

Kuwait

Geography

Location: Middle East, bordering the Persian Gulf, between Iraq and Saudi Arabia

Area:

total area: 17,820 sq km

land area: 17,820 sq km

Land boundaries: total 464 km, Iraq 242 km, Saudi Arabia 222 km

Coastline: 499 km

Maritime claims:

territorial sea: 12 nm

Climate: dry desert; intensely hot summers; short, cool winters

Terrain: flat to slightly undulating desert plain

Natural resources: petroleum, fish, shrimp, natural gas

Land use:

arable land: 0%

permanent crops: 0%

meadows and pastures: 8%

forest and woodland: 0%

other: 92%

Irrigated land: 20 sq km (1989 est.)

Environment:

current issues: limited natural fresh water resources; some of world's largest and most sophisticated desalination facilities provide much of the water; air and water pollution; desertification

natural hazards: sudden cloudbursts are common from October to April, they bring inordinate amounts of rain which can damage roads and houses; sandstorms and duststorms occur throughout the year, but are most common between March and August

Note: strategic location at head of Persian Gulf

People

Population: 1,817,397 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 34% (female 302,908; male 319,659)

15-64 years: 64% (female 467,163; male 697,849)

65 years and over: 2% (female 13,476; male 16,342) (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 7.46% (1995 est.)

note: this rate reflects the continued post-Gulf crisis return of nationals and expatriates

Birth rate: 21.07 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 2.2 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Net migration rate: 55.71 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 11.5 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:
total population: 75.64 years
male: 73.33 years
female: 78.06 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 2.93 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:
noun: Kuwaiti(s)
adjective: Kuwaiti

Ethnic divisions: Kuwaiti 45%, other Arab 35%, South Asian 9%,
Iranian 4%, other 7%

Religions: Muslim 85% (Shi'a 30%, Sunni 45%, other 10%),
Christian, Hindu, Parsi, and other 15%

Languages: Arabic (official), English widely spoken

Literacy: age 15 and over can read and write (1985)
total population: 74%
male: 78%
female: 69%

Government

Names:

conventional long form: State of Kuwait

conventional short form: Kuwait

local long form: Dawlat al Kuwayt

local short form: Al Kuwayt

Type: nominal constitutional monarchy

Capital: Kuwait

Independence: 19 June 1961 (from UK)

National holiday: National Day, 25 February (1948)

Suffrage: adult males who resided in Kuwait before 1920 and their male descendants at age 21

note: only 10% of all citizens are eligible to vote; in 1996, naturalized citizens who do not meet the pre-1920 qualification but have been naturalized for thirty years will be eligible to vote

Flag: three equal horizontal bands of green (top), white, and red with a black trapezoid based on the hoist side

Economy

Overview: Kuwait is a small and relatively open economy with proved crude oil reserves of about 94 billion barrels - 10% of world reserves. Kuwait lacks water and has practically no arable land, thus preventing development of agriculture. With the exception of fish, it depends almost wholly on food imports. About 75% of potable water must be distilled or imported. Because of its high per capita income, comparable with Western European incomes, Kuwait provides its citizens with extensive health, educational, and retirement benefits. Per capita military expenditures are among the highest in the world.

Industries: petroleum, petrochemicals, desalination, food processing, building materials, salt, construction

Agriculture: practically none; extensive fishing in territorial waters and Indian Ocean

Transportation

Railroads: 0 km

Highways:

total: 4,270 km

Pipelines: crude oil 877 km; petroleum products 40 km; natural gas 165 km

Ports: Ash Shu'aybah, Ash Shuwaykh, Kuwait, Mina' 'Abd Allah, Mina' al Ahmadi, Mina' Su'ud

Airports:

total: 8

Defence Forces

Branches: Army, Navy, Air Force, National Police Force, National Guard