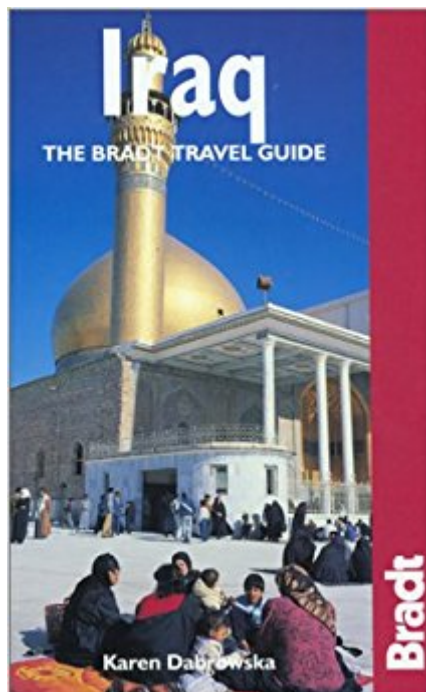


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Iraq: The Bradt Travel Guide



Synopsis

Iraq today is synonymous in the minds of travelers with the past. Barely two hours from Baghdad, one can walk in the footsteps of Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon or drive past Nineveh's pre-history ochre walls, with their caverns and winged lions.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In one sense Iraq is timeless, its place names resonating across the years - for this is Mesopotamia, the Land between Two Rivers. Between the Tigris and the Euphrates, three great religions were born, and no place in the world is so steeped in ancient history. But modern Iraq is under threat from every quarter. Politics play havoc with ordinary lives; sanctions cut deep. In the face of such adversity, one could understand hostility; yet today's rare visitors are met with a broad hospitality that belies years of deprivation, and harks back to a time when this beleaguered country could show the world the meaning of the word "welcome". Inside this guide you will find information on: history, ancient and modern; access and red tape; accommodation, restaurants and transport; traveling in Iraq, from Baghdad to the Marshlands; A to Z of archaeological sites, including Babylon and Ur; safety, security and sanctions. (5 1/4 x 8 1/2, 288 pages, color photos, maps, illustrations)

Karen Dabrowska and Felicity Arbuthnot are both journalists living in London. Karen is a New Zealander who focuses on Islamic culture and conflicts. Felicity specialises in social and environmental issues and has visited Iraq 24 times since the Gulf War. She was Iraq researcher for

John Pilger's award-winning documentary, *Paying the Price - Killing the Children of Iraq*, and has been nominated for several awards including the Millennium Peace Prize for Women.

To my knowledge, Bradt's Iraq is the only currently available travel guide for this troubled land. It is CLEARLY written with sympathy for the Iraqi people and culture, and for me, this unexpected but effective undertone has served to help bring a human dimension to the populace of this "Axis of Evil" member nation. In my personal opinion, U.S. military personnel and our allies (if any still exist) in the coming potential conflict will find this book valuable not only for its introduction to the Iraqi culture, geography and tourist attractions, but also because it puts a real "face" on the Iraqi people. In the end, THEY aren't the problem - Hussein and his cronies are. Whether she intended to or not, and despite her liberal undertones, the author effectively communicated this point. In that sense, the timing couldn't be better. If you are anticipating an all-expense-paid trip to the region in the near future - try to get your hands on a copy of this book and read it. I think you'll be glad you did. Godspeed and a safe journey, if the time comes.

It is the only book available with any hotels listed. It is for the 5 star traveler and if you want to use as a budget traveler always skip the first or top suggestions for hotels. Go for the third or last and you will be on the shoestring. I am a cultural traveler and like people, and the recommendations in the book will keep you away from the people, and away from the center of the culture. Iraq is one of the most developed infrastructure countries I have entered in 7 years of travel. Like walking down a street in Lima Peru at night. The history provided by this book is good reason to purchase. The hotel and transportation advice will get you in danger. There are lots of Hobo type hotels in all the cities I have entered so far, and not in the book. Andy HoboTraveler.com in Mosul, Iraq August 10, 2003

I read this book by chance, its title grabbed my attention. Why on earth would anyone be crazy enough to travel to Iraq (other than journalists / aid workers / soldiers)? I searched hard to find the usual travel-guide fodder: How to get into the city, what to see, where to eat, where to stay. Instead, a large chunk of the book was given over to detailing life under sanctions. And it was done in a sensitive way. No-one who has researched Iraq thoroughly enough to write a travel-guide could do any different. As I read, I wondered why the author had done this. Travellers don't want to read a comment on the life of Iraqis under sanctions. Or do they? Surely, anyone crazy enough to go to Iraq, and risk their life by entering a land which has been under daily bombardment for 12 years (ruled by a dictator, and now by a military occupation), would be going BECAUSE they want to see

for themselves what they see every day on the news. It is thin on hotels, and restaurants, not because the author didn't think it was important, but because Iraq itself was thin on hotels and restaurants. The sanctions killed many Iraqis, and forced more than half of the (formerly wealthy) population below the poverty line. Iraqis struggled to survive, rather than manage restaurants. The almost dead tourist industry further limited the number of hotels/restuarants. Overall this book is a great guide to Iraq, better than any Political book. It focusses heavily on the life under sanctions, and now military occupation not because the author wants a political platform, but because the sanctions / occupation have DEFINED Iraq (more than any historical sights) over the last 12 years.

Bradt always seems to do a good job of producing books for those places off of the beaten track. I'm not particularly fond of the way the book is set up nor with the overall tone of the author. She seems to be using the book as a stage to air her personal beliefs and views on the embargo and such. Maybe it is just me, but I don't see the need for that in a travel guide. The A-Z section on the archaeological sites is very good, though quite a bit seems to be copied nearly verbatim from the Middle East Blue Guide of the late 1960's. The guide is also a bit short on the ins and outs that normal travel guides have...restaurants, hotels, etc. Having said all that, it DOES provide decent information on the sites and cities of the country and a fairly thorough background on the Iraqi government and current situation. If you happen to be going to Iraq, it is the ONLY current book of this kind out there, so you'd be wise to have it. But, be warned, I don't imagine it will be long until the border guards wise up and confiscate all copies coming into the country.

This book was published pre-war and at least one of the authors was a long-time advocate of lifting sanctions and ally of John Pilger. It's terrible on the Kurdish regions. More up-to-date is Gilles Munier 'Iraq: an Illustrated History and Guide', although it lacks the details re hotels etc. Either might be of use - and or interest - to someone visiting. But surely no-one would be mad enough to rely on either for decisions about where to travel and where to stay: for either you must have up-to-date information from people on the ground whom you trust.

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