



**THE ENGLISH  
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL  
BAGHDAD**

## About Baghdad



Baghdad, the vibrant capital of Iraq, is a city rich in history, culture, and resilience. Steeped in centuries of tradition, it is home to some of the world's most significant historical sites, such as the National Museum of Iraq, where visitors can explore ancient Mesopotamian artefacts. The city's dynamic culture is evident in its bustling streets, especially Al-Mutanabbi Street, known for its lively bookshops and local cafés.



Baghdad is also a city of scenic beauty, with the Tigris River flowing through its heart, offering stunning views and leisurely walks along its banks. The city's diverse architecture, ranging from modern buildings to historical landmarks like the Al-Shaheed Monument, adds to its charm.



The food scene in Baghdad is exceptional, showcasing a variety of traditional Iraqi dishes that highlight the region's rich culinary heritage. From the renowned **Masgouf** (grilled fish) to **Kubba** (meat dumplings), the city offers an authentic taste of Iraq's hospitality.

Though Baghdad has faced challenges, its resilience and the warmth of its people make it a fascinating destination. Its unique blend of history, culture, and modernity provides an enriching and inspiring environment for both visitors and residents.

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## Before You Arrive

- **Currency:** Baghdad remains a cash-based society, and international cards can be expensive to use. It's advisable to bring at least \$500 USD in cash to cover expenses for the first month until your salary arrives.
- **Weather:** Baghdad experiences very hot summers and cold winters. Be sure to pack clothing suitable for both climates.
- **Dress Code:** The dress code at our school is business formal. Please bring work attire that aligns with this standard.
- **Visa:** Staff eligible for an eVisa should apply at least 7 days before arrival. The application process is straightforward, requiring a passport copy and a personal photo with a white background. Applications can be processed at [evisa.iq](https://www.evisa.iq). For those not eligible for the eVisa, the school will arrange the visa in advance.

- **Visa Payment:** Depending on your visa type, payment may be required upon arrival. HR will notify you of the cost in advance, and you'll need to prepare the amount in USD. This will be reimbursed after clearing immigration.
- **Flight Arrangements:** The school will book a standard economy ticket for your flight to Baghdad. To ensure you arrive during business hours and facilitate any necessary airport assistance, you may need to depart at an inconvenient time. We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause.



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## Upon Arrival

- **Immigration Process:** After disembarking the aircraft, follow the crowd to the arrivals area. Go to the "Visas" section with your visa printout and passport. The visa process may take anywhere from a few minutes to over an hour. If you encounter any issues, please contact HR via WhatsApp for assistance.
  - **Immigration Stamp:** Once your visa is approved, proceed to the immigration officer for your entry stamp.
  - **Transportation:** A driver will meet you outside baggage claim holding a sign with your name. Please ensure you connect to the airport Wi-Fi so we can reach you in case of any issues.
  - **SIM Card:** There are Asiacell and Zain kiosks in the arrival hall where staff speak English. We recommend purchasing a SIM card with a data package for local communication.
  - **Accommodation:** The driver will take you to your accommodation, where HR will meet you, give you a city tour, and assist with any immediate needs.
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## Things to Do in Baghdad

In addition to its rich history and cultural heritage, Baghdad offers a range of exciting activities and attractions:

1. **National Museum of Iraq:** Immerse yourself in Iraq's ancient history with a vast collection of Mesopotamian antiquities and artefacts.



2. **Al-Mutanabbi Street:** A vibrant street popular with book lovers and art enthusiasts. Browse books, enjoy street performances, and explore local cafés.



3. **Baghdad Zoo:** Located in Zawra Park, the zoo is great for a family outing, home to a variety of animals including lions, tigers, and monkeys.



4. **Stroll Along the Tigris River:** Enjoy scenic views of the river and dine at riverside cafés offering delicious Iraqi cuisine.



5. **Al-Shaheed Monument:** This iconic structure honours fallen soldiers from the Iran-Iraq War. The monument offers panoramic views of Baghdad.



6. **Souq Al-Safafer:** One of Baghdad's oldest markets, offering traditional crafts, spices, clothing, and souvenirs.



7. **Al-Kadhimiya Shrine:** A significant religious and architectural site, the golden dome of this shrine creates a stunning visual and spiritual experience.



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## Notable Places to Travel in Iraq

Iraq boasts diverse landscapes and historical landmarks. Here are some destinations worth exploring:

1. **Erbil:** The capital of the Kurdistan Region, featuring the ancient Citadel and the Qaysari Bazaar.



2. **Babylon:** Explore the ruins of the ancient city, including the Hanging Gardens and the Ishtar Gate.



3. **Najaf:** A pilgrimage site with the Imam Ali Shrine, an architectural and spiritual landmark.
4. **Basra:** Located along the Shatt al-Arab River, Basra is a port city rich in culture and history, with attractions like the Basra Museum and the Corniche.
5. **Mosul:** Still recovering from conflict, Mosul offers a glimpse into its past, including the Great Mosque of al-Nuri and the Nineveh Ruins.
6. **Sulaymaniyah:** Known for its landscapes and vibrant arts scene, Sulaymaniyah is a charming city in the Kurdistan Region.
7. **Karbala:** A major pilgrimage site, home to the Imam Husayn Shrine and a significant spiritual destination during the Arba'een pilgrimage.

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## Culinary Delights in Baghdad

Baghdad offers a rich culinary experience, with traditional dishes to enjoy:

1. **Masgouf:** Grilled fish, typically carp, marinated with spices and served with rice. Try **Al-Masgouf Al-Shami** for an authentic taste.
2. **Kubba:** Ground meat mixed with bulgur wheat and spices, formed into dumplings. Head to **Al-Khaimah Al-Iraqi** for delicious variations.
3. **Tashreeb:** A flavourful stew made with bread soaked in lamb or chicken broth, seasoned with aromatic spices. Enjoy this dish at **Al-Mansour Restaurant**.
4. **Shawarma:** Marinated meat (usually lamb or chicken) cooked on a vertical rotisserie. Visit **Shawarma Abu Zahra** for a tasty experience.
5. **Dolma:** Stuffed vegetables filled with rice, meat, and herbs. Try **Al-Hayat Restaurant** for this classic dish.

6. **Iraqi Tea:** Fragrant black tea infused with cardamom, served with sugar. Enjoy a cup at **Al-Maidan Al-Shimali Tea House**.



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## Important Instructions for Your Stay in Baghdad

To ensure a smooth and safe stay, please review the following guidelines:

### *Things to Do:*

- Familiarise yourself with local customs and dress modestly when appropriate.
- Stay in touch with colleagues and local contacts to enhance your experience.
- Stay informed about security situations through official advisories and school updates.
- Learn basic Arabic phrases to help navigate daily life.
- Explore the city's historical sites and try local cuisine.
- Always carry your passport or ID.
- Keep Iraqi Dinar (IQD) on hand for daily expenses.

### *Things Not to Do:*

- Avoid discussing sensitive political or religious topics with unfamiliar individuals.
  - Refrain from photographing military or government installations.
  - Do not consume tap water; stick to bottled water.
  - Avoid displaying excessive wealth or valuables.
  - Males should refrain from shaking hands with females unless they extend their hand first.
  - Alcohol is allowed but should be consumed in private settings.
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## Useful Arabic Phrases

- **Hello:** Marhaba
  - **Goodbye:** Ma'a salama
  - **Thank you:** Shukran
  - **You're Welcome:** Afwan
  - **Left:** Yasar
  - **Right:** Yameen
  - **Excuse me:** Afwan
  - **Sorry:** Asif
  - **I don't understand:** Maarif
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## Useful Applications

- **Careem:** A Middle Eastern version of Uber with English support.
  - **Totters:** A food delivery app featuring many of Baghdad's best restaurants, with an English interface.
  - **Google Translate:** Helpful for translating Arabic signs and menus.
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## Important Places

- **Al Warda Supermarket:** A clean and well-stocked supermarket with a diverse range of products, including imported items.
  - **Al Budoor Hospital:** The top hospital in Baghdad, offering international-standard healthcare. The school has an agreement to provide free care for staff.
  - **Dijlah Village:** An upscale area with cafés, restaurants, and a large water fountain.
  - **Al Jadriya Mall:** A modern mall featuring international brands, cafés, and restaurants.
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We wish you all the best in your new role and hope you have a successful and enjoyable stay in Baghdad!