The Guide

KURDISTAN

An eye on the people, places, culture, and lifestyle in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.
Enjoy luxury in Erbil.

- 100 m to Erbil Airport
- 35,000 m² Green Area
- 20,000 m² Mall
- Park Club Sports Center; Separate for male & female
  - Indoor Swimming pool
  - Gym
  - Squash
  - Spa
  - Sauna
  - Massage Room
  - Kids Club

0750 777 6 777

PARK VIEW

FITNESS | SHOPPING | RECEPTION | SPA | GARDENS | CAFE | POOL | PENTHOUSE
Divan Hospitality Rising in Erbil

Enjoy our exclusive accommodation approach for more than half a century, while you discover the unique business opportunities Erbil offers.

Many know the Kurdistan Region as a developing player rich in both natural resources and economic opportunities. Indeed, with over $30 billion invested in the growth of the Region and significant oil and gas deposits fueling speculation of massive revenue, the Kurdistan Region has become a recognized and strategic location for international development. Kurdistan is also a growing cultural entity, and is home to numerous destinations worthy of international attention. In Erbil, the capital city of the Kurdistan Region, there are abundant luxury hotel facilities, refined dining options, and lavish shopping opportunities. The Slemani governorate has long been heralded as the cultural capital of Kurdistan, and boasts numerous museums, universities, and cultural festivals. The rolling mountains and flowing rivers of the Duhok governorate make it an ideal destination for tourists seeking opportunities off the beaten path.

With that in mind, we present “The Guide”, a comprehensive review of the social and cultural lifestyle opportunities available in this new investment destination. The Guide seeks to help readers understand and experience the options available in the Kurdistan Region, including the hotels, restaurants, and shopping centers of this unique business location.

“The Guide” can serve as a useful tool for those individuals seeking to enjoy the finest the Kurdistan Region has to offer. Indeed, we are confident that the hotels, restaurants, health and wellness centers, and shopping facilities discussed herein will enable even the most experienced traveler to find high-quality, innovative options for almost any need. From five-star hotels to diamond watches to gourmet dining, the Region has numerous options for even the most refined palate. With that in mind, “The Guide” provides an insightful view into the luxury lifestyle in this rapidly developing marketplace.

“The Guide: Kurdistan” is a supplement of the Kurdistan Review magazine. Published annually, The Guide: Kurdistan’s target audience is prominent business community visiting Kurdistan. It details the premium hotels, restaurants, health clubs, luxury brands, and shopping centers of the Region.

We would like to thank the KRG’s General Board of Tourism for its support and photographs.

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Published annually, The Guide: Kurdistan’s target audience is prominent business community visiting Kurdistan. It details the premium hotels, restaurants, health clubs, luxury brands, and shopping centers of the Region.
The app of the Board is also available on the App Store. The best digital source for detailed information about touristic places is the website of the General Board of Tourism.

General Board of Tourism - www.kurdistantour.net

Religion
The majority of Kurds are Sunni Muslims. There are also multiple Christian sects practicing within the Region, including Syriac Catholic, Syrian Orthodox, Assyrian Church of the East, Armenian, and Catholic Chaldean. Yazidism, which is unique to Kurdistan, has tens of thousands of followers and is predominantly practiced in Duhok.

Demographics
The Kurdistan Region is composed of an ethnically diverse populace that includes Kurds, Arabs, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Turkmen, and Armenians. The population of the Kurdistan Region is skewed young, with 36% aged 0-14 years and only 4% aged over 65. The median age is just over 20.

Language
Kurdish, Arabic, Turkmen

Public Holidays
1 January - New Year’s Day
6 January - Army Day
5 March - Uprising Day
11 March - Liberation of Erbil City
14 March - Mustafa Barzani’s Birthday
21-23 March - Nawroz
9 April – Baghdad Liberation Day
1 May - Labour Day
14 July - Republic Day
25 December - Christmas Day

Traffic Flow: Right

Weather
The summer months are dry and hot. Temperatures often reach as high as 48°C during the summer. The winter months are generally cold and rainy, with average temperatures ranging from 5°C to 13°C.

Population
5.5 Million

Currency
Iraqi Dinar (IQD)
1 USD = 1,165 IQD
1 EUR = 1,580 IQD
1 GBP = 1,897 IQD

Time Zone
GMT +3

Business Hours
Sunday – Wednesday
09:00 – 16:00
Thursday
09:00 – 14:00

Electrical Appliances
Voltage is 220v.
Both UK three-pronged and European two-pronged plugs are in use.

Country Code
+964

Mobile Operators
Korek, Asiacell, Zain

Security
No significant incidents have occurred since 2007.

Money Exchange
There are formal currency exchange centers at the airports and modern shopping facilities in Kurdistan. However, informal exchange booths in the traditional bazaar areas offer more favorable rates.

Transportation
Taxis
Taxis in the Kurdistan Region do not have meters. Instead, the passenger and the driver must agree on a price prior to departing for a destination. Taxis are readily available on most major roads in all the cities of the Kurdistan Region. A ride to or from almost anywhere in the cities normally costs somewhere between 5,000-10,000 IQD. A private taxi between any of the Region’s three major cities will cost between 120-150,000 IQD. There are generally two types of taxis in the cities. Some are painted white (private drivers) and others are light tan in color (government vetted drivers). The latter are generally newer and safer options.

Upon Arrival
There are two main avenues for exiting the Erbil International Airport. The longer (but cheaper) route involves new arrivals taking an airport bus to a separate terminal, where passengers may then bargain with taxi drivers for a fare between 5,000-10,000 IQD. The more direct (and expensive) route is to book a private taxi for approximately 25,000-30,000 IQD. “Hello Taxi” has an agreement with the airport that allows its vehicles to access the terminal directly. Vehicles can be booked in advance via the company website or by waiting in line outside the main arrival/departure terminal.

Airports
Erbil Int'l Airport
Slemani Int’l Airport
Duhok Int’l Airport (Under Construction)

Airlines

ATM & Credit Card
Modern banking is only in its infancy in the Kurdistan Region. As such, ATMs are used only infrequently and can be difficult to find. Additionally, most of the hotels accept commission from credit card payments. Some of the larger hotels and shopping malls house ATMs, as do the more recently constructed banks.

Banks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>+964 (0) 66 2579777</td>
<td>T: +964 (0) 66 2579777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBAC Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>İş Bank</td>
<td>+964 (0) 66 2100546</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kurdistan International Bank</td>
<td>+964 (0) 66 2239149</td>
<td>T: +964 (0) 66 2239149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Bank</td>
<td>+964 (0) 770238349</td>
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Essentials

Religious Holidays:
(The dates for the holidays listed below are based on the Muslim calendar, and therefore change each year)

- Mouloud (Prophet Mohammad’s Birthday)
- Eid-al-Adha (Sacrifice Feast)
- Ashura
- Muharram
- Eid-al-Fitr (End of Ramadan)

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Basic Expressions

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Sorani</th>
<th>Kurmanji</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hello</td>
<td>Rozh-bash</td>
<td>Rozh-bash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good morning</td>
<td>Beyyanee-bash</td>
<td>Be kher hati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome! (on arrival)</td>
<td>Be kher b(t)</td>
<td>Khwaa-hafees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodbye</td>
<td>Supas</td>
<td>Supas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank you</td>
<td>Ser chaw</td>
<td>Ser Chaava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You’re welcome</td>
<td>Choneei</td>
<td>Chaawaian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are you?</td>
<td>Bashheei</td>
<td>Bashhee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you well?</td>
<td>Bazaar la chweya?</td>
<td>Bazaar la kidareya?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m fine, thank you</td>
<td>Bazaar le chweya?</td>
<td>Bazaar le kidareya?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What’s your name?</td>
<td>Nav-em John-ah</td>
<td>Nav-em John-ah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My name is John</td>
<td>Nav-ey ta cheeya?</td>
<td>Nav-ey ta kidareya?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please</td>
<td>Bazaar la chweya?</td>
<td>Otel la chweya?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where is the bazaar?</td>
<td>Otal la kidareya?</td>
<td>Otal la kidareya?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where is the Hotel?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>Na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OK</td>
<td>Bale</td>
<td>Bale/Arey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Diplomatic Missions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Address</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>+962 (0) 6 462 4304</td>
<td>60m St, Erbil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belarus</td>
<td>+964 (0) 750 445 0973</td>
<td>2 million in 2012). This rapid development has taken place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>+964 (0) 750 446 7906</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>+964 (0) 6 254 7983</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>+964 (0) 6 264 8299</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>+964 (0) 6 210 1730</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>+964 (0) 6 257 3583</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>+964 (0) 750 790 7909</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>+964 (0) 770 640 8848</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>+964 (0) 6 222 2444</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>+964 (0) 770 144 9000</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>+964 (0) 6 257 3668</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>+964 (0) 750 811 4442</td>
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<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>+964 (0) 750 793 4501</td>
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<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>+964 (0) 750 198 7002</td>
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<tr>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>+964 (0) 750 881 5420</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>+964 (0) 750 175 4346</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>+964 (0) 6 224 6715</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>+964 (0) 750 131 8674</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>+964 (0) 750 445 7412</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>+964 (0) 750 630 0503</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>+964 (0) 770 045 9530</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>+964 (0) 6 224 6233</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>+964 (0) 750 723 8178</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>+1 240 553 0590</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Visa

Citizens of the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Turkey, and the EU countries are issued free, 15-day visa stamps upon arrival in the Kurdistan Region. Other nationalities are required to get a valid “Iraqi” visa from their local Iraqi diplomatic office. The KRG representations abroad do not issue Iraqi visas. Travelers wishing to remain in the Region for a period longer than 15 days are required to visit an immigration office to obtain the necessary documentation. This process involves the completion of numerous forms and a mandatory blood test. The entire process can take up to four hours to complete. Companies may expedite the visa application process by registering a new employee with Iraqi authorities and applying for all necessary permits on behalf of the individual prior to his or her arrival in Kurdistan.
Slemani
Nicknamed the “cultural capital” of the Kurdistan Region, the modern city of Slemani was founded in 1784. Today, it is well known for its open, relatively liberal, and tolerant society, as well as being a center for culture and learning. The city boasts a population of approximately 1.9 million inhabitants and is geographically expanding at a rapid pace. Prior to 2003, the city was contained within a 60-meter ring road. However, since then, rapid urbanization has led to residential and commercial development outside the ring. Without the benefit of a uniform development master plan, this sprawl has been somewhat irregular in its pattern. The master plan that has since been implemented is well conceived in improving functionality while supporting projected population growth. As such, Slemani currently has the capacity to accommodate the projected five-year population growth without the need for additional horizontal expansion.

Duhok
The modern city of Duhok was established as an Ottoman Caliphate in 1887, and has historically served as a bridge to the Region’s most strategically significant neighbor: Turkey. The city, which is home to approximately 1.3 million residents, has a comprehensive master plan that will guide development through 2032; the plan itself calls for a phased approach to address current and future issues, particularly the need for urban rehabilitation and infrastructure improvement. Duhok’s proximity to the Tigris River (and the scenic mountain ranges that frame the waterway) make it ideally suited for the developing tourism industry.
Where to Stay

Divan Erbil
The 24-story Divan hotel features 227 guest rooms, parking for 200 vehicles, ten meeting rooms, five restaurants, four up-scale boutiques, a lounge, and multiple bars. The hotel, which is perhaps the most visually striking in all of Erbil, seeks to redefine the business experience with its well-appointed rooms, gourmet dining options, and spacious meeting areas. The Divan welcomes its patrons in with its resplendent décor, including crystal chandeliers, brass-lined columns, marble floors, and elegant selection of sculptures, art, and antiques. For these and other efforts, the World Travel Awards named the Divan “Iraq's Leading Business Hotel” for 2013.

T: +964 66 210 5000

Tangram Erbil
Located in the southern part of Erbil, the Tangram hotel has emerged as a favored destination for business travelers in the Kurdistan Region. Each of the hotel’s 118 rooms features a comfortable bed, a flat screen TV, a working desk, and a spacious bathroom; high-speed Internet and a lavish breakfast buffet are included at no additional charge. The Tangram also offers multiple gourmet dining options, one of the liveliest nightspots in all of Erbil (360 Club), and perhaps the most well-appointed gym in all of the Kurdistan Region.

T: +964 (0) 66 229 6900

Rotana Erbil
Named “Iraq’s Leading Hotel” for 2013 by the World Travel Awards, the Rotana has been turning heads since it first opened its doors in 2011. The facility features 201 lavish rooms and suites, five food and beverage outlets, a grand ballroom, five small meeting rooms, a health and wellness center, and multiple luxury boutiques. In the summer season, the Rotana pool and surrounding gardens are the place to be when seeking to avoid the extreme temperatures of the Kurdistan Region, and the hotel’s dining options (notably Basilico, the first Italian restaurant in Erbil, and Al Bustan, which offers authentic Lebanese cuisine) are known throughout the surrounding region.

T: +964 66 210 5555

Copthorne Hotel Baranan
The Copthorne Hotel Baranan offers the finest hotel and dining options for visitors to the city of Sulaimania. The facility’s 78 luxury rooms and suites are finished with contemporary décor and modern luxuries, and its four stylish restaurants offer a variety of both local and international cuisines. Perhaps most notably, “Uptown” (the Copthorne’s two-story restaurant and lounge bar) offers lovely views of the Sulaimania skyline and five-star, innovative cuisine that spans a number of continents.

T: +964 (0) 770 6000000
Where to Stay

Blue Mercury
The seven-story Blue Mercury, which is located on 60 Meter Street in the heart of the Erbil city center, stands as a symbol of a local, boutique hotel. Blue Mercury features 70 rooms (which includes five luxury suites), a large restaurant, a lounge area suitable for both relaxation and business, a modern gym, and a Turkish bath and sauna. The hotel is within walking distance of major government offices, modern shopping facilities, and historic landmarks.

T: +964 (0) 66 2569777

Jouhayna Hotel
Situated in a strategic location along 100 Meter Road in Erbil, the Jouhayna hotel offers the specialized service and attention to detail that only a smaller, more intimate facility can. The majority of the rooms are suites that include a bedroom, living room, dining space, and balcony. In addition, the hotel features Sidon (a Lebanese restaurant), a breakfast buffet, and modern spa and gym facilities.

T: +964 (0) 750 7120777
360 Club
360 Club features an indoor bar and lounge area, as well as an outdoor terrace that commands a panoramic view of Erbil. The nightclub offers live entertainment performed by a Colombian duo, as well as numerous specialty events. 360 Club features a variety of international food options, cocktails, and premium beverages. The club, which stays open late into the night, is an excellent place to unwind after a long week of meetings.
Location: Tangram Erbil

Qi 21
When people think about the Kurdistan Region, sushi hasn’t historically been one of the things that most readily came to mind. However, that may be changing thanks to the delicious offerings currently being served up at “Qi 21,” a Japanese sushi and steak restaurant located on the 21st floor of the Divan Hotel. Featuring respondent views, intricate décor, exquisite cocktails, and mouth-watering menu options, “Qi 21” is a must-visit destination. Dining service begins at 6:00pm and runs until 11:30pm, with bar service until 12:00am. Reservations recommended.
Location: Divan Erbil

Chopin Bar
The Chopin Bar has the rare distinction of being both an excellent meeting location and a superb late night destination. During the day, Chopin features a variety of lighter dining selections. In the evening, the space transforms into a lively jazz bar featuring live music, with a wide variety of the finest imported beverages available for selection. Chopin begins service at 11:00am and closes at 1:00am.
Location: Divan Erbil

Qi 21
When I first arrived in Erbil, I heard that we were too focused on international menu items, particularly Italian or Continental cuisines. We decided to place greater emphasis on the local market. So, we brought in supplementary Kurdish and Turkish chefs to give our menu a more authentic feel. To that end, we have tried to get a better feeling for what these clients prefer to eat, and how they like to eat. We have adopted a very reactive approach. We try to bring in the expertise needed to fulfill these requests and train our existing personnel.”

Chopin Bar
“Chopin Bar is the newest nightlife destination in Erbil. It is a groovy little place that serves up delicious cocktails, and the music is a fun mix of live jazz and modern hits. The atmosphere is lively and welcoming, making it a great spot for a night out with friends. I highly recommend checking it out.”

Qi 21
“Qi 21” is a must-visit destination for sushi lovers. The menu offers a wide variety of sushi rolls and sashimi, as well as a selection of Japanese dishes. The restaurant is beautifully decorated with elegant lighting and a modern design. The service is impeccable, with friendly staff that are knowledgeable about the menu. The prices are reasonable for the quality of food and experience. I highly recommend giving Qi 21 a try if you’re looking for a unique dining experience in Erbil.”

Food & Drink

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Location: Tangram Erbil

Qi 21
When people think about the Kurdistan Region, sushi hasn’t historically been one of the things that most readily came to mind. However, that may be changing thanks to the delicious offerings currently being served up at “Qi 21,” a Japanese sushi and steak restaurant located on the 21st floor of the Divan Hotel. Featuring respondent views, intricate décor, exquisite cocktails, and mouth-watering menu options, “Qi 21” is a must-visit destination. Dining service begins at 6:00pm and runs until 11:30pm, with bar service until 12:00am. Reservations recommended.
Location: Divan Erbil

Chopin Bar
“The Chopin Bar has the rare distinction of being both an excellent meeting location and a superb late night destination. During the day, Chopin features a variety of lighter dining selections. In the evening, the space transforms into a lively jazz bar featuring live music, with a wide variety of the finest imported beverages available for selection. Chopin begins service at 11:00am and closes at 1:00am.
Location: Divan Erbil

Qi 21
When I first arrived in Erbil, I heard that we were too focused on international menu items, particularly Italian or Continental cuisines. We decided to place greater emphasis on the local market. So, we brought in supplementary Kurdish and Turkish chefs to give our menu a more authentic feel. To that end, we have tried to get a better feeling for what these clients prefer to eat, and how they like to eat. We have adopted a very reactive approach. We try to bring in the expertise needed to fulfill these requests and train our existing personnel.”

Chopin Bar
“Chopin Bar is the newest nightlife destination in Erbil. It is a groovy little place that serves up delicious cocktails, and the music is a fun mix of live jazz and modern hits. The atmosphere is lively and welcoming, making it a great spot for a night out with friends. I highly recommend checking it out.”

Qi 21
“Qi 21” is a must-visit destination for sushi lovers. The menu offers a wide variety of sushi rolls and sashimi, as well as a selection of Japanese dishes. The restaurant is beautifully decorated with elegant lighting and a modern design. The service is impeccable, with friendly staff that are knowledgeable about the menu. The prices are reasonable for the quality of food and experience. I highly recommend giving Qi 21 a try if you’re looking for a unique dining experience in Erbil.”
Food & Drink

IIG: What are the defining flavors of Italian cuisine?
VD: The defining flavors of Italian cuisine are its basic ingredients: extra virgin olive oil, pasta, and cheese. Even though the Italian cuisine is international, these products prevail in each area with different flavors and shapes. The use of herbs is also key, especially oregano, thyme, sage, rosemary, parsley, and basil.

IIG: Which ingredients could you not live without in your kitchen and why?
VD: Every ingredient is an important one in the cooking process; the basics are pasta, risotto, olive oil, tomato, garlic, Parmesan, and Grana Padano. No Italian herb kitchen garden is complete without basil, parsley, oregano, black peppers, and rosemary. All other fresh ingredients that give the Italian cuisine its special aroma are the vegetables, seafood, cream, fresh mozzarella, and other cheeses. Why? It is simply because it is the Italian Gastronomy!

IIG: What approach does your restaurant take to Italian cuisine?
VD: Our approach is referred to as “The Italian Renaissance”: we take classic Italian cuisine and incorporate modern approaches to create a unique blend. We apply this to all of our recipes, from traditional lasagna to real Italian pizza.

IIG: Why do you think Italian cuisine is so popular?
VD: Italian cuisine prides itself on having simple recipes that are prepared with passion. It utilizes the freshest possible ingredients that are also quite common in appeal. All of these elements combined explain the popularity of the cuisine.

IIG: How has your Italian cuisine been perceived here in Erbil?
VD: For the local population, it reflects a new culture that they may not necessarily be familiar with. Those who have experience with Italian cuisine seem to feel that our menu successfully blends traditional offerings with new tastes, aromas, and styles.

IIG: What is the ultimate traditional Italian dish and why?
VD: Italian cooking is very vast, so there are many popular dishes. In fact, almost every city and town in Italy has its own specialty. So, the end result is that, rather than have a single, national cuisine, there are a number of local offerings. That said, there are certain dishes that are common, and have become standard for the many Italian communities scattered across the globe; these include penne arrabiata, lasagna, and buffalo mozzarella.

IIG: How would you define modern Italian cuisine?
VD: Modern Italian cuisine has become influenced by Asian ingredients and cooking techniques. For example, jellying agents like agar (which have been used in Asian cuisine for a long time) have recently begun to be utilized in Italian cooking. In addition, standard Asian ingredients like ginger, lemongrass, seaweed, and raw fish have become increasingly incorporated into the recipes of some modern Italian dishes.

Health & Wellness

Fitness Made Easy
Located on Kirkuk Road in Erbil, the Tangram Hotel has already established itself as one of the premier hotels in the Kurdistan Region. The Tangram Hotel Fitness Center is perhaps the most well-equipped, planned, and provisioned facility in all of the Region, let alone Erbil. Featuring numerous pieces of Technogym equipment (including multiple treadmills, ellipticals, stationary bicycles, and exercise stations), the spacious Tangram Hotel Fitness Center also includes modern changing rooms and a sauna room that helps to perfectly end a hard day’s workout.

Location: Tangram Erbil

Zen the Spa
Offering relief from the sweltering heat of a summer in the Kurdistan Region and the stresses of Erbil’s business environment, Zen the Spa provides premier therapeutic treatments offered by certified spa therapists. The facility, the first of its kind in Kurdistan, is located at the Rotana Hotel and features five massage rooms, as well as dedicated sauna and steam rooms. Patrons can choose from a variety of different treatments, including the Zen the Spa Signature Massage (a unique holistic massage combines the best from east & west), Swedish Massage, Shiroybhyanga (a deeply relaxing head, neck, and shoulder massage), the Deluxe Reflexology Massage (a massage focused on pressure points in the feet that correspond to different parts of the body), and the Sport Massage (deep pressure or neuromuscular therapy are used to work out spasms and chronic pain within the muscles and connective tissue).

Location: Rotana Erbil

Poolside Living
Every day in the summer from 07:30 to 22:30, guests at the Rotana Hotel are invited to take a break from their busy schedules and indulge in a bit of relaxation courtesy of the finest swimming pool in Erbil. The facility, which is surrounded by a lush, green garden, also offers outdoor dining options and fresh drinks at the Aquarius Pool Bar.

Location: Rotana Erbil
Fashion in Erbil—
Özden Güven
Manager, Beymen Erbil

Beymen opened its first store in Erbil a year ago and has since blossomed in a city not typically known for cutting-edge fashion.

IIG: Can you give our readers a breakdown of the clientele that frequent your store?
ÖG: 60% of our clients are locals, 20% are from Turkey, and the other 20% are from Europe or America. Actually, only about 20% of our customers are patrons of the Divan Hotel. Of course, the Divan attracts the highest-ranking executives and Beymen caters to an exclusive clientele, so there is an obvious connection there.

IIG: Turning to Beymen’s current collection, what are some of the leading brands and items available?
ÖG: Beymen offers its own line of clothing, and then it offers top brands like Cornélian, Gucci, Dolce & Gabbana, Ralph Lauren, and Armani; we have more than 80 brands for men and women. In terms of items, we offer everything a person could need. Jackets, pants, ties, cufflinks, socks, shoes, bags, jewelry... everything.

IIG: Is there a specific brand that you think executives need to know about?
ÖG: Kiton. It’s an Italian brand from Napoli, and it’s the best quality you can find in Kurdistan... and, to be honest, anywhere else in the world. Most of Kiton’s products are hand made. You can feel how good the quality is as soon as you put it on; it makes you feel good just to touch it.

IIG: Do you think that the current global fashion trends are starting to take root here in Erbil?
ÖG: It’s different depending on the area. For example, just because the color blue is fashionable in Istanbul doesn’t mean that it’s fashionable here. You can wear lots of different colors or patterns in Europe and look quite fashionable, but here, you will stand out. Most of our local customers prefer light brown or beige clothing. They start wearing those colors at an early age, and those colors become very ingrained in their fashion preferences. However, we want to expose them to lots of different options.

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Noura Jewellery & Watches
The Kurdistan Region has become known internationally as an excellent place to do business. Now, however, boutique stores and globally recognized brands are eager to cement the Region’s growing reputation as a luxury shopping destination. One shining example of this paradigm shift is Noura Jewellery and Watches (NJW), the premier stop for fine jewelry and watches in Erbil. Located on the first floor of the Divan Hotel, NJW offers its customers the world’s most prestigious brands [Rolex, Hublot, and Chopard], as well as brands more identified with the Middle East (the Al-Kurdi collection). NJW also features handcrafted, one-of-a-kind pieces of jewelry, as well as the latest edition of Vertu phones. The store, which is owned by Iraqi investor Noura Al-Souhail, also provides repair and adjustment services. The design of the NJW store itself reflects Noura Al-Souhail’s attention to detail, with the carpet, chairs, and the rest of the décor all designed by the owner. A visitor to NJW comes away with the feeling that each item or piece for sale has its own unique story that reflects a blend of the traditions of the Kurdistan Region and the luxury of the modern world.

Location: Divan Erbil
Executive Flights to the Kurdistan Region—Turhan Güngör
Director, T Jets
An Istanbul-based executive aircraft charter company, T Jets guarantees a safe and fast flight experience to your preferred destination.

IIG: Can you please tell us more about your service and its advantages?
TG: The main advantages of our service are speed, privacy, and comfort. When you choose to utilize a private jet, you are able to fly to a greater number of airports than is possible with the standard commercial airlines. Accessibility is another important feature in this business. Our aircraft is registered in the most frequently utilized internet-based sales systems and our Commercial Department can respond by telephone or e-mail to any flight request within an hour.

IIG: Has there been a significant increase in executive charter flights to the Kurdistan Region since the opening of the Erbil International Airport in 2007?
TG: We see the most potential growth in the Kurdistan Region; the increasing GDP thanks to its natural resources makes the Kurdistan Region an ideal market for growth. The main factors in the growth of business aviation are increased spending power, the globalization of large companies, new business models for the high-income segment, and travelers who are less willing to accept the hassles of traveling via scheduled airlines. All of these elements are currently present in modern Kurdistan.

Moreover, with the very recent decision of the US Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) to lift its ban on commercial planes flying from the US into the Kurdistan Region, we strongly believe there will be a tremendous amount of executive charter traffic on par with scheduled services, which have grown more that 400% in just 4 years.

IIG: Are there any regions or countries in which TJets is not presently operating or refuses to carry passengers?
TG: We have very good insurance coverage and as long as our aviation safety standards are met, TJets and its highly experienced crew can fly to any part of the world.

Where to Shop

Majidi Mall
One of the largest premier shopping and entertainment centers in all of the Kurdistan Region, Majidi Mall has serviced the residents and visitors of Erbil since November 2009. The facility is comprised of three floors that feature a total of 67 shops, a cinema, an entertainment center, a supermarket, and multiple dining options. A secure 2,000 vehicle capacity parking lot provides safe and easy access to the building. Shopping highlights include brands like Brioni, Vakko, and Sarar, as well as globally recognizable retailers like Adidas, Nike, Levi’s, and United Colors of Benetton. The third floor of Majidi Mall houses the center’s dining options. Amongst fast food offerings like Fatburger, New York Fries, Winerwald, Peppe’s Pizza, and Chester’s Chicken.

Royal Mall
Located closer to the heart of the old city, Royal Mall is home to more than 70 stores, 15 restaurants (which offer a range of local and international cuisines), and a huge market. On its top floors, the mall boasts a large-scale movie theater and multiple other entertainment and gaming options, making it an ideal setting for a wide range of potential shoppers.

Shopping in Erbil
Considerable foreign investment, a growing population of both local and foreign residents, and a median income per capita rate that is approximately 20-25% higher than in the rest of Iraq have all led to the development of a strong consumer industry in the Kurdistan Region. In no area is this change clearer than in the wealth of shopping opportunities now present in the Region. Currently, three facilities (all located in Erbil) have set themselves apart in terms of the services and overall environments they offer: Majidi Mall, Family Mall, and Royal Mall.

Majidi Mall is comprised of three floors and features a total of 67 shops, a cinema, an entertainment center, a supermarket, and multiple dining options. The mall, which was opened in 2009, features high-end boutiques and a relaxed shopping environment. Family Mall is an attractive destination for families and younger people who wish to blend their shopping and social experiences. The facility includes over 120 stores, multiple restaurants, a Carrefour, and the most modern movie theater in the Kurdistan Region. Located closer to the heart of the old city, Royal Mall boasts a large-scale movie theater and multiple other entertainment and gaming options, making it an ideal setting for a wide range of potential shoppers.

Luxury Brands

The main advantages of luxury brands are their exclusivity, high-quality goods, and overall experience. When you fly with us, you will have your favorite foods served by our in-flight crew, and comfort. When you fly with us again, they will have your drink preferences of our passengers so that when in the terminal, passengers at the airport, T Jets, guarantees a safe and easy access to the building. Shopping highlights include brands like Brioni, Vakko, and Sarar, as well as globally recognizable retailers like Adidas, Nike, Levi’s, and United Colors of Benetton. The third floor of Majidi Mall houses the center’s dining options. Amongst fast food offerings like Fatburger, New York Fries, Winerwald, Peppe’s Pizza, and Chester’s Chicken.

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Kurdistan-Iraq Oil and Gas Conference  
Bringing together over 800 leaders from the public and private sectors, the Kurdistan-Iraq Oil and Gas Conference is viewed by many to be the largest and most influential gathering of its kind in the Kurdistan Region. The 2013 event brought together 45 speakers, 45 sponsors, and over 850 delegates to discuss and help determine the policies and strategies that will guide the future of the oil and gas industry in the Kurdistan Region. Speakers at the event included KRG Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani, Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Dr. Rowsch N. Shaways, and KRG Minister of Natural Resources Dr. Ashti Hawrami, as well as influential figures from the private sector. The four-day international event is usually held in December.

Erbil International Fair  
For the past nine years, the Erbil International Fair (EIF) has served as the premier showcase event for the Kurdistan Region. The EIF, which is the largest general trade fair in all of Iraq, features a variety of goods and services from a diverse range of economic sectors, including electronics, telecom, fashion, banking, energy, and construction. The annual event is generally held in late September, and draws thousands of exhibitors and patrons from across the MENA Region. The EIF enjoys the enthusiastic support of numerous trade agencies, chambers of commerce, trade unions, ministries, and international embassies.

Erbil Real Estate Fair  
Each year, the Erbil Real Estate Fair (E.R.E.F.) brings together hundreds of influential executives, developers, and investors to promote and evaluate the numerous development opportunities present in the real estate sector of the Kurdistan Region. The three-day international fair, which is usually held in June, also allows for strategic networking opportunities and serves as a valuable tool for local, regional, or international entities contemplating entry into the Kurdistan market. The E.R.E.F. regularly features hundreds of exhibits and displays, and draws over 10,000 visitors from the Kurdistan Region and beyond.

Iraq Agro-Food 2014  
With over 300 regional and international exhibitors at the 2013 event, Iraq Agro-Food (IAF) has become the leading agriculture and agro-food trade exhibition in Iraq. Held in Erbil in late November, the event attracts the most influential decision makers from the KRG and the Iraqi Federal Government, as well as industry experts and private sector executives. The IAF offers visitors the opportunity to interact with national and international manufacturers, suppliers, traders, and business leaders, and stay up to date with the latest industry standards, equipment, research, and general practices.

Erbil Building  
The 8th annual “Erbil Building” exhibition will take place in May 2014, and will serve as an international showcase event for construction equipment and associated materials. Exhibits generally demonstrate the most recent trends, developments, products, and services in the industry, including construction materials, building systems, prefabricated structures, and modern machinery.

British Film Festival  
In 2011, in an effort to forge stronger political, educational, and cultural connections between the United Kingdom and the Kurdistan Region, the British Consulate-General and Bankside Films established the “British Film Festival in the Kurdistan Region”. The festival has since become an annual tradition, with thousands of visitors traveling to Erbil to enjoy the wide selection of films on offer. The festival also features a series of workshops for aspiring Kurdish filmmakers, including students from the Cinema Department of the Fine Arts College in Erbil.

Erbil Autoshow  
2014 will see the capital city of the Kurdistan Region play host to the 5th annual Erbil Autoshow. The international event stands as the premier automobile, automotive, commercial vehicle, and spare parts exhibition for both the Kurdistan Region and greater Iraq. In 2013, 85 exhibitors took part in the four-day event, which saw approximately 7-10,000 visitors in attendance.
ANNUAL ISSUE
KURDISTAN REVIEW

Our special edition is published annually, Kurdistan Review has a particularly strong focus on the key leaders, companies, sectors, and trends shaping the future of the Kurdistan Region.

THE GUIDE
The Guide helps you to appreciate the social and cultural life in the Kurdistan Region in order to better realize its dynamics.

HOW TO START UP
How to Start-up provides insight regarding the legal, bureaucratic, procedures, and institutional frameworks related to doing business in the Kurdistan Region.

INVEST IN GROUP
Invest in Group (IG) is a premium publishing company that produces quarterly economic reviews for prominent and engaged global business audience. IG defines its mission as a core of smart journalism, which aims to create international awareness on alluring business opportunities, successful investment stories, rising leaders and trends in key emerging and frontier markets.
Currently, we are able to satisfy about 40% to 50% of the demand for steel here in the Kurdistan Region. However, we have plans to increase our overall capacity.

We were able to reinitiate construction in 2012 by installing water tanks to ensure that our facility always has the best possible quality of water. The completion date of the project is 2014.

IIG: Do you think the solutions for problems such as these should come from the private sector, the government, or a combination of the two working together?

SÖ: Of course, the private sector or individual companies can try to find solutions for some of these issues. For example, look at the water issue. Right now, everyone utilizes wells. What happens when that supply runs out? What will people do? That’s what we’re trying to deal with right now. We are trying to identify realistic solutions that we can use but that everyone else can also utilize. However, I don’t believe that these are individual problems; they are issues experienced by many people here in Kurdistan. So, the problems require concrete, innovative solutions that can really only be implemented by the government.

Company Focus: SB Özel Group

The SB Özel Group of companies includes:

- Erbil Steel Company: Manufacturing facility that consists of a power plant, steel plant, rolling mill, and oxygen station. The power plant is operated by 20 engineers and produces enough electricity to power the entire manufacturing process. Erbil Steel Company produces approximately 240,000 tons of reinforcing steel annually.

- Home Istanbul: Opens in Erbil in April 2011, Home Istanbul is the largest do-it-yourself store in Iraq. The store has successfully introduced 18,000 types of products, including home textiles, furniture and appliances, garden accessories, decorative pieces, and light fixtures.

- Canada Village: Project designed to provide comfortable living spaces in the Kurdistan Region. Canada Village Homes are wooden and can be adapted to all types of environments due to their innovative insulation properties.

- Gulan Park Project: The complex is composed of four tower buildings and a shopping facility. Two of the towers will be office buildings, one will be a residential building, and the fourth will be a franchise hotel.