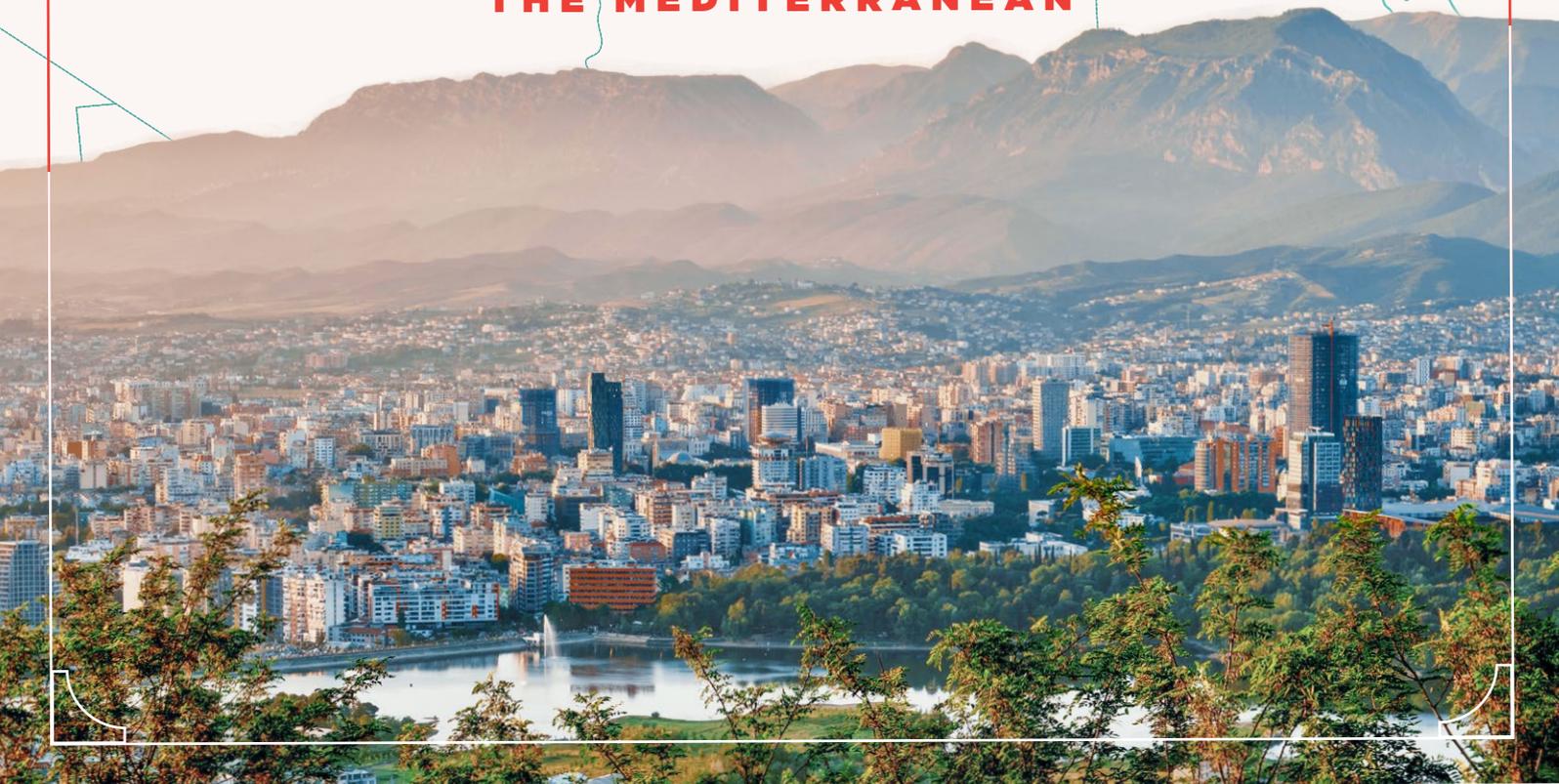




Qendra për
Administrim Social
Ekonomik Territorial

Tirana

**THE HEART OF
THE MEDITERRANEAN**



Tirana

THE HEART OF
THE MEDITERRANEAN





SLOVENIA



MONACO



FRANCE



ITALY



SPAIN



MOROCCO



ALGERIA



TUNISIA



CROATIA



BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



MONTENEGRO



ALBANIA



GREECE



TURKEY



CYPRUS



SYRIA



LEBANON



MALTA



LIBYA



EGYPT



ISRAEL



PALESTINE



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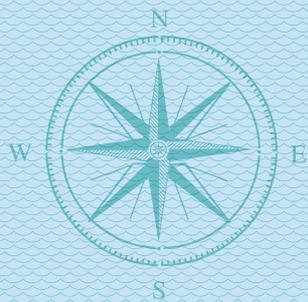


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The content of this publication is the sole responsibility of the ASET Center and does not necessarily reflect the views of the Municipality of Tirana.

The project aims to promote cultural diversity, historical ties, and shared values among Mediterranean countries. This publication was developed under the dedicated guidance of the Executive Director of ASET Center, Ms. Aulona Hoxha, whose leadership ensured the quality and integrity of its content.

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Summary

This album on the traditional clothing of Mediterranean countries is conceived as an interweaving of cultural anthropology, history, and both tangible and intangible heritage.

The main objective has been to offer a comprehensive and comparative panorama of traditional costumes from the 18th to the 21st century, following the historical, political, social, and intercultural influences that have shaped them. Traditional garments are treated as mirrors of the relationships between communities, geographic space, and expressions of collective identity. They are interpreted as silent sources that speak about gender, social stratification, urban and rural development, as well as the tensions or harmonies between tradition and modernity.

The methodology followed is unified across all chapters and is based on an eight-point analysis for each country:

1. Region
2. Geographical position and borders
3. Capital city (with an extended urban, historical, and cultural description)
4. Two main cities (selected based on historical importance and cultural development)
5. Historical, political, and cultural developments from the 18th to the 21st century
6. Characteristics of traditional clothing
7. The importance of culture and tradition today
8. References in Chicago academic format

The countries are grouped and treated based on Mediterranean regions, following the geographic principle, into three main blocks:

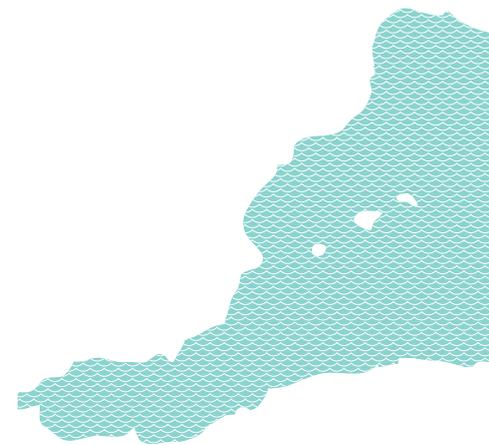
- **Western Mediterranean:** Spain, France (Provence and Corsica), Monaco, Italy, Malta
- **Eastern Mediterranean:** Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania, Greece, Turkey (southern regions), Cyprus, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine
- **Southern Mediterranean:** Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco

This structure allows for a comparison built upon historical context and regional influences. The



evaluation of sources is based on academic literature, ethnographic resources, and UNESCO-approved materials on cultural heritage. Through this approach, the album goes beyond a simple descriptive catalog and aims to provide an interpretive framework for how dress culture in the Mediterranean region is constructed, repeated, preserved, and reimagined over time.

In this modest album, it is demonstrated that folk clothing in the Mediterranean is not merely attire or garments of the past, but carriers of identity, collective history, and the shared Mediterranean spirit. Through them, one can read the history of migrations, invasions, coexistence, and cultural exchanges that have shaped this region for more than two millennia. From the Albanian fustanella to Moroccan kaftans, from the mantles of Valletta to the Amazigh costumes, each garment represents a deep symbolic code connecting the individual to the community, and the community to space and time.



In an era of globalization and cultural uniformity, the renewed attention to traditional costumes is not an act of nostalgia, but a conscious effort to preserve cultural richness and diversity. Traditional dress thus becomes a means to affirm origins, foster intercultural dialogue, and strengthen the sense of belonging in a Mediterranean context where diversity has always been a foundation of coexistence. More than just museum relics or ceremonial symbols, Mediterranean folk costumes represent a sustainable collective memory, embodied in the human body, woven into everyday life, and embedded in the region's cultural landscape.

This album is an invitation to view traditional garments not as museum artifacts, but as living documents of a shared history that deserves to be studied, preserved, and honored through new, creative, and interactive forms. In this way, traditional clothing becomes not only a marker of identity but also a way to converse with the past and reimagine the paths toward the future.



Prof. Asoc Dr. Marenglen Kasmi

Researcher / Historian

Tirana, April 2025

CHAPTER I



Region:

WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN



France



Geographical location and borders

France is located in Western Europe, with access to the Mediterranean Sea in the southeast, along the French Riviera (Côte d'Azur). In this region, it borders Italy and the principality of Monaco. The Mediterranean area includes the regions of Alpes-Maritimes, Var, Bouches-du-Rhône, and Hérault. The southern part of France, which includes the coastal cities, has a Mediterranean climate with mild winters and hot summers, making this region a popular destination for tourism and economic development.

Capital - PARIS

Paris is the capital of France and one of the most influential cultural and historical cities in the world. With over 2.2 million residents in the city and around 11 million in the metropolitan area, it represents the political, economic, and cultural center of the country. Located in the north of France, along the Seine River, Paris has a mild continental climate, with cool winters and warm summers, attracting visitors from all over the world throughout the year. As one of the most famous tourist destinations, Paris offers an extraordinary wealth of attractions: the Eiffel Tower, Notre-Dame Cathedral, the Louvre Museum, the Champs-Élysées, the Montmartre neighborhood, and the Palace of Versailles. This city is also a fashion capital, with international fairs and art exhibitions taking place year-round. Paris is a destination for art, architecture, and culture, and thus plays a major role in preserving the cultural heritage of the Mediterranean region.

In addition to its exceptional beauty and cultural heritage, Paris has helped maintain connections with the traditional clothing customs of southern France through cultural activities and ethnographic museums. The city also preserves a rich cultural and artistic legacy that supports citizens' connection with French history and cultural identity, making it one of the main centers for the development and promotion of fashion and art in the world.

Major cities of France

MARSEILLE

Marseille is the second-largest city in France and a major port on the Mediterranean. With around 870,000 inhabitants, it is an important center for trade and industry, as well as a city with a rich cultural history. Marseille is known for its multiculturalism and has been strongly influenced by Mediterranean culture and various peoples, including those from Africa and the Middle East.



The city features several main attractions, such as the Old Port (Vieux-Port), the Basilique Notre-Dame de la Garde, and the Museum of Marseille, which reflect its close connection to the sea and Mediterranean traditions. Additionally, this city is an important hub for art and culture.

The traditional clothing of Marseille is similar to that of the Mediterranean region, featuring bright colors and lightweight materials suited to the city's warm climate. Women often wear dresses with floral patterns, embroidered aprons, and headscarves, while men typically wear simple trousers, cotton shirts, and light vests.

NICE

Nice is a coastal city known for its natural beauty and warm climate. With around 340,000 inhabitants, it is one of the most popular tourist destinations on the French Riviera and has a rich history tied to Italy due to its proximity to the Italian border. The city is an important center for art, music, and gastronomy. Major attractions include the Promenade des Anglais, Villa Masséna, and the Matisse Museum, all of which re-



flect Nice's connections to Italian tradition and the international artists who have lived and worked there. Nice also preserves many old traditions, including traditional clothing. Women's outfits are often colorful and embroidered, with warm-toned dresses and hand-made aprons. Men typically wear light trousers, cotton shirts, and vests that reflect the simple, coastal lifestyle of the city. The clothing is well-suited for the warm climate and the active lifestyle along the coast.

Historical, political, and cultural developments (XVIII–XXI Century)

The 18th century in France was a period of deep change and development. The French Revolution of 1789 marked a major turning point for the nation, overthrowing the absolute monarchy and establishing a republic



based on the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity. This was a decisive moment that brought a fundamental break from previous social and political structures.

Subsequently, the Napoleonic era (1804–1815) expanded France’s influence across Europe and brought major legal and administrative reforms, including the creation of the Napoleonic Code, which helped modernize the legal system.

In the 19th century, France experienced fluctuating political periods, transitioning from the Restoration Monarchy (1814–1830) to the February Revolution of 1848, and then to the establishment of the Second Empire under Napoleon III. This era was marked by efforts to maintain France’s status as a global power, despite the devastating loss in the Franco-Prussian War (1870–1871), which led to the creation of the Third Republic.



The 20th century was a period of extraordinary events for France. It was involved in World War I (1914–1918), which left significant economic and social consequences. After World War II (1939–1945), France transitioned from German occupation to a phase of rapid reconstruction and economic modernization. After 1945, France became a strong economy with a stable democratic political system.

At the end of the 20th century and into the 21st, France experienced rapid development in fields such as technology, art, and culture, while maintaining its significant global influence. The country has played a key role in the European Union and on the international stage, promoting values of democracy, human rights, and peace. This period of rapid growth has also been accompanied by increased cultural diversity and the inclusion of various ethnic groups, creating a more inclusive and united society.

Characteristics of traditional clothing

PROVENCE

Women wear long embroidered dresses, often in bright colors such as red, green, and orange, reflecting the warm and vibrant nature of the region. The embroidered apron with traditional motifs is a common element, preserving the connection to agricultural life and nature. Men in this area wear lightweight trousers and simple vests, suitable for the warm climate.

LANGUEDOC

Clothing in this region is simpler and darker, using heavier fabrics to suit the colder and more humid climate. Women wear dark-colored aprons and plain trousers. Men usually wear white shirts with large collars and tight trousers, maintaining a practical style adapted to daily work. This region reflects a strong connection to rural traditions and agricultural life.

CÔTE D'AZUR

Women's clothing in the Côte d'Azur is influenced by Italian culture, using silk and lace that reflect the luxurious nature of the Riviera coast.





Dresses are embroidered and light, appropriate for the region's warmth. Men wear embroidered vests and white trousers, emphasizing a simple yet elegant style that mirrors the refined and luxurious coastal lifestyle. In all these regions, traditional clothing is closely linked to daily life and is still worn during cultural events and festivals, where the rich cultural identity of France is preserved.

The importance of culture and tradition today

In the southern regions of France, traditional clothing is mainly preserved through folklore groups, ethnographic museums, and traditional festive activities such as *La Fête de la Lavande* and *La Farandole*. Local artisans continue to reproduce elements of traditional dress for cultural and touristic purposes.



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Italy



Geographical location and borders

Italy is located in Southern Europe with access to the Mediterranean Sea along its southeastern and southwestern coasts. It is a country situated on the Italian Peninsula (Apennine Peninsula), with a shape resembling a boot. Italy shares borders with France, Switzerland, Austria, and Slovenia in the north. It also includes several islands, including Sicily and Sardinia. Italy is known for its natural richness, including coastlines, mountains, and rivers that contribute to the development of a Mediterranean climate, ideal for agriculture and tourism. The climate is generally mild, with warm winters and hot summers, making Italy an attractive destination throughout the year.

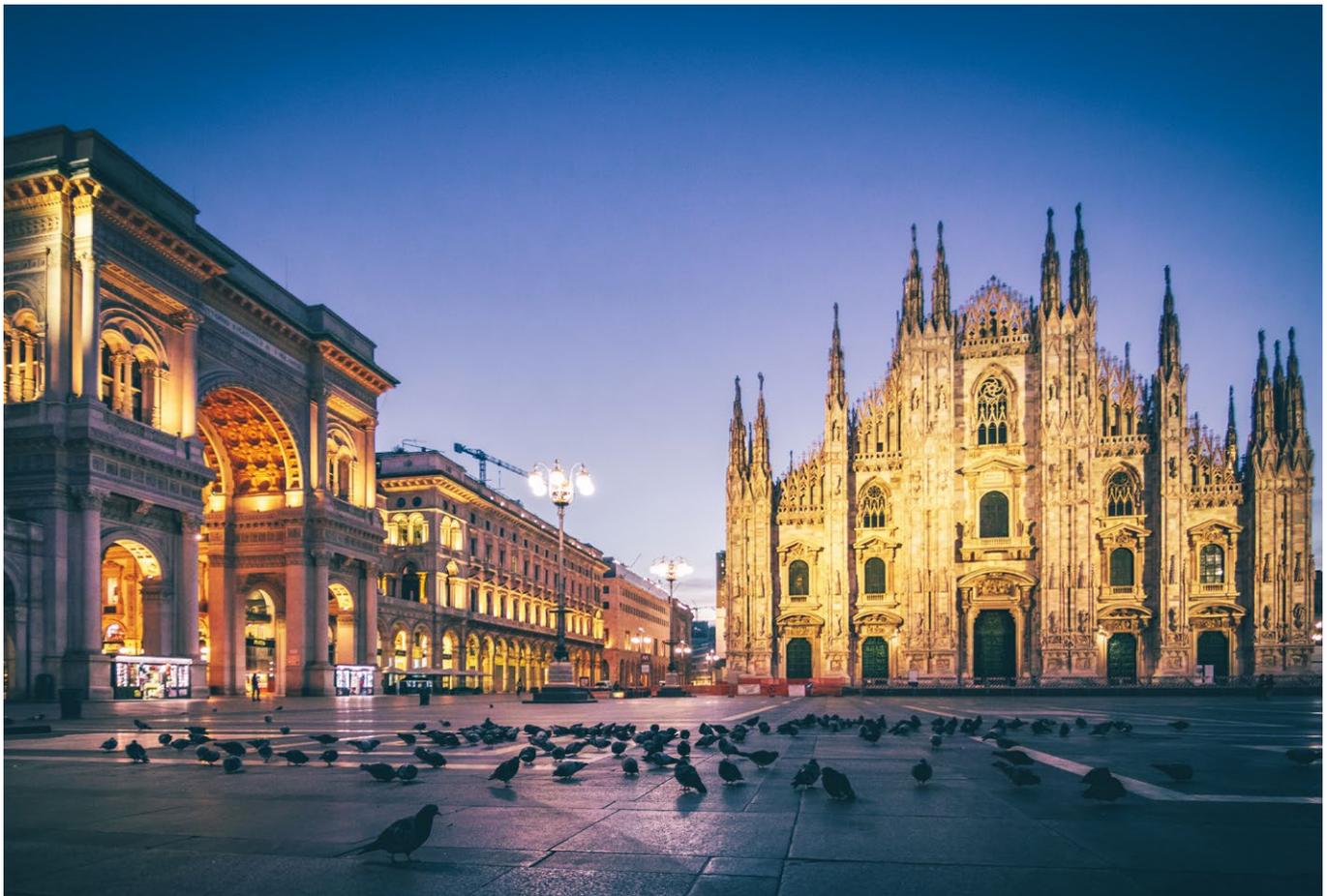
Capital - ROME



Rome is the capital and the largest city of Italy, with a population of around 2.8 million. As one of the most well-known and historically significant cities in the world, Rome holds an extraordinary cultural and historical wealth. It is known as the “City of Saints” and the “City of Freedom” due to its close connection with the Catholic Church and its pivotal role in the history of civilizations. Rome has had a great impact on art, politics, and culture and is a key destination for tourists from all over the world. The city has a Mediterranean climate, with mild winters and warm summers, which makes it attractive year-round. Rome is rich in historical buildings, ancient monuments, and old churches dating back to the Roman Empire and later periods. Some of the most famous attractions include the Colosseum, the Roman Forum, and the Pantheon, all of which reflect the grandeur of Roman history. Rome is also renowned for its impressive architecture and the wealth of art collections housed in its museums. At the heart of the city lies Vatican City, an independent state that is the center of the Catholic Church and a sacred place for Catholic believers. Rome is a major cultural and economic hub, offering vast opportunities in art, fashion, and gastronomy. The people of Rome are known for their hospitality and passion for history and culture. With a rich tradition and a unique atmosphere, Rome remains one of the most important and beloved cities in the world.

Major cities of Italy

MILAN



Milan is one of the most important cities in northern Italy and is recognized as the fashion and financial capital of the country. This city is an international hub for business, economy, and industry, as well as a renowned destination for art and culture. Milan is also known for landmarks such as the Milan Cathedral and the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, which are among the city's most iconic buildings. Milan is a center for design and fashion, hosting international events like Milan Fashion Week and Milan Design Week, attracting figures from all over the world. Fashion in Milan is very modern and reflects the luxurious and contemporary lifestyle of the city. Women tend to wear simple yet sophisticated clothing, while men are known for their perfectly tailored and elegant suits.

NAPLES

Naples is one of the oldest cities in Italy and also one of the most important cities in the south of the country. This city is known for its authentic atmosphere, cultural wealth, and rich history, including attractions such as the Royal Palace of Naples and the Church of San Gennaro. Naples is also the birthplace of pizza, which has become one of the most internationally recognized foods.



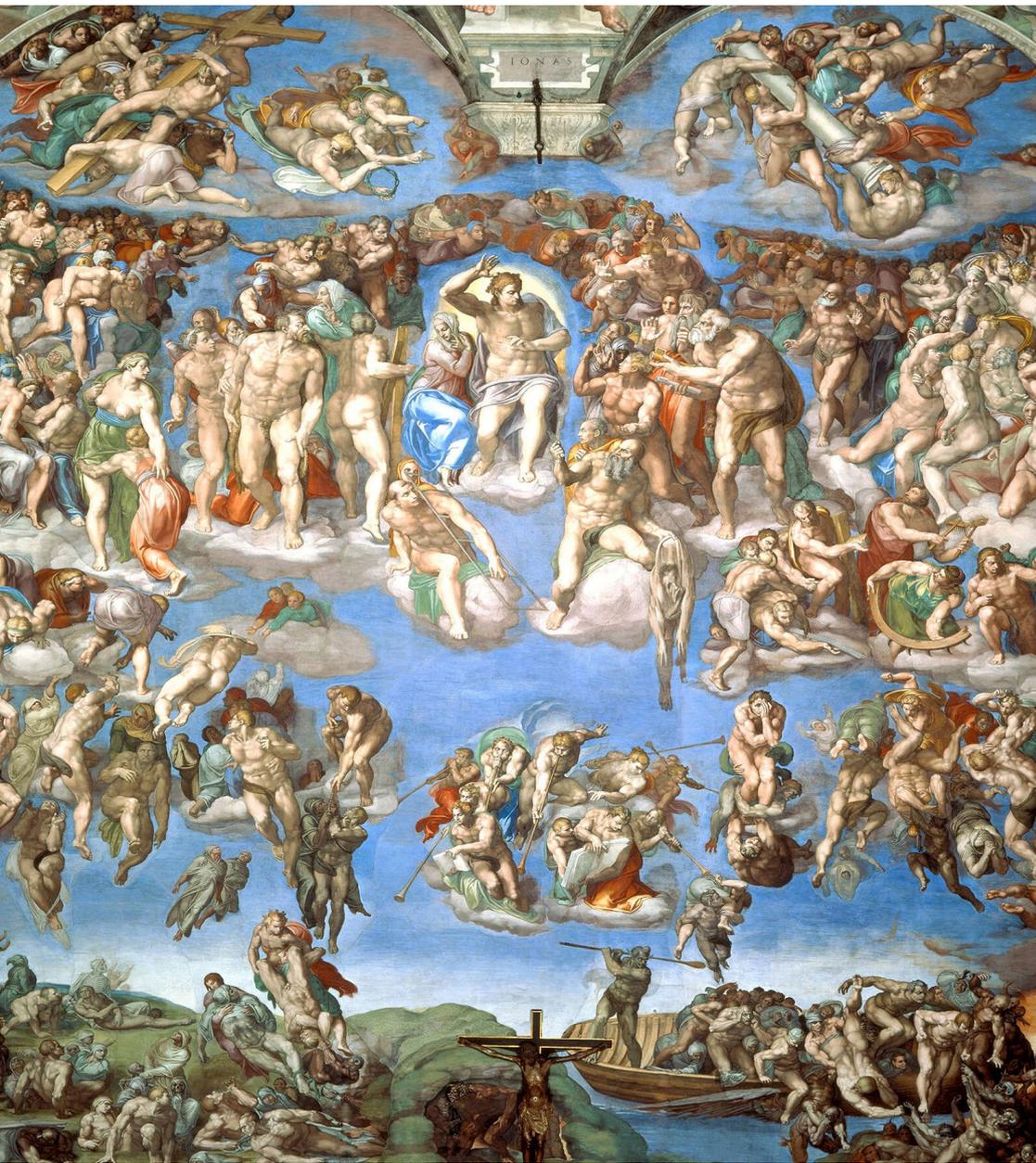
Clothing in Naples tends to be simpler but still very elegant, reflecting the Mediterranean culture of the city. Everyday attire is influenced by the Mediterranean climate and relaxed lifestyle, with a focus on comfort and understated elegance. Additionally, Naples is well known for the arts, especially music, as it is considered the birthplace of opera and home to notable venues such as the Teatro di San Carlo.

Historical, political, and cultural developments (XVIII–XXI Century)

Italy's history is filled with important events that have shaped its culture, politics, and society. During the 18th century, Italy was divided into various states, including the Kingdom of Naples, the Duchy of Milan, and the Papal States. After the Napoleonic Wars, Italy came under French imperial rule, but later, in 1861, it was unified for the first time under the leadership of Victor Emmanuel II, King of Sardinia. This unification marked a major turning point in Italian history and was a significant step toward forming a centralized and unified state. In the 20th century, Italy went through turbulent and uncertain periods. After World War I, it became involved in World War II, during which Benito Mussolini's fascist regime and Italy's role as part of the Axis Powers had a major impact on the country's politics. After the war, Italy entered a period of rapid transformation, becom-



ing one of Europe's largest economies and a member of the European Union. Today, Italy's complex history continues to influence its national identity, political landscape, and cultural contributions to the world.



Italy has also had an extraordinary impact on global art and culture, being a center of the European Renaissance and a rich source of cultural development. During the Renaissance, great artists such as Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, and Raphael created works that remain among the most important in history, reflecting the high level of Italian art and culture.

After World War II, Italy continued to influence art and fashion, becoming a global center for design and elegant style. Events such as Milan Fashion Week and other major cultural happenings in cities like Rome and Florence have turned the country into a symbol of contemporary fashion and art. Italy also has a rich architectural heritage, including cathedrals, palaces, and sacred monuments from the Renaissance and Baroque periods. Cultural events

and festivals like the Venetian Carnival and theatrical or musical performances are deeply connected to the country's cultural identity and continue to attract visitors from around the world.

Characteristics of traditional clothing

NORTH

Women wear long embroidered dresses with rich silk and detailed ornamentation. These dresses are often paired with beautiful shawls and aprons decorated with natural motifs. In northwestern Italy, women often wear short sweaters and other garments embroidered with floral or natural patterns. Clothing here is influenced by the colder climate and agricultural traditions, reflecting a simple yet refined elegance.

NAPLES

Women wear long silk dresses and wide, highly decorated shawls. Red and black silk hats are also part of the attire, reflecting a strong influence of Mediterranean culture. The clothing is rich in detail and symbolism, reflecting the traditions and identity of this southern Italian city.

SICILY

Women wear elegant, embroidered dresses reinforced with silk and traditional fabrics. They also wear shawls and hats that reflect the island's cultural traditions. Sicilian dress reflects the rich influence of the island's history and art.

SARDINIA

Men and women wear very simple garments made from natural materials such as



cotton and wool. Women wear embroidered dresses in modest colors and vests, while men wear plain trousers and jackets suitable for the rural lifestyle. Sardinian clothing is warm-toned and designed to cope with the Mediterranean climate and the island's agricultural lifestyle.

FLORENCE

Clothing is influenced by the Renaissance period and reflects the city's wealth and heritage. Women wear long, wide dresses often embroidered with floral patterns and sophisticated details. Men wear vests and stylized suits that reflect the elegance and cultural legacy of the city.

The Importance of culture and tradition today

Italy continues to preserve and promote its cultural richness through events such as the Carnevale di Venezia and other traditional festivals, where traditional costumes remain an essential part. Traditional attire and cultural events like Milan Fashion Week reflect Italy's ongoing influence in fashion and the arts. The country's cultural wealth, including its museums and art galleries, continues to attract visitors from all over the world.

Italy's cultural heritage is also preserved through world-renowned landmarks like the Colosseum and Milan Cathedral, both part of UNESCO's World Heritage.





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Monaco



Geographical position and borders

Monaco is a small principality located on the southern coast of France, along the Mediterranean Sea. It covers an area of only 2.02 km² and is bordered entirely by France, except for its coastline. Its geographical location enables the development of financial and tourism-related activities, making it an international center for business and tourism. The Mediterranean climate, with mild winters and warm summers, is ideal for tourists who visit the principality year-round. Monaco's short coastline, which stretches along the Mediterranean Sea, offers spectacular views and a peaceful atmosphere, perfect for the development of tourism and the financial industry.

Capital - MONACO



Monaco is also the main city of the principality and is known for its luxurious and elegant lifestyle. With a population of around 39,000 residents, Monaco is an international hub for business and finance, attracting visitors and investors from all over the world. This city has a strategic position on the southern coast of France and is well-known for hosting major prestigious events such as the **Formula 1 Monaco Grand Prix**, the **Monte Carlo Casino**, and the **Oceanographic Museum**, which are some of its main attractions. Monaco is also famous for its wealth and luxurious lifestyle, as well as the high level of safety and excellent services available to both residents and tourists.

Despite being a small principality, Monaco is a significant cultural and economic center, maintaining a rich tradition of luxurious events and international activities. It is a symbol of elegance and wealth, where events such as the **Monte Carlo Gala** and various **music and art festivals** attract visitors and celebrities from around the globe. The city also has a rich history closely tied to the **Grimaldi dynasty**, which has ruled Monaco for centuries. There are many historical monuments and attractions, such as the **Royal Palace**, **St. Nicholas Cathedral**, and the **Prince's Palace**, which are among the most visited destinations and reflect Monaco's rich cultural heritage. Many visitors come to explore the natural beauty of the city, its coastline, and its gardens, including the **Botanical Garden** and the **Japanese Garden**. Although small, Monaco is one of the most well-known and visited destinations in the world—not only for its wealth and luxury lifestyle but also for its cultural and historical richness.

Main districts of Monaco

MONTE CARLO

Monte Carlo is one of Monaco's most prestigious and well-known districts, famous for the **Monte Carlo Casino**, one of the most visited casinos in the world. It is also a popular destination for luxurious activities such as the **Formula 1 Monaco Grand Prix**, a globally recognized event. Monte Carlo embodies elegance and luxury and is an important hub for cultural events and artistic performances. The district is also famous for its nightlife and upscale restaurants, attracting international tourists and guests.

Fashion in Monte Carlo

Women wear stylish and elegant dresses embroidered with fine details, while men wear expensive suits that reflect a modern and luxurious lifestyle. The district is closely linked to the fashion world, as many events held in Monte Carlo revolve around a lavish lifestyle.

La Condamine

La Condamine is another well-known district of Monaco and is home to the **Port of Monaco**. This area has a calm and welcoming atmosphere and is known for its shops, restaurants, and cafes. La Condamine is also



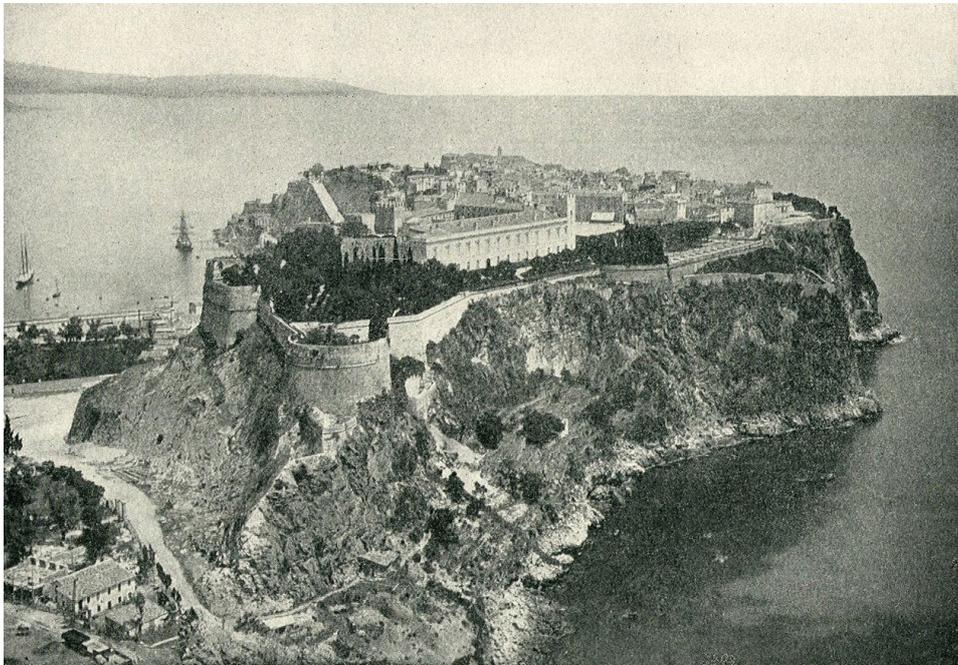


a center for maritime and commercial activities, with many yachts and luxury ships anchored in its harbor, adding to the district's attractive and prestigious look.

Fashion in La Condamine

Women wear simple yet elegant dresses suitable for everyday life, while men opt for light clothing such as trousers and short-sleeved shirts, ideal for a relaxed and peaceful lifestyle.

Historical, political, and cultural developments (XVII–XXI Century)



The history of Monaco is closely linked to the **Grimaldi dynasty**, which has ruled the principality for over 700 years. In the 18th century, Monaco was under the control of the French Empire but still managed to retain its autonomy. In 1814, after the Napoleonic Wars, Monaco came under the rule of the **Kingdom of Sardinia**, and later, in **1861**, it was recognized as an **independent principality**. Despite its small size, Monaco has played an important role in European history through its ties with major powers and its economic and tourism development.

In the **20th century**, Monaco became a favored destination for the international elite, especially after **1911**, when the principality introduced a **favorable tax system**, attracting wealthy individuals and businesses. During **World War II**, Monaco remained neutral, but after the war, it began a period of economic stabilization and rapid growth in tourism and finance.



In **1956**, the marriage of **Prince Rainier of Monaco** to **American actress Grace Kelly** gave Monaco a new international image and transformed the principality into a world-famous tourist destination. In **1993**, Monaco became a **member of the United Nations**, further consolidating its role on the international stage. Monaco has also developed strong economic ties with France and other countries of the European Union.

Monaco is also known for its rich **cultural heritage**, reflected in its architecture, cultural events like the **Monaco International Film Festival**, and various art performances. The city is an international center for the arts and culture, hosting events that attract visitors and personalities from around the world. In

recent years, Monaco has also invested in the **preservation of its historical heritage** and has restored several of its most important monuments, such as the **Royal Palace**, which remains a significant symbol of the Prince and the Grimaldi dynasty.

Characteristics of traditional clothing

Monaco is renowned for its luxurious and modern clothing, which reflects the lifestyle of its elite society. Traditional attire is uncommon in such a modern and luxurious city, but during numerous cultural events, traditional outfits that represent Monaco's rich heritage can still be seen.



Women in Monaco wear elegant and refined dresses, often embroidered with lace, silk, and precious accessories. The colors are rich and vibrant, such as red, black, and gold, which reflect the luxury and elegance of life in the principality. Accessories are a crucial part of women's clothing and include expensive jewelry and sophisticated details that reflect wealth and prestige. Women also wear stylish scarves and luxurious shoes, suitable for special events like royal ceremonies and festivals. On anniversaries of important events, such as royal occasions or notable cultural celebrations, women wear long, highly elegant dresses adorned with intricate embroidery that reflects the wealth and prestige of Monaco. Accessories such as fine jewelry and sparkling elements are also essential for these important events.

For **men**, traditional clothing is influenced by 19th-century European style but is modernized to suit contemporary life. Men wear elegant suits, often made from the finest materials such as silk and velvet. Black trousers and fitted vests are common, as is the use of scarves and white shirts for ceremonial events. The outfits are also tailored for special occasions such as the **Monte Carlo Gala**, where guests from around the world wear stylish and sophisticated attire.



Monaco's fashion is heavily influenced by the rich cultures of **France and Italy**, both of which are strongly present in the principality. Rich colors and materials such as silk and velvet are also prevalent, reflecting Monaco's close ties with these countries. Participants in events like the **Formula 1 Monaco Grand Prix** and other luxurious occasions wear very modern clothing, symbolizing the fast-paced and contemporary lifestyle of this wealthy city.

The importance of culture and tradition today

Monaco preserves and promotes its traditions through numerous events and festivals, such as **Music and Theater Festivals** held throughout the year, as well as other activities like the **Monaco Grand Prix** and cultural events that draw visitors from all over the world. These events reflect a strong connection to heritage and history, as well as Monaco's rich culture, which remains a vital element of the principality's identity. Traditional attire is worn during these events and continues to play an important role in preserving the cultural identity of the principality.



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Malta



Geographical location and borders

Malta is an island country in the center of the Mediterranean Sea, consisting of a group of islands located about 80 km south of Italy and 280 km north of Tunisia. The state includes the main islands of Malta, Gozo, and Comino, as well as several smaller islets. Malta has no land borders, as it is a small island nation with a total area of about 316 km², but it boasts a long and rich coastline with beaches and cliffs. Malta's Mediterranean climate is mild, with warm winters and hot summers, making it an attractive destination for visitors year-round. It also holds significant geopolitical importance due to its strategic position between two continents, Europe and Africa.

Capital city - VALLETTA



Valletta is the capital of Malta, known for its rich historical and architectural heritage. With a population of around 6,000, this small city is an important cultural and administrative center. Valletta is renowned for its Baroque architecture and historic monuments, many linked to the Order of St. John and its influence on the city's development. The city is a remarkable historical treasure, featuring landmarks such as **St. John's Co-Cathedral** and **Fort St. Elmo**, which are excellent examples of medieval and Baroque architecture.

Valletta has a Mediterranean climate with mild winters and warm summers, making it a year-round destination. Despite its small size, Valletta is rich in history and maintains strong ties to its past. Besides historical monuments, it's a cultural hub for arts and music, offering numerous cultural events and festivals throughout the year. One of the city's most popular attractions is **St. George's Square**, a beautiful public space used for cultural events. Traditional Maltese clothing is often seen during these festivals, reflecting strong Catholic and Mediterranean cultural influences. Valletta is also a center for social activity, with many restaurants and shops that offer both entertainment and relaxation. The city reflects a vibrant blend of history, culture, and modern Maltese life.

Major cities in Malta

MDINA



Mdina is an ancient city and a cultural treasure of Malta. Known as the “Silent City,” Mdina exudes a special atmosphere and boasts a rich history dating back to Roman times. Its narrow, cobblestone streets make it a great example of medieval and Baroque architecture. **St. Paul’s Cathedral**, one of Malta’s most significant monuments, draws many visitors and reflects the deep Catholic traditions of the country. Traditional clothing in Mdina reflects Baroque opulence, featuring embroidered dresses and elegant vests. Mdina remains a major cultural and historical hub, hosting festivals and events throughout the year.

SLIEMA

Sliema is a coastal city and one of Malta’s most popular tourist destinations, particularly known for its nightlife. With its beautiful Mediterranean views, Sliema is a thriving center for commerce and services. The city features a long promenade, famous restaurants, and many shops, making it a favorite among tourists and locals. Clothing in Sliema is modern and cosmopolitan, reflecting the city’s luxurious and multicultural lifestyle. Both women and men dress elegantly, with a focus on style and comfort. Sliema is also a key location for cultural activities and festivals, such as the **Malta Arts Festival** and **Malta International Fashion Week**.



Historical, political, and cultural developments (XVII–XXI Century)

Malta has experienced a range of historical periods that have significantly shaped its cultural and political development. In the 18th century, Malta was governed by the **Order of St. John**, which managed it as an independent state and a major Christian stronghold in the Mediterranean. The Order led numerous reforms and left a rich cultural and artistic legacy in Valletta.

In 1798, Malta was briefly occupied by the French. After their defeat in 1800, Malta became a **British colony**. During British rule, Malta served as a key military base and developed close ties with the UK, which had a significant influence on Maltese politics and culture. Malta gained full independence from Britain on **21 September 1964**, and in 1974 it became a **republic**. After a politically tense period, Malta joined the **European Union in 2004**, strengthening its ties with Europe and benefiting from EU integration.



Culturally, Malta has an extraordinary artistic heritage dating back to Roman and medieval times. It has seen influences from the **Roman Empire**, **Byzantine and Arab cultures**, and later the **British Empire**. In the 20th century, Malta emerged as a center for music, theater, and the arts, contributing significantly to Mediterranean cultural identity. Events like the **Carnival di Malta** and the **Malta Arts Festival** celebrate and preserve this cultural richness. Malta is also famous for its mosaic art and gold craftsmanship, reflected in its many cathedrals and churches.



Characteristics of traditional clothing

VALLETTA

Women in Valletta wear simple yet elegant dresses embroidered with natural motifs and delicate details. These dresses are fitted at the waist and mid-length, reflecting the city's lifestyle and warm Mediterranean climate. It is also common for women to wear embroidered shawls and hats that reflect the city's Catholic and Mediterranean heritage. The style is simple but carries a quiet elegance, reflective of Valletta's old-world charm.





MDINA

In Mdina, traditional clothing is more formal and known for its richness in detail. Women wear long dresses made of silk and velvet, decorated with traditional embroidery and floral aprons. These outfits suit the city's cooler temperatures and sacred ambiance. Men wear embroidered jackets and vests, influenced by the Baroque period and Mdina's historical legacy. The style is elegant and refined, matching the traditions of this ancient city.

GOZO

On the island of Gozo, traditional clothing is simpler and more natural, fitting the rural and agricultural lifestyle. Women wear long dresses embroidered with traditional motifs and warm colors that reflect Gozo's rich natural environment. Men wear basic farming attire such as trousers and shirts suitable for daily work. The clothing reflects a deep connection with nature and rural life, symbolizing simplicity and functionality.

The importance of culture and tradition today

Malta continues to preserve and promote its rich cultural and historical heritage. Traditional clothing is showcased during events like the **Carnival di Malta** and other folk festivals, which are vital elements of the country's cultural identity. These events help maintain the Catholic and Mediterranean influences present in Malta's heritage. The country is also committed to preserving its historical monuments, such as **St. John's Co-Cathedral** and **Fort St. Elmo**, which are part of the **UNESCO World Heritage** list. Culture and tradition remain an essential part of modern life in Malta and are celebrated and preserved with pride.



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Spain



Geographical location and borders

Spain is located in the southwestern part of Europe, with coastlines along the Mediterranean Sea to the south, on the southern edge of the Iberian Peninsula. It borders France and Andorra to the north, and Portugal to the west. Spain has a long coastline and numerous islands, including the Canary Islands in the Atlantic Ocean and the Balearic Islands in the Mediterranean. This unique position allows for significant development in trade and tourism. Spain has a Mediterranean climate along the coast and a continental climate in the interior, with cold winters and hot, dry summers.

Capital - MADRID

Madrid is the capital and the largest city in Spain. The city has nearly 3.4 million inhabitants and a metropolitan area population of around 7 million, making it the second-largest city in the European Union. Madrid is home to the government, Parliament, ministries, partner institutions and agencies, and serves as the



official residence of the Spanish monarchs. Economically, Madrid is the fourth richest city in Europe after London, Paris, and Moscow. Located in the central part of the country, Madrid has a continental climate with cold winters and hot summers. It is an important political, economic, and cultural center for both Spain and Europe and is known for its rich cultural and historical heritage. Madrid is home to some of the world's most renowned museums, such as the **Prado Museum**, the **Queen Sofia Museum**, and the **Royal Palace**. It is also a center for fashion, music, and the arts, hosting numerous cultural events and exhibitions throughout the year. The city is a major tourist destination and a hub for business and industry. Madrid was one of the hardest-hit cities during the **Spanish Civil War (1936–1939)**. It served as a stronghold for the Republicans starting in July 1936, and its western surroundings were the site of intense battles.

Major cities in Spain

BARCELONA

Barcelona is Spain's second-largest city and one of the most popular tourist destinations in Europe. With around 1.6 million inhabitants, it is an important cultural and economic hub known for its extraordinary architecture, including works by **Antoni Gaudí** such as the **Sagrada Família** and **Park Güell**. The city enjoys a Mediterranean climate with hot summers and mild winters, making it a year-round tourist hotspot.



Barcelona is also a center for fashion and gastronomy and has a vibrant cultural scene, with many museums, art galleries, and theaters. Traditional clothing in Barcelona is simple, suited for the Mediterranean climate, and often features bright colors and light fabrics that reflect the city's connection to the sea and nature.

VALENCIA



Valencia is another coastal Spanish city, with around 800,000 inhabitants. It is a major cultural and commercial center known for its modern architecture, such as the **Valencia Castle** and the **City of Arts and Sciences**. The city has a warm and dry climate, ideal for tourism and outdoor activities. Valencia is also famous for its cultural events and festivals such as **La Tomatina** and **Las Fallas**, where traditional clothing plays an important role. Traditional clothing in Valencia is influenced by the city's history and climate. Women wear long dresses and headscarves, often accompanied by hand-embroidered aprons. Men typically wear simple cotton trousers and shirts suitable for both cultural events and daily life.

Historical, political, and cultural developments (XVIII–XXI Century)

From the 18th century onwards, Spain underwent deep political, historical, and cultural transformations. At the beginning of the 18th century, the death of **King Charles II** without an heir triggered the **War of the Spanish Succession (1701–1714)**, which ended with the **Bourbon dynasty** being established on the

Spanish throne. **Philip V**, grandson of the King of France, consolidated royal power and initiated administrative and centralizing reforms. In the 19th century, Spain experienced significant turmoil, including the **war against the Napoleonic occupation (1808–1814)**, the proclamation of the liberal **1812 Constitution in Cádiz**, and a series of civil wars known as the **Carlist Wars**, driven by conflicts between liberals and conservatives.

In the early 20th century, the monarchy faced severe crises, culminating in the proclamation of the **Second Republic (1931–1939)**. After a short period of democratic reforms, the **Spanish Civil War (1936–1939)** broke out, ending with the victory of **nationalist forces led by General Francisco Franco**, who ruled the country as a dictator until his death in 1975. Franco suppressed freedoms and regional autonomy. After his death, Spain peacefully transitioned to democracy under **King Juan Carlos I**, and in 1978 adopted a new **constitution**, turning the country into a **parliamentary monarchy** with regional autonomy. In recent decades, Spain has become a modern country and a key member of the **European Union (since 1986)**. It has experienced economic, urban, and cultural development, although it has also gone through crises, such as the one in 2008. Spanish culture has flourished in literature, cinema, and the arts, with figures like



Pedro Almodóvar, **Javier Marías**, and **flamenco** music continuing to symbolize national identity. Despite modernization, territorial tensions remain, especially in **Catalonia**, where calls for independence continue. Spain has played an active role internationally, contributing to peacekeeping missions and strengthening ties with Latin America. Traditions like the **San Fermín Festival** and **Semana Santa (Holy Week)** remain central to Spain's cultural identity and social life.

Characteristics of traditional clothing

MADRID

Traditional clothing in Madrid is simple and influenced by **Castilian traditions**. Women wear long, hand-made dresses, often brightly colored, and aprons decorated with traditional motifs. Men usually wear fitted trousers and simple vests, suitable for daily life.

BARCELONA

In Barcelona, traditional clothing is light and suited for the Mediterranean climate. Women wear long dresses and embroidered hats, often bright and beautiful. Men wear lightweight trousers and cotton shirts that reflect the simple and elegant style of this coastal city.

VALENCIA

Valencian traditional clothing is closely tied to local festivals and cultural events such as **Las Fallas** and **La Tomatina**. Women wear brightly colored dresses and hand-knit blouses, while men wear simple trousers and vests suitable for festive events and everyday life.

The importance of culture and tradition today

Spain preserves and promotes its rich cultural traditions through festivals, handicrafts, and folk activities. **La Tomatina**, **Las Fallas**, and **the Flamenco Festival** are among the most famous events that maintain and celebrate Spanish culture. Traditional costumes are worn during these events and continue to play a key role in preserving the nation's cultural identity.







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CHAPTER II



Region:

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN



Bosnia and Herzegovina



Geographical location and borders

Bosnia and Herzegovina is located in Southeastern Europe, in the Balkan region, with a limited coastline on the Adriatic Sea. It borders Croatia to the north and west, Serbia to the east, and Montenegro to the southeast. The country is divided into two main entities: the **Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina**, which is more populated, and the **Republika Srpska**. Bosnia and Herzegovina has a mountainous terrain, with two major mountain groups: the **Dinaric Alps** in the west and the **Carpathians** in the east. The climate is both **Mediterranean and continental**, with cold winters and hot summers, influenced by the mountainous relief.

Capital - SARAJEVO



Sarajevo is the capital and largest city of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with a population of around 300,000. It holds significant historical and cultural importance and is often referred to as the “**Jerusalem of the Balkans**” due to its multiculturalism and coexistence of various religions and cultures. The city has a long and rich history that includes periods of **Ottoman**, **Austro-Hungarian**, and **Yugoslav** rule.

Sarajevo is renowned for the legacy left by the Ottoman Empire, especially its distinctive architecture, which includes numerous mosques such as the **Gazi Husrev-beg Mosque**, along with other historical monuments. The city also reflects Austro-Hungarian influences and Yugoslav heritage. Sarajevo is a cultural and educational center, home to many museums, art galleries, and educational institutions that reflect the city’s rich history and culture.

Notable attractions include the **Old Bazaar (Baščaršija)** and **Sacred Heart Cathedral**, both of which draw many visitors. Sarajevo is also famous for its **traditional cuisine**, influenced by various cultures, especially the Ottoman. Cultural events such as the **Sarajevo Film Festival** have gained international recognition and highlight Sarajevo’s growth as a modern and dynamic cultural center. Surrounded by mountains, the city also offers opportunities for outdoor activities such as hiking and skiing in winter. With a continental climate, Sarajevo experiences cold winters and hot summers. Despite difficult periods, especially during the Bosnian War, Sarajevo has undergone significant recovery and redevelopment, attracting visitors with its deep historical and cultural roots.

Main cities of Bosnia and Herzegovina

MOSTAR

Mostar is a historic city best known for the **Stari Most (Old Bridge)**, an iconic Ottoman-era monument symbolizing the connection between Muslim and Christian cultures. During the Ottoman period, the city was a commercial and cultural hub, and today it is a well-known tourist destination. Traditional clothing in Mostar is influenced by Ottoman culture and is often seen during festivals and cultural events. The **Mostar Mosque** is another major attraction, offering stunning views of the city



and reflecting the Ottoman legacy. The city is famous for its riverside cafes and restaurants overlooking the Old Bridge and the **Neretva River**. Events such as the **Mostar Summer Festival** attract many visitors and showcase an important part of the local culture. Mostar is also a renowned center for traditional handicrafts, especially **wood and marble carvings**.

BANJA LUKA



Banja Luka is the second-largest city in Bosnia and Herzegovina and serves as the administrative center of **Republika Srpska**. It is located in the northern part of the country and has a rich historical background. Known for its natural beauty and the **Vrba River**, the city offers outdoor activities such as **rafting and fishing**.

Traditional clothing here is simpler and reflects **Serbian and Orthodox Christian culture**. Banja Luka has a strong cultural presence and is a center for **art and history**. Festivals such as the **Banja Luka Summer**

Festival and Poetry Days attract many visitors and reflect the city's active cultural life. It is also a hub for music and theater events that preserve regional traditions and culture.

Historical, Political, and Cultural Developments (18th–21st Century)

Bosnia and Herzegovina has gone through numerous historical periods that have deeply influenced its culture and politics. In the 18th century, the country was under **Ottoman rule**, which significantly shaped its civilization and local culture. Much of Bosnia's social structure and way of life was influenced by **Islamic traditions and Ottoman architecture**, including mosques, markets, and other public buildings.

In **1878**, Bosnia and Herzegovina came under **Austro-Hungarian administration**, which brought new Western influences, including modern infrastructure and economic development. After **World War I**, it became part of **Yugoslavia**, where it experienced a long period of coexistence among various ethnic and religious groups, including **Serbs, Croats, and Bosniak Muslims**.



After the **dissolution of Yugoslavia** and the **Bosnian War (1992–1995)**, Bosnia and Herzegovina was divided into two main entities: the **Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina** and **Republika Srpska**. Following the war, the country went through a difficult period of recovery and stabilization, but also a rich era of cultural development.

Despite its challenging history, Bosnia and Herzegovina has preserved a vibrant cultural and artistic heritage. Many historical monuments and buildings remain, showcasing both Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian influences. Culture and tradition remain essential elements of the country's identity, contributing to **tourism and cultural activities** that highlight the **resilience of the Bosnian people** and their efforts to preserve and promote their heritage. Bosnia and Herzegovina stands as a striking example of **multicultural coexistence** and the **aspiration for a shared future** after overcoming past struggles.



Characteristics of traditional clothing

SARAJEVO

Traditional clothing in Sarajevo is simple and elegant, reflecting influences from both the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian periods.

Women often wear long, embroidered dresses with traditional motifs and small hats, symbolizing both Catholic and Muslim influences. Men wear dark, fitted trousers and vests, mirroring classic Ottoman styles. Festive attire is more decorated, often in bright colors with intricate embroidery.

Sarajevo's traditional garments reflect the city's **cultural coexistence**, showcasing both **Islamic and Western elements**.





MOSTAR

Mostar's traditional clothing is colorful and richly detailed, deeply influenced by the **Ottoman Empire**.

Women wear long dresses and embroidered hats with floral motifs. Men wear wide pants and vests adorned with embroidery. The city's clothing style blends Ottoman heritage with local culture, and the use of vibrant colors and detailed embroidery reflects the population's strong connection to **faith and tradition**. These garments are typically worn during cultural festivals and events.

BANJA LUKA

Traditional clothing in Banja Luka is simple and practical, reflecting **Serbian and Orthodox** ways of life.

Women wear long, modest dresses in darker tones, while men wear fitted trousers and white shirts, often paired with vests. The outfits are suited for both everyday wear and religious or cultural events, such as **Orthodox Easter**. They reflect strong Serbian traditions and

Orthodox Christian values and are still used in cultural gatherings today. Banja Luka's attire represents a **respect for old traditions** that remain relevant.

The importance of culture and tradition today

Bosnia and Herzegovina preserves and promotes its cultural traditions through festivals such as the **Sarajevo Film Festival**, **Mostar Summer Festival**, and other events that reflect both **Ottoman and Western influences**. Traditional clothing and crafts are still present at cultural events, showcasing the strong connection between the population and their national identity and history. Culture and tradition remain vital elements of tourism and are key to preserving Bosnia and Herzegovina's **rich cultural heritage**.



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Croatia



Geographical position and borders

Croatia is located in the southern part of Europe, in the Balkan region, and has extensive access to the Adriatic Sea, making it a well-known coastal destination. It borders Slovenia to the north, Hungary to the northeast, Serbia to the east, and Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro to the southeast. In the south, Croatia has a long and beautiful coastline that stretches along the Adriatic Sea. The climate is typically Mediterranean, with hot summers and mild winters, enabling the development of coastal tourism.

Capital - ZAGREB



Zagreb is the capital and largest city of Croatia, with a population of around 800,000 inhabitants. It is located in the western part of the country, near the Slovenian border, and serves as an important cultural, political, and economic center.

Zagreb was first mentioned as a city in 1094, when the diocese of Zagreb was established by King László I of Hungary. This date is considered the official beginning of the city's urban history. The city has a rich history and reflects a great architectural heritage, including buildings in Baroque, Neo-Gothic, and modern styles. The city has a unique charm that is closely tied to the Austro-Hungarian period, when Zagreb underwent significant urban development.

At the center of the city are Ban Jelačić Square and the Zagreb Cathedral, two main attractions that draw visitors from all over the world. The Cathedral is one of the tallest structures in the Balkans and reflects the Gothic style. Zagreb is also an important center for art and culture, offering museums such as the Museum of Modern Art, as well as many galleries and theaters. The city has a warm Mediterranean atmosphere with many restaurants, cafes, and bars, which are filled with visitors throughout the year. The Zagreb Festival is also a well-known cultural event that attracts thousands of visitors every year. The traditional clothing of Zagreb is elegant and simple, filled with fine details, reflecting the period of transition from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and is an important part of festivals and cultural events.

Main cities of Croatia

DUBROVNIK

Dubrovnik is one of the most famous and historically significant cities in Croatia. Known as the "Pearl of the Adriatic," Dubrovnik is a coastal city with a rich history dating back to the medieval period. This city has a famous surrounding wall that protects the ancient city and is one of the main attractions for tourists. The Dubrovnik Bridge, built during the Venetian period, is an excellent example of Mediterranean architecture. Tradition-



al clothing in Dubrovnik is similar to that of the medieval period, reflecting influences from Venetian and Mediterranean cultures. During cultural events and festivals, traditional clothing can be seen, which preserves the city's rich traditions.

The Dubrovnik Summer Festival is an important cultural event that promotes the arts and music, giving the city the opportunity to showcase its cultural wealth. Dubrovnik is also an important center for maritime history and trade, where history and culture combine to offer a unique atmosphere.

SPLIT



Split is the second-largest city in Croatia and an important center for industry, trade, and tourism. Known for the Diocletian's Palace, built by the Roman emperor Diocletian, Split is a city with a great historical and archaeological wealth. Diocletian's Palace, one of the largest and best-preserved Roman structures, is a UNESCO World Heritage site and is also a significant center for tourism and cultural activities. The traditional clothing of Split is simple but has a natural elegance that reflects the lifestyle and style of the coastal city. The clothing is suitable for the Mediterranean climate and lifestyle of this beautiful city. Cultural activities such as the Split Festival and Theater Festival are well-known and attract many visitors,

providing the opportunity to learn more about the city's cultural and historical wealth. Traditional clothing and cultural events are an important part of life in Split and offer a way to preserve connections with its history and heritage.

Historical, political, and cultural developments (XVIII–XXI Century)

Croatia has gone through many different historical periods, which have influenced its cultural and political development. During the 18th century, Croatia was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which had a major impact on the development of the country's culture and administration. This influence was particularly evident in the architecture of important cities like Zagreb, Rijeka, and Osijek, where Baroque buildings were common. During this period, Croatia was part of the Duchy of Croatia and had limited autonomy, but was still involved in the political and cultural developments of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

In the 19th century, the rise of nationalism and the desire for more autonomy led to the formation of a powerful movement for national liberation. Croatia participated in wars involving the Balkans, including World War I, and after World War II, it became part of communist Yugoslavia. After the dissolution of Yugoslavia in 1991, Croatia declared independence and began a difficult period of war for independence, known as the Croatian War of Independence. This painful period, which ended in 1995, brought much destruction but also consolidated the country's independence.

After the war, Croatia went through a long period of recovery and stabilization, working towards integration into international structures. In 2013, Croatia took the major step of becoming a full member of the European Union, marking an important phase in its political and economic development. Croatian culture has been influenced by many factors throughout its history, including Venetian and Italian influences, particularly in coastal cities like



Dubrovnik, Split, and Zadar. These influences are evident in Croatia's architecture, music, and visual arts, which reflect a blend of Western and Slavic cultures. In literature, Croatia has a rich heritage with notable writers like Miroslav Krleža and Ivo Andrić, who played an important role in shaping Croatian cultural identity.



Characteristics of traditional clothing

ZAGREB

Traditional clothing in Zagreb is simple and elegant, reflecting the influences of the Austro-Hungarian period. Women wear long dresses embroidered with traditional motifs, and small hats that reflect the Catholic and Muslim influence in the city. Men in traditional Zagreb dress wear tight trousers, vests, and large shirts, maintaining the classical style of the city, enriched with fine details that reflect the influence of Austro-Hungarian culture. Clothing for events and festivals is usually more decorated, often with bright colors and more embroidery, making it special for traditional holidays and cultural events.



DUBROVNIK



Traditional clothing in Dubrovnik is similar to that of the medieval period and reflects influences from Venetian and Mediterranean cultures. Women wear long dresses and embroidered hats, decorated with floral motifs and artistic details. Men wear wide trousers and vests, which are adorned with intricate embroidery. These garments can be seen during cultural festivals and events like the Dubrovnik Summer Festival, an internationally renowned event promoting Croatian culture and art. Dubrovnik's clothing is a deep reflection of the city's connection to Mediterranean history and the influences it received during the Venetian period. Today, local artisans continue to preserve these traditions by creating replicas of historical garments and showcasing them in museums and workshops. This effort not only keeps the cultural heritage alive but also educates younger generations and visitors about the city's rich and diverse past. Through its clothing, Dubrovnik tells a visual story of its history, artistry, and enduring cultural pride.

SPLIT

Traditional clothing in Split is simple and practical, reflecting the coastal and Mediterranean lifestyle of the city. Women wear long dresses in soft and simple colors, while men wear vests and tight trousers, reflecting the natural colors of the environment and the Mediterranean climate.

The clothing is suitable for everyday life and for cultural events that showcase Split's traditional heritage. Split has preserved a unique style of clothing that is simple but elegant, reflecting the city's way of life.

The importance of culture and tradition today

Croatian culture and tradition are essential to the country's identity and continue to play an important role in everyday life. Traditional clothing, crafts, and cultural events such as the Dubrovnik Summer Festival and the Zagreb Film Festival are an inseparable part of the country's culture and heritage. They reflect the various historical influences, including Venetian and Austro-Hungarian



ones, making Croatia an attractive destination for tourists and a place where tradition and modernity come together in harmony. Croatian culture remains a reference point for preserving identity and promoting the country's rich historical values.



Across towns and villages, local communities actively celebrate traditional music, dance, and folklore, keeping these customs alive. Museums and cultural institutions play a key role in documenting and sharing these traditions with future generations. As a result, Croatian culture continues to evolve while honoring the deep roots of its historical and regional diversity.

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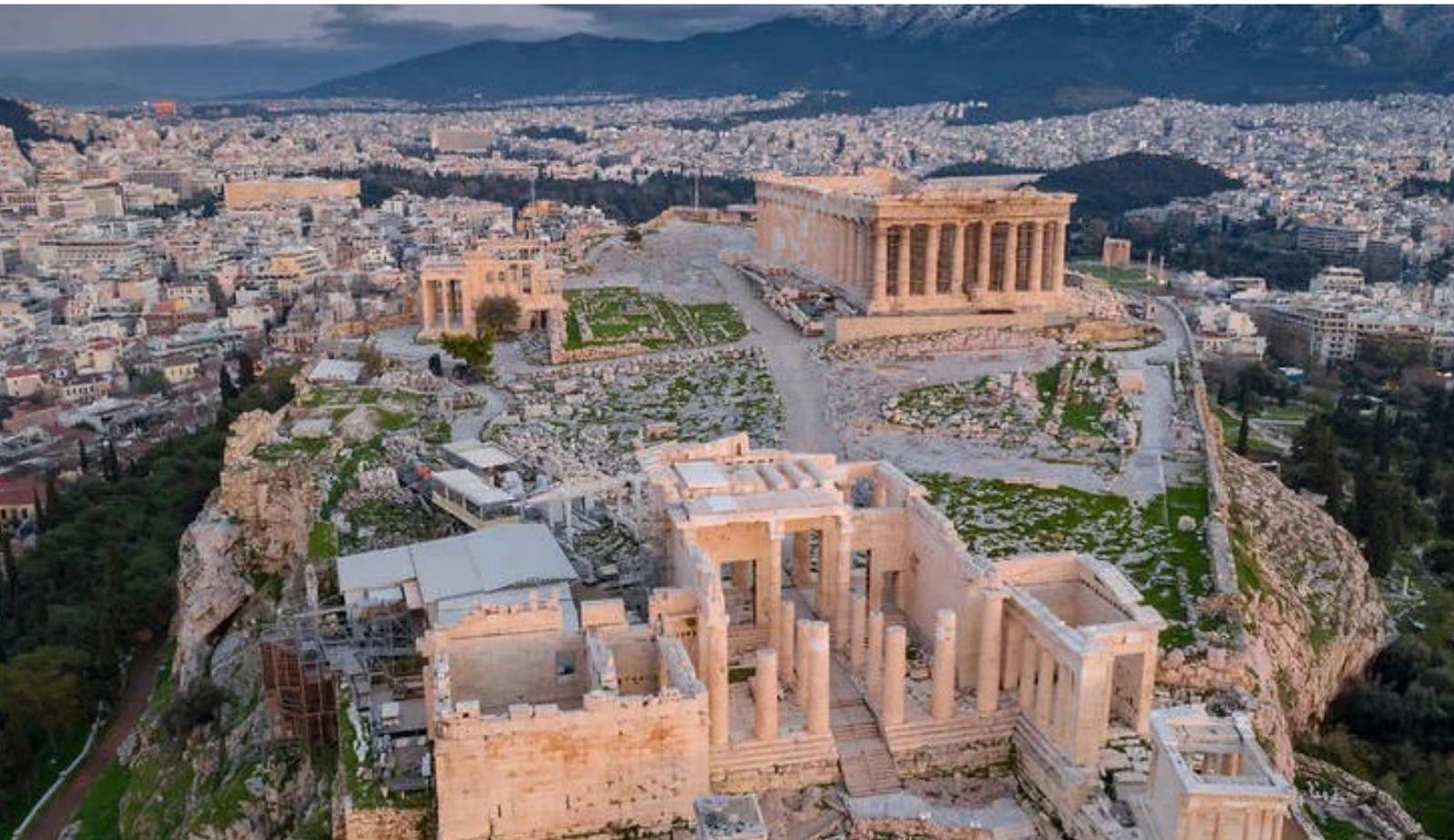
Greece



Geographical location and borders

Greece is located in the southeastern part of Europe and has a long coastline along the Aegean and Ionian Seas. It borders Albania to the northwest, North Macedonia and Bulgaria to the northeast, and Turkey to the east, while also having access to the sea on both sides of the peninsula, providing strong connections to the Aegean and Ionian Seas. Greece is well-known for its numerous islands, such as Crete, Rhodes, Lesbos, and many others, which are famous for their history, culture, and natural beauty. The climate is typical Mediterranean, with hot summers and mild winters, making this country a popular tourist destination year-round.

Capital - ATHENS



Athens is the capital and largest city of Greece, with a population of around 3.1 million people. It is located in the Attica region, in the central part of Greece, and has great historical and cultural significance as one of the oldest cities in the world. Athens is the ancient center of Western civilization and is one of the most well-known cities for its archaeological and monumental wealth, including the Acropolis, the Parthenon, and the Theatre of Dionysus. The city has also been an important center for philosophy, art, and science, with renowned figures such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, who have had a profound impact on the development of Western thought.

Athens is also a modern city that combines elements of tradition and modern technology. It preserves many ancient monuments and is also a dynamic city offering a rich cultural and social life. Syntagma Square, Plaka neighborhood, and Monastiraki are some of the most popular places for visitors, where they can enjoy the architecture, traditional shops, and restaurants serving typical Greek cuisine. The climate is typical Mediterranean, with mild winters and hot summers, making this city an attractive destination all year round.

Main cities of Greece

THESSALONIKI



Thessaloniki is the second-largest city in Greece and one of the most important cities for the history, culture, and economy of the country. Thessaloniki has a rich history dating back to Roman and Byzantine periods and is known for the many influences it has received from the empires that ruled it, including the Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman Empires. The city has a rich cultural atmosphere, where you can visit museums, art galleries, and theaters.

Aristotelous Boulevard is one of the main streets walked by both visitors and locals to enjoy the views and do shopping. Traditional clothing in Thessaloniki has been influenced by these periods and is simpler than in the southern cities of Greece.

Thessaloniki is also known for its festivals and cultural events, such as the Thessaloniki Film Festival, which attracts producers and directors from around the world.

CRETE (Heraklion)



Crete is the largest island of Greece and one of the most popular tourist destinations. The island's capital, Heraklion, is an important center for the history, culture, and art of Greece. Known for its Minoan period influences, Heraklion offers many opportunities to learn about the antiquity and cultural heritage of Greece. In addition to the Palace of Knossos, Heraklion has its museums and cathedrals that reflect the development of the Minoan civilization and later Byzantine and Venetian influences. The traditional clothing of Crete is known for bright colors and embroidered patterns, often decorated with symbols of nature and rural life. Heraklion is also known for its cuisine, which is rich in flavors and fresh ingredients, including olive oil, feta cheese, and moussaka. The city is also known for its strong connection with musical traditions and Croatian ballet.

Historical, political, and cultural developments (XVIII–XXI Century)

Developments in various historical epochs have had a significant impact on Greece's political, social, and cultural structure. During the Ottoman period (1453–1821), Greece was under the rule of the Ottoman Empire for over four centuries. Although the Greek people preserved their cultural and religious traditions, the Ottoman administration left a noticeable mark on the development of civilization and social structures, especially in cities and regions with a strong Ottoman presence. Greek culture during this period retained important elements of the Orthodox faith and a close connection to the church, which was one of the main forces preserving the national and cultural identity of the Greeks.







In the early 19th century, independence movements gained strength, culminating in the outbreak of the Greek War of Independence in 1821. The war, which involved strong resistance and the engagement of many foreign countries, ended with the creation of the independent Greek state in 1830. After independence, Greece went through changing political periods, including periods of monarchy and internal transformations that required the modernization of state structures. The Greek Civil War (1946–1949) and the military dictatorship (1967–1974) were important moments that helped shape the modern democratic state.

After the fall of the dictatorship, Greece entered a period of democratic consolidation and the development of legal state institutions. Greece's accession to the European Union in 1981 and the adoption of the euro in 2001 were significant steps that helped Greece integrate into European structures and modernize its economy. Greece has also had an extraordinary impact on Western civilization, contributing to philosophy, literature, art, and science. Greek philosophers and thinkers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle have shaped the Western intellectual tradition, and their influence remains present in philosophical studies and discussions today.

Characteristics of traditional clothing

ATHENS

The traditional clothing of Athens reflects the influences of the Byzantine and Ottoman periods, creating a unique style that harmonizes with the city's Mediterranean climate. Athenian women wear long dresses, usually in dark colors, with intricate embroidery and fine details, while men wear vests and narrow pants in dark colors.

The clothing is simple but elegant, reflecting the city lifestyle. However, festive clothing is more decorated and may include brighter colors and more embroidery. Many of these clothes can be seen during cultural events and festivals held in Athens, such as the Independence Day Parade and the Greek Music Festivals.

THESSALONIKI

Traditional clothing in Thessaloniki is rich in colors and details that reflect the influences of Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman periods. Women in Thessaloniki often wear long, embroidered dresses with floral motifs and fine details, while men wear vests and wide pants, which are suitable for life in this coastal city. The clothing is simple but with a natural elegance that reflects the city's connection to the sea and its colorful traditions. During festivals and cultural events, such as the Thessaloniki Film Festival, traditional clothing can be seen that reflects these influences and maintains the city's strong connection to its cultural heritage. Thessaloniki's clothing is a reflection of the city's rich and complex past.

CRETE

Traditional clothing on the island of Crete is known for bright colors and embroidered patterns that reflect the nature and rural life of the island. Women wear long dresses and woven hats, which are often decorated with symbols of nature and agricultural life. Men in Crete wear wide pants and embroidered vests, which are suitable for daily tasks and agricultural activities. Crete's traditional clothing is a reflection of the island's traditional life and the local population's passion for nature and craftsmanship. Traditional clothing is often worn during cultural events like the Cretan Festival, which is an opportunity to enjoy music, dance, and clothing that reflect the island's rich heritage.

The importance of culture and tradition today

Culture and tradition are important elements of Greece's national identity and continue to play a major role in everyday life. Traditional clothing, crafts, and folk music are still part of cultural activities and festivals that promote the country's cultural treasures. Events such as the Thessaloniki Festivals, the Athens and Epidaurus Festival, and the Rhodes Festival keep the country's traditions alive and attract tourists and visitors from around the world.





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Israel



Geographical location and borders

Israel is located on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, in the southern part of the Levant (the eastern Mediterranean coast). It is bordered to the north by Lebanon, to the northeast by Syria, to the east by Jordan, to the southwest by Egypt, and to the west by the Mediterranean Sea. Through the Gaza Strip, it has a disputed border with Palestinian territories, while Jerusalem, a city of extraordinary historical and religious significance, serves as a focal point of international tension due to its contested status. The territory of Israel includes a variety of landscapes: from the Mediterranean coast in the west, to the Negev desert in the south, and the Galilean mountain plateau in the north. With a coastline of over 270 kilometers on the Mediterranean Sea, Israel has a typical Mediterranean climate, which influences its agriculture, tourism, and lifestyle. This position has made Israel a bridge between Asia and Africa, as well as a strategically important territory throughout history.

Capital - TEL AVIV

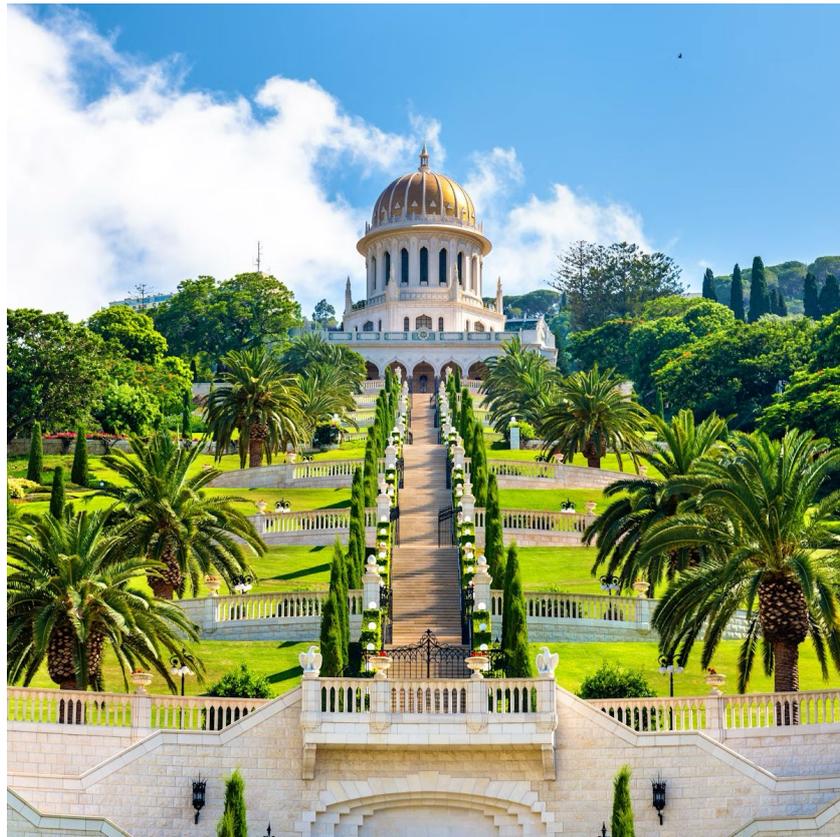


Tel Aviv is located along the Mediterranean coast and is Israel's primary administrative, economic, and cultural center. With a population of about 460,000 in the city and over 3 million in the metropolitan area known as "Gush Dan," Tel Aviv represents one of the most dynamic and modern urban areas in the region. The city enjoys a typical Mediterranean climate, with long hot summers and mild winters, with rainfall concentrated in the colder months. Its wide beaches, modern architecture, vibrant nightlife, and presence of a well-developed technology industry give the city a lively and cosmopolitan character. Tel Aviv was founded in 1909 as a Jewish neighborhood outside the old port of Jaffa, and later merged with it, forming an important urban center in the 1930s and 1940s. Over the following decades, the city developed into a significant economic metropolis, home to many embassies, international companies, and renowned universities such as Tel Aviv University.

Although the Israeli government declares Jerusalem as its capital, most countries and international organizations recognize Tel Aviv as the de facto center of diplomatic and administrative institutions, due to the contested status of Jerusalem in the international arena.

Major cities

HAIFA



Haifa, located in the northwest of Israel, is one of the largest and most important cities in the country. Haifa is a strategic port and a developed industrial and scientific center. The city is known for its interfaith and interethnic coexistence, where Jewish, Arab, Druze, and Christian communities live in an atmosphere of mutual understanding. The Technion University located in Haifa is one of the most prominent institutions for higher education in technology in the Middle East. Attractions include the Bahá'í Gardens, a UNESCO World Heritage site and a symbol of tolerance and urban beauty. The importance of Haifa's port is also significant in economic and military terms, as it plays a key role in the import and export of goods for the country. The city also has a well-developed urban transport network and is an important center for the maritime, chemical, and high-tech industries.

JERUSALEM



Jerusalem, one of the oldest cities in the world, is located in the eastern part of Israel, on hills sacred to the three monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The city has a mixed population and an extraordinary cultural and historical significance for the entire region. Among the most famous monuments are the Western Wall, the Temple Mount, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and the Dome of the Rock. Jerusalem is also an academic and cultural center, with universities, museums, and numerous religious institutions. The city is divided into different neighborhoods that reflect the religious and ethnic identity of its residents, such as the Jewish Quarter, the Arab Quarter, the Christian Quarter, and the Armenian Quarter. Jerusalem also hosts significant cultural and artistic activities, such as the Jerusalem Biennale and international music festivals. Although Israel declares it as its capital, the majority of the international community does not recognize this status due to the ongoing conflict over East Jerusalem, which holds special significance for the Palestinians and the international community.

Historical, political, and cultural developments (XVIII–XXI Century)

In the 18th century, the territory of modern Israel was part of the Vilayet of Syria under the Ottoman Empire and included significant cities like Acre, Jerusalem, Jaffa, and Hebron. During this time, the area had a mixed population of Jews, Arabs, and Christians, with an economy based on agriculture and local trade.

After World War I and the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the territory came under the British Mandate for Palestine (1920–1948). This period saw increasing tensions between the Arab and Jewish populations, which culminated in armed clashes in the 1930s and 1940s. After the end of World War II and the Holocaust, international pressure grew for the creation of a Jewish state.

On May 14, 1948, Israel declared its independence, which immediately led to war with neighboring Arab states. These tensions continue to this day, often escalating into armed conflict. During the 20th century and into the 21st century, Israel has faced several wars and ongoing conflicts with the Palestinian population and neighboring states, particularly over the status of Jerusalem, occupied territories, and refugees. However, the country has also seen significant economic, technological, and cultural development. Israel has established functional democratic institutions, a strong educational system, and has become a major hub for innovation and scientific research.





Modern Israeli culture is formed by a mixture of traditions from Jewish communities coming from Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia. This mosaic has influenced music, literature, theater, cuisine, and traditional clothing. At the same time, Palestinian and Arab Israeli culture continues to contribute to the overall cultural richness through language, crafts, and inherited customs. Although political tensions



remain, cultural development in Israel has created a diverse and complex society where the modern coexists with ancient heritage and the challenges of collective identity.

Characteristics of folk clothing

Jerusalem presents a mosaic of traditional clothing, with distinctive elements from Sephardic Jewish, Yemenite Jewish, and Arab-Palestinian attire. Women's clothing often includes long cotton dresses embroidered with bright colors and geometric or floral patterns, adorned with silver necklaces and coins. In some traditional neighborhoods, men wore long woolen garments with wide belts and characteristic hats such as the "kippah" or "tarbush" (oriental fez).

Haifa stands out for the influences of Druze and Arab communities in the Carmel region, where women wear dark dresses with embroidered aprons in gold or silver thread, and on festive occasions, they wear thin veils with floral motifs. Men wear wide pants with a soft belt and white shirts with high collars, often paired with black or blue vests. Haifa's clothing shows the influence of the Ottoman Empire, particularly in the use of brocade and velvet for festive garments. The dark colors and intricate embroidery reflect a deep respect for tradition.

Safed, as a city with strong religious and artisanal heritage, preserves softer-colored garments with symbolic motifs that represent spiritual connection to tradition and nature. Women's clothing is often adorned with hand-embroidered blue and gold patterns created in family workshops. Men wear long shawls over their shoulders during religious ceremonies and woven vests with ancient traditional motifs. Clothing in Safed serves not only as a form of local identity but also as part of religious rituals and communal events.

The importance of culture and tradition today

In Israel, traditional culture and folk clothing continue to play an important role in contemporary life, especially during religious holidays, family ceremonies, and community events. Sephardic, Yemenite, and Druze communities still preserve their traditional attire for special occasions, passing it down through ceremonies and rituals. Cultural institutions, museums, and festivals like the "HaMusica HaYehudit Festival" promote heritage through exhibits and care for artisan workshops.



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Lebanon



Geographical position and borders

Lebanon is located on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea, in the heart of what is historically known as the Levant (the eastern Mediterranean coast). It is bordered to the north and east by Syria, to the south by Israel, and to the west it stretches along the Mediterranean Sea with a coastline of over 200 kilometers. The Lebanese territory is characterized by a diverse relief, with two main mountain ranges – the Lebanon Mountains and the Anti-Lebanon Mountains – stretching parallel to the coastline, separated by the fertile Bekaa Valley. This topography has influenced not only the climate of the country but also the historical, social, and cultural division of communities.

Capital - BEIRUT



Beirut is the capital of Lebanon and one of the most important cities on the eastern Mediterranean coast. Situated on a small peninsula facing the sea and surrounded by high mountains to the east, Beirut has a typical Mediterranean climate with hot summers and mild, rainy winters. The population of the city, along with the metropolitan area, reaches about 2 million people, making it the demographic, economic, and cultural heart of the country. Beirut has historically been an important port and cultural center since the Phoenician era, and over the centuries, it has been influenced by various civilizations – Roman, Byzantine, Arab, Ottoman, and French. The city is known for its rich architectural and cultural heritage, where Ottoman and colonial buildings stand in contrast to modern towers and vibrant urban squares. Beirut has a developed intellectual life, with prestigious universities such as the Université Saint-Joseph and the American University of Beirut, which have played a key role in shaping the elites of the Middle East. Notable attractions include the Corniche promenade, Jeita Grotto, the National Museum, and the historic Gemmayzeh neighborhood. Despite periods of war and political crises, Beirut remains a symbol of open culture, interfaith dialogue, and civic resistance, reflecting the complexity and beauty of Lebanese society.

Main cities

TRIPOLI



Tripoli, located in the northern part of Lebanon along the Mediterranean coast, is the country's second-largest city and one of the oldest urban centers in the region. Founded during the Phoenician period, Tripoli served as a port and trade center throughout history, especially in the medieval period when it was one of the main cities of the Mamluk Emirate. The city has a rich Islamic architectural heritage, including mosques, madrasas, hammams, and caravanserais (inns) from the Ottoman and Mamluk periods. The old part of the city is one of the best-preserved in the Arab world, containing more than 100 historical monuments. Tripoli's economy is closely linked to the port, the wood industry, soap production, and artisan products. It is also known for its culinary culture, including traditional sweets like halawa, baklava, and mouhalabieh.

SIDON

Sidon (Saida), located in the southern part of the country, is one of the oldest Mediterranean cities, with a history that dates back to the Phoenician era. As one of the major centers of Phoenician civilization, Sidon played a major role in maritime trade and the production of the famous purple dye of the time. Today, the city preserves many historical monuments, including the Sea Castle (Sidon Castle), the Old Hammam, and the traditional market. The city has an urban stretch along the sea and is known for fishing, traditional crafts, and a strong cultural identity tied to its multi-faceted Phoenician, Islamic, and Ottoman history. Sidon also serves as a cultural bridge between southern Lebanon and the rest of the country.



Historical, political, and cultural developments (XVIII–XXI Century)

In the 18th century, Lebanon's territory was part of the Ottoman Empire, and it was organized mainly through the system of sanjaks and the emirate of the Druze and Maronite mountain people, who enjoyed a degree of local autonomy. This period was marked by complex relations between religious communities and Ottoman influences, which were intertwined with European interests, particularly French. In the 19th century, violent conflicts broke out between Druze and Christian communities, culminating in the massacres of 1860, which led to French intervention and the creation of a more structured organization for the Lebanese mountain people, increasing French influence in the region. After World War I and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Lebanon came under French Mandate (1920–1943). During this period, state institutions were built, sectarian division was codified, and French-speaking culture was reinforced.

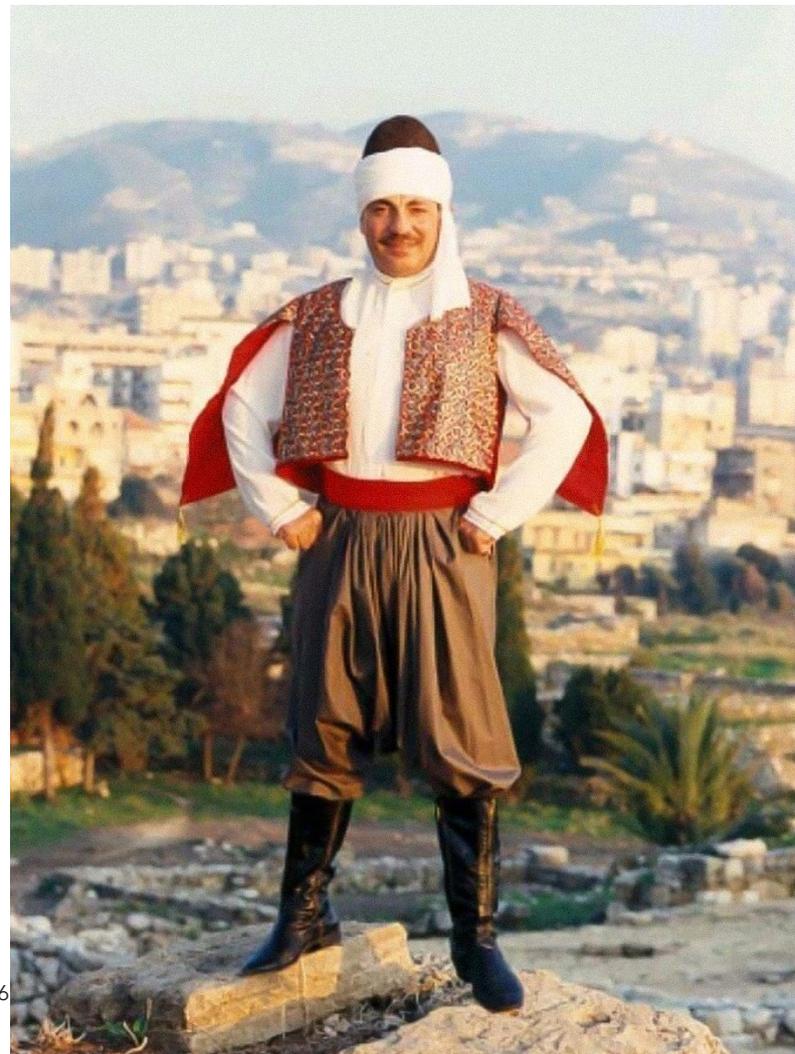
Lebanon declared independence in 1943, establishing a political system known as the “National Pact,” which divided power along religious lines. However, since the 1970s, the country has experienced deep crises, including the Civil War (1975–1990), the Israeli occupation of the south, and ongoing interfaith and political tensions.



The 1989 Taif Agreement formally ended the civil war, but the country continues to function under a fragile and sectarian political system. Despite these crises, Lebanon has preserved a strong cultural identity, where Arab, Ottoman, Western, and Phoenician heritages coexist. Urban culture, literature, music, and crafts continue to flourish as forms of resistance and national identity preservation.

In recent decades, Lebanon has been an important source of artistic and cultural influence in the Middle East. The country's multi-religious and multi-lingual heritage is vividly reflected in its architecture, lifestyle, and daily customs. Despite political polarization, Lebanese citizens are known for their strong sense of belonging to a rich, ancient, and modern culture that survives through artistic values, community solidarity, and the preservation of traditions.

Characteristics of traditional clothing



Beirut reflects the fusion of urban fashion with Eastern tradition. Women in the city wear long dresses made of silk or thin cotton, embroidered with gold threads or light colors, while tight-fitting vests over the bust highlight elegant lines. A light scarf, often decorated with coins or silk, is worn on the head to signify marital or social status. Men wear wide trousers (shirwal), white shirts, vests with delicate embroidery, and small tarbushes, inherited from the Ottoman period. In the urban environment, Western influences are evident in the cut and choice of materials. Traditional dress in Beirut represents a form of cultural identity in artistic activities and national events.

The mountain regions of Lebanon are known for hand-made clothing that suits the cold climate and mountainous relief. Women wear thick dresses in dark colors, heavily embroidered around the chest and sleeves, along with an apron with local geometric motifs. The head is covered with a dark scarf or white veil for special festive occasions. Men wear wool or strong fabric vests, wide leather belts, and thick handmade shoes. Colors represent clan affiliation or social status, and the clothing is integrated into song, dance, and everyday ritual customs. This traditional dress remains alive in festivals, wedding ceremonies, and traditional religious rituals. Sidon retains lighter, brighter-colored clothing, suitable for the coastal climate and maritime heritage. Women wear loose dresses embroidered with multi-colored floral patterns and use numerous accessories on the neck, hands, and ears. Men wear light tunics, a belt scarf, and soft leather sandals. The dresses feature spiral patterns or forms related to Phoenician symbolism. Clothing is worn in summer festivals, maritime ceremonies, and rituals that maintain the connection with coastal identity. Embroidery and textile craftsmanship in Sidon remain an artisanal tradition passed down through generations.

The importance of culture and tradition today





In Lebanon, traditional clothing and the associated customs remain a living part of cultural life, especially in national festivals, wedding ceremonies, and religious events. Local communities preserve and pass down traditional attire as a symbol of religious, regional, and historical identity. Artisan schools and cultural centers offer courses in embroidery and promote the use of traditional motifs in modern fashion.

In cities like Beirut, designers incorporate elements of inherited clothing into modern collections, creating bridges between the past and the present. The spiritual and aesthetic heritage of traditional dress is increasingly appreciated by younger generations as a form of self-expression and cultural pride. Through exhibitions, documentaries, and international collaborations, Lebanese traditions are presented as a valuable treasure on both the Mediterranean and global stage.



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Montenegro



Geographical location and borders

Montenegro is located on the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea, part of the Eastern Mediterranean, in the southeast of Europe. It is bordered by Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina to the west, Serbia to the north, Kosovo to the east, and Albania to the southeast. Its coastline, about 293 kilometers long, includes famous areas such as the Bay of Kotor and Adriatic beaches. The territory is mountainous, with distinct natural divisions that influence its cultural diversity. The climate is Mediterranean along the coast and continental inland, which favors the development of local traditions and folk heritage.

Capital - PODGORICA



Podgorica is the capital of Montenegro and the country's main administrative, political, and economic center. The city is located in the southeastern part of the country, in a broad plain between the Morača and Ribnica rivers. The population of Podgorica is around 190,000, representing more than a third of the country's total population. The climate is Mediterranean continental, with hot summers and mild, wet winters, influencing the lifestyle and architecture of the city. Podgorica has a long history dating back to antiquity, with Illyrian, Roman, and Ottoman roots. In the 20th century, the city experienced rapid urban and industrial development, particularly after World War II, when it also became the capital of Montenegro within Yugoslavia. Today, the city is known for its wide streets, modern administrative buildings, green areas, and educational and cultural institutions. The University of Montenegro is located here, as well as several museums and art galleries. Attractions include the Old Ribnica Bridge, the ancient city fortress, the Clock Tower Mosque, and the modern Millennium Bridge. Podgorica offers a blend of historical identity with contemporary development, making it a dynamic city open to regional and European integration.

Main cities

KOTOR



Kotor is located in one of the deepest natural bays of the Adriatic Sea. It is an ancient city of particular historical, architectural, and cultural importance for Montenegro. Known since the Roman period and later as an important maritime center during the Middle Ages, Kotor has preserved a medieval urban structure with narrow streets, stone houses, and centuries-old churches. The city is part of UNESCO's World Heritage and is recognized for its cultural festivals and Venetian heritage. Attractions include the fortress that rises above the city, the Cathedral of St. Tryphon, and the defensive walls. Kotor is also a vibrant center for cultural, maritime, and musical tourism, with folk costumes displayed during religious festivals and traditional parades.

NIKŠIĆ

Nikšić is the second largest city in Montenegro and one of the most important industrial and cultural centers in the western part of the country. Located in a valley surrounded by mountains, Nikšić has a history linked to Illyrian, Roman, and Slavic civilizations, and later the Ottoman period and the independent Montenegrin state. The city is a university and educational center, playing an important role in shaping the cultural identity of the country's interior. Nikšić is known for its active cultural life, traditional music festivals, and craftsmanship, especially for embroidery and the production of folk costumes in the surrounding rural areas. Montenegrin traditional clothing is proudly preserved and used in festive occasions, national ceremonies, and traditional dances.



Historical, political, and cultural developments (XVIII–XXI Century)



In the 18th century, Montenegro was a mountainous principality organized on a tribal basis, with a unique church-state structure, where power was concentrated in the hands of the “Vladika” – a leader who was both religious and political. During this period, the country fiercely defended its independence from the Ottoman Empire and developed a culture of resistance that shaped the Montenegrin national identity. In the 19th century, especially under the leadership of Petar II Petrović Njegoš, Montenegro consolidated as a state, strengthening its institutions and relations with European countries.

In 1878, the Congress of Berlin recognized Montenegro as an independent state. This period marked the flourishing of Montenegrin cultural identity, embodied in literature, churches, and national symbols.



At the beginning of the 20th century, Montenegro was involved in the Balkan Wars and later in World War I, losing its independence in 1918 when it joined the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (later Yugoslavia). Throughout the 20th century, Montenegro was part of Yugoslavia in various forms, and after its dissolution, it remained briefly united with Serbia. In 2006, following a peaceful referendum, the country declared full independence. This process was accompanied by a revival of interest in the national heritage and the distinct Montenegrin identity on the international stage.

In the cultural field, Montenegro has preserved a strong national identity tied to the mountains, tribal traditions, the Orthodox Church, and Slavic heritage. Language, folklore, and folk costumes represent important elements of national consciousness. In recent decades, the country has sought to preserve local traditions while taking steps towards European integration, becoming an active member of international organizations and promoting its culture through tourism and cultural exchanges. Despite political and social challenges, tradition remains an element that unites communities in both mountain and urban areas.





Characteristics of traditional clothing

Cetinje represents one of the centers where folk clothing clearly reflects the connection between local religious and aristocratic power with tradition. Women wear long dark dresses, embroidered with gold and silk threads on the chest and sleeves, paired with a thin vest and a shawl over the shoulders. On their heads, they wear scarves decorated with golden ornaments or church symbols. Men wear tight pants that reach just below the knee, white shirts, deep blue or black vests, wide belts, and a traditional flat hat – the “black cap,”

known as a national symbol. The clothing of Cetinje retains influences from the principality period and is still worn in state and religious ceremonies.

The Highlands represent a strong legacy of tribal clothing related to the way of life in the mountains and the preservation of family honor. Women wear heavy woolen dresses, with white aprons and long shawls wrapped around the shoulders. Dark colors and linear embroidery reflect the social structure and respect for tradition. Men wear white trousers, handwoven shirts, long jackets, and black or white hats. This clothing remains alive in folk dances, religious ceremonies, and national celebrations.

Kotor represents a region with strong Venetian and maritime influences on its clothing. Women wear light dresses in rich colors such as deep red or blue, decorated with silk and embroidered ribbons. Men wear tight tunics, vests with maritime embellishments, and round wool hats. The clothing is showcased during the traditional Kotor festival and is a symbol of Montenegrin coastal pride.

The importance of culture and tradition today

In Montenegro, folk culture and traditional clothing continue to play an important role in defining national and local identity. Traditional clothing is displayed at folkloric festivals, religious celebrations, and state events, especially in the Highlands and Cetinje, where they are considered symbols of historical pride. Cultural institutions and artisan schools support the preservation of embroidery techniques and textile production. In museums, exhibitions, and tourism events, folk clothing is passed on to younger generations as a living heritage. This strong connection to tradition is also used in promoting Montenegro’s image on the international stage as a country with deep Balkan and Mediterranean culture.



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Palestine



Geographical location and borders

Palestine is located on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea and consists of two main territories: the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. It borders the Mediterranean Sea to the west, Israel and Jordan to the north and east, and Egypt to the southwest. The Palestinian territory features diverse landscapes, including coastal plains, the hills of the West Bank, and semi-arid areas. The climate is Mediterranean along the coast, becoming more continental inland, which influences the lifestyle and agricultural traditions of its communities.

Capital – RAMALLAH



Ramallah, located in the central part of the West Bank, serves as the administrative and de facto capital of the Palestinian National Authority. With a population of about 40,000 people, the city represents a political, economic, and cultural hub for Palestinians. Ramallah is situated in a hilly area with a Mediterranean continental climate, with cold winters and hot summers, which influences the architectural style and way of life. In recent decades, the city has experienced rapid urban growth and development, becoming a dynamic center for international organizations, educational institutions, and Palestinian media. The city preserves important cultural elements through artistic activities, exhibitions, cultural centers, and festivals that emphasize Palestinian national identity. Institutions such as the “Cultural Hall”, “Al-Kasaba Theatre,” and Birzeit University contribute to the development of intellectual and creative life. The architecture combines modern buildings with traditional white-stone villas, reflecting the architectural style of the region.

East Jerusalem, although under Israeli control since 1967, is considered by Palestinians as their historical and spiritual capital. The city holds significant religious and national importance, being home to sacred sites for Muslims, Christians, and Jews. Monuments such as the Al-Aqsa Mosque, the Dome of the Rock, and the Via Crucis support its role in shaping Palestinian identity over the centuries.

Major cities

HEBRON

Hebron (Al-Khalil) is one of the oldest cities in the Middle East and the largest urban center in the West Bank.

Located about 30 kilome-



ters south of Jerusalem, Hebron is a major religious, historical, and economic hub for Palestinians. The city is known for the Cave of the Patriarchs (Ibrahimiya), a sacred site for Muslims, Jews, and Christians. Hebron has a vibrant economy based on agriculture, trade, and craftsmanship, particularly in glass processing, ceramics, and stonework. The old city, with its cobblestone streets and covered market, preserves a valuable Ottoman and Mamluk heritage. In modern times, Hebron has also been a central point of resistance and a symbol of Palestinian identity. The traditional clothing of the region reflects deep historical influences and is still worn during ceremonies and folk dances.

NABLUS (Shechem)



Nablus (Shechem) is located in the northern part of the West Bank, nestled between the Gerizim and Ebal mountains. It is one of the most economically and culturally lively cities in Palestine. The city has an ancient Canaanite, Roman, and Islamic history and is known for producing olive oil soap and the traditional sweet knafeh. Nablus features a bustling market, ancient mosques, and well-preserved Mamluk and Ottoman-style buildings. It is also an educational center, with An-Najah University playing an important role in Palestinian

intellectual life. The cultural heritage of Nablus is reflected in its embroidery, folk music, and the continued use of traditional clothing in weddings and special celebrations. In Nablus, the classic forms of folk dress are carefully maintained by women artisans and local workshops.

Historical, political, and cultural developments (XVIII–XXI centuries)

In the 18th century, Palestine was part of the Ottoman Empire and was administered under the Sanjak of Damascus. During this period, Palestine consisted of several cities and villages dominated by religion and local traditions. At the end of the 19th century, the beginning of the Zionist movement brought a profound change to Palestine's political and demographic status, with massive Jewish migration from Europe and growing tensions between Jews and Palestinian Arabs.

After World War I, Palestine came under British Mandate (1920–1948), and after a period of ongoing unrest, it was declared to be a land for both a Jewish and an Arab state under the UN partition plan of 1947. Despite this plan, the outbreak of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, following the declaration of the State of Israel, led to a prolonged period of conflict and the dispersal of the Palestinian population. Many Palestinians were forced to become refugees, a process that continues to affect the current situation.



In 1967, during the Six-Day War, Israel occupied the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem, including territories of great significance to Palestinians. Over the past two decades, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been accompanied by periods of deep tension and incomplete peace agreements. Following the declaration of Palestinian Authority independence in 1994, Palestine has experienced varying political periods, including important events such as the Intifada (protest movements) and an ongoing effort to gain international recognition for its statehood.

Culturally, Palestine has preserved a rich heritage, including literature, music, art, and culinary traditions. The strong connection to national and religious identity has been reinforced through songs, poetry, and the preservation of traditional clothing that reflects its history and struggle for independence.

Characteristics of traditional clothing

East Jerusalem is one of the most important cultural and religious regions of Palestine, and the traditional clothing here reflects both Arab and Islamic heritage. Women in this area wear long dresses in dark colors, embroidered with floral and geometric patterns by hand. They also wear large scarves, often decorated with golden embroidery, and cover their heads with a headscarf, a tradition that holds religious and cultural significance.

Men in this region wear short tunics and wide trousers, which are adapted to the hot climate of the area. These garments are worn primarily during religious festivals and traditional ceremonies, highlighting both national and religious identity.

The West Bank, especially in cities like Ramallah and Nablus, maintains a more diverse style of dress, where different cultural and historical elements are prominently displayed. Women wear hand-embroidered dresses, adorned with rich motifs that reflect a strong connection to nature and history. The dresses are filled with vibrant colors such as red, green, and gold, and cover the whole body, leaving space for a traditional head covering. Men in this region wear simple trousers and knitted jackets, often made from thick material. The clothing is closely tied to agricultural culture and the traditional socialization of the community.

The Gaza Strip has a clothing style influenced by both climate and political division. Women in Gaza wear traditional dresses with long sleeves and rich embroidery, displaying motifs linked to the region's Arab history and traditions. The garments are woven in bold colors like red and blue and are worn as part of Palestinian identity, showing pride in the tradition. Men in Gaza wear tunics and traditional trousers with a simpler style, adapted to everyday life in a hotter climate. The clothing is also a form of social status communication and is closely linked to the preservation of a pure national identity that has remained throughout the years of Palestinian history.







The importance of culture and tradition today

In Palestine, the culture and tradition of folk clothing remain a strong expression of national identity. Traditional garments are proudly worn during religious events, traditional ceremonies, and festivals, symbolizing the continuity of Palestinian culture, especially for women who wear hand-embroidered clothing with regional-specific motifs. The clothing also serves as a form of preserving identity and resilience in the face of political and social challenges, reflecting the cultural heritage of the Palestinian people. Cultural institutions and schools promote the use of these garments as part of education for the preservation of national culture and history. Clothing remains an essential tool for maintaining traditions, beyond the daily challenges that Palestine faces.



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Cyprus



Geographical location and borders

Cyprus is a large island located in the eastern Mediterranean, to the southeast of Europe and south of Turkey, near the shores of the Middle East. The island has a coastline of over 800 kilometers and is geographically and politically divided into two main parts: the northern part, which is under Turkish control, and the southern part, known as the Republic of Cyprus, a member of the European Union. Cyprus is bordered by the Mediterranean Sea to the west and the Levantine Sea to the east. This geographic location makes the island a key commercial and military point between Europe, Asia, and Africa. Cyprus has a Mediterranean climate, with hot, dry summers and mild, wet winters, making it suitable for agriculture and tourism.

Capital - NICOSIA



Nicosia is the capital of Cyprus and one of the oldest and historically most important cities on the island. Located in the central part of Cyprus, Nicosia is the largest city on the island and also one of the oldest cities in the Mediterranean, with a history dating back more than 2,000 years. The city has a combined population of around 300,000 people and serves as an important cultural, economic, and political center for Cyprus. Nicosia is known for its unique division: the northern part is under Turkish control, while the southern part is controlled by the Greek Cypriots, following the division that occurred in 1974. This division, accompanied by a period of tension and conflict, has shaped the city, making Nicosia a symbol of separation and efforts for reunification.

The climate of Nicosia is typically Mediterranean, with hot, dry summers and mild winters, influencing the development of an economy focused on agriculture, tourism, and services. Key attractions in the city include the old town with Venetian walls, several sacred churches, museums, and an active cultural life that promotes art, music, and literature. Nicosia also plays an important role as an educational hub, with universities and research institutions contributing to its intellectual and cultural development.

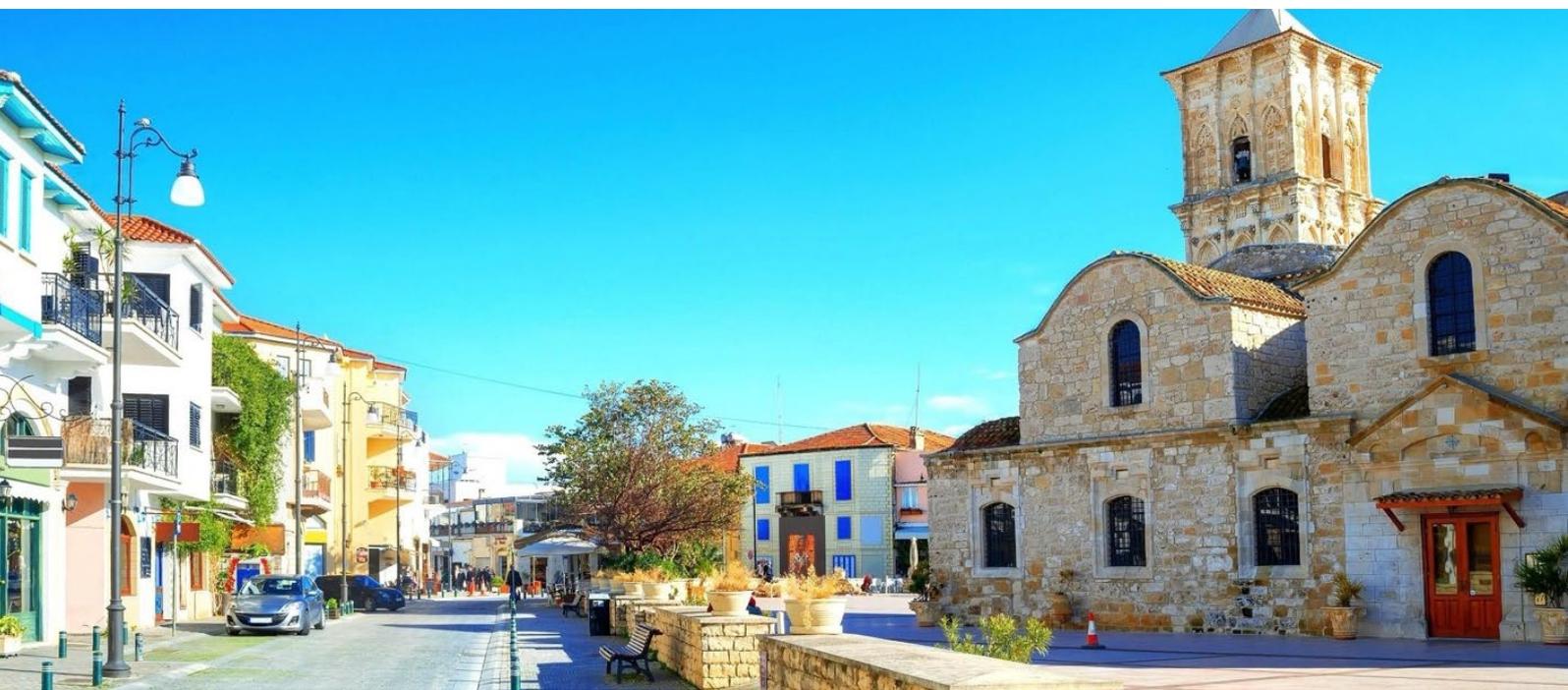
Major cities

LIMASSOL



Limassol is one of the largest and most important port cities in southern Cyprus. Located opposite the Levantine Sea, Limassol is a commercial and economic center with an important port for exports and imports, particularly in the fields of tourism, oil, and agriculture. The city has a population of around 200,000 people and has experienced rapid development in the past two decades. Limassol is known for combining modern life with its historical heritage, where ancient churches, Venetian castles, and narrow streets of the old town can be found. Traditional festivals, such as the Limassol Carnival, take place in the city, attracting both tourists and locals for a week of celebrations. The traditional attire of Limassol reflects a blend of Venetian and Byzantine elements, reflecting the historical influences of the city and island.

LARNACA



Larnaca, located in the southeast of Cyprus, is a coastal city known for its beautiful beaches and cultural heritage. With a small population but a significant attraction for tourists, Larnaca has a history that spans over 2,000 years and was one of the key cities of Cyprus during the Roman and Byzantine periods. The city has an important port and is also a hub for the oil industry and transportation. Historical attractions in Larnaca include the Hala Sultan Tekke Mosque, one of the holiest Islamic sites in Cyprus, and the ancient city of Kition. Larnaca has a quieter atmosphere compared to the larger cities of Cyprus and retains traditional attire that is known for using bright colors and embroidered motifs in a simple style suitable for the region's warm climate.

Historical, political, and cultural developments (XVIII–XXI Century)

In the 18th century, Cyprus was under Ottoman rule, a period marked by long-lasting peace and stability but also internal tensions due to efforts to maintain control over the Greek Orthodox population and the rest of the population.

After the fall of the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century, the island came under British administration in 1878. The British period brought infrastructure development and increased Western cultural influence but also raised tensions between the Greek and Turkish communities, leading to demands for independence from the Greek Cypriots.



Cyprus declared its independence on August 16, 1960, when an international agreement was reached to support a shared state for both Greek and Turkish Cypriots, with the new government being supported by the United Kingdom, Greece, and Turkey. However, tensions between the ethnic groups continued, and in 1974, a coup orchestrated by the Greek government to annex Cyprus to Greece led to the intervention of the Turkish army, resulting in the island's division and the creation of two zones: one controlled by the Turks in the north and the other under Greek control in the south.

In the post-partition period, Cyprus has gone through a difficult phase in maintaining its independence and ensuring political stability, especially after its accession to the European Union in 2004. Differences



between the two ethnic groups have influenced political relations, but Cyprus has become an important hub for tourism as well as a significant player in energy politics and the development of natural resources. Despite internal challenges and external obstacles, Cyprus has preserved a strong national identity and a rich cultural heritage, where the mixed history of East and West is reflected in art, music, and various traditions.

Characteristics of traditional dress

Nicosia, the capital of Cyprus, has a rich tradition of folk clothing that incorporates influences from the Ottoman and Byzantine empires.

Women wear long, handwoven dresses adorned with geometric and floral embroidery and use large scarves to cover their heads. The colors are typically bright, with red and blue being commonly used, reflecting the cultural and symbolic importance of the attire. Men wear short tunics and wide trousers, often adapted for agricultural work and traditional rural life. Traditional clothing in Nicosia is worn during festivals and important religious and national occasions.

Kyrenia, a coastal town in northern Cyprus, has attire characterized by Turkish and Venetian influences.

Women wear long dresses made of silk or cotton, embroidered with delicate motifs, and often combine them with large hats or headscarves in vibrant colors. Venetian elements are seen in the use of luxurious materials like silk and velvet, representing a period when Cyprus was one of the key trade regions in the Mediterranean. Men wear short tunics in dark colors and vests with fine embroidery. Traditional clothing is also worn during weddings and festive activities, showcasing the town's coastal culture. Limassol has a dress style that reflects the city's rich history and Western and Mediterranean influences. Women wear







short dresses with firm embroidery and rich colors, such as red and purple. The garments are handwoven and cover the entire body, preserving a distinct style that reflects the Mediterranean climate of the city. Men wear light tunics with vests and fitted pants that correspond to the coastal lifestyle.

The most important aspect of Limassol's attire is the use of light fabrics and traditional head coverings, which allow freedom of movement and are suitable for the hot climate.

The importance of culture and tradition today

In Cyprus, traditional clothing is a strong symbol of the island's national and historical identity, reflecting the multiple influences that have shaped its culture. The use of traditional clothing in religious festivals, weddings, and cultural events is still alive, particularly in areas such as Nicosia, Limassol, and Kyrenia, where clothing serves as an expression of national pride and heritage preservation. The clothing reflects a blend of Venetian, Ottoman, and Greek elements and is closely linked to Cyprus's identity as an island with diverse influences from all directions. Through cultural organizations and educational activities, clothing traditions are preserved and promoted to younger generations.



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Syria



Geographical position and borders

Syria is a country in the Middle East, bordered by the Mediterranean Sea to the west, Turkey to the north, Iraq to the east, and Jordan and Palestine to the south. Syria connects the Mediterranean region with the inner territories of Asia and the Middle East. It stretches across a mountainous territory that includes the plains of the Al-Ansari mountain range, as well as the Euphrates River valley and the coastal sea. The climate in the coastal area is Mediterranean, with warm and dry summers and mild winters. In contrast, the inland climate is more continental and dry.

Capital - DAMASCUS

Damascus is the capital and the oldest inhabited city in the world, with a history spanning over 4,000 years. It is located in the southwest of Syria, near the Barada and Abou-Rummaneh rivers, and has a population of around 2 million people. The climate of Damascus is continental, with cold, wet winters and hot, dry summers, which influences the traditional architecture and urban development. As an important historical and religious city, Damascus has played a key role in the development of Arab and Islamic culture, and it is also a significant center for art, science, and philosophy.



Damascus boasts an extraordinary architectural heritage, including ancient Roman, Ottoman, and Islamic monuments. The Great Mosque, one of the oldest mosques in the world, is a major attraction of the city, while the Old City of Damascus is a UNESCO World Heritage site due to its historical significance. The city is also an important cultural and intellectual hub, with numerous educational institutions and museums reflecting Syria's heritage.

The traditional Damascene dress is known for its rich colors and intricate craftsmanship, reflecting the city's elegance and its rich history.

Main cities

ALEPPO



Aleppo, one of Syria's largest and oldest cities, is located in the northwest of the country and has been an important commercial and cultural center for thousands of years. With its large population, Aleppo reflects Syria's historical and cultural wealth, with ancient Roman, Islamic, and Ottoman structures. The Aleppo Mosque is one of the city's most famous monuments, and the Old City of Aleppo is also a UNESCO World Heritage site for its rich heritage.

Aleppo is also known for its craftsmanship, including carpet weaving, glasswork, and textiles. The folk costumes of Aleppo are known for their use of rich colors and detailed embroidery, reflecting the city's deep-rooted traditions.

HOMS

Homs, located in western Syria, is a city of great historical and strategic significance. This city has also been an important commercial center and has a large population.

Homs is known for its ancient constructions, with remains from Roman and Byzantine civilizations, as well as Ottoman architecture in its commercial centers. The Mosque of Homs and the Qal'at al-Hosn Castle are



some of the city's major attractions. Homs has a close connection to agriculture, producing traditional products, especially olives and citrus fruits. The folk costume of Homs is known for its use of simple materials with warm colors that reflect the city's warm climate and nature.

Historical, political, and cultural developments (XVIII–XXI Centuries)

In the 18th century, Syria was a province of the Ottoman Empire and was known for its cultural and strategic wealth. During this period, cities like Damascus and Aleppo flourished as major commercial and cultural centers, heavily influenced by Arab, Persian, and Byzantine cultures. At the same time, Syria had a rich intellectual life, contributing to the development of philosophy and science. However, during the Ottoman period, Syria suffered from internal imbalances and competition with other empires, leading to a weakening of Ottoman control.



In the early 20th century, after World War I, Syria came under the French Mandate. During the French period, French culture had a significant influence on the local culture, while the Syrian people mounted a powerful independence movement, culminating in the declaration of independence in 1946. After this, Syria underwent a period of political and military instability, marked by a series of dictatorial regimes and political movements, including various revolutionary developments. In 1963, the Ba'ath Party seized power, establishing an authoritarian regime that would lead Syria for decades.



Throughout the 20th and early 21st centuries, Syria continued to experience both internal and international tensions, involving wars and various conflicts

in the Middle East. After the Six-Day War in 1967, Syria lost important territories, including the Golan Heights, which remains a hotbed of tensions. After 2011, Syria entered a devastating civil war that has affected the country's stability and caused a severe humanitarian crisis. Nevertheless, Syria retains a rich cultural identity, where its traditions, art, and literature continue to be a precious heritage for the Syrian people.

Characteristics of folk costumes





Damascus has a rich tradition of folk costumes that reflect multiple cultural influences, including Byzantine, Ottoman, and Arab. Women wear long dresses, handwoven and adorned with rich embroidery, using deep colors like red, gold, and dark blue. The most important elements of the costume are the silk scarf and head coverings, which express social and religious status. Men wear simple tunics and jackets with a minimalist style, often embellished with bright details, and a traditional cap. The costumes of Damascus are often worn during cultural festivals and religious rituals, reflecting the city's importance as a cultural and religious center of the Middle East.

Aleppo, a historic and commercial city, has unique costumes that reflect Venetian, Ottoman, and Arab influences. Women in Aleppo wear long dresses made from silk and cotton, handwoven and decorated with detailed embroidery and floral motifs. The colors used are rich and pronounced, reflecting the cultural significance and status of the city. The head is covered with light scarves and shawls, often embroidered with gold thread. Men wear vests and short tunics, tailored for urban life and commercial activities.

Homs has a simpler and more functional style of dress, reflecting the everyday agricultural lifestyle of the region. Women wear long, handwoven dresses decorated with simple motifs in warm colors like yellow and red. The dress is simpler and suited to daily life but still retains traditional beauty. Men wear short tunics

and wide trousers, suitable for the mountainous and agricultural terrain. The costumes in Homs reflect the close relationship with nature and rural life, making it an example of deep-rooted Syrian folk traditions.

The importance of culture and tradition today

Folk costumes in Syria are a valuable part of the national and cultural identity of the country, and they continue to be worn at significant religious, national, and cultural events, such as weddings and festivals. Despite political and social challenges, the traditions of folk dress remain strong and are a form of resistance

and national pride for Syrians. Cultural institutions and international organizations continue to support the preservation of these costumes through exhibitions and educational activities.



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Slovenia



Geographic position and borders

Slovenia is located in the southern part of Central Europe, bordered to the north by Austria, to the east and southeast by Hungary and Croatia, and to the west by Italy. It has a short coastline along the Adriatic Sea, which is part of the Western Mediterranean. Slovenia's geographic position is strategic, as it lies at the crossroads of routes connecting Western Europe with Eastern Europe and the Balkans. The country is mountainous and covered with dense forests, with the Ljubljana River valley and the Karavanke region in the north, while the coastline is known for its natural beauty and seaside cities. The climate along the coast is Mediterranean, with hot summers and mild winters, while the inland region experiences a continental climate.

Capital - LJUBLJANA



Ljubljana is the capital and largest city of Slovenia, with a population of around 280,000 people. Located in the central part of Slovenia, the city is built around the Ljubljanica River, which flows through it, offering picturesque views and making it an important cultural, administrative, and economic center. Ljubljana has a rich history dating back to the Roman and medieval periods, where the city played a significant role as a commercial and cultural hub. Evidence of this development can be seen in the medieval castles and buildings from different historical periods scattered throughout the city.

The climate in Ljubljana is continental, with cold winters and hot summers, which influences daily life and the city's architecture. In modern terms, Ljubljana is a vibrant and attractive city, known for its cultural and university life, with numerous museums, art galleries, and theaters that reflect Slovenia's history and art. The city also offers outdoor activities, with many parks and opportunities for walking and biking along the river. Ljubljana is also a center for tourism and international events, making it a welcoming city for visitors from all over the world.

Main cities

MARIBOR



Maribor is Slovenia's second-largest city, located in the northwestern part of the country near the Drava River. With a population of around 115,000, Maribor is an important economic, cultural, and academic center. The city is known for its rich history and strong ties to Slovenian culture and tradition, as well as its beautiful natural surroundings, which offer opportunities for outdoor activities. Maribor is also famous for its wine, and it is home to some of the oldest vineyards in the region, including the famous Maribor vineyard. Some of the most well-known monuments in the city include medieval castles, St. John's Church, and the old city bridge. The traditional costumes of Maribor, as well as its architecture, reflect Slavic and Austro-Hungarian influences.

CELJE



Celje, located in eastern Slovenia, is a city with great historical and cultural significance. Known as the “City of the Princess,” Celje has historical ties to the Slovenian aristocracy and boasts a rich cultural heritage. With a population of around 40,000, Celje has preserved many medieval buildings and castles, which reflect the period when it was one of the wealthiest and most powerful cities in Slovenia. The city is also an important center for industry and agriculture and is known for its connections to citrus trade and the production of artisanal goods. The traditional costumes of Celje are associated with the region’s agricultural culture and medieval history and are often worn during festivals and cultural events.

Historical, political, and cultural developments (XVIII-XXI centuries)

Slovenia has a rich history characterized by significant political, social, and cultural developments. In the 18th century, Slovenia was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and had a significant influence on the country’s culture and social life. During this period, Slovenian culture began to strengthen, particularly in the fields of literature and music. Cities such as Ljubljana and Maribor became important cultural centers where artistic and intellectual activities took place. Despite foreign control, the Ottoman and Austrian periods left a rich architectural and artistic legacy.

In the 19th century, with the rise of nationalism and the natural demand for autonomy, as seen in other countries in the region, Slovenia began to play an important role in the political developments of the region and beyond. After World War I and the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Slovenes joined with the Croats and Serbs to form the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, a union that had a significant impact on the country’s social and cultural developments. In the second half of the 20th century, during World War II, Slovenia was occupied by fascist Italian and German forces, enduring a difficult period of resistance and war. After World War II, Slovenia became part of socialist Yugoslavia, a federation that, despite internal dif-



facilities, brought developments in education, health, and industry. In 1991, Slovenia declared independence from Yugoslavia, dismantling the federation and quickly following a path toward European Union integration.

After joining the European Union and NATO in 2004, Slovenia has played an important role in the economic and political development of the Balkan region. Slovenian culture has received much attention, preserving ancient traditions while integrating Western and Eastern influences into everyday life. Since joining the European Union, the country has been characterized by political stability and a stable economy.

Characteristics of traditional clothing



In Ljubljana, women wear long, hand-embroidered dresses adorned with traditional floral and geometric motifs. The head is usually covered with a decorated scarf, often hand-stitched. The colors are rich and bright, such as red and deep blue, symbolizing joy and celebration. Men wear tunics and vests with simple embroidery, often accompanied by wide belts and traditional hats. In Maribor, a city in the north of Slovenia, the traditional costumes reflect strong agricultural traditions and wine cultivation. Women wear long, knitted dresses, rich in dark colors such as black, green, and red, decorated with detailed embroidery that reflects the nature and flora of the region. The head is covered with a simple scarf or silk covering that represents social status. Men wear short pants and simple tunics, often with traditional hats and embroidered vests. The traditional costumes of Maribor are an expression of the close connection with nature and the tradition of farming.



Prekmurje, a region in eastern Slovenia, is known for its traditional clothing, which is valued for its simplicity and functionality. Women in this region wear simple, narrow long dresses made from basic materials, which are often decorated with simple embroidery. The colors are softer, including gray, yellow, and natural shades that reflect the connection to agriculture and nature. Men wear traditional clothing that includes wide pants and short tunics, and they also wear wide belts and traditional hats.

The importance of culture and tradition today

Traditional clothing in Slovenia remains an important element of national and cultural identity. It is worn during festivals, weddings, and cultural events, reflecting the rich heritage of the country and its connection to nature and history. Through cultural activities and exhibitions, Slovenia promotes the preservation and dissemination of these costumes for future generations. Traditional clothing is a symbol of the effort to preserve national identity in an era of globalization and social transformation.



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Albania



Geographic position and borders

Albania is a country located in the southeast of Europe, on the western coast of the Balkans. It is bordered to the north by Montenegro, to the east by Kosovo and North Macedonia, to the south by Greece, and to the west by the Adriatic Sea, while to the southwest, it has a short coastline along the Ionian Sea. Albania has a diverse terrain that includes high mountains, hills, and fertile plains, as well as a rich coastline with bays and beaches. The climate is typically Mediterranean along the coast and continental inland, with mild winters and hot, dry summers. Albania's geographic position makes it a key link between Europe and Asia, and a bridge between the Balkans and the Adriatic Sea.

Capital - TIRANA



Tirana is the capital and largest city of Albania, with a population exceeding 800,000 inhabitants. It is located in the western part of the country, about 30 kilometers away from the Adriatic coast. Tirana is an important political, economic, cultural, and educational center for the country and one of the cities that has experienced rapid urban development in the last two decades. Its Mediterranean climate, with mild winters and hot summers, is utilized for the development of tourism, horticulture, and agriculture. Tirana has a history that dates back several centuries, with roots going back to the Roman and medieval periods, when the city gradually transformed into an important administrative center in the early 20th century. During the communist period, Tirana underwent significant development in all aspects—political, economic, infrastructural, and cultural.

After 1991, when Albania transitioned to a democratic regime, Tirana experienced a profound transformation, with the construction of modern centers, hotels, and the expansion of infrastructure. Some of the city's major attractions include Skanderbeg Square, the Et'hem Bey Mosque, the Tirana Castle, and the National Art Gallery. The city is also an important cultural and educational hub, with many museums, theaters, and universities, contributing to the intellectual and artistic development of the country. Tirana is a vibrant and dynamic city, offering visitors the chance to enjoy modern life while preserving the country's historical and cultural heritage.

Main cities

SHKODRA



Shkodra, located in the north of Albania, is one of the oldest and most historical cities in the country. With a population of about 200,000 inhabitants, Shkodra has great cultural and historical significance and is known for its rich architectural heritage and ancient traditions. The city has a history dating back to the Illyrian and Roman periods, and it is one of the main centers of culture and education for the Albanian people.

Shkodra is also an important center for craftsmanship, including the making of carpets and traditional clothing. Some of the city's main attractions include Shkodra Castle and the Lead Mosque. Located near Lake Shkodra and having a mild Mediterranean climate, the city has a strong connection with nature and Albania's rural traditions.

GJIROKASTRA

Gjirokastra, a city known for its historical and architectural wealth, is located in the south of Albania. Known as the "Stone City" due to its construction with stone, Gjirokastra is a well-preserved city reflecting the influences of earlier historical periods. With a population of about 40,000 inhabitants, Gjirokastra is an important tourist destination and a UNESCO World Heritage site. Major attractions include Gjirokastra Castle, the Museum of War, and the traditional stone-built houses. The city has a mild Mediterranean climate and stunning mountainous landscapes, contributing to the development of tourism and the preservation of local traditions. Gjirokastra is also an important center for music and the arts, and it is the birthplace of the famous writer Ismail Kadare.



Historical, political, and cultural developments (XVIII–XXI Century)

In the 18th century, Albania was under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. During this period, the Albanians maintained a strong ethnic and cultural identity, despite influences from the Ottoman culture. Albania was an important center for trade and the development of craftsmanship, as well as for the spread of cultural and religious influences in the region. At the end of the 19th century, with the spread of nationalist movements and the growing demands for independence, national consciousness gained new momentum. In the context of the Balkan Wars, Albania declared its independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1912, marking an important step for the country, although it was followed by a period of political uncertainty and wars to defend its territory and establish an independent state. Despite several periods of insecurity and partitionist tendencies from neighboring states, Albania managed to preserve its national independence and began its path of state development.

In 1944, Albania entered the communist regime under the leadership of Enver Hoxha, which lasted for several decades. The communist regime contributed to the development of industry and infrastructure but isolated Albania completely from the rest of the world, prohibiting freedom of speech and suppressing any



opposition movements. After the fall of the communist regime in 1991, Albania transitioned to a long period of moving from a totalitarian system to a democracy, facing significant economic and social challenges.

In 2009, Albania became a member of NATO and has made significant steps toward integration into the European Union, further developing its economy and political structures. Over the past two decades, Albania has made notable progress in the fields of education, healthcare, and urban development, making the country an attractive destination for tourism and foreign investments.

Characteristics of traditional clothing

SHKODRA

The traditional clothing from Shkodra reflects various religious and social influences. The Muslim woman's attire includes a long shirt down to the knee, embroidered with gold threads and silk, covered with a red velvet vest decorated with four buttons. She wore a velvet mantle and wide trousers with floral designs, which reflected her social status. The Muslim man's attire was known for the "fistan," a wide skirt with many folds, made from white cotton fabric, which had deep Albanian origins and was worn until the 1920s. The Catholic woman's clothing included a long shirt and trousers dyed in violet or eggplant color, decorated with floral and zoomorphic embroidery. She wore a decorated vest and a red cloth on her head, and a cap embroidered with gold on her head. The Catholic man's attire was simpler, with trousers made of cotton or percaline fabric, worn by Catholic citizens of Shkodra from the mid-19th century until the 1920s.

GJIROKASTRA

The traditional clothing of Gjirokastra women reflects the city's cultural wealth and traditions. The Pirpiria, a sleeveless mantle, is the main element of this costume, made with gold threads, giving the outfit an aristocratic appearance. Women also wore a shirt with wide sleeves made of fine and transparent taffeta, embroidered on the sleeves to create an elegant effect. The sleeveless vest, in purple or cherry colors, was fastened with clasps and worn with thick lining. The traditional clothing of Gjirokastra men is known for the fustanella, a white skirt made of cotton fabric with many pleats. Under the fustanella, men wore long underwear and woolen trousers, which could reach up to the thigh. On the upper part, they wore a short shirt with wide sleeves, over which they put on a vest and shoulder straps. Wide woolen and leather belts adorned with weapons were worn around the waist.

The outfit also included a woolen cloak for cold weather, and a white festive cap with a pin on top. This attire is a symbol of the heritage and tradition of Gjirokastra, reflecting the pride and history of the city.





The importance of culture and tradition today

Traditional clothing in Albania remains an important element of national and cultural identity, worn during festivals, weddings, and cultural events to preserve and promote Albanian heritage. They are an expression of a strong connection to nature, history, and traditions, serving as a symbol of pride for the Albanian people. Traditional clothing is an important part of the social and spiritual life of the Albanian people, representing a rich history that has been preserved and developed through generations.

In modern times, traditional clothing is used to educate younger generations and promote cultural tourism, becoming an important element in the preservation of Albanian traditions.



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Turkey



Geographical position and borders

The southern region of Turkey stretches along the Mediterranean coast, including important provinces such as Antakya, Mersin, Adana, and Antalya. This region is bordered to the south by Syria, to the north by Anatolia, and has a coastline that extends along the Mediterranean Sea. The geographical position of this region gives it a Mediterranean climate with warm, dry summers and mild winters, which favors the development of agriculture, especially citrus fruits and olives. This area is also an important center for tourism, attracting visitors with its beautiful beaches and rich archaeological sites.

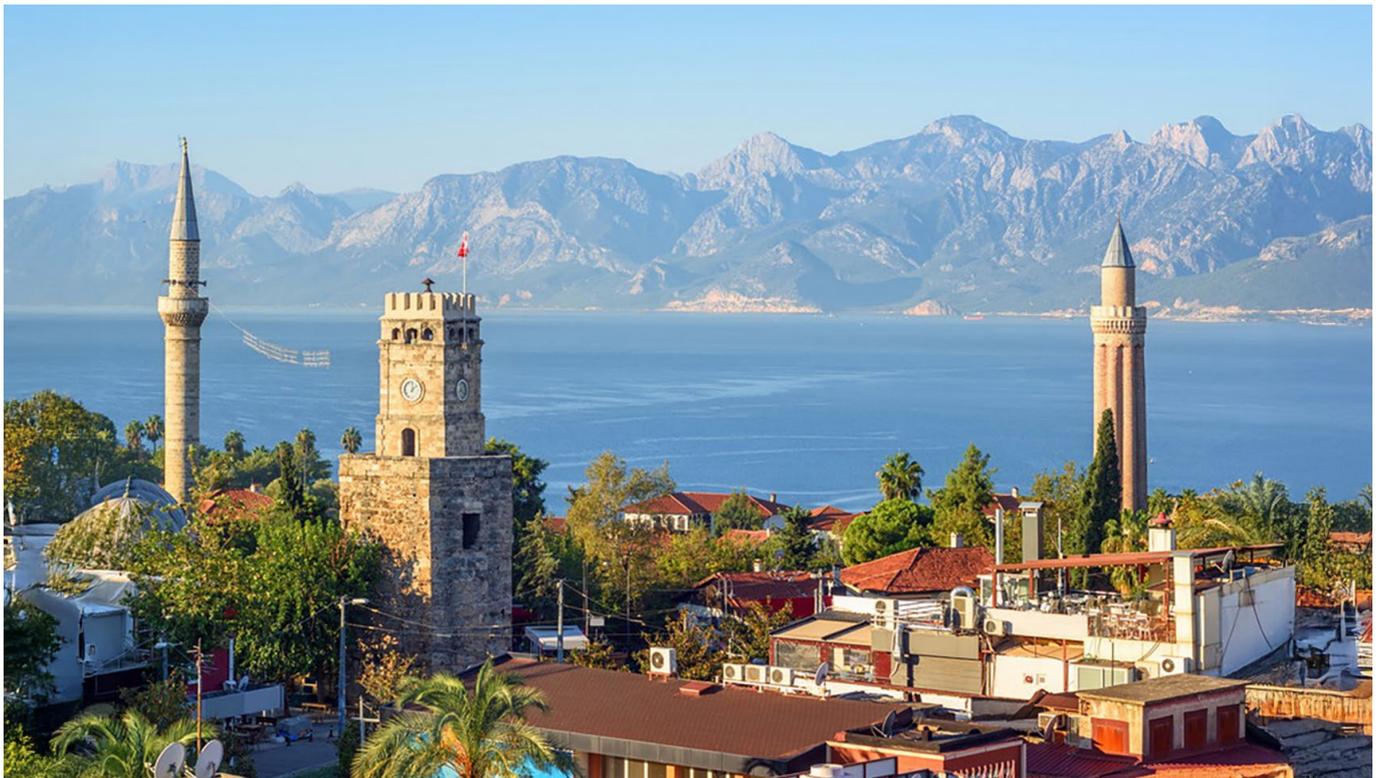
Capital - ANKARA



Ankara, the capital of Turkey, is located in the central part of the country and is the second-largest city after Istanbul. With a population of about 5 million people, Ankara is an important political, administrative, and cultural center. Its continental climate is characterized by cold winters and hot, dry summers, a factor that directly influences the daily life of its citizens and the city's architecture. The city has a rich history that spans more than 2,000 years and has played an important role during various periods, including the Hittite, Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman periods. During the Ottoman period, Ankara had a small role compared to Istanbul, but after Turkey's War of Independence in 1923, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk declared Ankara the new capital of the Republic of Turkey, symbolizing a shift to a new phase in Turkish history and transforming it into an administrative and modern center. In addition to its political significance, Ankara has many historical and cultural attractions. The Museum of Hittite Civilizations, Kocatepe Mosque, and Anıtkabir, the mausoleum of Atatürk, are some of the main attractions that reflect the city's historical heritage. With rapid development in the fields of technology and industry, the city has undergone a modern transformation, making it an important center for economic development and scientific research in the region.

Main cities

ANTALYA



Antalya, one of Turkey's most famous cities and an important tourist center, is located on the southern coast of the country, facing the Mediterranean Sea. With a population of about 1.2 million people, Antalya is a popular destination for vacationers, thanks to its beautiful beaches, Mediterranean climate, and historical monuments. The city has a rich history dating back to antiquity and has played an important role as a Roman and Byzantine city. Some of the most popular attractions in the city include Hadrian's Gate, a Roman monument, and the Theater of Aspendos, one of the best-preserved Roman theaters and one of the most visited attractions in the region. Antalya also offers numerous opportunities for excursions and outdoor activities, including hiking Mount Tahtalı, exploring canyons, and yacht tours, making it an attractive destination for all those seeking adventure and relaxing holidays.

MERSIN

Mersin, also an important city on Turkey's southern coast, is a key port and trade center, with a population of about 1 million people. The city is known for its large port and its connections to international trade, playing an important role in the export of agricultural products, as well as in the oil and chemical industries. Mersin has an ancient history dating back to the Roman period, when it was a renowned city for trade and



culture. Some of the main attractions in Mersin include Mersin Castle, one of the best-preserved Roman fortifications, and the Mersin Museum, which showcases artifacts from various historical periods. Mersin also has beautiful beaches and a Mediterranean climate, making it an attractive destination for tourists seek-

ing relaxation and adventure. As an industrial and trade center, Mersin has developed modern infrastructure and is an important city for the economic development of the **18th** region.

Historical, political, and cultural developments (–21st Centuries)

In the 18th century, the southern region of Turkey was part of the Ottoman Empire and experienced a period of stability, but also challenges. This period was characterized by the strong control of the Ottomans over most of Turkey's territories, including the southern region, which was an important center for trade and agricultural cultivation, particularly citrus fruits and olives. Additionally, this region served as a key node for connecting the Ottoman world to external trade, with important ports such as Mersin and Antalya, which helped in the economic development.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Turkey went through a period of turmoil and political developments, including World War I and the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. After World War I, the southern region of





Turkey went through periods of uncertainty as soldiers and Turkish nationalists tried to defend against foreign occupations, especially by French and British forces. This period led to the formation of the Republic of Turkey under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in 1923, who declared Ankara as the new capital and initiated a period of rapid reforms that in-

cluded modernization of the state, industrial growth, and infrastructure development.

Throughout the 20th century, Turkey's southern region has undergone significant developments, becoming an industrial and tourist center. Antalya and Mersin, the two main cities of the region, have seen major developments in infrastructure and tourism, making them popular destinations for vacations and various activities. The region has also played an important role in Turkey's economy, contributing agricultural products and oil, as well as its important ports that connect Turkey to international trade. Turkey's participation in the League of Nations, later the European Union, and its growing role in the region have enriched the culture and economy of the region, turning it into a key center for Turkey's modern development.

Characteristics of traditional clothing

The traditional clothing of the southern region of Turkey is rich in history and traditions that reflect the multiple cultural and climatic influences of this area. Here, clothing is not only functional but also a reflection of social status and tradition, incorporating elements from the Ottoman Empire, Arab cultures, and local rural traditions.

Women in the southern region of Turkey typically wear long shirts made of light materials such as cotton and silk, often embroidered with floral, geometric patterns, or sometimes with threads of gold and sil. These shirts are accompanied by tight vests decorated with intricate embroidery, often in vibrant colors, which help emphasize the body shape. Over these garments, women wear long dresses made from strong fabric in light colors, which may also feature embroidery with sequins to show wealth.

The most important part of the attire is the “fest,” a headdress made from white materials and adorned with tassels and gold coins. Men’s traditional clothing in the southern region of Turkey includes the “fustanella,” a white, pleated skirt made from cotton fabric. Beneath the fustanella, men wear “kallei,” a garment made from woolen cloth that extends to the thighs, along with “kofshare.” The upper part includes a short-sleeved shirt, usually made of cotton, decorated with traditional patterns. Broad woolen belts are used to hold the fustanella in place and for carrying weapons, which are an important part of the attire.







The importance of culture and tradition today

Traditional clothing in the southern region of Turkey remains an important element of cultural identity and serves as an expression of pride and the preservation of tradition. These garments are primarily worn during special events and festivals, maintaining a connection to the past and the rich cultural heritage of Turkey. Traditional clothing is also an opportunity to promote tourism and local craftsmanship, contributing to the development of the economy and the preservation of cultural values for future generations. In an effort to preserve these cultural elements, Turkey has organized cultural activities and festivals that feature traditional clothing and has encouraged support for artisans who produce them.



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CHAPTER III



Region:

SOUTHERN MEDITERRANEAN

(North Africa)



Egypt



Geographical position and borders

Egypt is located in the northeastern part of the African continent and holds a strategic position linking the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea through the Suez Canal. To the north, Egypt is bordered by the Mediterranean Sea, while to the east it borders Israel and the Gaza Strip. To the south, it shares borders with Sudan, and to the west, it borders Libya. The Egyptian territory also includes the Sinai Peninsula, which stretches into Asia and represents an intercontinental land connection. The presence of the Nile River divides the country into two main regions: Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt, creating a geographical structure that has significantly influenced the country's economic, social, and cultural organization.

Capital - CAIRO



Cairo (El-Qāhira), the capital of Egypt, is one of the largest and most populous cities in Africa and the Arab world, with a population exceeding 10 million within the city itself and over 20 million in the metropolitan area. Situated on the eastern banks of the Nile River, Cairo is not only an administrative and political center but also the historical and cultural heart of Egypt. The city's climate is semi-arid, with mild winters and hot, dry summers, which has influenced both the lifestyle and traditional architecture of the city.

The city embodies various layers of Egypt's history, from antiquity to modern times. It hosts important monuments and historical districts such as the old Islamic city, the Coptic district, and new urban areas developed during the 20th century. One of its most renowned cultural attractions is the Egyptian Museum, which houses priceless treasures from the pharaonic period. Nearby, the Pyramids of Giza and the Sphinx make Cairo a unique archaeological and tourist destination. Cairo is also a modern educational, university, and artistic center. Al-Azhar University, one of the oldest in the Islamic world, is located here and has played an important role in shaping theological thought. Cairo is a city that lives in a constant tension between the past and the present, maintaining a strong identity that reflects the country's millennia-old heritage.

Main cities

ALEXANDRIA



along the Mediterranean Sea. In antiquity, it became one of the most important centers of knowledge and culture in the Hellenistic world, thanks to the Library of Alexandria and its Museum. Under Roman rule and later during the Islamic and Ottoman periods, the city continued to be a strategic trade and cultural hub. Today, Alexandria is a cosmopolitan city, where Greek, Roman, Ottoman, and Egyptian influences are evident in its architecture, urban planning, and lifestyle. The city is also one of Egypt's most important ports, with an economy based on maritime transport, industry, tourism, and the service sector. The modern Bibliotheca Alexandrina, built in 2002, represents an effort to revive the city's status as a center of knowledge and science in the Arab world and beyond. The city is also known for its literary and artistic atmosphere, being home to many Egyptian writers and artists. Due to its Mediterranean location, Alexandria has served as a cultural bridge for centuries.

LUXOR



Luxor, located in Upper Egypt, is a city that maintains a direct link to pharaonic civilization. Built on the ruins of the ancient city of Thebes, Luxor is home to some of the most magnificent monuments in the world, such as the Temple of Karnak, the Temple of Luxor, and the Valley of the Kings. The city is a major center for archaeology and Egyptology studies, attracting researchers and visitors from all over the world. Besides tourism, agriculture along the Nile River remains an important economic source for the local communities. Luxor retains the characteristics of a city rich in symbolism, where ritual elements and religious traditions connected to pharaonic history continue to have a significant impact on daily life and the collective imagination of its inhabitants. The city experiences a continuous cycle of festivals and ceremonies honoring its ancient heritage. Today, Luxor is also a hub for sustainable tourism development and the promotion of local craftsmanship.

Historical, political, and cultural developments (XVIII–XXI Centuries)





In the 18th century, Egypt was still under the formal influence of the Ottoman Empire, but in practice, it was administered by the Mamluk beys, who exercised decentralized and often conflicting power. This uncertain period ended with the French intervention of Napoleon Bonaparte in 1798, which, although short-lived, left a lasting impact on the country's administrative and cultural systems. After the French departure, power was consolidated by Mehmet Ali Pasha, who, in the early 19th century, founded a modern dynasty that reformed the army, education, and economy, making Egypt one of the most powerful entities in the Middle East.

In the second half of the 19th century, Egypt became increasingly integrated into the economic and strategic network of the British Empire, especially after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. In 1882, the United Kingdom took military control of Egypt, turning it into a de facto protectorate. Formal independence was declared in 1922 with the establishment of the Kingdom of Egypt, but British influence remained strong until the 1952 revolution led by Gamal Abdel Nasser. With Nasser's rise to power, Egypt became a republic and embarked on a broad program of nationalism and modernization, positioning itself as a leader of the Non-Aligned Movement during the Cold War.

In the subsequent decades, Egypt underwent a difficult political transition between authoritarianism, economic opening, and social pressures. Under the leadership of presidents like Anwar Sadat and later Hosni

Mubarak, the country oriented itself towards the West while maintaining a strong presidential regime. The 2011 revolt, part of the Arab Spring, overthrew Mubarak's regime and opened the way for a turbulent political period. Despite rapid changes in governance, including a brief period under Islamic leadership, the military regained control in 2013. On the cultural front, Egypt remains a center for Arab cinema, literature, and music, while preserving a vibrant popular and folkloric heritage that blends pharaonic, Islamic, and contemporary periods.

Traditional clothing characteristics







Cairo preserves the tradition of simple and functional clothing that reflects urban and religious influences. Women in the capital, especially in traditional neighborhoods, used to wear a long mantle called *melaya leff*, which wrapped around the body and was held in place with metal pins. This outfit was usually accompanied by an embroidered scarf, simple adornments, and flat shoes. Men wore *galabeya*, a long robe with wide sleeves, and over it, they wore a *kaftan* or *jubba*, depending on their status and the occasion. The colors were mostly neutral, but festivals were marked by brighter versions and intricate embroidery.

Alexandria, as a port city open to international influences, represented a blend of traditional Egyptian clothing with Ottoman or Levantine styles. Women wore a more sophisticated version of *melaya leff*, often embellished with gold embroidery and maritime ornaments. During celebrations and ceremonies, they wore embroidered tunics with geometric motifs and used traditional perfumes based on jasmine and musk. Men in Alexandria, particularly from the commercial classes, wore more refined garments, often influenced by

19th-century European styles, but without abandoning the traditional *tarbush* and *sharwal*.

Luxor, as part of Upper Egypt, has preserved a more conservative style connected to the rural climate and tradition. Men typically wore thick cotton *galabeyas* in dark colors, while women wore long dresses adorned with white or blue embroidered patterns. These patterns often had symbolic significance related to fertility, water, and sunlight. Clothing in Luxor was practical but also aesthetically appealing, maintaining a direct link to agricultural life cycles and the religious festivals that accompanied the farming seasons.

The Importance of culture and tradition today

In modern Egypt, traditional clothing is no longer the everyday wear of the majority of the urban population but remains present in social life through religious ceremonies, weddings, and national celebrations. Particularly in the rural areas of Upper Egypt and in the Bedouin communities of the Sinai Peninsula, these garments are preserved as part of local identity and cultural pride. Many Egyptian designers have begun to reintroduce traditional elements into modern fashion, using authentic motifs in contemporary creations. Festivals such as the *Heritage Festival* in Luxor and artisan exhibitions in Cairo help promote and raise awareness about the importance of preserving folk heritage, connecting the traditional culture to Egypt's urban and globalized present.

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Libya



Geographical position and borders

Libya is located in North Africa and is one of the largest countries in the Mediterranean region in terms of surface area. To the north, it is bordered by the Mediterranean Sea, with a coastline of over 1,700 kilometers. To the west, it borders Tunisia and Algeria; to the south, it borders Niger and Chad, and to the east, it borders Sudan and Egypt. This geographical location places Libya as a natural junction between Central Africa, the Middle East, and the Mediterranean, influencing its history and culture. Its territory mainly consists of the Sahara Desert, but fertile lands and significant cities with long cultural traditions can be found along the coastline. The climate is Mediterranean in the northern part and desert-like for the majority of the territory, which has shaped the way of life, settlements, and characteristics of local clothing.

Capital - TRIPOLI



Tripoli, known in Arabic as Ṭarābulus, is the capital and the largest city of Libya, located in the northwest of the country along the Mediterranean coast. The city has a long history dating back to the 7th century BC, when it was a Phoenician colony and later developed as part of the Roman Empire. Throughout different periods, Tripoli has been under the rule of the Vandals, Byzantines, Arabs, Ottomans, and Italians, making it a city rich in multiple historical layers and intertwined cultural influences. This wealth of historical heritage is reflected in the urban structure of the city, where narrow streets of the traditional medina coexist with Ottoman monuments, ancient mosques, and Italian colonial buildings. The population of Tripoli exceeds one million residents, and the city represents the economic, political, and cultural heart of the country. The Mediterranean climate with mild winters and dry summers makes the city suitable for urban living, while its proximity to the sea has been a key factor in the development of trade and international connections. Tripoli is also a center for higher education and academia in Libya, with universities and research institutes that maintain ties to the country's cultural and scientific heritage. At different times, the city has played a crucial role in political and social movements, particularly during the struggle for independence and later during the upheavals following 2011. Tripoli is a city where the past and present collide and coexist simultaneously. Despite the political and social challenges in recent years, the city maintains a unique dynamism and is a center for cultural, artistic, and artisanal developments that reflect Libya's multifaceted identity.

Main cities

BENGHAZI

Benghazi, the second-largest city in Libya, is located on the north-eastern coast of the country and is the historical capital of the Cyrenaica region. With a population of about 700,000, Benghazi has been a strategic trading hub since ancient times, when it was a Greek colony known as Euesperides. Later, under Roman and Arab rule, the city developed as a center of learning and Islamic faith. During the Ottoman period and later under Italian occupation, Benghazi experienced deep urbanization and infrastructural development, transforming it



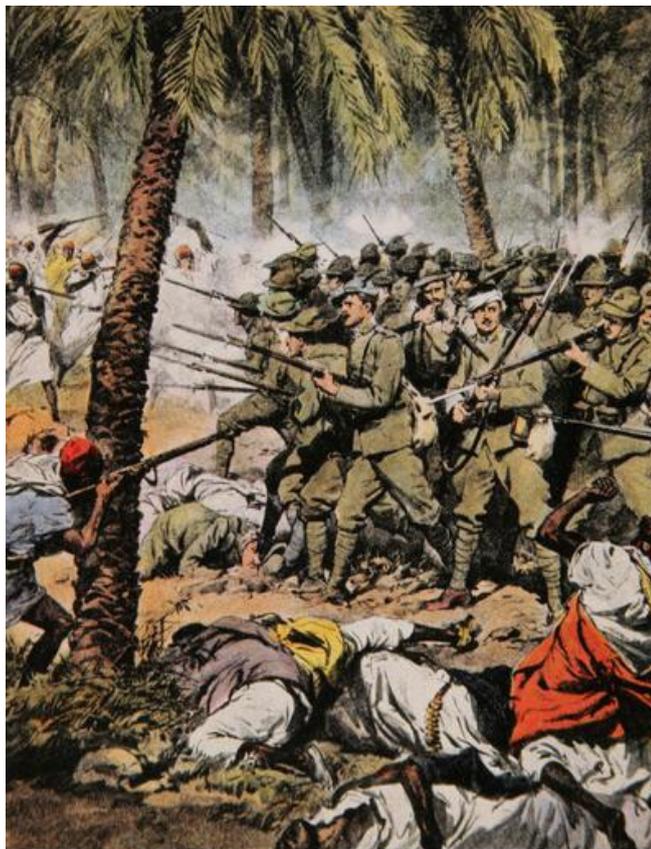
into a modern center for administration and trade. The city's architecture bears strong traces of different periods, from Italian colonial buildings to mosques with low domes and old Arab neighborhoods that retain a historical atmosphere. Beyond its political importance, Benghazi has also been a hotbed for intellectual debate, with universities and cultural institutes promoting studies in history, linguistics, and Islamic jurisprudence.

MISRATA

Misrata, located about 200 kilometers east of Tripoli, is one of the most dynamic cities in modern Libya. With a population of over 400,000, it is known for its private enterprise and central role in the country's economy, especially through its large port and industrial zone. Misrata has a long trading history dating back to the Ottoman period, when local merchant families established ties with Mediterranean coastal cities and markets in Central Africa. During the 2011 civil war, the city became a symbol of resistance against Gaddafi's forces and continues to play a strong political role in the country's current structure. Misrata has developed an urban culture based on autonomy, community organization, and the preservation of local heritage, especially through craftsmanship and knowledge centers. The city is known for its spirit of



self-governance and for active communities that preserve historical memory through local museums and intergenerational storytelling.



Historical, political, and cultural developments (XVIII–XXI Century)

In the 18th century, Libya was formally part of the Ottoman Empire, but its administration was largely dominated by the Karamanli dynasty, which ruled Tripoli semi-autonomously for over a century. This period was characterized by relative stability but also internal conflicts and an increase in piracy, leading to American military intervention in the early 19th century, known as the First and Second Barbary Wars. In 1835, the Ottomans regained direct control over the country, and administration became centralized, although reforms remained limited. In the early 20th century, Libya was occupied by Italy after the Italo-Turkish War (1911–1912), becoming a colony that was harshly ruled during the fascist period, particularly under Mussolini's regime. Independence was declared in 1951, making Libya the first kingdom born out of the United Nations, with King Idris, the traditional leader of the Senussi movement - a religious and political order based in Cyrenaica - at the helm.



In 1969, after a military coup, Colonel Muammar Gaddafi overthrew the monarchy and declared the Libyan Arab Republic, initiating an authoritarian regime with Pan-Arab, socialist, and anti-Western rhetoric. Under Gaddafi, Libya underwent nationalization of the oil industry, infrastructure development, and a foreign policy often in confrontation with the West. However, internal repression, lack of democratic institutions, and deep regional divisions within society fueled growing discontent. The 2011 revolution, sparked by the Arab Spring, led to the overthrow and killing of Gaddafi, but was followed by a prolonged

period of chaos, civil wars between factions, foreign interventions, and the de facto division of the country into parallel governments in the east and west. From a cultural perspective, Libya has preserved a rich heritage that includes Amazigh (Berber), Arab, and Ottoman influences, while in periods of relative calm, efforts have been made to revive traditional arts, language, and clothing as part of a national identity still under construction.

Characteristics of folk clothing

Tripoli retains a rich tradition of urban clothing with Ottoman and Maghreb influences, which are embodied in the traditional dresses of women and men. Tripolitan women used to wear the *bazin*, a long velvet or silk garment, often in dark red or deep blue, adorned with golden threads, which was combined with a *khamisa* – a light inner shirt – and a *melhafa*, a cloak wrapped around the body for public outings. They also wore a rich set of jewelry, such as large rings, gold necklaces, and *khalkhal* (anklets), especially during weddings and family ceremonies. Men wore wide *jalabiya* in neutral colors, a *farmla* (short jacket with embroidery), and the traditional *shashia* cap, while during celebrations, they would add the *barnusin*, a white woolen cloak with a hood. Benghazi presents a simpler variant of urban clothing, but with a particular emphasis on functionality and simplicity of style.

Women in this city often wore *zarbouta*, a light cotton garment with embroidered patterns around the neck and sleeves, combined with the *akhdar* shawl, while for special occasions, the *thob al-arusa*, a wedding dress with intricate embroidery, was used, passed down from generation to generation. Benghazi men also wore *jalabiya*, but with fewer embellishments, combined with *sirwal* (wide trousers) and a light *abaya* for sunny days. Everyday colors were soft – white, gray, and beige – but for ceremonies, darker tones and embellished clothing were observed, reflecting social status. Misrata has preserved more strongly the influences of Bedouin tradition and regional craftsmanship, where women's clothing includes the *jard* – a long robe embroidered by hand – and brightly colored *shal* in tones like red and orange, covering the hair and upper body. Festive clothing for women is accompanied by heavy silver jewelry and necklaces with symbols of Amazigh heritage. Men in Misrata are known for wearing *djellaba* with woolen hoods during winter and lightweight cotton robes during summer, often sewn by local artisans. This clothing heritage is still passed down through old families who ensure the preservation of traditional forms and the use of natural materials from the region.

Importance of culture and tradition today

In contemporary Libya, despite significant political and social challenges since 2011, cultural heritage and folk traditions continue to play a crucial role in social identity and daily life in communities. Traditional clothing is still worn during weddings, religious holidays such as Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, as well as





in special ceremonies organized by local communities or cultural organizations. In cities like Misrata and Tripoli, initiatives are present to promote craftsmanship and traditional clothing through fairs, museums, and exhibitions, making these elements part of conscious cultural education and domestic tourism. Through the transmission of these practices across generations, these values are preserved as a sign of identity and cultural resistance, serving as a link between the past and efforts toward a sustainable cultural future in a society still in transition.



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Tunisia

Geographical location and borders

Tunisia is located in the northwestern part of North Africa and is the smallest country in the Maghreb region. To the north and west, it is bordered by the Mediterranean Sea, with a coastline of approximately 1,300 kilometers, while to the west, it shares a border with Algeria and to the southeast with Libya. Its strategic position between the Arab world and the Mediterranean has made Tunisia an important hub for cultural, economic, and military exchanges since ancient times. Its land features a wide range of landscapes – from fertile coastal plains to the Atlas Mountains and the southern desert region that touches the border with the Sahara.

The climate is typical Mediterranean in the north, with mild winters and dry summers, while in the south, more continental and arid conditions dominate.

Capital - TUNIS



Tunis, the capital of the Republic of Tunisia, is located in the northern part of the country, near the Gulf of Tunis and the large lagoon called Lac de Tunis, which connects the city to the Mediterranean Sea via a series of canals. With a population of nearly two million in the metropolitan area, Tunis is the most important administrative, political, economic, and cultural center of the country. The city has an extraordinary historical heritage dating back to the period of ancient Carthage, which was destroyed by the Romans in the 2nd century BCE and later rebuilt as Carthago Nova, one of the most important cities of the Roman Empire in North Africa. After the arrival of Islam in the 7th century, Tunis became an important center of Arab governance, and later under the Hafsids, Ottomans, and the French protectorate, the city developed into a multi-layered cultural and urban center. At the heart of the city is the Medina of Tunis, declared a UNESCO World Heritage site, a labyrinth of narrow streets, markets, mosques, and buildings adorned with arabesques and colorful ceramics. The Medina coexists with the colonial city of the 19th century, where Haussmannian-style buildings, squares, and modern boulevards give the city a dual appearance: both traditional and modern at the same time. Here, you can also find the Zitouna University, one of the oldest centers of Islamic knowledge in the Arab world. Tunis is also an economic hub, with the port of La Goulette and an increasingly growing technology industry. Cultural activities such as the Carthage International Festival, theaters, museums, and emerging music and literary scenes keep the city vibrant as a center of thought and artistic expression in the Arab world.

Main cities

SFAX



Sfax, the second largest city in Tunisia, is located on the southeastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea and is one of the most important economic and industrial centers of the country. The city was founded in the 9th century on the ruins of ancient Roman and Byzantine settlements and soon developed into an important trading port that connected with the rest of the Maghreb, Italy, and Levantine countries. Sfax has a well-preserved Medina, surrounded by medieval walls and filled with markets, traditional workshops, and Aglabid-style mosques. The city's economy is based on olive oil production, fishing, phosphate processing, and the textile industry, while local communities have maintained a strong sense of cultural identity. The city retains a conservative spirit and a traditional lifestyle, distinguishing it from the more urbanized northern areas of Tunisia. Sfax is also an intellectual and educational hub, with universities and research institutes contributing to the formation of young generations in fields such as natural sciences, literature, and sociology.

KAIROUAN



Kairouan, located in central Tunisia, is one of the holiest cities of Islam in North Africa and the spiritual center of the country. Founded in the 7th century by the Arab commander Uqba ibn Nafi, Kairouan developed in the medieval period as the capital of the Aghlabid dynasty and an important center of Islamic knowledge, art, and architecture. The Great Mosque of Kairouan is one of the oldest Islamic monuments in the Maghreb and a model of early religious architecture in Africa. The city is also known for its hand-woven carpets, which are among the most valued in the Arab world, and for the traditional embroidery passed down from generation to generation. Kairouan carries a deeply spiritual and conservative atmosphere, where social life is intertwined with religious rites and historical commemorations. Thanks to its rich heritage, the city is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site and has become a symbol of Tunisian Islamic and cultural identity on the international stage.

Historical, political, and cultural developments (XVIII–XXI Century)

During the 18th century, Tunisia was formally part of the Ottoman Empire, but in practice, it was governed by the Husainid beys, a semi-autonomous dynasty that created a stable administrative system and developed trade relations with Europe. During this period, the state structure was strengthened, and many public buildings, mosques, and trade routes were built, while a local bureaucratic and religious elite played a key role in organizing the country's social and legal system.



In the 19th century, efforts to modernize the economy and administration, including the creation of a civil administration and openness to international trade, led the country into significant debt, paving the way for French intervention. In 1881, Tunisia became a French protectorate and remained under colonial control until 1956, when, under the leadership of Habib Bourguiba, it gained independence and was proclaimed a republic. During Bourguiba's rule (1956–1987), the country underwent a powerful modernization program, focusing on secularism, educational reform, and the advancement of women's rights, which set Tunisia apart from other Arab countries.

After Bourguiba's downfall, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali took power and ruled with an authoritarian regime for over two decades, under rhetoric of economic stability and moderate secularism but with severe restrictions on civil liberties. In 2011, Tunisia became the first country to experience a successful uprising during the Arab Spring, overthrowing Ben Ali and opening a democratic process that became a model for political transition in the Arab world.

In the decade following the revolution, Tunisia has experienced political polarization and economic difficulties but has maintained a pluralistic institutional system, with free elections and a democratic constitution adopted in 2014. Culturally, Tunisia has always been a link between the East and the West, with a rich heritage that includes Phoenician, Roman, Islamic, Ottoman, and French influences, reflected in music, literature, crafts, and traditional clothing. This continuous blending of modernity with tradition has made Tunisia a dynamic society where the clash and coexistence of different identities remain central to the national self-determination.

Characteristics of traditional clothing

Tunisia represents an urban variant of traditional clothing, where Ottoman and Andalusian influences have defined the style and elegance of traditional dress. Women in the cities wore the "sefsari," a white mantle that wrapped around the body and head, made of fine cotton or silk, symbolizing honor and family dedication. Underneath, women wore a "qamis," a long shirt with embroidered sleeves, and the "al-qandoura" dress, usually adorned with golden and silver threads for festive occasions. Men wore the "jebba," a wide woolen robe handmade, combined with a "farmla" (embroidered vest), "sirwal" (wide trousers), and a "shashia," a traditional red cap. Festive clothing was complemented by heavy gold jewelry for women and intricately carved belts for men, passed down through generations.

Sfax retains a rich artisanal tradition in embroidery and the production of woolen and silk garments, turning traditional dress into a symbol of social prestige and local identity. Sfaxian women wore "kmejja," a long dress with delicate embroidery, paired with a mantle called "kholkhal," while during weddings, the "kiswa al-kbira," a ceremonial velvet outfit in red or blue, was worn, adorned with golden threads and rich silver embellishments. Accessories like "khit errouh" (long necklaces), heavy earrings, and head jewelry were an essential part of the festive look. Men wore darker variations of the "jebba" and often added a "barnusin," a white mantle with a hood, worn in cold weather and formal ceremonies. Kairouan represents a more conservative and religious style, reflecting the city's status as the spiritual center of the country. Women wore the "mlehfa," a long, thin cloth wrapped around the body and covered with a "rida" – a dark-colored scarf with embroidered patterns symbolizing marital status and tribal affiliation. During festive occasions, a silk dress embroidered with handmade gold embellishments was worn. Men in Kairouan wore the "jebba" with a narrow cut and "sirwal," combined with a thick woolen "barnus," especially in the colder months.

The traditional colors in this region are more subdued – primarily white, beige, and gray – with an emphasis on cleanliness, order, and modesty, in accordance with inherited religious norms.





The importance of culture and tradition today

In Tunisia, popular culture and the heritage of traditional clothing continue to be essential elements of national identity and regional pride, despite urbanization and modern influences. Traditional clothing is proudly worn during national holidays, independence days, weddings, and religious ceremonies such as Aid el-Fitr and Aid el-Adha, creating a strong connection between generations. Institutions such as Maison de l'Artisanat, ethnographic museums in Tunis, Sfax, and Kairouan, as well as national craft fairs, play an active role in preserving and promoting these traditions. At the same time, Tunisian designers are giving traditional clothing a contemporary interpretation, integrating elements of heritage into modern urban fashion. This blending of heritage with renewal has helped raise awareness of the cultural importance of traditional dress, turning it into a living tool for expressing identity and strengthening national unity.



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Algeria



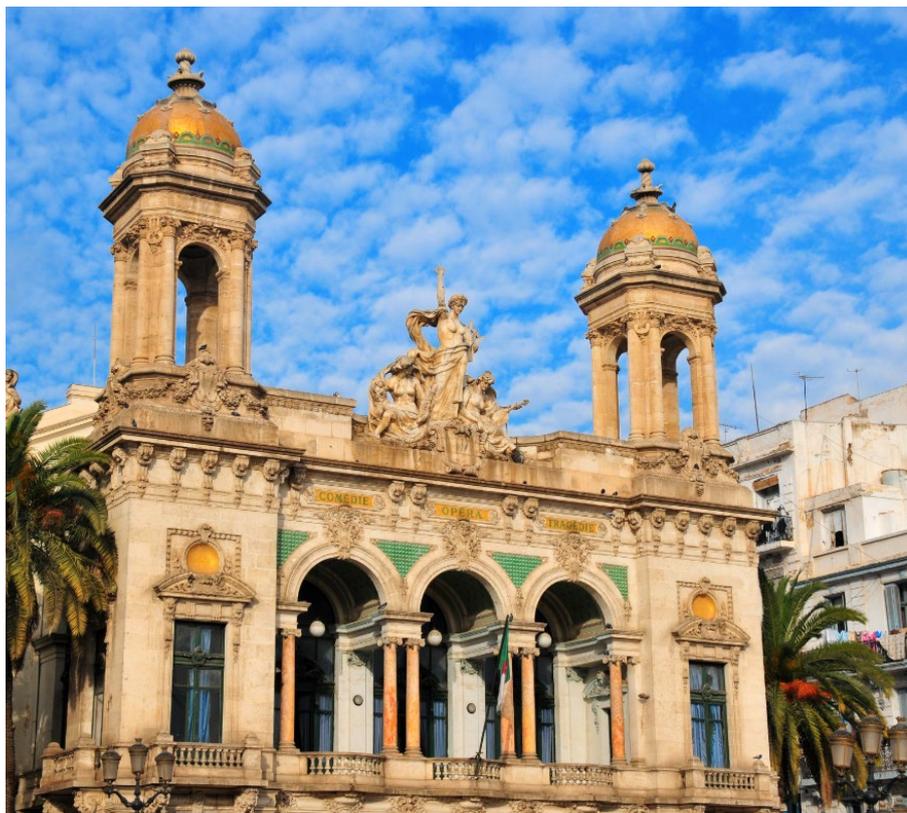
Geographical position and borders

Algeria is located in North Africa and is the largest country on the continent by area. To the north, it is bordered by the Mediterranean Sea, while to the west, it borders Morocco and Western Sahara, to the south by Mauritania, Mali, and Niger, and to the east by Libya and Tunisia. Its territory is divided into three main areas: the coastal belt with a Mediterranean climate and developed cities, the Atlas mountain ranges in the central part, and the vast southern region covered by the Sahara desert. This geographical diversity has influenced the way of life, economy, and culture in the different regions, creating distinct contrasts between the urban north and the nomadic south.

Capital - ALGIERS



Algiers (Al-Jazā'ir), the capital of Algeria, is located on the northern shores of the Mediterranean Sea and is the largest city in the country both in terms of population and administrative, political, and cultural significance. With over 3 million people in its metropolitan area, the city serves as a central urban hub that encapsulates the complex history and multifaceted identity of the Algerian state. Algiers has ancient Phoenician and Roman origins but consolidated as an important urban center during the Arab rule in the 10th century, later experiencing significant growth as part of the Ottoman Empire. From the 16th century until the French invasion in 1830, Algiers was a powerful port city and a naval base known for its fleet and complex relations with Europe. During the French colonial period, the city was transformed into a model of European-style urbanization, with wide boulevards, Haussmannian architecture, and a clear division between the French zone and the old Arab city. At the heart of the city is the Kasbah of Algiers, a historic district built on a hill overlooking the sea, which has been designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site for its architectural and historical values. The Kasbah represents a closed world of the traditional Algerian city with narrow streets, intertwined houses, and a communal life centered around family and mosque. Thus, Algiers combines the modern elements of a fast-paced metropolis with the rich historical heritage preserved in the heart of the old city. The city is also a university and cultural center, hosting numerous artistic, musical, and academic activities. As the capital of a country that underwent a long liberation war, Algiers also symbolizes resistance and national sovereignty, represented in monuments such as the Martyrs' Monument (Maqam Echahid) and the museum of the independence struggle.



Main cities

ORAN

Oran, located in the western part of Algeria along the Mediterranean coast, is the second-largest city in the country and one of the most important commercial ports. Founded by the Andalusians in the 10th century, the city experienced continuous growth during various periods of rule – Spanish, Ottoman, and French – becoming a space with intertwined cultural influences. During French colonialism, Oran developed into a modern urban center with wide boulevards and European-style architecture, and in the 20th century, it became a major industrial

and maritime transport hub. The city is also known as the birthplace of raï music, a popular musical genre that combines elements of Algerian tradition with Spanish, Arab, and French influences, which has become part of the cultural identity of Algeria's youth. Oran is also an intellectually and artistically vibrant city, with universities, theaters, and festivals that keep the cultural and urban life dynamic. Its proximity to Morocco and its powerful port give the city a unique role in trade and regional relations.

CONSTANTINE



Constantine, located in the northeast of the country, is one of Algeria's oldest and most distinctive cities in terms of geography and history. Known in antiquity as Cirta, the city was an important center of Numidia and later the Roman Empire, and then came under Byzantine and Arab control. Constantine is known as the "city of seven bridges" due to its impressive structure over deep ravines and cliffs, where high bridges connect different parts of the city. During the Ottoman period and later under French influence, the city retained a high cultural and educational profile, serving as a hub of Islamic knowledge and refined craftsmanship. Constantine is particularly known for its delicate embroideries, called fouta, and the traditional

textiles preserved by the city's artisan women. In the 21st century, the city continues to be an important center for universities and heritage, where the past and future intersect in the urban and cultural landscape.

Historical, political, and cultural developments (XVIII–XXI centuries)

At the end of the 18th century, Algeria functioned as a semi-autonomous vilayet under the Ottoman Empire, administered by a dey chosen by the Janissary troops and local elites. This period was characterized by a fragmented political system influenced by trade and military interests, while Algeria had created a strong maritime economy and a complex relationship with European powers, especially France. In 1830, following a diplomatic incident known as “the slap of the dey,” France intervened militarily and invaded Algiers, later turning the country into a full colony and then part of French territory with a special status.



During colonization, Algeria experienced profound social and economic transformations, including the displacement of local populations, the expropriation of land, and the creation of a racial hierarchy in which the French and European settlers held primary privileges. Despite harsh repression, Algerian culture and national identity were preserved through religious networks, traditional education, and folk art.

In the mid-20th century, Algeria became the epicenter of one of the bloodiest decolonization wars. The War of Independence (1954–1962), led by the National Liberation Front (FLN), was marked by its brutality and included open conflicts in cities and villages, the breakdown of state structures, and systematic torture by the French army. With the Evian Agreements of 1962, Algeria gained independence, and the FLN took power as the sole political force, establishing an authoritarian regime with a socialist ideology and close ties to the Eastern bloc. Under Houari Boumédiène's rule (1965–1978), the country underwent rapid industrialization and strong nationalization policies, particularly in the hydrocarbon sector. By the late 1980s, Algeria faced mass protests for democratic reforms, which led to pluralistic elections in 1991. However, the victory of an Islamist party (FIS) led to military intervention and the outbreak of a civil war that lasted over a decade.



After 2000, the country followed a slow stabilization course, with reforms controlled by the executive power, while youth movements, such as the 2019 Hirak protests, showed that Algerian society remains engaged and critical of corruption and lack of transparency. Culturally, Algeria has preserved a rich heritage encompassing Arab, Berber, Ottoman, and French influences, reflected in literature, music, clothing, and architecture. The War of Independence remains a fundamental pillar of collective memory and a constant reference in the country's public and institutional life.

Characteristics of traditional clothing

Algiers, as the capital, represents a blend of urban clothing with Ottoman influences and traditional Algerian women's style. Women in Algiers are known for wearing the distinctive "blouza," a long velvet or silk dress embroidered with gold thread and adorned with floral motifs, usually worn with an embroidered bustier and important gold jewelry. This outfit is typically worn during weddings and solemn ceremonies.



In the past, women from the upper class would cover themselves in public with the “haik,” a wide white cloak wrapped around the body and head. Men would wear the “gandoura” (a wide cotton robe), “burnus” (a wool cloak with a hood), and “chechia” (a traditional red cap), all symbols of national identity and the Ottoman and Andalusian heritage.

Oran is an important center for living folk culture, where traditional garments have taken on freer and more expressive forms, especially through the influence of *rai* music. Women in Oran would wear “mlehfa,” a multicolored cloak wrapped around the body and head, combined with light embroidered dresses. For festive occasions, they wore modern variations of the “blouza,” adapted to contemporary fashion. Jewelry is abundant and varied—long necklaces, bracelets with stones, and large earrings, often passed down through generations. Men in this area still wear the “djellaba” and “burnus” for traditional occasions, while everyday clothing is more influenced by European styles.

The city represents an environment where folk culture, urban style, and inherited identity combine dynamically through clothing and behavior. Constantine is known for the distinctive elegance of its wom-



en's clothing, especially for the “chedda of Constantine,” one of the most sophisticated costumes in Algerian heritage.

The “chedda” is a ceremonial ensemble made by hand, which includes a long velvet dress, an embroidered belt, an adorned shawl, and a heavy gold crown and inherited jewelry, symbolizing marriage and family status. This costume is protected as cultural heritage by UNESCO and is an integral part of wedding ceremonies in the city. Constantine men also retain traditional clothing elements for official occasions, combining the “jebba”, “chechia,” and “burnus” with a refined and restrained style. The city’s textile heritage also includes the well-known “majboud” embroidery technique, used to decorate festive dresses and robes with gold thread and symbolic motifs.

The importance of culture and tradition today



In Algeria, culture and traditional customs remain pillars of national identity and are prominently displayed in social life, public art, and community celebrations. Traditional Algerian clothing is worn with pride during wedding ceremonies, religious holidays such as Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, and state events honoring cultural heritage.

Institutions like the Palais des Raïs in Algiers, regional museums in Constantine and Oran, and local cultural organizations play an active role in preserving, promoting, and educating about traditional costumes and artisan crafts. Many young Algerian designers are blending elements of traditional clothing with contemporary fashion, creating new lines that preserve inherited motifs and breathe new life into them through modern forms. Through these developments, traditional clothing is not just a memory of the past, but a living element of cultural affirmation and part of the intergenerational dialogue in a society that strives to preserve its roots while moving forward with awareness and pride.



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Morocco



Geographical location and borders

Morocco is located in the northwestern part of Africa and is one of the most distinct countries in the Maghreb region, with a large coastline on the Mediterranean Sea to the north and the Atlantic Ocean to the west. To the east, it borders Algeria, and to the south, it borders the disputed territory of Western Sahara. Two major mountain ranges, the Atlas and Rif, run through the country, separating the coastal and inland areas, where the desert zone gradually begins. This geographical composition has made Morocco a country rich in natural, climatic, and cultural diversity, including urban, agricultural, mountainous, and nomadic areas. Its strategic location near the Strait of Gibraltar has favored intensive connections with Europe, as well as with the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa over the centuries, strongly influencing the development of a multi-faceted and refined cultural identity.

Capital - RABAT



Rabat, the administrative capital of the Kingdom of Morocco, is located on the northwestern coast of the country, on the Atlantic Ocean, and at the mouth of the Bou Regreg River, across from the twin city of Salé. With a population approaching 1.8 million in the metropolitan area, Rabat is a calm, organized city with an identity shaped by both historical heritage and controlled modernization. The city was founded in the 12th century as a military camp by the Almohad dynasty and later became a political and spiritual center during the Merinid and Saadian dynasties. In modern times, Rabat became the capital during the French protectorate period (1912–1956) and still retains buildings and urban planning influenced by the French colonial style. The city's architecture blends Andalusian, modern, and traditional Arab elements, making it a model of Moroccan urban civilization. At the heart of the city lies the old Medina, a lively neighborhood with markets, narrow streets, and artisan workshops, offering a quieter atmosphere compared to other more dynamic medinas like those of Fès or Marrakesh. On the other side of the city stands the new town, with wide boulevards, government buildings, and embassies, making Rabat a refined space for diplomacy and governance. The most famous monuments include the Hassan Tower, an unfinished mosque from the 12th century, and the Royal Mausoleum, where Kings Mohammed V and Hassan II are buried. Rabat is also an educational and cultural center with universities, theaters, and museums, including the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, one of the most important in North Africa. Thanks to its Mediterranean climate, coastal position, and sustainable urban development, the city is also considered one of the most livable capitals in the region.

Main cities



FES

Fès, one of the oldest and most sacred cities in Morocco, is located in the northern part of the country and is a symbol of knowledge, tradition, and cultural heritage. Founded in the 8th century by the Idrisid dynasty, Fès developed as an educational and spiritual center, housing the Al-Qarawiyyin University, considered the oldest continuously operating university in the world. The Medina of Fès el-Bali, listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site, is one of the best-preserved medieval cities in the world, with more than 9,000 narrow streets and a rich architectural system that includes mosques, religious schools (madrasas), caravanserais, and traditional workshops. The city is famous for

its sophisticated craftsmanship, especially leatherwork, embroidery, and blue pottery. Traditional clothing, particularly djellabas and tarbush hats, are still produced using artisanal methods, while the city maintains a deep sense of cultural and religious identity that distinguishes it from other urban centers in Morocco.

MARRAKESH

Marrakesh, known as the “Red City” due to the color of its historic walls, is located in the southwestern part of the country, near the Atlas Mountains, and is one of the most popular tourist and cultural destinations in Morocco. Founded in the 11th century by the Almoravid dynasty, Marrakesh has served as the capital for several dynasties and remains a key historical and commercial hub between the coastal areas, the inland regions, and the Saharan zones. The Jemaa el-Fnaa square, the vibrant center of the city, is one of the liveliest public spaces in the Arab world, where traders, street performers, storytellers, and musicians mix, preserving an atmosphere unchanged for centuries. The Medina of Marrakesh is also a UNESCO World Heritage site and contains palaces, gardens, mosques, markets, and traditional inns that reflect a lively and historic city. Marrakesh is also a center for Moroccan fashion and design, where traditional craftsmanship blends with contemporary trends, making the city an active creative and intercultural stage.



Historical, political, and cultural developments (XVIII–XXI centuries)

In the 18th century, Morocco was an independent kingdom under the rule of the Alaouite dynasty. During this period, the country had a decentralized structure, where the sultan's authority was difficult to exercise outside urban centers, and internal tribes enjoyed considerable autonomy. Through careful diplomacy, Morocco managed to maintain its independence during the European colonization wave that affected the rest of North Africa. However, the pressure from French and Spanish interests became increasingly strong by the end of the 19th century. In 1912, after the Algeiras Conference and successive diplomatic crises, the French protectorate was established in most of the country,



with a Spanish protectorate in the north and south, while the city of Tangier acquired an international status. During the protectorate period (1912–1956), significant infrastructural investments were made, and new cities were built, but Moroccan society faced discrimination and economic exploitation. After World War II, there was a significant rise in the demand for independence, and the nationalist movement, led by the Istiqlal Party and the figure of King Mohammed V, who was widely respected as a sym-



bol of national unity, gained strength. In 1956, Morocco regained its independence, and Mohammed V returned to the throne, beginning the process of building a modern state. King Hassan III(1961–1999) consolidated a strong royal regime, with a formal parliamentary system, but with centralized power, amid a politically tense climate that included protests, coup attempts, and known persecutions referred to as the “Years of Lead.” One of the most significant events was the annexation of Western Sahara in 1975 through the “Green March,” which strengthened nationalism but also caused conflict with the Polisario Front and ongoing regional tensions.

At the beginning of the 21st century, under King Mohammed VI, Morocco pursued a course of careful reforms, promoting economic modernization, infrastructure development, and the improvement of women’s rights, especially through the Family Code reform (*Moudawana*) in 2004. In 2011, during the Arab Spring,

peaceful protests led to a constitutional reform that granted more powers to the parliament, although the monarchy remains the central actor in political life. In the cultural sphere, Morocco has promoted an identity composed of three fundamental dimensions: Arab, Berber (Amazigh), and Islamic, safeguarding both tangible and intangible heritage through new laws and support for art, craftsmanship, and the Amazigh language as an official language. This approach has made Morocco a relatively stable model in the North African region, where modernization and tradition coexist with special care for the preservation of cultural identity.

Characteristics of traditional clothing

Rabat represents a refined model of Moroccan urban dress, where elegance, formality, and Ottoman and Andalusian heritage blend gracefully. Women in Rabat typically wore the *kaftan*, a long gown with wide sleeves, made of silk or velvet and finely embroidered with gold or silver threads called *sfifa*, often finished with a wide belt (*mdamma*) made of gold. Ceremonial attire was accompanied by many ornaments such as large earrings, rings, and pendants, especially at weddings of the aristocratic class. Men wore the *djellaba* with a hood, a long cloak with wide sleeves worn over a white shirt and *serwal* (baggy trousers), completed with *balgha* (flat leather shoes) and the traditional *tarbush* hat.





Fès retains one of the richest traditions of textiles and artisanal clothing, where dress is a symbol of social and cultural status. Women in Fès are known for their finely embroidered *djellabas* and hand-made wedding *kaf-tans*, passed down from generation to generation, reflecting the skill of the famous gold embroidery workshops (*maalem*). Dresses are often accompanied by silk scarves and jewelry that represent the wearer's tribe or region of origin, carrying rich symbolism. Men maintain a clean and traditional style: a white *djellaba* for festive occasions and a variant in gray or beige for everyday use, always combined with a *chechia* (felt hat) and smooth *balgha*. Marrakesh is a city where the Amazigh (Berber) heritage strongly influences the surrounding areas and the



clothing of rural women who come to trade in the city. Women wear *mlehfa*, a large multicolored cloak wrapped around the body and fastened at the shoulder with a metal brooch (*tizerzit*), accompanied by silver jewelry featuring symbolic motifs such as the moon, star, and the “evil eye” protector. For solemn occasions, *kaftans* with geometric patterns and a variety of colors are worn, reflecting the broad cultural style of the city. Men in the Marrakesh area wear light *gandoura* for the hot climate, while for official or religious occasions, they wear the white or gray *burnus* (wool cloak), a symbol of dignity and male maturity.

Importance of culture and tradition today

In present-day Morocco, tradition and popular culture are vital parts of national identity and represent one of the key pillars of social unity. Traditional Moroccan clothing continues to have a strong presence in public and family life, worn with pride during weddings, religious festivals such as Eid al-Kebir and Eid al-Fitr, and national events. The Moroccan government and cultural institutions, such as the Maison de l'Artisan and the Royal Institute for Amazigh Culture, support local craftsmanship, especially in embroidery, textile production, and the preservation of traditional clothing techniques. There is also a revival of interest in Moroccan fashion internationally, with local designers presenting the *kaftan* as a symbol of modernity and oriental elegance on global runways. This connection between heritage and renewal has created a sustainable balance, where traditional costumes are not only preserved as valuable heritage but are also adapted for urban life, ensuring the continuity of a lively and proud culture.



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