

Photo Essay: Everyday Lives in Kurdistan

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Yezidi shrine in Lalish. The region is populated with Kurds, Turkmens, Armenians, Yezidis, Roma, Mandaea and other ethnic groups from across the Middle East all living in the same and nearby cities and villages. Kurdish culture has its roots in ancient societies along the Tigris River and has been suppressed for centuries. Their culture is now a creation and amalgamation of both indigenous and ancient Iranian traditions and a reaction to modern Turkish, Persian and Arab influences.



Portrait of a Yezidi religious leader at the shrine in Lalish.



Tourists pose for a photo by a waterfall at an old resort.



Shoppers pose in front of a large Christmas tree in the Majidi Mall in Erbil. Iraqi Kurdistan went through swift development after the establishment of a no-fly-zone in 1991 and then after the toppling of Saddam Hussein. Erbil, Sulaimaniyah, and Dohuk are full of high-rise buildings, tourist attractions, new malls and amusement parks. Despite the rapid construction in Kurdistan's larger cities, the general population still lacks basic services.



New suburban development in the mountains of Iraqi Kurdistan. The community is organized into neighborhoods and has a small amusement park.



View from the suburban development, exposing some of the stratigraphy that traps the hydrocarbons that the Iraqi Kurdistan's economy is based on.



One of the many new buildings being constructed, a common sight in the skylines of all three of Kurdistan's provinces.



A young boy sits by the ancient Erbil citadel, overlooking a crowded city center.