of international events is limited.

E-mail and Internet services have recently become available but can also be censored. Because of power outages, service is often unreliable and subject to interruptions.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

The medical care available in Vietnam does not meet U.S. standards. Anything involving broken bones or other surgical procedures will entail a medevac. Medevac patients are flown either to Bangkok, Hong Kong or Singapore.

There are three medical facilities in Hanoi approved by the U.S for minor medical treatment: Dr. Kot's Clinic, AEA International, and the Hanoi International Hospital. In HCMC the three approved medical facilities are: AEA International, Columbia - Gia Dinh Clinic, and Dr.Vannort's Clinic. All of the above medical facilities have a number of qualified foreign doctors on staff who speak English. While each can treat routine illnesses and stabilize trauma, they are not full service medical facilities. Dentists are also available in Hanoi and HCMC and the caliber of general dental care is considered good.

Community Health

Tap water is not considered safe to drink. Bottled water can always be purchased in most restaurants and grocery stores. Consuming ice made from unfiltered water poses a risk when having refreshments outside the home.

All fruits and vegetables eaten raw should be thoroughly cleaned using an acceptable washing/soaking procedure. Reports by several Western doctors have noted that Vietnamese farmers rely heavily on DDT and night soil.

The sewage system is inadequate and in many places within the cities totally nonexistent. And, since the majority of Vietnamese homes in the city do not have indoor plumbing, it is not uncommon to see the

Vietnamese using trees and walls as urinals, or to see the children use runoff channels in the street next to the sidewalks as toilets. Spitting, nose picking and nose blowing on the sidewalk are also common. During the rainy season, the aforementioned practices are even more of a health hazard due to flooding on the streets and sidewalks.

Shopkeepers and residents place garbage in small piles outside in anticipation of the evening garbage collector, who then hauls away the debris in an open cart. Oftentimes, people can be seen sitting along the streets sifting through a day's collection of garbage to recover recyclable material. A neighborhood site serves as the pickup point for the city's garbage trucks.

Preventive Measures

Be aware of both the medical and physical health hazards in country. Try to avoid exposure to mosquitoes and/or use mosquito repellent. Mosquitoes are the most common transmitter for dengue fever, malaria and Japanese encephalitis. Recurring parasitic infestations (e.g. worms) are a problem. Individuals usually suffer some form of intestinal disorder (from mild to severe) within a few weeks after arrival in Vietnam. Diseases prevalent in Vietnam include tuberculosis, dengue fever, Japanese encephalitis, hepatitis, STDs, and malaria. Inoculation against cholera and taking malaria suppressants are not necessary. Children should have the normal variety of immunizations, including the three-shot rabies preventive series and a tetanus booster. Local pharmacies are known to carry contraband or counterfeit medication. Bring at least a 3-month supply of medicine for chronic conditions and arrange for regular renewal of supplies to be sent through mail.

Contact lenses and solutions are available in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, though they may be difficult to find. With increasing pollution levels, those using extended wear lenses may find them inappropriate. If you wear eyeglasses, however, it is advisable to bring an extra pair.

Larger (men's) size frames are not available and frame styles are quite limited. Acceptable eye care services are available in Bangkok, Hong Kong or Singapore.

Pickpocketing and handbag/camera snatching are common occurrences (much more so in HCMC than in Hanoi), particularly before the Lunar New Year - late January/early February. Fortunately, most of these petty crimes are economic and non-violent in nature. Should you be the unfortunate victim of such petty crimes, it is wise not to resist. Stolen cameras, wallets and handbags can be replaced; they are not worth risking life and limb.

While most people are more concerned with threats of infectious disease, traumatic injuries resulting from automobile or motorcycle accidents are the greatest hazard. Be sure to bring a sturdy helmet if you intend to ride either a bicycle or motor scooter in Vietnam.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs & Duties

The most direct route to Vietnam from the U.S. is by air over the Pacific. Getting to Hanoi usually requires an overnight in Bangkok or Hong Kong to connect planes.

U.S. passports are valid for travel in Vietnam. Visas are required and should be obtained from a Vietnamese Embassy or Consulate before traveling to Vietnam. Visas may be issued for one or multiple entries but are usually valid for only one entry. Visas are generally valid for one month, but increasing numbers of travelers have been successful in having their visas renewed after their arrival in Vietnam for up to three months. Entry into and exit from Vietnam is sometimes restricted to a specific port of entry.

U.S. citizens are cautioned that the Vietnamese immigration regulations require foreigners entering

Vietnam to carry out only the activity for which the visas were issued. Change of purpose requires permission from the appropriate Vietnamese authority in advance. U.S. citizens whose stated purpose of travel is tourism but who engage in religious proselytizing have had religious materials confiscated and have been expelled from Vietnam.

No shots are required for entering Vietnam unless you are coming from a country that has had an outbreak of cholera, smallpox, or yellow fever.

Current entry requirements as well as other information may be obtained from the Vietnamese Embassy, 1233 20th Street, Suite 400, NW, Washington, DC 20036, telephone 202-861-0694 or 2293, Fax 202-861-1297, Internet home page: <http://www.vietnamembassy-usa.org>; the Vietnamese Consulate General, 1700 California Street - 4th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94109, telephone 415-922-1577, or from a travel agent who organizes travel to Vietnam. Overseas inquiries may be made at the nearest Vietnamese Embassy

U.S. citizens have been detained after traveling in areas close to the borders with Vietnam's neighbors. These areas and other restricted areas are not always marked, and there are no warnings about prohibited travel. Travelers should avoid such areas unless written permission is obtained in advance from local authorities

U.S. citizens living in or visiting Vietnam are encouraged to register in person or via telephone with the consular section of the U.S. Embassy in Hanoi or the U.S. Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City and to obtain updated information on travel and security within Vietnam.

The Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Hanoi is located at 6 Ngoc Khanh, Ba Dinh District, Hanoi, Socialist Republic of Vietnam, telephone: (84-4) 831-4590; after hours emergency telephone

number: (84-4) 772-1500; fax: (84-4) 831-4578, Internet home page: <http://usembassy.state.gov/vietnam/>. The consular section's business hours are 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. The Embassy's Consular Section provides the full range of services for U.S. citizens (passport services, consular reports of birth abroad, notarial services) and non-immigrant visa services (except K-1 fiancee visas).

The U.S. Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City is located at 4 Le Duan, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City, Socialist Republic of Vietnam, telephone: (84-8) 822-9433, fax: (84-8) 822-9434, Internet home page <http://www.uscongenhcmc.org>. The Consulate General's business hours are 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. The Consulate General provides the full range of consular services for U.S. citizens and the full range of immigrant and non-immigrant visa services. All immigrant visa processing in Vietnam, including visas for adopted children and fiance/e visas, is conducted solely at the Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City.

Callers from the U.S. should note that Vietnam is 12 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time and 11 hours ahead of Eastern Daylight Time.

Pets

Pets can be brought into Vietnam. All animals must have a certificate of health issued by a veterinarian, including certification of inoculation against rabies dated between one to six months before the pet's arrival at post. Currently, no quarantine is required. Pets are usually brought in as excess baggage at the traveler's expense, rather than as cargo, to avoid long airport delays and expensive handling charges. You should notify post via telegram or fax prior to arrival to obtain an import permit. Competent veterinary services are available in Hanoi and HCMC. A limited variety of dogs, cats and birds are available in the local marketplace at very reasonable prices. Hanoi even has a bona fide pet store.

Currency, Banking, and Weights and Measures

The monetary unit is the Vietnamese Dong (VND). There are no coins. Paper notes bear the portrait of Ho Chi Minh with the smallest note at VND 100 and the largest at VND 50,000. The rate of exchange fluctuates. In November 1999 it was VND 14,040 to US\$1. The Vietnamese use the international metric system of weights and measures. Gasoline and other liquids are sold by the liter, cloth by the meter, and food and other weighted items by the kilogram. Distance and speed are measured in kilometers.

Taxes, Exchange, and Sale of Property

There is a 10% VAT on all locally purchased items.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

- Jan.1 New Year's Day
 - Feb. 3 Communist Party Foundation Day
 - Jan/Feb Tet Nguyen Dan*
 - Mar. 8 Women's Day
 - Mar. 26 Youth Day
 - Apr. 30 Victory Day
 - May 1 Labor Day
 - May 19 Ho Chi Minh's Birthday
 - June 1 Children's Day
 - July 27 Memorial Day (war martyrs)
 - Sept 2 Vietnamese National Day
 - Sept. 28 Confucious Birthday
 - Nov 20 Teacher's Da
 - Dec. 22 Army Day
- *variable

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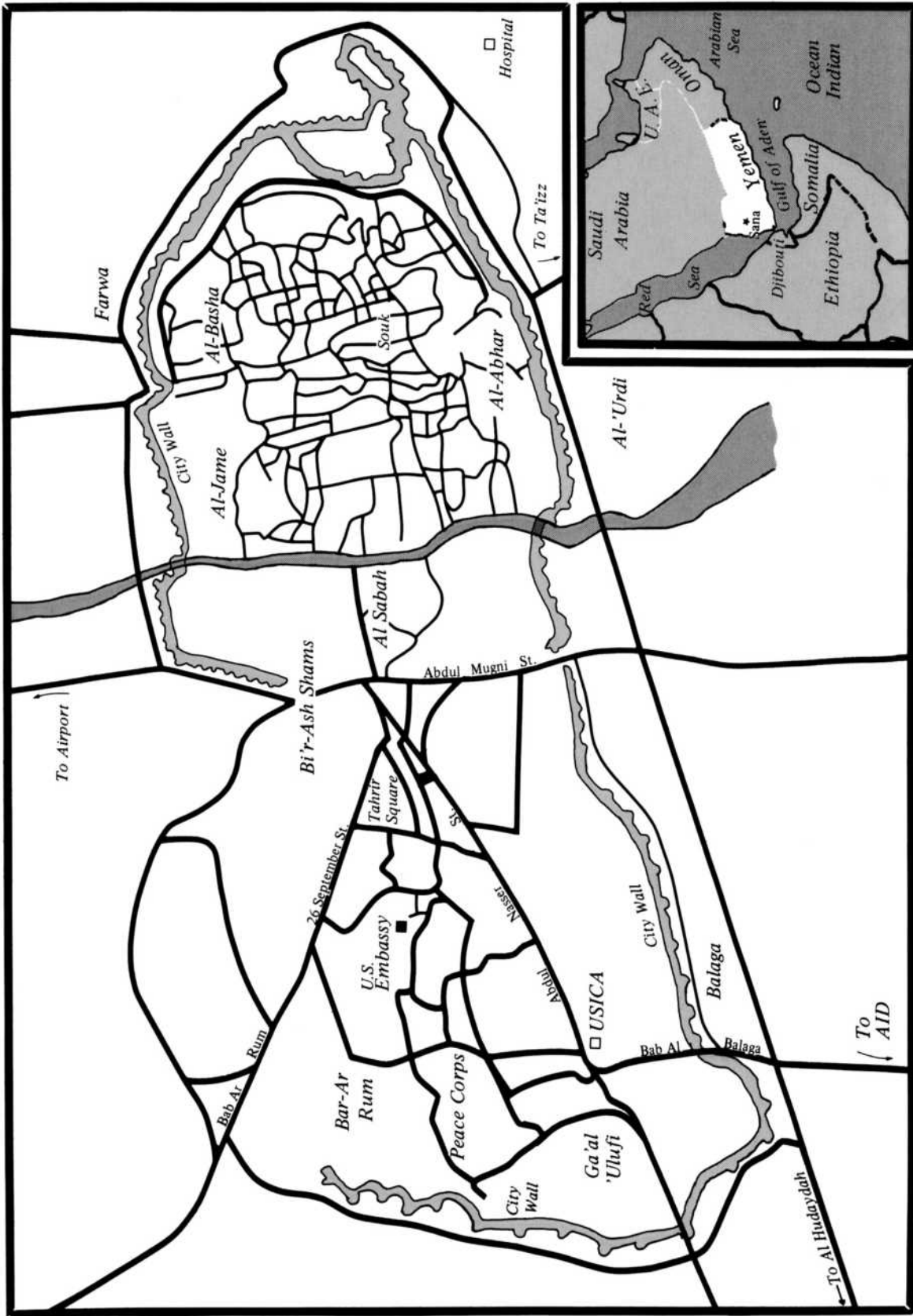
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Sanaa, Yemen

YEMEN

Republic of Yemen

Major Cities:

Sanaa, Aden, Taiz, Hodeida

Other Cities:

Dhamār, Ibb, Al-Mukallā, Sa'dah

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated July 1993. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

YEMEN, once part of the ancient Kingdom of Sheba, is one of the oldest centers of civilization in the Near East. Although much of its early history is obscure, it is known that from about 1000 B.C. to A.D. 600, it was the center of an advanced culture based on intensive agriculture and a prosperous link in trade between Africa and India. A biblical reference speaks of its gold, spices, and precious stones as gifts given by the Queen of Sheba to King Solomon.

Halfway across the world and shielded from Western civilization for centuries, this lush, mountainous country has long remained politically and economically back-

ward. Within Yemen, there is a variety of scenery, architecture, people, and customs, ranging across the hot and sandy coast land with bananas, palms and African-style thatched-roofed houses to the cool, coffee-growing central highlands dotted with stone fortresses.

After years of conflict, pro-Western Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen), and the only Marxist Arab country, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (South Yemen), merged into one country—the Republic of Yemen—on May 22, 1990. Today, Yemen is making rapid advances in modernizing political, economic, and public institutions, while seeking to retain the traditions of its culture and history.

MAJOR CITY

Sanaa

Sanaa, the capital of the Republic of Yemen, is a growing city of about 630,000 people located in the middle of a broad valley between mountains that rise to 12,000 feet. Sanaa's altitudes of 7,226 feet above sea level and its position on the Arabian Peninsula provide an almost ideal climate. Although dust can be a problem, the winters are warm

and the summers relatively cool. With the exception of two short rainy periods in spring and late summer, the air is very dry.

The geology of the Sanaa basin mixes volcanic with sedimentary rocks and the brown and black mountains create striking patterns in the morning and evening light. Many people are reminded of the stark beauty of Arizona and Utah, although the generally barren terrain is relieved by verdant channels of vegetation along the valley water courses. These water courses, or wadis, permit an extraordinary system of terraced farming along the slopes of the escarpment that turn the hills green during the two growing seasons of the year.

Sanaa has a unique architectural tradition dating from medieval times, which is preserved within the walls of the old city. Stone houses, often six or seven stories high, are highlighted by clusters of stained glass windows. Intricate designs traced in plaster decorate the exterior walls, while within the house guests climb stairs past the family quarters to a "mufraj" reception room. The mufraj—the word comes from the Arabic root "to view"—is chosen if possible for its view of the city and mountains, and guests recline on colorful cushions and carpets.



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Overview of Sanaa

A wall still surrounds most of the old city, and life within has changed little over the years. Narrow streets twist through the suq, or market area, offering a glimpse of blacksmiths working over their forges, meat, and vegetable vendors with their wares, gold and silver merchants and moneychangers doing brisk business, donkeys plodding beside their masters, colorful and pungent baskets of spices and children running everywhere. There is an atmosphere of continual festivity, with tribesmen from mountain villages examining the wares of the city alongside veiled housewives striking hard bargains with the merchants.

Westerners visiting the suq are treated with genuine friendliness by shopkeepers and their customers—and with little of the harassing pressure to buy found in some other countries. The old city is a favorite destination of many Mission mem-

bers, who enjoy bargaining for such treasures as elaborate silver jewelry, antique rifles, Maria Theresa coins from the Africa and India trade, as well as traditional jambias and embroidered cloth.

Outside the walled city, land prices have risen rapidly as emigrant workers invest their savings in new houses and shops. Construction projects continue in every area of Sanaa, but city services have lagged behind the population increase. Electricity outages in some areas are frequent, and voltage fluctuations can cause serious damage to electronic equipment not protected by voltage regulators. Houses in several districts are connected to municipal water and sewer systems, but many houses still rely on water wells or water delivered by tank truck, and their own septic tanks or cesspools. The municipal system provides water only for a limited time each week

requiring that water be stored in roof-top tanks.

Traffic is increasingly congested, both from cars imported with emigrant capital as well as from construction and utility projects which can close roads for extended periods. Most new houses retain traditional features such as stained glass windows and mufraj rooms, but rarely exceed three stories.

Stores carry a variety of consumer goods but supplies are inconsistent and prices high. A well-tuned system of information among the western community announces when scarce items are again in stock. Dedicated shoppers can generally find most items they need and many people enjoy their frequent contacts with local shopkeepers.

Contrary to the situation a few years ago, Sanaa's grocery stores are well-stocked with a wide range

of foodstuffs, albeit many are expensive by U.S. standards. Seasonal fruits and vegetables are widely available and inexpensive. Many food products familiar to American consumers, including snack foods, diet drinks and other packaged foods, are not available and should be included in consumable shipments.

U.S.—Yemeni Relations

The U.S. first established diplomatic relations with Yemen in 1946, but it was not until 1959 that a resident legation was opened in Taiz. The Agency for International Development program began soon after, and the legation was upgraded to Embassy status.

The U.S. recognized the post-revolutionary Yemen Arab Republic on December 19, 1962. On June 7, 1967, during the Arab-Israeli conflict, the government of Abdullah al-Sallal severed diplomatic relations with the U.S. and all Americans were withdrawn.

In 1970, the Yemen Arab Republic requested the resumption of diplomatic relations, and on April 29, 1970, a U.S. Interests Section was established in the Italian Embassy in Sanaa. On July 1, 1972, full diplomatic relations were resumed during a visit by then Secretary of State William P. Rogers. A new USAID program was started in the spring of 1973 and the Peace Corps began several projects in the same year. A military sales agreement was signed in 1976, followed in 1979 by the establishment of the Office of Military Cooperation.

In 1984, the Hunt Oil Company discovered oil in Marib. The pipeline work began in 1986 and commercial production began in 1988. Then-Vice President Bush attended the inaugural ceremonies of the central processing unit in 1986. Mr. Bush also inaugurated the beginning construction of the present embassy compound. President Ali Abdullah Saleh visited the U.S. on an official state visit in January 1990.

The former People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen severed its diplomatic relations with the U.S. in 1969. Before the resumption of diplomatic relations, contacts between the U.S. and the PDRY was exceedingly rare. However, in 1980, after the fall of former President Abd al-Fattah Ismail, the PDRY began realigning its foreign policy toward the conservative Gulf Shaykhdoms and dropped its sponsorship of Dhofar separatists attempting to secede from Oman. In the late eighties, PDRY began exploring the possibility of reestablishing diplomatic relations with the U.S. which were resumed in April 1990.

In May 1990, the Yemen Arab Republic and the People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen merged into the Republic of Yemen. A provisional constitution was overwhelmingly approved in a referendum held in May 1991. The unification agreement, according to which the ruling parties of the former North and South Yemen share power equally, stipulated a 30 month transitional period, due to end in November 1992. Parliamentary elections are scheduled to be held before the end of the period.

U.S.-Yemen relations took a turn for the worse as a result of the Gulf Crisis. The U.S. withdrew its Office of Military Cooperation, the Peace Corps, and slashed its AID program. As of mid-1992, bilateral relations continued to be strained by Yemen’s political support for the regime of Saddam Hussein. However, Peace Corps volunteers returned in midsummer, 1991 and the program continues to expand. U.S. companies are playing a growing role in the development of Yemen.

Food

A variety of food items is available in Sanaa, though prices are high, choice of brands is limited and quality varies, especially with fresh meat. Western-brand packaged foods are often found in grocery stores but their availability is sporadic and their price very high. The

following is a partial list of foodstuffs available.

- Fresh Meat: Beef, veal, lamb, chicken, rarely turkey.
- Frozen Meat: Beef, lamb, chicken, duck, steak, beef sausages (all are imported).
- Fresh Seafood: Shrimp (periodically), several varieties of fish (generally all of high quality, though lack of refrigeration requires care in choosing items).
- Fresh Vegetables: Cabbage (no red), carrots, okra, potatoes, tomatoes, green peppers, hot peppers, leaf lettuce, egg plant, squash (in season), onions (red and yellow), garlic, spinach, green beans (in season), cauliflower (in season).
- Fresh Fruit: Bananas, papaya, mango, pomegranates, figs, melon, grapes, limes, apples, oranges, peaches, pears and plums. Most fruits are highly seasonal.
- Dairy Products: Eggs, “long life” milk, butter (imported), yogurt, ice cream. Fresh cheese is now generally available, as are canned cheeses.
- Canned goods: Fair variety of canned fruits and vegetables, (all expensive). Locally produced fruit juices are reasonable in cost, but no sugar-free brands are available.
- Toiletries: Limited variety of basic items such as toothpaste, soap, body lotion and shampoo (expensive and sometimes of poor quality).
- Paper Products: Limited selection and expensive.
- Soft Drinks: Limited variety but ample supply of brand-name soft drinks are available.
- Miscellaneous: Most spices, ketchup and mustard (limited selection), pickles (limited selection), tea, coffee beans; vendors will grind the beans but result is usually too fine for American tastes. Instant

coffee is available but expensive. Flour and sugar (coarsely ground of uneven quality).

Clothing

Dress is relatively informal in Sanaa. Most Americans wear comfortable business attire to work. Formal wear for men is not required. Women wear both long and short dresses at receptions and cocktail parties. Women should also bring a "suq dress," an oversized, long sleeved garment with a high neck and hemline below the calf, and/or loose slacks with long overblouse. While Yemenis are generally tolerant of Western behavior and dress, most Americans feel more comfortable wearing conservative clothing in public. For street wear, in addition to the "suq dress," women often wear slacks with a loose-fitting shirt or blouse which reaches the thigh. Shorts are worn only for sports.

Because of the constant dust in Sanaa, clothing may wear out quickly with frequent washing in hard water. Durable fabrics are recommended. With Sanaa's moderate climate, all but the heaviest and lightest materials will be comfortable most times of the year. Sweaters and light jackets are necessary for at least part of the day during the winter months and often evenings in summer. As most streets in Sanaa are unpaved, sturdy shoes with crepe or rubber soles are a necessity. Ladies' leather heels can quickly be ruined on gravel, which is used instead of concrete or asphalt in many parking areas and paths.

There are several stores in Sanaa offering western clothing. Prices are high, selection is limited especially for larger sizes, and quality only fair. A good selection of imported fabrics is available. Imported shoes are available, but, again, prices are high and selection only fair. There are a few dependable seamstresses in town who can make simple garments.

Supplies and Services

Cosmetics and toilet articles are appearing in increasing variety, though quality may not be up to American standards. Favorite brands should be brought.

High altitude and clear skies make for a harsh, bright sun. A good supply of sunblocks or suntan lotions should be brought. Sunglasses are also advisable. Reasonable quality non-prescription types can be found in town; prescription sunglasses should be brought. Hats are recommended for outdoor activities especially for children. Skin creams are important in Yemen's extremely dry air, and liquid soap may be more tolerable than regular bar soap. Lip balm is also useful.

Non-prescription drugs familiar to Americans may not be available; a supply of medicines such as aspirin, cough syrup, and digestive remedies should be brought. Prescription drugs may be available locally, but you should bring a supply.

Local, American, and English brands of cigarettes are readily available at reasonable prices. Menthol brands are harder to find. Some pipe tobacco and cigars are available, but not in great variety.

Three hotels provide clean, fair to good quality barber and hairdressing services at reasonable prices. There are a large number of cheaper barbers, though quality and cleanliness can be a question. Dry cleaning services are offered by hotels and many shops, and quality is satisfactory. Car rentals are available but prices are high and a Yemeni driver's license is required (drivers can be hired for an additional charge). Shoe repair is very primitive.

Religious Activities

Islam is the national religion and Yemeni law prohibits religious proselytizing. However, Yemen is tolerant of the private practice of religion by foreigners. Both Catholic and nondenominational Protestant services are held weekly at the Hadda Community Center. Catholic Mass

is also held weekly and on holidays at the Sisters of Mercy home in Sanaa. A Protestant youth group holds regular meetings and sponsors various activities throughout the year. There are no functioning synagogues in Yemen, but Yemeni Jews hold religious services in their homes. There is an active Catholic church and Hindu temple in Aden.

Education

The Sanaa International School (SIS) is an English-language day school with students representing about thirty nationalities. The Department of State considers SIS as "adequate" through the sixth grade, although many American dependents attend SIS through ninth grade.

English (reading, grammar, composition, keyboarding, and spelling), mathematics, cultural studies (history, geography, economics, etc.), science, art, music and physical education are offered as a part of the standard curriculum.

A 4-year American secondary program is offered, which includes the basic subjects and a limited selection of electives. Various enrichment activities are scheduled some afternoons each week.

The school year runs from late August through early June, and the children attend school Saturday through Wednesday with Thursday and Friday off. The school hours are: 8 am to noon for kindergarten; 8 am to 1:30 pm for children ages 6 through 11 (although some days students will stay for various activities or special subjects); and 8 am to 3 pm for students ages 12 years and up. Bus service is available for a yearly fee. Children are expected to bring a snack on the shorter days and lunch on activity days. All textbooks are loaned to the students, who are responsible for their own pencils, erasers and notebooks.

The school is located about 20 minutes outside Sanaa, and consists of a number of comfortable, spacious buildings around a center courtyard. The 35-acre campus has large

play areas with outdoor play equipment.

A few English-language preschools are available for younger children. These preschools operate in private homes and have between 10 and 30 students. Qualifications of teachers vary, and other parents should be consulted before choosing a preschool.

Special Educational Opportunities

The Sanaa International School offers night classes in various subjects from time to time, including computer programming. In addition, Sanaa University offers a few English-language courses, though admission requirements and quality have not been tested. The British *Council* offers basic Arabic classes at regular intervals for a moderate charge. The Peace Corps offers a 2-month intensive courses in Arabic, but charges must be paid personally by the student. The American Institute for Yemeni Studies (AIYS) hosts lectures on a variety of topics relating to Yemeni and Arab culture, and shows by local artists and entertainers. It also maintains an excellent library of books relating to Yemen. Visiting scholars supported by AIYS and USIA provide opportunities for discussing a myriad of topics.

Sports

The Sheraton and Taj Sheba hotels offer memberships for use of their heated swimming pools, exercise rooms, and tennis courts (Sheraton only).

The Sanaa chapter of the Hash House Harriers sponsors weekly runs through the scenic countryside. Yemeni soccer teams play weekly throughout the season, and visiting teams bring international-level competition several times a year. Many individuals jog through residential streets without difficulty, as long as they are vigilant for ubiquitous potholes, curious dogs, and vehicles that often drive on the wrong side of the streets.



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Old town, Bab Al-Yemen (southern gate) in Sanaa

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Much of the Yemen's natural beauty is increasingly accessible. Paved roads lead to the coast, to the southern areas of the country, to the city of Sa'ada in the north, and to Marib in the eastern desert. Four-wheel drive allows one to explore more remote areas of the country. However, visitors should use caution when traveling to these areas, as hijackings of vehicles (mostly large, four-wheel-drive Toyota land cruisers) are not uncommon.

The warm, coral-fringed Red Sea coast is a favorite spot for swimmers, fishermen, and snorkelers, especially during the moderate winter months. (There are no facilities for servicing scuba gear.) Scenic but primitive camping sites are available in several areas along the coast. No acceptable hotels are available outside of Hodeidah, and camping gear is necessary. Basic Arabic is quite helpful in communicating with local residents.

The ancient sites of the Marib Dam and Temple of the moon at Marib are an easy day trip from Sanaa. The "triangle" from Sanaa, west to Hodeidah on the coast, southeast to Taiz and back to Sanaa, is a popular weekend trip. It allows one to see

the Tihama and the Red Sea coast, the medieval university city of Zabid, the famous port at Mocha, the fertile green farmlands of the southern highlands, spectacular mountain scenery and ancient walled cities at Taiz, Jibla and Ibb. Adequate hotels are available both in Hodeidah and Taiz. Other interesting places to visit are "Job's Tomb," an excellent spot for experienced and novice rock climbers, the extinct volcano of Hamt Dam, and the fossil fields just outside Sanaa.

Since unification in 1990, travel to Aden (formerly the capital of South Yemen and currently the "economic and commercial capital" of united Yemen) has become increasingly popular. There are two paved roads from Sanaa to Aden, where visitors will find stark contrasts with the North—British and Soviet influences on architecture, and cultures are readily apparent. Visitors will find, among other things, one of the world's best natural harbors, scenic beaches, a popular brewery and an international-class hotel. Aden also boasts Yemen's finest (and only) Chinese restaurant.

Yemen is a photographer's paradise. The exotic scenery and children in native dress clamoring to be photographed provide delightful and

exciting opportunities. Women, however, should not be photographed without their permission, nor any site that could be considered military. When in doubt, asking a local shopkeeper or traffic policeman for permission to photograph is both good manners and good sense. Yemeni authorities are sometimes suspicious of video cameras, especially in urban areas. In general, these cameras should only be used for recording family or American community events. Film is available, though in limited variety. Local processing is adequate for prints, although slide and movie film must be sent out of the country.

Entertainment

The Sanaa Amateur Minitheater Society, boasting members of several nationalities, provides several opportunities each year for budding performers as well as those who only wish to attend. In recent years the Society has presented several plays and play readings, musicals, dinner theaters, cabarets and pantomimes.

Social Activities

Approximately 350 Americans live in Sanaa, with much smaller communities in Taiz, Jibla, Aden and Sa'ada. Informal parties are frequent and provide excellent opportunities for meeting people. Most social activities take place in the home, but community picnics, athletic events, and amateur theatricals provide occasions throughout the year to meet the entire American community.

Yemenis are accessible people, and interesting friendships are possible, especially for Americans who speak Arabic. A few words of Arabic, even simple greetings, will go a long way toward making Yemeni acquaintances. An ever-increasing number of Yemenis speak English.

There are many diplomatic missions in Sanaa, as well as several expatriate business firms whose employees participate in social activities with Americans. Many nationalities are represented among the Hash House harriers running group, while the Christmas



View of Aden

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pantomime is an Anglo-American tradition in Sanaa.

Aden

When the two Yemens merged, Aden was chosen to be the economic capital of the country. Aden became a British crown colony in 1937 and in 1968 it became the capital of South Yemen.

The Old Testament book of *Ezekiel* mentions Aden as a trading partner with the Phoenician port of Tyre on the Mediterranean Sea. Aden maintained its position as a trading center in the following years under its rule by Yemenis, Ethiopians, Arabs, Turks, and the British. Situated between Africa and India, Aden became a strategic and convenient port in the years following its capture by the British in 1839. Aden became even more important as a trading center after the 1869 opening of the Suez Canal. However, Aden's economy and importance declined after 1967 when South Yemen became independent. The British withdrew from the country, resulting in a loss of tourist trade and the income generated by the British military base. The closure of the Suez Canal from 1967 to 1975, during the Arab-Israeli crisis, further eroded Aden's position.

The city has a population of more than 562,000 (2000 est.). Small industries include some light manufacturing, seawater evaporation plants (to obtain marine salt), and boat building. The international airport at Khormaksar, a northern suburb of Aden, is the former British Royal Air Force base.

Aden consists of three sections or quarters: the Crater, Ma'llah, and Tawahi. The Crater, so named because it is located in the crater of a dead volcano, is the old commercial quarter. Despite Aden's long history, very few very historic constructions still exist. The oldest surviving construction is the Aden Tanks, located at the southern edge of the crater. The Tanks are huge water cisterns partially carved out of rocks. On the edge of the crater still stand remnants of the old city walls and bastions, some dating back as far as the 12th century. The Mosque of Sayyid Abdullah al-Aidrus, built in the 14th century and largely renovated, is Aden's Islamic religious center. Ma'llah, a small port area, is known for its traditional Arab *dhow*s (boats). The business quarter of Tawahi is where most of the tourist hotels and shops are located. Also in Tawahi is the National Museum of Antiquities, which has an interesting collection of pre-Islamic statues.

Taiz

Taiz (sometimes spelled Taizz and Ta'iz), with a population over 180,000 is located in Yemen's southern highlands, about 125 miles south of both Sanaa and Hodeida. The three cities form a triangle and are connected by a road system. Bait al Faqih, Abid, and Yarim are other cities situated on these roads. Taiz, called "Aruzat al Yaman" in Arabic, meaning "bride of Yemen," is located in a narrow valley at the base of the rolling Saber Mountains, at an altitude of about 1,400 feet. It is an agricultural marketing center and was the country's administrative capital from 1948 to 1962.

The history of Taiz dates to the early seventh century, when the site first consisted of just a fortress on top of a steep cliff at the foot of Mount Saber. At this time, the town of al-Janad, four miles north of Taiz, was more prominent and because of the famous al-Janad Mosque, it was the religious and administrative center of the area. The shift in importance to Taiz began in 1174 when Turan Shah al-Ayyubi made the city the seat of his government. The city grew into a trade center, a position it still maintains today. Taiz expanded greatly during the time it served as Yemen's capital. The old city became an enclave in a fast-growing, modern urban center; the remains of the city walls near Mount Saber form an imaginary circle in which all the beautiful mosques and old houses can be found.

Many tourist sites may be found in Taiz, including two of the most beautiful mosques in Yemen. Al-Ashrafiya, with its two minarets, still serves as an important Koran school. Al-Mudhaffar has many small domes; its minaret collapsed after centuries and has never been rebuilt. The former Palace of Imam Ahmed and the Salah Palace both are museums now.

The Taiz *souk* offers a colorful variety of goods, including baskets, pottery, textiles, and carpets. Native

women take an active part in the *souk*; they wear colorful dresses and do not wear the traditional veils.

Education

Mohammed Ali Othman School, for kindergarten through grade 12, is located in Taiz. The coeducational school, founded in 1972, has an enrollment of over 1,000, and over 60 teachers, including Americans.

The school employs a combined U.S., U.K., and Yemeni curriculum, with instruction in English and Arabic. Extracurricular activities include newspaper, music club, volleyball, and football. The school has seven buildings, 53 classrooms, playing fields, science laboratories, and a 6,000-volume library. The school's mailing address is: P.O. Box 5713, Taiz, Yemen.

Hodeida

Yemen's chief port is Hodeida (sometimes spelled Hodeidah and Al Hudaydah), located on the Red Sea about 90 miles west of Sanaa. Developed by the Turks in the mid-19th century as a seaport, Hodeida exports dates, coffee, and hides. A fire in 1961 destroyed most of the city, but it was rebuilt with aid from the former Soviet Union. Hodeida's modern harbor has a port that can accommodate medium-sized ships and tankers. The port facilities have been the impetus behind the city's expansion. Hodeida is linked to Sanaa by a highway; taxis and airlines also travel between the seaport and the capital. Hodeida has modern health and communications facilities. The population of Hodeida is over 300,000.

Historic sites are nonexistent in Hodeida. There is, however, a fish market on the city's southern shore, where wooden fishing boats are still built in the traditional way. Hodeida's clean, sandy beaches offer excellent swimming.

Southeast of Hodeida is the village of Bait al-Faqih, known as the handicraft center of the Tihama. Craftsmen from the surrounding area

come to the village on market day (Friday) to sell pottery, leather goods, textiles, baskets, and other woven goods. Farther south is Zabid, which used to be the site of a prestigious Islamic learning institution. Zabid has a Great Mosque and a colorful market known for its local sweets.

OTHER CITIES

DHAMĀR, with a population of over 40,000, is situated about 50 miles south of Sanaa. It is a provincial capital and market center for the nearby grain-growing region. Local tradition notwithstanding, first mention of the town is by the Arab geographer Yāqūt (1179–1229). He noted the city's handsome buildings and fecund countryside. Market gardens divide Dhamār in two; there are numerous mosques.

IBB is one of Yemen's most picturesque cities. Located about 100 miles south of the capital, its surrounding wall contains several homes. An aqueduct from the mountains supplies the city with a rare luxury in this country—running water. The Muzaffariyah Mosque, among the dozens here, is considered especially beautiful. Ibb is a farming center, situated in the province that receives the highest rainfall, and remains green all year long. It has a *souk*, or marketplace, that serves as the regional hub for agricultural products. The city may date to biblical times. Its estimated population is roughly over 34,000.

AL-MUKALLĀ, the only important port in eastern Yemen, is 320 miles northeast of Aden. With a population of more than 50,000, al-Mukallā is the largest city east of Aden and is a market center for the mostly undeveloped interior regions. The fishing industry is of prime importance here. Industries include a fish canning plant and a fish meal factory; fish products, along with tobacco, are the major exports. Boat building is also important here.

SA'DAH, situated 120 miles northwest of Sanaa, is the capital of Sa'dah Province. The city of roughly 12,000 residents (1986 est.) is a major administrative center in the north. Industries here include leather goods manufacture and stoneware production. Sa'dah was the first headquarters for the Zaydī *imams* (leaders), who ruled the country from 860 to 1962. It lost its stature when the capital was moved to Sanaa in the 17th century. A recently built road connects Sa'dah with Sanaa and Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The Republic of Yemen is located in the southern corner of the Arabian peninsula bordered by Saudi Arabia to the north and east, Oman to the east, and by the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea to the South and by the Red Sea to the west. In area, it is about 204,000 square miles—the size of France.

Sanaa, the capital, is located at an altitude of 7,200 feet above sea level. Nearby is the highest mountain between East Africa and Iran, Djebel al-Nabi Shu'ayb, at 12,300 feet. The interior highlands have two rainy seasons a year: the first, in March and April; and a second, heavier, rainfall in July and August. For the rest of the year, sunny clear weather is the rule, with occasional dust storms. In winter, nighttime temperatures in Sanaa can drop to 30°F, with sunshine and day time highs of 70°F. Summer temperatures are very moderate, with highs of 85°F, dropping to the low 60s at night. The climate is very pleasant.

To the east of the highland interior, the terrain slopes down to the sandy wastes of the deserts of inner Arabia, the famous "Empty Quarter." These desert areas are extremely dry, with summer temperatures

exceeding 110°F, but they can be quite cold on winter nights.

To the west, in the Tihama (the lowlands adjoining the Red Sea) where there is a mixture of African and Arabian cultures, the temperatures are very hot and humid for much of the year. Even in winter, daytime highs can be in the 90s. During the summer, torrential monsoons occur. Aden is similarly hot and humid, with summer temperatures frequently in the 100s. However, winter temperatures are far milder and more pleasant. The Hadhramaut and the desert regions extending east from Aden to the Omani border are hot and dry.

Population

In 2000, Yemen's population was estimated at 17,521,000. Before the Gulf Crisis, about 1.4 million Yemenis were working overseas, with perhaps over 1 million in Saudi Arabia alone. One consequence of Iraqi aggression is that 800,000 to 850,000 Yemeni workers returned home. Over half the population of the Arabian peninsula lives in the Republic of Yemen.

In contrast to the nomadic traditions of other peninsula inhabitants, most Yemenis have long been settled in small agricultural communities, and the population is still mostly rural. Because of poverty and the shortage of arable land, there has been a long tradition of Yemeni men working as expatriate workers and small traders. Many Yemenis have close family relations in Ethiopia, Somalia, and Djibouti, and there are Yemeni-origin communities as far-flung as the U.S. and Korea.

Yemenis belong to two principal Islamic religious groups: The Zaydi community of the Shi'a sect, which predominates in the northern, central, and eastern areas of the country; and the Shafi community of the Sunni sect in the southwest. The Zaydi Shi'a have a distinct religious tradition that differs little from the Sunni mainstream. Yemen also has the vestiges of a once thriving Jew-

ish community, believed by some scholars to be one of the oldest diaspora communities in the world.

Arabic is the official language of Yemen, although English is gradually becoming more common as a second language.

Yemenis are proud of their culture and history and regard their distinctive civilization as a unifying force among the many tribes that make up the population. This distinctiveness has been recognized in several fields. For example, the architecture of the old city of Sanaa has been accorded protective status by UNESCO. Another characteristic feature of Yemeni society is the chewing of qat leaves at social sessions. Yemeni men, especially tribesmen, prominently carry the "jambia," a curved knife, at the waist as a sign of their personal dignity and independence.

Although Western dress is becoming more common, especially in the cities, most Yemeni men still wear the traditional "futtah" skirt, or full length "thobe," and an open jacket with their jambias. In the tribal areas of the north and east, most adult men also carry a rifle.

Yemeni women living in urban areas usually veil completely. In public, they generally wear black overskirts, loose-fitting capes and veils, or colorfully printed draperies over embroidered dresses and loose trousers. However, customs differ. In Taiz, women generally cover their hair with bright gold or saffron colored scarves but do not otherwise veil. Veiling is less common in rural areas, although many women will draw scarves across their faces if strangers approach. Some younger Yemeni women, especially university students, cover their hair with scarves. In Aden after unification, women have begun to cover their hair more frequently than before.

Yemenis are, for the most part, very friendly to Americans. Many have family and tribal ties to the thousands of Yemenis who have emigrated to the U.S. Since most

Yemenis do not speak English, even a few phrases in Arabic will be warmly appreciated.

History

From about 1000 B.C. to 600 A.D., Yemen was the center of an advanced civilization based on intensive agriculture and a lucrative trade in aromatics, such as frankincense, with Mediterranean countries. The Biblical Queen of Sheba, Queen Bilquis, presided over a flourishing kingdom centered in Marib. Ruins of temples and walls, as well as of the famous Marib dam whose final rupture in A.D. 570 (recorded in the "Elephant" sura of the Koran) spelled the end of this civilization, can still be seen near Marib. According to popular tradition, the city of Sanaa was founded by Shem, a son of Noah.

The country converted to Islam about A.D. 628 during the prophet Mohammed's lifetime. Previously, it had undergone periods as both a Jewish and Christian kingdom. Yemen provided many warriors to Islamic armies, and its artisans worked in constructing buildings that have given Islamic architecture its renown. Since early medieval times, Yemen has enjoyed varying political and economic fortunes that have been tied closely to the relative importance of its caravan routes. The Zaidi Imamate was founded by Yahya bin Husain bin Qasim al-Rassi, in A.D. 897 and lasted until the Republican Revolution in 1962. Other important dynasties that ruled in northern Yemen included Sulayhids, who produced the second great female leader in Yemeni history, Queen Arwa bint Ahmad. She established her capital in Jibla and ruled between A.D. 1067 and 1138. A second dynasty, important for its mosque-building activities and for the establishment of the famous medieval university in Zabid, was the Rasulids. Areas of the country were twice ruled by the Ottoman Turks—the first period lasted from 1513 to 1636—and the second from 1849 to 1918.

After the departure of the Turks in 1918, Imam Yahya assumed political control of the north. Succeeding Imams kept the country in almost complete isolation until the regime was overthrown on September 26, 1962 by elements intent on modernizing the country's medieval economic, political, and social structures. The new republic was opposed by forces loyal to the Imam's family for several years. The Republicans were supported by Egyptian troops and the Royalists by Saudi Arabia, and periodic heavy fighting continued for almost 8 years between the Republican and Royalist forces and their supporters.

The Egyptians departed in November 1967, and a settlement was mediated by Saudi Arabia and Egypt in March 1970, which guaranteed a republican form of government in the former Yemen Arab Republic. Subsequent presidents of the republic established a written constitution and parliament. The new state faced both external and internal threats. It fought two border wars with the Communist-ruled People's Democratic Republic of Yemen in 1972 and 1979 and suffered from a Communist-inspired insurgency until the mid-eighties. Two Presidents were assassinated within a year in 1978. President Ali Abdullah Saleh, the current President of the unified Republic of Yemen, took office in that year.

South Yemen was a focus of European attentions from the beginning of the 15th Century. Attracted by the superb natural harbor of Aden, the British came to Aden in 1839 and quickly established relations with sultans in the hinterlands of Hadhramaut to protect their position in Aden. With the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, the British reinforced their position in Aden in order to ensure their line to India and their dominance in the region. Following the departure of the British in 1967 and independence, the militant Marxist National Liberation Front (NLF) took power. The People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) was proclaimed

under Communist Aegis in 1970 and immediately began to support an unsuccessful guerilla war in the Dhofar province in neighboring Oman. In January 1986, Aden was rocked by a bloody 10-day coup between rival leftist factions. Estimates of those killed during the coup range up to 10,000.

Yemeni unification took place on May 22, 1990, following the decline of Soviet support for the PDRY and the collapse of the economy. The new state, the Republic of Yemen, was accorded immediate recognition by most of the world community, including the U.S. and Saudi Arabia.

Public Institutions

Yemen essentially has two political systems: an developing democracy and an ancient tribal system. Yemen's government is divided into three branches: the executive, with the President appointing a cabinet headed by a Prime Minister; the legislative, with a 301-member unicameral Parliament; and the judiciary, consisting of three levels of courts (magistrate, appellate, and supreme).

The president is elected by popular vote from at least two candidates selected by the legislature. Yemen held its first direct presidential elections in September 1999, electing President Ali Abdallah Salih to a five-year term in what were generally considered free and fair elections. However, a Constitutional amendment adopted in 2000 extended the presidential term by two years, moving the next presidential election to 2006.

A 2001 amendment created the bicameral legislature consisting of a Shura Council (111 seats; members appointed by the president) and a House of Representatives (301 seats; members elected by popular vote). Parliamentary terms of office are 6-years.

Yemeni law is a mixture of tribal customs (known as *urf*), Muslim religious statutes (*sharia*), execu-

tive decree, and parliamentary legislation. New laws do not yet cover the full range of civil issues, but they have codified some traditional procedures, while introducing new concepts regulating commerce, labor, nationality, taxes, and civil rights. Outside urban areas, justice and law are still largely administered by traditional figures such as religious judges and tribal leaders

Arts, Science, and Education

In medieval Yemen, disciplines of law, religion, history and poetry were sophisticated and widely spread among the population. Yemen made many important contributions to Islamic civilization: a famous example is the development of algebra in the University of Zabid in the Tihama. Yemeni teachers taught in the Al-Azhar University of Cairo in the 10th and 11th centuries and students came to Zabid from all over Arabia, Ethiopia and Somalia. Yemeni isolation in recent centuries, however, led to a development gap which has had lasting consequences.

A low level of education (literacy is about 53% for males and 26% for females) has hampered development projects initiated by the government, but the number of students has greatly increased in recent years. Primary school enrollment in 1997 was about 2.7 million students. However, in the same year, secondary school enrollments only reached to about 354,000 students.

Yemen's principal universities are the University of Sanaa's arts colleges (including the Faculty of Education, which has branches in several other locations in Yemen) and Aden University. Total university enrollment in 1997 was about 65,675 students, with about 2,000 additional students studying abroad.

Commerce and Industry

Although once noted for its exports of coffee from the port of Mocha, today Yemen now exports little other than oil. The discovery of oil in both North and South Yemen has been regarded as the most significant economic development in many years. Oil was discovered July 4, 1984, by the American-owned Yemen Hunt Oil Company (YHOC) in the Marib region east of Sanaa. The Soviets also found oil about 80 miles to the south of the Marib area in the mid-80's. Yemen is believed to have modest reserves by Arabian peninsula standards. Export pipelines were constructed from both fields to oil terminals. Oil from the YHOC fields began to be exported in 1988, while no oil from former Soviet field (block 4) has been exported as of July 1992.

Outside of the petroleum sector, Yemen's economic prospects are limited. Yemen continues to import much of its food and, with a population growing at over three percent a year, chances for it becoming self-sufficient in food are slim. Agriculture cannot be expanded significantly due to the limited supply of water. Yemen is able to produce modest quantities of fruits and vegetables for export to its neighbors which should increase once relations with them improve. A small food processing industry has developed in the last decade mainly using imported raw materials. While primarily for the domestic market, some of this production is exported; including to Europe. Fishing holds some brighter prospects although over-fishing in the former South has severely depleted stocks. The government is committed to economic liberalization and improving the climate for investment although so far this commitment has yielded few tangible results. A new investment law has been passed but implementing regulations and the investment authority are not yet functioning.

The government has eased restrictions aimed at controlling imports. Formerly, it had sought with little

success to limit outflow of foreign exchange by restricting imports through licensing and providing foreign exchange only for authorized imports. After unification, the government relaxed import restrictions and has generally not acted to halt smuggling of consumer goods. The government is allowing high levels of consumption and has not yet completed legal and political steps to create a more favorable environment for capital investment.

Transportation

Local

Within Sanaa, taxis are common, but hardly luxurious, and often operate on a group basis. Fares are generally reasonable and should be negotiated in advance. Tipping is not necessary. Women are generally advised not to take taxis alone.

Regional

Taxis between cities have a poor safety record and are not recommended. Buses are generally considered safer, since journeys are scheduled and drivers have no incentive to make the trip faster than safety permits.

The network of paved roads which now links Yemen's major cities is being steadily extended, but many parts of the country are accessible only by rough and narrow tracks with no roadside services available. Yemen is now connected to Saudi Arabia by an excellent road running from Jeddah to Hodeidah.

Major airlines serve Sanaa International Airport, including Air France, Lufthansa, Egyptair, Royal Jordanian, KLM (starting October 1992) and the national carrier, Yemenia Airlines. No U.S. carriers operate in Yemen.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

Domestic telephone service is fairly reliable. Service to countries, such as the U.S., with international direct-dial facilities is excellent but very expensive. A call to the U.S.

costs about twice as much as the cost of the same call initiated from the U.S. Operator-assisted calls can take up to 3 hours. It is more economical to have families and friends in the U.S. do most of the calling. Telegrams may be sent from the downtown office of Cable and Wireless. A written text is necessary to ensure accuracy.

Health and Medicine

Sanaa is located at an altitude of 7,200 feet and is dusty. Individuals with respiratory or heart problems are suggested to contact Med before assignment.

Medical Facilities

Sanaa hospitals are used only in emergency situations. Hospitals are also located in Sa'ada and Jibla (both about 4 hours by car from Sanaa).

You and your family should ensure that all required dental treatment is completed before arriving in Sanaa. Local dentists are not trained or equipped to U.S. standards. They generally are used only for simple fillings and similar dental procedures.

Community Health

Public health conditions in Sanaa and other cities remain poor. Municipal garbage collection is irregular, and many areas suffer from overflowing dumpsters. Given the dryness and altitude, household pests are not a big problem and all homes are screened against flies. Happily, few rats exist in Sanaa, since a thriving population of wild cats and dogs keeps them under control. The cats and dogs pose some threat of rabies. Early morning joggers sometimes carry small stones to scare off the easily cowed dogs, who are rarely seen during day and evening hours.

Most water supplies, either from city services or private water companies, come from deep wells but are often contaminated. A city-wide sewer system is under construction

but not yet completed, and wells can be contaminated by ubiquitous shallow cesspools. Proper treatment of water by boiling and filtration protects against water-borne diseases.

Preventive Measures

Dusty days can prove an inconvenience to sinus and allergy sufferers. Plant allergies, in contrast, are not a problem with the sparse vegetation around Sanaa.

Commercially bottled water and carbonated soft drinks manufactured in Yemen are safe and are widely available throughout the country. Some local hotels and restaurants offer food that is safe and sanitary.

Typhoid has occurred in Yemen in recent years, as well as polio, tuberculosis and scattered incidents of hepatitis A. Some malaria cases have been reported from exposure in the lowlands. However, malaria is not present at the altitude of Sanaa. Cholera has been reported in scattered locations in Yemen.

Gastro-intestinal parasites are common, but can be diagnosed and treated routinely. Firm discipline in water and food preparation greatly reduces the likelihood of such illnesses.

Schistosomiasis or bilharzia is endemic in Yemen but can be easily avoided by not wading or swimming in streams or fresh water pools. Fresh vegetables must be washed in a chlorine or iodine solution. You can buy imported meats, but they must be well cooked. Local meat from selected stores is also safe after thorough cooking.

Qat

Qat is a leaf which many Yemenis like to chew in the afternoon hours after lunch. It is on the official U.S. list of controlled substances and may not be imported into the U.S. It produces a mild amphetamine-like reaction. Much of the social activity of Yemen is centered around the "Qat chew." Important business agreements as well as community and national matters are usually

discussed, and often decided during these sessions.

While qat does not appear to be physically addicting, withdrawal reaction has been known to occur after many years of regular chewing. The dangers include: blood pressure elevation; infectious diseases transferred via its leaves and/or the water with which it is washed; and ingestion of pesticides or other chemicals sprayed on the leaves.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs & Duties

Connections are usually made from Frankfurt, Paris, London, Bahrain or Jeddah, with flights in or out of Sanaa most days of the week. Reservations should be made and confirmed as far ahead of time as possible.

Passports and visas are required. As of November 17, 2001, the Yemeni government stopped issuing visas to American passport holders at airports and other points of entry. All U.S. travelers to Yemen must obtain visas prior to travel at Yemeni embassies or consulates overseas. Upon arrival in Yemen, travelers should register within the first month at the Immigration Authority in Sanaa or at any police station in the district where they are residing. Long term residents should re-register when they change their residence. Yellow fever vaccination is recommended. For further information on entry requirements, please contact the Embassy of the Republic of Yemen, Suite 705, 2600 Virginia Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037, telephone (202) 965-4760; or the Yemen Mission to the U.N., 866 United Nations Plaza, Room 435, New York, N.Y. 10017, telephone (212) 355-1730. The Embassy in Washington, D.C. maintains a home page at <http://www.yemenembassy.org>.

Americans who are considering studying in Yemen should make this fact clear to a Yemeni consular official in the United States and apply for the appropriate visa. Some American Muslims who come to Yemen for tourism or Islamic studies at Yemeni schools and have appropriate visas nevertheless have been detained by Yemeni security officials who seized their passports. In such instances, the American citizens were told their passports would be returned when they departed the country. Some Americans studying in Yemen without official permission have been deported.

Yemeni government security organizations have arrested and expelled foreign Muslims, including Americans, who have associated with local Muslim organizations considered extremist by security organs of the Yemeni government. The events mentioned in the WARNING section of this Consular Information Sheet have served to make Yemeni authorities, if anything, more suspicious of some foreign Muslims. Any American in Yemen who is considering associating with any political or fundamentalist Islamist group should discuss those intentions with a Yemeni consular official in the United States before traveling to Yemen. Americans risk arrest if they engage in either political or other activities that violate the terms of their admission to Yemen.

Yemeni law prohibits the removal of antiquities from the country. Yemeni authorities define antiquities loosely as anything man-made that is more than 50 years old. Persons attempting to depart with antiquities are subject to arrest, imprisonment or fines.

Yemeni customs authorities may enforce strict regulations concerning temporary importation into or export from Yemen of items such as firearms, pornography, and antiquities. It is advisable to contact the Embassy of Yemen in Washington, D.C. for specific information regarding customs requirements.

Americans living in or visiting Yemen are encouraged to register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Sanaa and obtain updated information on travel and security conditions within Yemen. The U.S. Embassy is open for American citizen services between 8:30 and 10:30 a.m., Saturday through Tuesday. The Embassy is located at Dhahr Himyar Zone, Sheraton Hotel District, P.O. Box 22347. The telephone number of the Consular Section is (967) (1) 303-155, extension 118, 265 or 266. The fax number is (967) (1) 303-175.

Laws

Photography of military installations, including airports, equipment, or troops is forbidden. In the past, such photography has led to the arrest of U.S. citizens. Military sites are not always obvious. If in doubt, it is wise to ask specific permission from Yemeni authorities.

Pets

Dogs and cats require current rabies and distemper vaccinations as well as a general certificate of good health dated within 2 weeks of arrival. Pets are generally cleared immediately upon their arrival. Shipment through Air France or Lufthansa is recommended. Some birds, including African parrots, and animals such as turtles and reptiles are not permitted entry. There are several Western-trained veterinarians in Sanaa.

Currency, Banking, and Weights and Measures

The Yemeni Riyal (YR) is broken down into 100 fils. Notes are available in denominations of YR1000, 500, 100, 50, 20, 10, 5 and 1. Coins are in denominations of 50, 25, 10, 5 and 1 fils. The exchange is around 164.59YR=US\$1.

Travelers should be aware that automatic teller machines (ATM) are not available in Yemen. Credit cards are not widely accepted.

The metric system is understood within Yemen's main cities, but sev-

eral traditional measures continue in use.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan. 1	.....	New Year's Day
May 1	.....	Labor Day
May 22	.....	Yemeni Unity Day
	.....	Muharram*
	.....	Mawlid an Nabi*
	.....	Ramadan*
	.....	Id al-Fitr*
	.....	Id al-Adha*
	.....	Lailat al Kadr*

*variable, based on the Islamic calendar

RECOMMENDED READING

The following titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country. The Department of State does not endorse unofficial publications.

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