

S4 The Middle East

The Middle East is a region of Asia that is bordered by Asia to the east, Europe to the northwest, Africa to the southwest, and the Mediterranean Sea to the west. Parts of Africa (primarily Egypt and Sudan) are sometimes considered part of the Middle East as well. Many of today's countries of the Middle East were formed from the partitioning of the Ottoman Empire.

The Middle East is rich with history. Several great ancient civilizations were formed in the Middle East including Ancient Egypt, the Persian Empire, and the Babylonian Empire.

Countries that make up the Middle East

Bahrain	Jordan	Saudi Arabia
Cyprus	Kuwait	Syria
Egypt	Lebanon	Turkey
Iran	Oman	United Arab Emirates
Iraq	Palestine	Yemen
Israel	Qatar	

Middle East Factfile

- The most widely spoken languages in the Middle East are Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Berber and Kurdish.
- The largest cities in the Middle East are Cairo, Tehran, Istanbul, Baghdad, Riyadh, Jeddah and Ankara.
- The largest ethnic group in the Middle East are Arabs.
- Many countries in the Middle East are wealthy because they have large quantities of crude oil.
- 80% of the world's accessible oil reserves come from Saudi Arabia.
- Standing at 828 meters (2,717 feet) and boasting 163 floors, the Burj Khalifa in the United Arab Emirates is the world's tallest building.
- The nation of Iran is the world's largest producer of pistachios, and the sweet green nut is the country's second-largest export behind oil.
- All three of the world's major monotheistic religions – Christianity, Judaism, and Islam – were founded in the Middle East. The only other major world religion that did not originate in the region, Hinduism, was born not far away, in India.
- The name 'Muhammad' (in all its spellings) is thought to be the most common name in the world, given to 150 million men/boys.
- The English words for 'algebra,' 'admiral,' and other words came from Arabic. Further, 4,000 Spanish words – and lots of place names – came from Arabic, making Arabic the 2nd most important influence (after Latin) on the Spanish language.