



A Tourist Guide to a Hospitable Country

Syria: The Meeting of Past and Present

Damascus-"Islamic Tourism"

Syria is at the heart of the ancient world that is full of history. This history is connected to the history of the whole region in the past and still in the present and may be in the future. Syria is situated at the cross road of the old trade. The famous silk route that came from such a far land as China passed through Syria, along the coastal side. From the Syrian it went to the western world. To the land of Syria came also the caravans of southern Arabia. But it is also at the heart of

the invention of writing which has generated culture, science and civilization. Many anthropologists link the rise of civilizations with the settled people of a fertile land. Syria is part of what is known as The Fertile Crescent. From a very ancient times, people of this land cultivated wheat and barley. Many civilizations, some local others foreign, have fought over this land. The remains of these civilizations that are mainly present in the form of citadels, fortresses towers and

walls are witnesses to the great game of civilization, conquest and the undiminished strategic importance. The pre-Roman world had witnessed many indigenous civilizations and city states in this region, but it is the Roman Empire that has left so much to see at the present day. The Christian and Islamic religions and civilizations have there immense impact on this land such that you could not omit this land from your tour of the Middle East and could still be able to ➤



غوطة دمشق

The Ghouta of Damascus.





City Tourism



دير سمعان.
Samaan Church.

piece the history of Islam and Christianity together.

Syria fell to the mighty of Alexander the Great towards the end of the fourth century B. C. but it was Seleucus who managed after the death of Alexander to gain the control of most of Syria. There were continuous con-

flicts between Seleucus and the Ptoleuids of Egypt for the control of central and southern parts of Syria. The Romans annexed Syria in the first century B. C. but when the Roman capital shifted from Rome to Constantinople in 220 A.D.

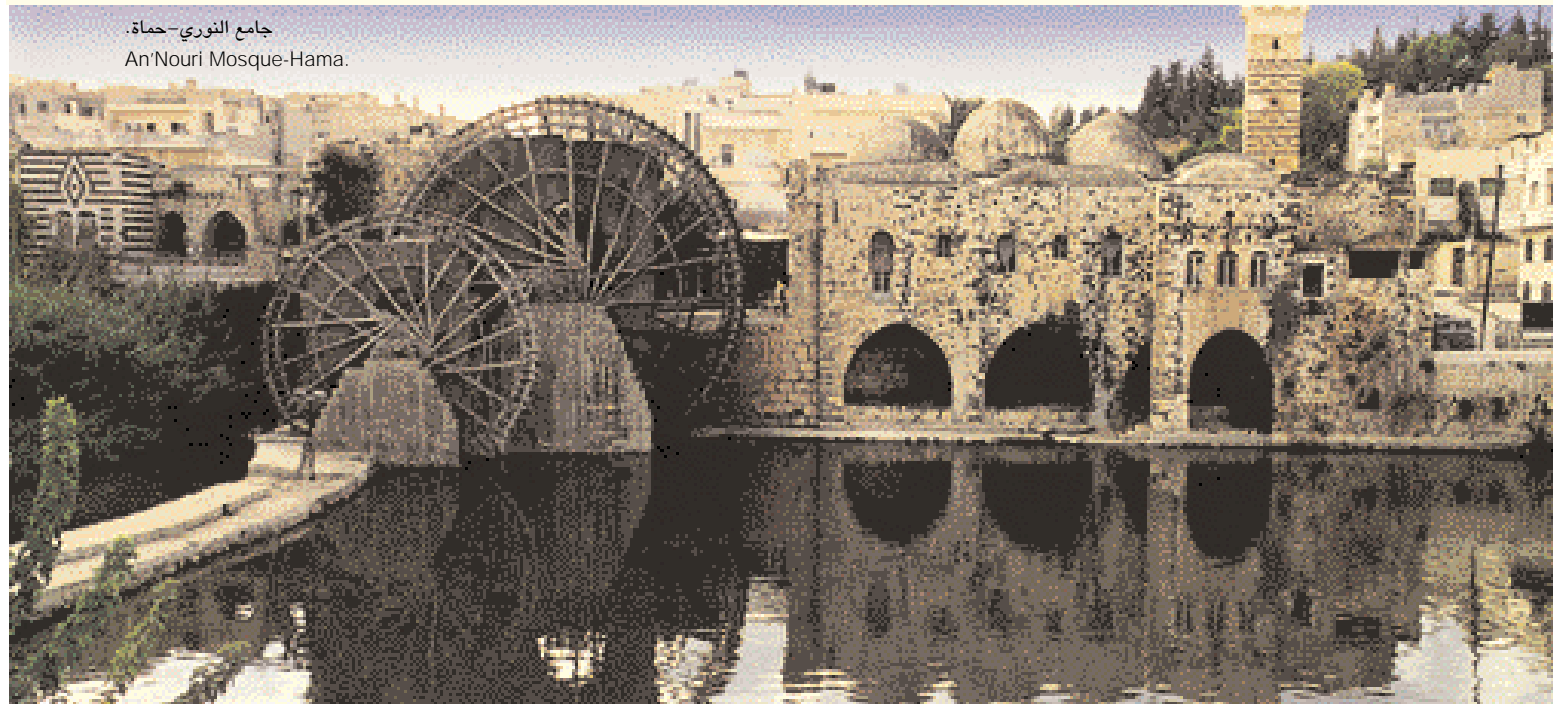
The Moslem Arabs tried to regain Syria from

the Roman during the Caliph Abu Baker in 634 A. D. and they did succeed two years later after the battle of Yarmuk. Later on, a dynasty of rulers, known as The Umayyad, ruled in Damascus for some hundred years. The Crusaders conquered parts of Syria but it was regained from them by the Ayyubids who ruled until 1250. The Memlukes governed Syria from that until the Ottoman Turks occupied the land in 1516. The situation changed after the First World War when Syria fell to the French but gained its independence on April the 17th, 1946.

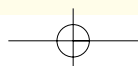
Your Way to Syria

Syria is accessible by all means, land, sea and air. To get to Syria by land; there are so many connections to neighbouring countries. From Europe you can get to Syria through Turkey. There are good international road links to this country and to other neighbouring countries, such as Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon.

If you prefer the sea way, you can go directly to the Syrian ports, such as Lattakia and Tartous, both on the Mediterranean. But if you rather go by air, you can use the Syrian Arab Airline or any other world famous airlines. These flights go normally to Damascus or Aleppo. Most nationalities need a visa to enter Syria and that can be obtained from the Syrian Embassy or Consulate in the visitor's own country or at the point of entry. Visitors do not need an exit visa if their ➤



جامع النوري-حماة.
An'Nouri Mosque-Hama.





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جزيرة أرواد
Arwad Island.

stay does not exceed a period of 15 days. Travel between Syrian cities and historical sites can be done in comfort with air conditioned coaches. There are train services between cities and you could fly to some cities, such as Damascus, Aleppo, Lattakia, Qamishli and Deir al-Zor.

Accommodation in Syria

Syria is a country well prepared for tourism and it has the required infra structure. Accommodation is not a problem. There are more than 400 hotels of varying standard and cost. You can always find the multinational hotels plus the local well known hotels. Just to name some, we mention the Sheraton, Meridian, al-Cham, Ebla in Damascus. There are branches to some of these hotels in Lattakia, Palmyra, Aleppo and Deir al-Zor.

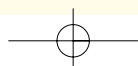
If you are interested in camping, there are several sites available outside the cities, particularly summer time. The coastal area is well equipped with facilities for camping with full facilities as well as many chalets of various categories and prices.

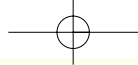
Food

Syria is well known for its food. Many of its food products are exported world wide. Syrian restaurants are also known for the ➤



قلعة حلب.
Aleppo Citadel.





City Tourism

quality of their food and presentations. Western visitors have already acquired the taste in their own countries of origin. Beside the local dishes most types of western food are also available. Water in Syria is very pure and comes either from rivers or springs and treated with a very advance technology.

Climate

Syria falls within the Mediterranean climate. It has four distinct seasons. Winter is moderate, wet in coastal area and cold inland. Summer is hot and dry inland but hot and humid on the coast. Temperature is generally between 20-25 during autumn and spring. Winter pushes temperatures down to 10 or five, but summer time takes it higher to 30 degrees centigrade.

Shopping

Syria is a home to so many trades, industries and crafts. The shops and markets are full with local products that are of interest for the tourist. You can buy silk brocade embroidered with gold and silver threads. Damascus is very famous for this type of product. There are hand engraved brass plates with silver inlays. Also available hand printed cotton garments and cloths. Hama is famous in this field. Hand made rugs weaved from pure wool. Hand made glass with blowers demonstrating their crafts.

Religious and Cultural life

There are so many places of worship for different religions. Some of the mosques and churches are historical and tourists may want to see them. There is a lot of history and religion connected with these places of worship but you have to respect the sanctity of them. Syria also has a very active cultural life.

There are always exhibitions, films, theatres, lectures, poetry readings that would appeal to a tourist with a cultural interest, especially for one who knows the Arabic language or interested in learning the Arab language and culture. But knowledge of Arabic is not necessary for the enjoyment of listening to a piece of music or appreciating a painting or a sculpture. ■



حلي يدوية بتقنيات متعددة: فضة، ذهب، نحاس، أحجار كريمة.
Handmade jewellery of several techniques:
silver, gold, copper & precious stones



نحت على الحجر في أحد البيوت الدمشقية العريقة.
Stone Hewing-An Inveterate Damascene House.



الجامع الأموي - دمشق.
Omayyad Mosque - Damascus.

