

MIDDLE EAST PLANNING GUIDE

A flight attendant's guide to cuisine, hotels, airports, health, security, and country requirements in the Middle East.

Your creativity and knowledge make the trip.

Due to the abundance of materials exported from this region and increasing oil production, the Middle East is a popular destination for many business aircraft operators. Be sure that you are aware of the appropriate customs and courtesies—which can vary greatly among its 18 countries—because, if you haven't operated to the Middle East, there is a good chance that at some point you could.

We recognize the critical role you play as a vital member of the crew. To help you avoid the unexpected and manage expectations when traveling to the Middle East, while delighting your passengers along the way, we have developed this planning guide.

Enclosed, you'll find tips to help you plan for visas, airports, hotels, health, and security from Universal Weather and Aviation, Inc., as well as a guide to Middle East cuisine from Air Culinaire Worldwide, a Universal® company.

We hope this information is useful in helping you navigate the Middle East's local cultures and unique operational requirements.

And, as always, know that you're not alone, and we are here for you whenever you need us.

"Ahlan wa sahan"

– "Welcome" in Arabic (the language most commonly spoken in the Middle East)



A Universal Weather and Aviation, Inc. company

You navigate a complex world. Avoid the unexpected. Manage expectations.

Below is a list of important operational considerations when planning a trip into, within, or out of the Middle East.

COUNTRY

Be aware of the following recommendations and requirements before operating to the Middle East:

- Visa requirements for crew and passengers, and if visas can be obtained on arrival
- Crew documentation needs upon arrival (licenses, IDs, passports, visas, etc.)
- Customs and immigration regulations and clearance process for crew and passengers
- Pet entry regulations and documentation requirements
- Country regulations for de-catering and disposing of trash
- Country health briefing (should be obtained in advance)
- Restricted food items
- Services that may be restricted or unavailable during religious holidays (such as unavailability of catering during Ramadan)

SECURITY

Research the following information prior to your trip:

- Security considerations for city, including tourist destinations, hotels, restaurants, markets, and areas that should be avoided
- Security intelligence reports you should acquire to understand potential risks (e.g., city, hotel, country)
- Public transportation (not recommended)
- Women should not hail their own cabs and should never sit in the front of a vehicle
- Never travel alone, no matter what time of day (ratio should be two men in your group to each woman)
- Review photography restrictions for the countries in this region
- Research holidays, like Ramadan, in this region in advance because these will limit the availability of public activities
- Limit your conversations regarding politics and religion

HOTELS

Confirm the following with your hotel prior to booking:

- Meets western standard for 4- and 5-star accommodations
- Location
- Grocery stores or markets nearby
- Restaurant options at or near hotel
- Advance booking requirements (critical if stay coincides with major local events)
- Minimum number of stays needed for booking
- Down payment or pre-payment requirements
- Lead time to arrange direct bill for rooms through a 3rd party
- Cancellation policy
- Availability of courtesy transportation
- Rate cap limitations on rooms
- Lead time required by hotel restaurant to order catering
- Room refrigerator requirements
- Rewards program information on file with hotel for elite status qualification and points

AIRPORT

Confirm the following information prior to your trip:

- Airport operating hours
- Ground handler operating hours, meeting point, and phone numbers
- Customs, Immigration, and Quarantine (CIQ) clearance procedures
- Regulations for crew bringing aboard catering for departure
- Fluid limitations if bringing own catering (e.g., from a restaurant) for departure
- Restricted food items (e.g., agricultural restrictions)
- Ability to store food items on aircraft, with ground handler, or with caterer
- In-flight catering delivery time (particularly, how far in advance catering is recommended to be delivered)
- Ramp access availability (when needed during your stay and on day of departure)

This information was provided by Universal Weather and Aviation, Inc. If you have questions or need trip support assistance with any of the above, contact us at: **N. America** +1 (800) 231-5600, ext. 3300 or **Worldwide** +1 (713) 944-1622, ext. 3300.

Middle Eastern Cuisine

Food from the Middle East is a reflection of its vast history and traditions. Its influences include cuisine from Asia, Persia, Europe, India, and Africa. Spices like Cumin, Turmeric, Za'atar, Sumac, and Baharat bring dishes alive with flavors that tantalize your taste buds. Popular dishes include Machboos (Bahrain), Mansaf (Jordan), Saltah (Yemen), Falafel (Israel), Kibbeh (Lebanon), Kapsa (Saudi Arabia), and kababs prepared in various ways.

Here, our executive chefs have identified some of the most popular local dishes in the Middle East and their culinary influences. We recommend that you consult with your caterer about local specialties, as well as what's available and in-season.



THE MIDDLE EAST

The Middle East

This region covers parts of northern Africa, southwestern Asia, and southeastern Europe. It is commonly considered to comprise 18 countries, which include: Bahrain, Cyprus, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Northern Cyprus, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

LOCAL DISHES

- **Halwa Showaiter:** from Bahrain, a traditional sweet confection produced by the Showaiter family and very popular in this region
- **Mansaf:** the national dish of Jordan, seasoned lamb cooked in yogurt and served over a bed of rice with nuts
- **Shawarma:** found all over the region, refers to lamb, chicken, turkey, beef, veal, or mixed meat prepared on a vertical spit and then served as a wrap with a variety of vegetables and dressing
- **Dolma:** very common dish in the region, consists of fruit, meat, and vegetables with rice stuffed in grape leaves or can also be served in peppers and tomatoes
- **Chelow Kabab:** the national dish of Iran, consists of steamed saffron basmati or Persian rice and a kabab (grilled meat, fish, or vegetables)
- **Simach Maskuf:** the national dish of Iraq, grilled fish with a spice sauce
- **Harees:** from Qatar, a dish of boiled, cracked, or ground wheat and meat cooked to a porridge-like texture (a very popular dish to serve during the month of Ramadan)
- **Falafel:** the national dish of Israel, a deep-fried ball or patty made from ground chickpeas and/or fava beans typically eaten with or in pita bread and topped with salads or tahini-based sauces

CULINARY INFLUENCES

Asian, Persian, European, Indian, Middle Eastern native, and African

This information was provided by Air Culinaire Worldwide. If you have questions or need catering assistance, contact us at: **N. America** +1 (800) 247-2433 or **Worldwide** +1 (813) 449-6000.