

# Travelling The Unknown Around Iraq

# IRAQ MARCH

# الله أكبر

# ITINERARY

8 Days/ 7 Nights

### Introduction:

- This unique tour takes us to Iraq's most important touristic and historical sites, and is the perfect itinerary for someone who is visiting the country for the first time. You will learn about the diversity of modern Iraq, its Shia, Sunni, Christian and Kurdish components. You will also learn about its ancient history, ranging from the Sumerians to the Babylonians, as well as its Islamic history of the battle of Karbala.

### Highlights:

- A boat tour on the Iraqi marshes, a unique natural landscape that exists nowhere else in the Middle East.
- The crowds and spiritual atmosphere of the pilgrims at the holy shrines in Najaf and Karbala.
- Iraq's ancient historical sites of Babylon, Ur and Hatra, giving the country its title as "the cradle of civilisations".



## DAY 1 March 22, 2025

### BAGHDAD

- Airport pickup from Baghdad international airport, and check in to our hotel in Karrada area.
- Then, we will explore the main sites of Baghdad, including Muttanabi Street (famous market street selling books and antiques), Al Shahbander Martyr's Cafe, The Martyr's Monument, 1001 Nights Monument, and more. We know many awesome hidden sites, but let's keep them a surprise!
- In the evening, we will go to some local Baghdad cafes and explore what the youth of Iraq get up to during the night! We will either explore Karrada neighbourhood at night, or Adhamiyah neighbourhood (both bustling and filled with youth).

### CTESIPHON, BABYLON & KARBALA

- Start your journey with the awe-inspiring Taq Kasra, the world's largest single-span brick arch and a marvel of Sasanian architecture. Imagine the grandeur of what was once a thriving royal city and a center of Persian power.
- Next, visit the legendary Babylon, the city of Hammurabi and Nebuchadnezzar II. Walk through the reconstructed Ishtar Gate, a stunning blue-tiled portal once part of the city's protective walls. Wander along the Processional Way and learn about the Hanging Gardens, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World (though their exact location remains a mystery!). We will also visit Saddam Hussein's palace, perched dramatically on a hill overlooking the ancient ruins.
- We will end our day in the holy city of Karbala, where spirituality fills the air. Consider an evening visit to the Imam Hussein Shrine, one of the holiest sites in Islam, illuminated beautifully at night, as well as the local marketplaces.
- Enjoy a delicious dinner. Overnight in Karbala

## DAY 2 March 23, 2025



### KARBALA & NAJAF

- Start in Karbala at the Imam Hussein Shrine and Al-Abbas Shrine, marveling at their golden domes and spiritual ambiance. Stroll through nearby bazaars filled with local crafts and snacks.
- Travel to Najaf to visit the majestic Imam Ali Shrine, a stunning site of worship and reflection. Explore Wadi Al-Salam, the world's largest cemetery, rich in history and cultural significance. We know the place with the best view!
- End in Kufa at the historic Great Mosque of Kufa, an architectural and spiritual landmark. Return to Karbala or Najaf to relax and reflect on the day's journey.
- Overnight in Najaf - possibly a homestay if you would like!

## DAY 3 March 24, 2025



## DAY 4

March 25, 2025



### BASRAH

- After breakfast, we will depart Najaf in the morning and head south towards Basrah, Iraq's third largest city and hub of the oil industry.
- Upon arrival in Basrah, we will check in to the hotel, before heading out to the old town. This area is filled with ancient Shanashil style buildings, a unique form of architecture specific to Basrah,
- If time permits (and it's open), we will visit the Basrah museum, which is located in a former palace of Saddam Hussein.
- Around sunset time, we will head out to the Corniche area, a pleasant promenade along the waterfront, filled with families and Basrah locals heading out to enjoy their evening. Here, we have the opportunity to take a boat ride and experience Basrah from the water. The vibes here are truly unique and can only be found here in Basrah.
- Overnight in Basrah

### IRAQI MARSHES, ZIGGURAT OF UR, BAGHDAD

- After having a light breakfast, we will drive to the Iraqi marshes in Chibayish (highlight!). Here, we will have a boat tour in a truly unique landscape, whilst also admiring the traditional Sumerian reed houses, which people still build today! After our boat tour, we will eat Masguf, the national dish of Iraq, which is grilled marsh fish, cooked using burning wood. The way it's made is also an ancient Sumerian tradition.
- We will then drive on to the Ziggurat of Ur. This ancient pyramid and city was mentioned in the Bible, and it is one of the oldest standing structures on planet Earth. History geeks, this is your place.
- We will then continue on to Baghdad, where we will check in to our hotel. In the evening, you have the opportunity to go out to a cafe for tea and a shisha.

## DAY 5

March 26, 2025



### SAMARRA, HATRA/ASHUR, MOSUL

- In the morning, we will begin our journey with a visit to the iconic Samarra Minaret (Malwiya Tower), a spiraling masterpiece of Islamic architecture from the Abbasid era. Climb to the top for panoramic views and a sense of the grandeur of ancient Samarra.
- Head north to the UNESCO World Heritage site of Hatra or Ashur. At Hatra, explore the well-preserved ruins of a Parthian empire city, with its grand temples and fortress-like walls. If visiting Ashur, discover the ancient Assyrian capital with its rich archaeological remains, including ziggurats and palaces.
- Continue to Mosul, a vibrant city rich in history. We'll sample our favourite ice cream shop in Iraq, before relaxing at the hotel.

## DAY 6

March 27, 2025

## DAY 7

March 28, 2025



### MOSUL, BAKHDIDA, ERBIL

- We will start our day in Mosul's Old City, exploring its historical treasures. Walk through its narrow alleys to see landmarks like the reconstructed Al-Nuri Mosque and the beautifully restored Al-Tahira Church, symbols of the city's resilience and diverse heritage.
- Travel to the Assyrian town of Bakhdida (Qaraqosh), a historic Christian center which was occupied by ISIS during the war. Visit the Immaculate Conception Cathedral, known for its inspiring restoration, and explore the town's cultural heritage through its traditional houses and local stories. We will also visit a local museum for Assyrian heritage.
- Continue to Erbil, the capital of the Kurdistan Region and one of the world's oldest continuously inhabited cities. Explore the ancient Erbil Citadel, a UNESCO World Heritage site, and stroll through the vibrant Qaysari Bazaar to experience Kurdish culture.
- We will go out for dinner together, and enjoy our final night. For those that would like to go to a bar, this option is available.



## DAY 8

March 29, 2025

### BAGHDAD, DEPARTURE

- For those that would like to fly out from Erbil airport, this is where you will depart. We can arrange your airport transfer.
- After spending the morning in Erbil, we will depart back south towards Baghdad, arriving at around 4pm.
- If you wish, we can also arrange your airport transfer to Baghdad airport.

**PRICE: 1300 USD**



**SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: 300 USD**

## TO BOOK, CONTACT US

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### INCLUDED:

- Twin-share accommodation (single supplements are available at an additional cost) for every night of the tour.
- Entry costs to all museums, historical sites and places that we visit.
- Tourist permits and all required permissions.
- Transportation between the places mentioned in the itinerary.
- English speaking guides licensed guides
- Breakfast
- Airport pickup

### EXCLUDED:

- The on-arrival visa fee at the border.
- Visa approval (if your nationality doesn't qualify for on-arrival visa)
- Airport drop off after the tour (arranged for a fee)
- Single supplement for those who do not want to share a room (300 USD)
- Tips for the guides (not mandatory)
- Lunch, dinner, drinks and souvenirs