

## IRAQI KURDISTAN STUDY TOUR MAY



### Tour Date:

12. May 2018 to 21. May 2018

After decades of war and violence, Iraqi Kurdistan is today experiencing profound economic and social changes. The mushrooming of gated communities, grand shopping malls and luxurious restaurants points towards the astounding new wealth acquired by some parts of the society. While some regard Iraqi-Kurdistan as predestined to become the new Dubai, most of its population has other priorities. The region is experiencing a deep economic crisis and many people are without a job. Other concerns range from protecting the environment to starting a process to reconcile the violent past with the present and creating a more just society.

### Our focus

An essential part of this trip is engaging with civil society activists in Iraqi Kurdistan. What do women's rights activists, both the old and new Peshmerga, journalists, and ordinary citizens think about the politics and society in today's Iraqi Kurdistan?

We will learn about the everyday realities, hopes and wishes of people living in historic villages, like Amadiye and Lalesh, or in major cities such as Sulaymaniya, Dohuk, and Erbil.

Led by our seasoned partners from Go-Wild-Kurdistan, we'll hike on mountain paths once used by the Peshmerga and explore nature in its historical context.

Price

Tour Price

EUR 1,689

**Tour Price**

Reduced Price

EUR 1,289

**Reduced Price**



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#### Tour Overview

START:	Sulaimaniyya
FINISH:	Dohuk
DURATION:	11 days / 10 nights
TRANSPORT:	Private bus with air-condition
ACCOMMODATION:	Guesthouses / mid-range hotels
SINGLE ROOM SUPPLEMENT:	EUR 400
TOUR LANGUAGE:	Tour language is English, Meetings partially in Kurdish with translation

#### Travel itinerary and program

### Tour program:

#### Day 1: Sulaimaniyya

- Visit of the former prison of Saddam Hussein's Baath party which now hosts an art exhibition
- Tour through the Bazar of Sulaimaniyya with a focus on the structure of the market and its historical-architectural changes
- Meeting with representatives of women centres, Discussion on the situation of (marginalised) women in Iraqi-Kurdistan

#### Day 2: Sulaimaniyya

- Visit of the Democratic Lawyers' Organisation - Topic: Democracy in Kurdistan?
- Guided tour through the Archeological Museum of Sulaimaniyya, which displays many cultural and antique treasures
- Visit of the editorial office of Awene and/or Hawlati, two independent newspapers - Topic: Press Freedom and role of the Media in Iraqi-Kurdistan
- Meeting with Art Collective SulyOn - Topic: Past, present and future cultural production in Iraqi-Kurdistan

#### Day 3: Halabja (site of the Baath regime's toxic gas attack in 1988)

- Visit of the memorial site and martyr's cemetery
- Talk with affected persons
- Picnic and walk in the mountainous Hawraman region

#### Day 4: Erbil

- Visit of the 4000 year old citadell which hosts several museums
- Free time in the Langa Bazar next to the citadell
- Historical tour in the Christian quarter Ain Kawa, Visit of the local churches
- Dinner in Ain Kawa and optional visit of a bar

#### Day 5: Erbil

- Visit of the Parliament, meeting with deputies - Topic: the Political System in Kurdistan, influence of the Parliament
- Meeting with representatives of ruling and opposition parties
- Freetime in the afternoon, optional tour to the mountains close to Erbil

#### Day 6: Dohuk and surroundings

- Meeting with Students of Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Dohuk
- Visit of the Jinda Center for female victims of sexual violence
- Climbing the local mountain of Dohuk from which one can see the Mossul-Dam
- Dinner in the Assyrian Cultural Center

#### Day 7: Lalesh (yezidische sanctuary) and al-Qush

- Daytrip to the Yezidi sanctuary Lalesh, guided tour by a local
- Visit of the old monastery al-Qush
- Dinner at the Dohuk Dam

#### Day 8: Amediyeh

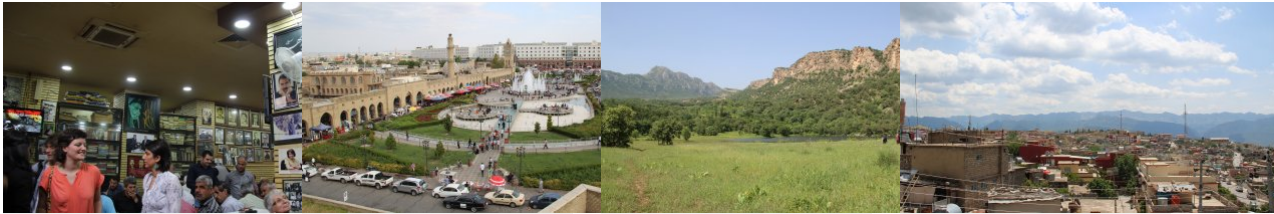
- Daytrip to Amediye, a 3000-year old city located on a mountain plateau
- Visit of the water mill which produces the country's best sesame paste
- Lunch at the Sulav Waterfall
- Start of the hike with Go-Wild Kurdistan in the Gara Mountains

#### Day 9: Gara Mountains

- Hike
- Overnight stay in a mountain village

#### Day 10: Gara Mountains, Dohuk

- Final part of the hike
- Arrival in Dohuk around noon, Lunch and evaluation of the tour
- Departure for the airport



#### Sulaimaniyya

Sulaimaniyya is the cultural capital of the Kurdish part of Iraq. Known for its university, the city is the second biggest in the autonomous region Kurdistan, counting about 1.607.000 inhabitants.

#### Erbil

Erbil ist capital and seat of the autonomous Kurdish government in Northern Iraq. Its Christian quarter Ain Kawa houses many Assyrians, some of whom originating from Mossul or the Niniveh plains where they had to flee the so called Islamic State.

#### Dohuk and Surroundings

Around Dohuk - literally translated „little village“ - there are many refugee camps. We will discover the fantastic landscape of the nearby Gara Mountains on a two-day hike.

#### Amediyeh

This 3000 year old city's location on a mountain plateau offers spectacular sights.

#### Tour Team

#### Schluwa Sama

Schluwa earned an MSc in Middle East Politics at SOAS, University of London and an MA in Politics and Economics of the Middle East at Philipps University Marburg, Germany. Currently, she is a PhD candidate at the Centre for Kurdish Studies, University of Exeter. Her research focuses on the political economy of Iraqi Kurdistan. As a guide for political study excursions to Iraqi Kurdistan, it is most important that participants come to a critical understanding of their very own positions towards West Asia.



#### Christoph Dinkelaker

Christoph is Co-Founder of Alsharq and today the Co-Director of Alsharq Travel. Due to his studies of Political Sciences, History and Islamic Studies he has been working on and in the region for many years. In 2015, he conducted his first Alsharq tour in Iraqi-Kurdistan. Even today, he is overwhelmed by the Kurdish people's openness and the stunning beauty of the mountains.



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