

📖 Topic Page: [Baghdad \(Iraq\)](#)

Definition: **Baghdad** from *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*
Governorate of Iraq; area 5,159 sq km/1,992 sq mi; population (2003 est) 6,386,100. The region is irrigated by the Euphrates and the Tigris rivers, but the soil is generally poor and unproductive. The inhabitants are predominantly Sunni Arabs, with some Turkomans and Kurds.



Image from: [The creation of the Mongol empire - 1204-11260](#) in [Concise Atlas of World History](#).
[Andromeda](#)

Summary Article: **Baghdad**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

Capital city and largest city of Iraq, and capital of the governorate of Baghdad, on the River Tigris; population (2002 est) 5,605,000 (urban area 6,508,200). The city is the home of most of the industrial, commercial, and financial activities of the country. Industries include oil refining, distilling, tanning, tobacco processing, and the manufacture of petrochemicals, iron and steel, textiles, clothing, electrical goods, and cement. Founded in 762, it became Iraq's capital in 1921. During the Gulf War in 1991 and the Iraq War in 2003, international coalition forces bombed it in repeated air raids.

History A transportation hub from the earliest times, it was developed by the 8th-century caliph Harun al-Rashid, although little of the *Arabian Nights* city remains. It was overrun in 1258 by the Mongols, who destroyed the irrigation system. In 1639 it was taken by the Turks. During World War I it was part of the Turkish Empire until it was captured in March 1917 by General Frederick Maude (1864–1917).

Features The east and west sides of the River Tigris are connected by 11 bridges. To the southeast, on the river, are the ruins of **Ctesiphon**, capital of Parthia from about 250 BC–AD 226 and of the Sassanian Empire from about 226–641. The Kadhimain Mosque (1515) is one of the most important in Iraq. The Iraqi Museum has collections of ancient artefacts, and the Baghdad museum has tableaux of traditional life. Baghdad's university was established in 1858.

From Assyrian times to the 20th century There was a town near the site in Assyrian times and a settlement with this name when the Abbasside caliph Mansur built his new capital on the west bank of the Tigris (762–66), and called it Mansuriya. As it was the capital of the largest empire of that time it grew quickly, and before long the palaces of the caliphs and grandees were on the east bank, the two parts of the city being joined by bridges of boats. At the height of its glory its total area was about 50 sq km/20 sq mi, including 9 ha/22 acres of cemeteries; in 1900 the total area was 300 ha/750 acres. Hulagu, grandson of the Mongol ruler Genghis Khan, captured the city in 1258, putting an end to the caliphate, and in 1393 Tamerlane captured it. In the 16th century the Persians held it for a time and they and the Turks fought for it until the Ottoman Murad took it in 1638 and held it. In 1755 a British trade agency was established there and the telegraph was introduced during the rule of the reforming governor, Midhat Pasha. Baghdad was brought into world politics by the Baghdad railway built by the Germans; it was begun at Haidar Pasha in 1871 and reached Konya in 1896, although through traffic to Baghdad was not possible till 1940.

Ancient buildings The city built by Mansur has vanished entirely and few old buildings, which were built

of brick, remain: part of the Mirjaniya mosque and college (14th century), the Mustansiriya college (13th century; it was used as a customs house but has now been repaired), the Aqliya mosque (13th century), and the minaret of al-Ghazi. In or near Baghdad are some venerated shrines: Kadhimain, the burial place of two imams, the tomb of Abu-Hanifa the jurist, and the shrine of Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani. Jews made pilgrimages to the tomb of Joshua. There are also the remains of a palace of the late Abbasside dynasty (750–1258).

The modern city The city's population grew rapidly in the 20th century, much of the increase caused by large-scale migration into the city from rural areas. A series of water-control measures have reduced the danger of flooding and there has been great expansion in the built-up area to the south and west of the city. Until the 1960s many of the new dwellings were in squatters' shanty towns. Most of these have now been destroyed and the inhabitants rehoused by the government in new settlements on the outskirts of the city. Over 1 million low-income migrants to the city occupy housing areas to the east developed in the late 20th century. At the same time a prosperous residential area has grown up, surrounded by a meander of the Tigris, at al-Jadriyah, an area which is also the home of the University of Baghdad. The city is the major communications centre of the country, served by many road and rail routes, as well as by Saddam International Airport. It is also the seat of government and administration, and a large proportion of Iraq's industry is located in Baghdad, including brick and cement manufacture and oil refining.

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