



Country Profile: Syrian Arab Republic

Since March 1963, the Syrian Arab Republic has been ruled by an authoritarian regime dominated by the Socialist Ba'ath Party. While the ruling Ba'ath party espouses a largely secular ideology, Islamic traditions and beliefs provide a conservative foundation for the country's customs and practices. Syria has a developing, centrally-planned economy with large public (30%), agricultural (25%), and industrial (20%) sectors. Tourist facilities are available, but vary in quality depending on price and location. Read the Department of State Background Note <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3580.htm> on Syria for additional information.

COUNTRY OVERVIEW



Country Name:	Syrian Arab Republic
Continent:	Middle East
Capital City:	Damascus
Boundary Countries:	Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey
Recommended Hospitals in Capital:	Cham Clinic (Damascus)
Main Cities:	Damascus, Aleppo, Latakia, Hims
Country Size:	185,180 sq km
Population:	18,881,361

COUNTRY GENERAL INFORMATION

Language:	Arabic (official); Kurdish, Armenian, Aramaic, Circassian widely understood; French, English somewhat understood
Currency:	Syrian Pound (SYP)
Predominant Religions:	Sunni Muslim 74%, Alawite, Druze, and other Muslim sects 16%, Christian (various sects) 10%, Jewish (tiny communities in Damascus, Al Qamishli, and Aleppo)
National Holidays:	Independence Day, 17 April (1946)
Economic Status:	Syria has a developing, centrally-planned economy with large public (30%), agricultural (25%), and industrial (20%) sectors.
Security:	Syrian Armed Forces: Syrian Arab Army (includes Syrian Arab Navy), Syrian Arab Air and Air Defense Force (includes Air Defense Command)
US Presence:	U.S. Embassy in Damascus Abou Roumaneh, 2 Al Mansour Street Damascus, Syria Telephone: 3391-4444
Major Airports:	Airports: 92, Airports w/paved runways: 26

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