



Kuwait الكويت

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Best for Culture

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Best for Nature

- ➔ Scientific Center (p85)
- ➔ Scientific Center Aquarium (p85)
- ➔ Planetarium (p88)
- ➔ Falaika Island (p99)
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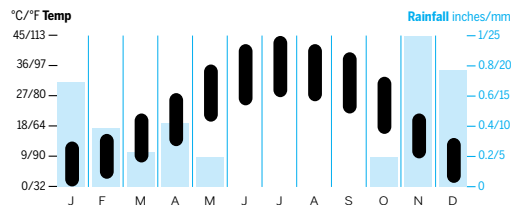
Why Go?

Kuwait, in the cradle of one of the most ancient and most-contested corners of the world, is best described as a city state. For centuries Kuwait City has been like a magnet attracting Bedouin people from the interior, in search of a sea breeze and escape from recurring drought. Today the metropolis is still an oasis in a land of desert plains, but rather more of the cultural and culinary kind. Excellent museums, a corniche of combed beaches and lively restaurants, malls and souqs mark the Kuwait City experience.

Outside the capital there are few attractions other than coastal resorts. Oil excavation dominates the flat desert plains and there are few distinctive geographical features. That said, there is always something to see in a desert, with a bit of patience and an eye for detail; when it comes to the ritual camping expedition, Kuwaitis have plenty of both.

When to Go

Kuwait



Nov–Jan Experience the relief of cool evenings after the burning heat of summer.

Feb Pick up a bargain in Kuwait's Hatta shopping festival.

Feb–Mar During spring, the desert is laced in a gossamer of lime green.

Daily Costs

Kuwait is an expensive country to visit. With budget accommodation from US\$100, cheap options for eating (around US\$20) and museum admission charges, a minimum daily cost with transport comes to around US\$200. This rises to US\$380 if staying in midrange hotels and for a top-end hotel with car hire, US\$450 is nearer the mark.

ITINERARIES

Stopover

Come eye to eye with the incoming tide at the Scientific Center's **aquarium**. Potter the length of the **corniche** (Arabian Gulf St), pausing at Kuwait Towers for an aerial view of the city. Get a feel for the country's Bedouin history at **Sadu House**, take lunch in one of the few remaining heritage houses at **Beit 7**, and sample local desserts in the city's most traditional souq, **Souq Marbarakia**. Return to the water (or dry dock to be exact) for dinner on the dhow at **Al-Boom**.

Three Days

After day one exploring the corniche, head inland on day two to **Tareq Rajab Museum** – a hidden gem of a collection displaying ethnographic treasures from across the Islamic world. Spend the afternoon shopping for brands in fashionable **Salmiya** district and end the day enjoying the bustle of promenading locals at nearby **Marina Crescent**.

For Expats

Spare a thought for the events of the past two decades by visiting the diminished **National Museum**, sense the still-smarting scars of war in the Kuwait House of **National Memorial Museum** and drive out to Al-Jahra's **Mutla Ridge**. Brighten up a sobering day at the **Hilton Kuwait Resort**, on a silky stretch of coastline with sequined waters, explore **Wafra Farms** to enjoy some greenery in the unremitting desert or get away from it all on **Falaika Island**.

AT A GLANCE

- ➔ **Currency** Kuwaiti dinar (KD)
- ➔ **Mobile Phones** SIM cards widely available
- ➔ **Money** ATMs widespread; credit cards widely accepted
- ➔ **Visas** Available on arrival for many nationalities

Fast Facts

- ➔ **Capital** Kuwait City
- ➔ **Country code** 965
- ➔ **Language** Arabic; English widely spoken
- ➔ **Official name** Kuwait
- ➔ **Population** 2.6 million

Exchange Rates

Australia	A\$10	KD2.95
Bahrain	BD1	KD0.75
Euro zone	€10	KD3.69
Oman	OR1	KD0.73
Qatar	QR10	KD0.77
Saudi Arabia	SR1	KD0.08
UAE	Dh1	KD0.08
UK	UK£10	KD4.31
USA	US\$10	KD2.81
Yemen	YR100	KD0.13

For current exchange rates see www.xe.com.

Essential Food & Drink

- ➔ **Baked fish** Blended with coriander, turmeric, red pepper and cardamom.
- ➔ **Hamour or pomfret** Fish stuffed with herbs and onions.
- ➔ **Gulf prawns** Available late autumn and early winter.
- ➔ **Alcohol** Not available nor permissible.
- ➔ **Mixed fruit cocktails** Served in rainbow combinations.
- ➔ **Tap water** Safe to drink although most people stick to bottled water.

Resources

- ➔ **Complete Guide to Kuwait** (www.kuwaitah.net) Great general guide
- ➔ **Live Work Explore** (www.liveworkexplore.com/Kuwait) Comprehensive expat site