

## Topic Page: [Shatt al Arab](#)

Definition: **Shatt-al-Arab** from *Collins English Dictionary*

*n*

**1** a river in SE Iraq, formed by the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers: flows southeast as part of the border between Iraq and Iran to the Persian Gulf. Length: 193 km (120 miles)

### Summary Article: **Shatt al Arab**

From *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

(shät ä'l ä'räb), tidal river, 120 mi (193 km) long, formed by the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, flowing SE to the Persian Gulf, forming part of the Iraq-Iran border; the Karun is its chief tributary. The Shatt al Arab flowed through a broad, swampy delta, but the marshlands in Iraq were drained in the early 1990s in order to increase government control over the Arab Shiites (Marsh Arabs) who lived there. Restoration of the marshlands began in 2003, following the invasion of Iraq by Anglo-American forces, but only about 75% of the area was restored, and some marshland has since been lost. The river supplies fresh water to S Iraq and Kuwait but the construction of dams and the demand for water upstream has led to a greatly increased salt content. The Shatt al Arab is navigable for oceangoing vessels as far as Basra, Iraq's chief port.

Iraq and Iran have disputed navigation rights on the Shatt al Arab since 1935, when an international commission gave Iraq total control of the Shatt al Arab, leaving Iran with control only of the approaches to Abadan and Khorramshahr, its chief ports, and unable to develop new port facilities in the delta. To preclude Iraqi political pressure and interference with its oil and freight shipments on the Shatt al Arab, Iran built ports on the Persian Gulf to handle foreign trade. Iran and Iraq negotiated territorial agreements over the Shatt al Arab waterway in 1975, but by the end of the decade skirmishes in the area became prevalent. Full-scale war between the two countries broke out in Sept., 1980, leading to eight years of attacks on coastal areas (see Iran-Iraq War). The Shatt al Arab remains a source of conflict, as limited water access and unresolved maritime boundaries in the region persist.

See Schofield, R. N. , *Evolution of the Shatt al Arab Boundary Dispute* (1986).

### **APA**

### Chicago

### Harvard

### MLA

Shatt Al Arab. (2018). In P. Lagasse, & Columbia University, *The Columbia encyclopedia* (8th ed.). New York, NY: Columbia University Press. Retrieved from [https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/shatt\\_al\\_arab](https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/shatt_al_arab)



*The Columbia Encyclopedia*, © Columbia University Press 2018



## APA

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## Chicago

"Shatt al Arab." In *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, by Paul Lagasse, and Columbia University. 8th ed. Columbia University Press, 2018. [https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/shatt\\_al\\_arab](https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/shatt_al_arab)

## Harvard

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## MLA

"Shatt al Arab." *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, Paul Lagasse, and Columbia University, Columbia University Press, 8th edition, 2018. *Credo Reference*, [https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/shatt\\_al\\_arab](https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/shatt_al_arab). Accessed 22 Sep. 2019.