[Template:About](/wiki/Template:About" \o "Template:About) [Template:Pp-pc1](/wiki/Template:Pp-pc1) [Template:Use dmy dates](/wiki/Template:Use_dmy_dates) [Template:Coord](/wiki/Template:Coord) [Template:Infobox country](/wiki/Template:Infobox_country) [Template:Contains Arabic text](/wiki/Template:Contains_Arabic_text)

**Kuwait** [Template:IPAc-en](/wiki/Template:IPAc-en) ([Template:Lang-ar](/wiki/Template:Lang-ar) [*Template:Audio*](/wiki/Template:Audio)*)*, officially the **State of Kuwait**, is a country in [Western Asia](/wiki/Western_Asia). Situated in the northern edge of [Eastern Arabia](/wiki/Eastern_Arabia) at the tip of the [Persian Gulf](/wiki/Persian_Gulf) it shares borders with [Iraq](/wiki/Iraq) and [Saudi Arabia](/wiki/Saudi_Arabia). [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), Kuwait has a population of 4.2 million people; 1.3 million are Kuwaitis and 2.9 million are expatriates.[[1]](#cite_note-1) Oil reserves were discovered in 1938. From 1946 to 1982, the country underwent large-scale modernization. In the 1980s, Kuwait experienced a period of geopolitical instability and an economic crisis following the [stock market crash](/wiki/Souk_Al-Manakh_stock_market_crash). In 1990, Kuwait was [invaded by Iraq](/wiki/Invasion_of_Kuwait). The Iraqi occupation came to an end in 1991 after [military intervention](/wiki/Gulf_War) by United States-led forces. At the end of the war, there were extensive efforts to revive the economy and rebuild national infrastructure.

Kuwait is a constitutional emirate with a [high income economy](/wiki/High_income_economy) backed by the world's [sixth largest oil reserves](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_proven_oil_reserves#Countries). The [Kuwaiti dinar](/wiki/Kuwaiti_dinar) is the highest valued currency in the world.[[2]](#cite_note-2) According to the [World Bank](/wiki/World_Bank), the country has the fourth [highest per capita income](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_(PPP)_per_capita#List_of_countries_and_dependencies) in the world. The [constitution](/wiki/Constitution_of_Kuwait) was promulgated in 1962, making Kuwait the most democratic country in the region.<ref name=ras>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>[[3]](#cite_note-3)[[4]](#cite_note-4) From 2001 to 2009, Kuwait had the highest [Human Development Index](/wiki/Human_Development_Index) ranking in the Arab world.[[5]](#cite_note-5)[[6]](#cite_note-6)[[7]](#cite_note-7)[[8]](#cite_note-8) Only 30.9% of the population are Kuwaiti citizens, which makes them a [minority](/wiki/Demographics_of_Kuwait), while 70% of the population are [expatriates](/wiki/Expatriates_in_Kuwait).[[9]](#cite_note-9) Kuwait ranks highly in regional metrics of gender equality,<ref name=hgh/> as it has the region's highest [Global Gender Gap](/wiki/Global_Gender_Gap) ranking.<ref name=gnw/><ref name=wid/><ref name=wef/>

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## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

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### Early history[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

In 1613, the town of Kuwait was founded in modern-day [Kuwait City](/wiki/Kuwait_City). In 1716, the [Bani Utubs](/wiki/Bani_Utub) settled in Kuwait. At the time of the arrival of the Utubs, Kuwait was inhabited by a few [fishermen](/wiki/Fishermen) and primarily functioned as a [fishing village](/wiki/Fishing_village).[[10]](#cite_note-10) In the eighteenth century, Kuwait prospered and rapidly became the principal commercial center for the transit of goods between [India](/wiki/India), [Muscat](/wiki/Muscat,_Oman), [Baghdad](/wiki/Baghdad) and [Arabia](/wiki/Arabia).<ref name=sail>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>[[11]](#cite_note-11) By the mid 1700s, Kuwait had already established itself as the major trading route from the Persian Gulf to [Aleppo](/wiki/Aleppo).[[12]](#cite_note-12) During the Persian siege of Basra in 1775–79, Iraqi merchants took refuge in Kuwait and were partly instrumental in the expansion of Kuwait's boat-building and trading activities.<ref name=boom>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref> As a result, Kuwait's maritime commerce boomed.[[13]](#cite_note-13) Between the years 1775 and 1779, the Indian trade routes with Baghdad, Aleppo, [Smyrna](/wiki/Smyrna) and [Constantinople](/wiki/Constantinople) were diverted to Kuwait.<ref name=kw>[Template:Cite thesis](/wiki/Template:Cite_thesis)</ref>[[14]](#cite_note-14) The [East India Company](/wiki/East_India_Company) was diverted to Kuwait in 1792.<ref name=eas>[Template:Cite thesis](/wiki/Template:Cite_thesis)</ref> The East India Company secured the sea routes between Kuwait, [India](/wiki/India) and the east coasts of [Africa](/wiki/Africa).[[15]](#cite_note-15) After the Persians withdrew from Basra in 1779, Kuwait continued to attract trade away from Basra.<ref name=mer>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>

Kuwait was the center of [boat building](/wiki/Boat_building) in the Persian Gulf region.[[16]](#cite_note-16)[[17]](#cite_note-17) During the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, vessels made in Kuwait carried the bulk of trade between the ports of India, East Africa and the Red Sea.[[18]](#cite_note-18)[[19]](#cite_note-19)[[20]](#cite_note-20) Kuwaiti ship vessels were renowned throughout the [Indian Ocean](/wiki/Indian_Ocean).<ref name=neildon>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref> Regional geopolitical turbulence helped foster [economic prosperity](/wiki/Prosperity) in Kuwait in the second half of the 18th century.[[21]](#cite_note-21) Kuwait became prosperous due to Basra's instability in the late 18th century.<ref name=w>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref> In the late 18th century, Kuwait partly functioned as a haven for Basra's merchants fleeing [Ottoman government](/wiki/Ottoman_government) persecution.<ref name=halamudhir>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref> According to Palgrave, Kuwaitis developed a reputation as the best sailors in the Persian Gulf.[[22]](#cite_note-22)[[23]](#cite_note-23)[[24]](#cite_note-24) The Sheikhdom of Kuwait became a British protectorate in 1899 (until 1961) after the Anglo-Kuwaiti agreement of 1899 was signed between Sheikh Mubarak Al Sabah and the British government in India due to severe threats to Kuwait's independence from the Ottoman Empire.

[thumb|250px|Celebration at](/wiki/File:Kuwait1944.jpg) [Seif Palace](/wiki/Seif_Palace) in 1944. The [Great Depression](/wiki/Great_Depression) negatively impacted Kuwait's economy starting in the late 1920s.[[25]](#cite_note-25) International trading was one of Kuwait's main sources of income before oil.[[25]](#cite_note-25) Kuwaiti merchants were mostly intermediary merchants.[[25]](#cite_note-25) As a result of European decline of demand for goods from India and Africa, the economy of Kuwait suffered. The decline in international trade resulted in an increase in gold smuggling by Kuwaiti ships to India.[[25]](#cite_note-25) Some Kuwaiti merchant families became rich due to gold smuggling to India.[[26]](#cite_note-26) Kuwait's pearling industry also collapsed as a result of the worldwide economic depression.<ref name=hist>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref> At its height, Kuwait's pearling industry led the world's luxury market, regularly sending out between 750 and 800 ship vessels to meet the European elite's need for pearls.[[26]](#cite_note-26) During the economic depression, luxuries like pearls were in little demand.[[26]](#cite_note-26) The Japanese invention of [cultured pearls](/wiki/Cultured_pearls) also contributed to the collapse of Kuwait's pearling industry.[[26]](#cite_note-26) Following the [Kuwait–Najd War](/wiki/Kuwait–Najd_War) of 1919–20, [Ibn Saud](/wiki/Ibn_Saud) imposed a trade blockade against Kuwait from the years 1923 until 1937.<ref name=do>[Template:Cite thesis](/wiki/Template:Cite_thesis)</ref> The goal of the Saudi economic and military attacks on Kuwait was to annex as much of Kuwait's territory as possible. At the [Uqair conference](/wiki/Uqair_Protocol_of_1922) in 1922, the boundaries of Kuwait and Najd were set. Kuwait had no representative at the Uqair conference. Ibn Saud persuaded [Sir Percy Cox](/wiki/Percy_Cox) to give him two-thirds of Kuwait's territory. More than half of Kuwait was lost due to Uqair. After the Uqair conference, Kuwait was still subjected to a Saudi economic blockade and intermittent Saudi [raiding](/wiki/Raid_(military)).

### Golden Era (1946–82)[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

From 1946 to 1982, Kuwait experienced a period of prosperity driven by oil and its liberal atmosphere.<ref name=venezia>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=pavilion>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref><ref name=farid>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> In popular discourse, the years between 1946 and 1982 are referred to as the "Golden Era".[[27]](#cite_note-27)[[28]](#cite_note-28)[[29]](#cite_note-29)[[30]](#cite_note-30) In 1950, a major public-work programme began to enable Kuwaitis to enjoy a modern standard of living. By 1952, the country became the largest oil exporter in the Persian Gulf region. This massive growth attracted many foreign workers, especially from Palestine, Egypt and India. In June 1961, Kuwait became independent with the end of the [British protectorate](/wiki/Sheikhdom_of_Kuwait) and the sheikh [Abdullah Al-Salim Al-Sabah](/wiki/Abdullah_Al-Salim_Al-Sabah) became an Emir. Under the terms of the newly drafted [constitution](/wiki/Constitution_of_Kuwait), Kuwait held its first [parliamentary elections in 1963](/wiki/Kuwaiti_parliamentary_election,_1963). Kuwait was the first Gulf country to establish a constitution and parliament.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Kuwait was the most developed country in the region.[[31]](#cite_note-31)[[32]](#cite_note-32)<ref name=index>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> Kuwait was the pioneer in the Middle East in diversifying its earnings away from oil exports.<ref name=swf>[Template:Cite journal](/wiki/Template:Cite_journal)</ref> The [Kuwait Investment Authority](/wiki/Kuwait_Investment_Authority) is the world's first sovereign wealth fund. From the 1970s onward, Kuwait scored highest of all Arab countries on the [Human Development Index](/wiki/Human_Development_Index).[[33]](#cite_note-33) [Kuwait University](/wiki/Kuwait_University) was established in 1966.[[33]](#cite_note-33) Kuwait's [theatre industry](/wiki/Kuwait#Theatre) was well-known throughout the Arab world.[[27]](#cite_note-27)[[33]](#cite_note-33) In the 1960s and 1970s, Kuwait's press was described as one of the [freest in the world](/wiki/Freedom_of_press).<ref name=review>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref> Kuwait was the pioneer in the literary renaissance in the Arab region.[[34]](#cite_note-34) In 1958, [*Al Arabi*](/wiki/Al_Arabi_Magazine) magazine was first published, the magazine went on to become the most popular magazine in the Arab world.[[34]](#cite_note-34) Many Arab writers moved to Kuwait because they enjoyed greater [freedom of expression](/wiki/Freedom_of_expression) than elsewhere in the Arab world.[[35]](#cite_note-35)[[36]](#cite_note-36) The Iraqi poet [Ahmed Matar](/wiki/Ahmed_Matar) left Iraq in the 1970s to take refuge in the more liberal environment of Kuwait.[[37]](#cite_note-37) Kuwaiti society embraced [liberal and Western attitudes](/wiki/Westernization) throughout the 1960s and 1970s.[[38]](#cite_note-38) Most Kuwaiti women did not wear the [hijab](/wiki/Hijab) in the 1960s and 1970s.[[39]](#cite_note-39)[[40]](#cite_note-40) At Kuwait University, mini-skirts were more common than the hijab.[[41]](#cite_note-41)

### 1982 to present day[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

In the early 1980s, Kuwait experienced a major [economic crisis](/wiki/Economic_crisis) after the [Souk Al-Manakh stock market crash](/wiki/Souk_Al-Manakh_stock_market_crash) and [decrease in oil price](/wiki/1980s_oil_glut).[[42]](#cite_note-42) During the [Iran-Iraq war](/wiki/Iran-Iraq_war), Kuwait supported Iraq. Throughout the 1980s, there were several terror attacks in Kuwait, including the [1983 Kuwait bombings](/wiki/1983_Kuwait_bombings), hijacking of [several Kuwait Airways planes](/wiki/1983_Kuwait_bombings#Aircraft_hijackings_(1984–1988)) and attempted assassination of Emir Jaber in 1985. Kuwait was a regional hub of science and technology in the 1960s and 1970s up until the early 1980s,<ref name=s&t>[Template:Cite journal](/wiki/Template:Cite_journal)</ref> the scientific research sector significantly suffered due to the terror attacks.[[43]](#cite_note-43) [thumb|300px|Oil fires in Kuwait in 1991, which were a result of the](/wiki/File:BrennendeOelquellenKuwait1991.jpg) [scorched earth](/wiki/Scorched_earth) policy of [Iraqi](/wiki/Iraq) [military forces](/wiki/Military_of_Iraq) retreating from Kuwait. After the Iran-Iraq war ended, Kuwait declined an Iraqi request to forgive its US$65 billion debt.[[44]](#cite_note-44) An economic rivalry between the two countries ensued after Kuwait increased its oil production by 40 percent.<ref name=Gregory2004>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref> Tensions between the two countries increased further in July 1990, after Iraq complained to [OPEC](/wiki/OPEC) claiming that Kuwait was stealing its oil from a field near the border by [slant drilling](/wiki/Slant_drilling) of the [Rumaila field](/wiki/Rumaila_field).[[45]](#cite_note-45) In August 1990, Iraqi forces [invaded and annexed](/wiki/Invasion_of_Kuwait) Kuwait. After a series of failed diplomatic negotiations, the United States led a coalition to remove the Iraqi forces from Kuwait, in what became known as the [Gulf War](/wiki/Gulf_War). On 26 February 1991, the coalition succeeded in driving out the Iraqi forces. As they retreated, Iraqi forces carried out a [scorched earth](/wiki/Scorched_earth) policy by setting oil wells on fire.[[46]](#cite_note-46) During the Iraqi occupation, more than 1,000 Kuwaiti civilians were killed.[[47]](#cite_note-47) In addition, more than 600 Kuwaitis went [missing](/wiki/Missing_people) during Iraq's occupation,[[48]](#cite_note-48) approximately 375 remains were found in mass graves in Iraq.

In March 2003, Kuwait became the springboard for the US-led [invasion of Iraq](/wiki/Invasion_of_Iraq). Upon the death of the Emir Jaber, in January 2006, [Saad Al-Sabah](/wiki/Saad_Al-Sabah) succeeded him but was removed nine days later by the Kuwaiti parliament due to his ailing health. [Sabah Al-Sabah](/wiki/Sabah_Al-Sabah) was sworn in as Emir.

From 2001 to 2009, Kuwait had the highest [Human Development Index](/wiki/Human_Development_Index) ranking in the Arab world.[[5]](#cite_note-5)<ref name=HDI2/><ref name=HDI21/><ref name=HDI1/>[[49]](#cite_note-49) In 2005, women won the right to vote and run in elections. In 2014 and 2015, Kuwait was ranked first among Arab countries in the [Global Gender Gap Report](/wiki/Global_Gender_Gap_Report).<ref name=wid/><ref name=hgh/><ref name=wef/> Kuwaiti women outnumber men in the workforce.<ref name=gnw/><ref name=gend/> In June 2015, a [suicide bombing](/wiki/2015_Kuwait_mosque_bombing) took place at a mosque. It was the largest terror attack in Kuwait's history.

## Media[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

[thumb|upright|The 372 m tall](/wiki/File:Kuwait_Liberation_Tower_cropped.jpg) [Kuwait Telecommunications Tower](/wiki/Kuwait_Telecommunications_Tower) (leftmost) is the main communication tower of Kuwait. Kuwait's media is annually classified as "partly free" in the [Freedom of Press](/wiki/Freedom_of_Press) survey by Freedom House.[[50]](#cite_note-50) Kuwait's media is the freest in the Gulf region.[[3]](#cite_note-3)[[51]](#cite_note-51) Kuwait consistently ranks as having the [freest media](/wiki/Freedom_of_press) in the [Arab world](/wiki/Arab_world).[[52]](#cite_note-52)[[53]](#cite_note-53)[[54]](#cite_note-54) Since 2005,[[55]](#cite_note-55) Kuwait has frequently earned the highest ranking of all Arab countries in the annual [Press Freedom Index](/wiki/Press_Freedom_Index) by Reporters Without Borders.[[56]](#cite_note-56)[[57]](#cite_note-57)[[58]](#cite_note-58)[[59]](#cite_note-59)[[60]](#cite_note-60)[[61]](#cite_note-61)[[62]](#cite_note-62)[[63]](#cite_note-63)[[64]](#cite_note-64) In 2009, 2011, 2013 and 2014, Kuwait surpassed [Israel](/wiki/Israel) as the country with the greatest press freedom in the Middle East.[[56]](#cite_note-56)[[57]](#cite_note-57)[[58]](#cite_note-58)[[59]](#cite_note-59)[[63]](#cite_note-63) Kuwait is also frequently ranked as the Arab country with the greatest press freedom in Freedom House's annual Freedom of Press survey.<ref name=lead>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>[[65]](#cite_note-65)[[66]](#cite_note-66)[[67]](#cite_note-67)[[68]](#cite_note-68)[[69]](#cite_note-69)[[70]](#cite_note-70) Kuwait produces more newspapers and magazines per capita than its neighbors.[[71]](#cite_note-71)[[72]](#cite_note-72) There are limits to Kuwait's press freedom, criticism of the government and ruling family members is permitted but many people have been jailed for defaming the Emir.[[73]](#cite_note-73) Kuwait's constitution criminalizes criticism of the Emir.

The state-owned [Kuwait News Agency](/wiki/Kuwait_News_Agency) (KUNA) is the largest media house in the country. The Ministry of Information regulates the media industry in Kuwait.

In 2000, there were 624 radios and 486 television sets for every 1,000 people. In 2001, there were 165,000 Internet subscribers served by three service providers.<ref name=nationsen>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> Kuwait has 12 satellite television channels, of which four are controlled by the Ministry of Information. State-owned [Kuwait Television](/wiki/Kuwait_Television) (KTV) offered first colored broadcast in 1974 and operates five television channels.[[74]](#cite_note-74) Government-funded Radio Kuwait also offers daily informative programming in several foreign languages including [Arabic](/wiki/Arabic_language), [Farsi](/wiki/Farsi), [Urdu](/wiki/Urdu), and English on the [AM](/wiki/AM_broadcasting) and [SW](/wiki/Shortwave).

## Politics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|300px|The](/wiki/File:Utzon_Kuwait_National_Assembly.jpg) [Kuwait National Assembly Building](/wiki/Kuwait_National_Assembly_Building).

Kuwait is a constitutional emirate with a [semi-democratic](/wiki/Semi-democracy) political system.<ref name=wsjo>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>[[75]](#cite_note-75)[[76]](#cite_note-76)[[77]](#cite_note-77) The [Emir](/wiki/Emir_of_Kuwait) is the head of state. The hybrid political system is divided between an [elected parliament](/wiki/National_Assembly_(Kuwait)) and [appointed government](/wiki/Government_of_Kuwait).[[78]](#cite_note-78)[[79]](#cite_note-79) The [Constitution of Kuwait](/wiki/Constitution_of_Kuwait) was promulgated in 1962. Kuwait is among the Middle East's freest countries in terms of [civil liberties](/wiki/Civil_liberties) and [political rights](/wiki/Political_rights).[[80]](#cite_note-80)[[4]](#cite_note-4)<ref name=mubash>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> [Freedom House](/wiki/Freedom_House) rates the country as "Partly Free" in the [Freedom in the World](/wiki/Freedom_in_the_World) survey.<ref name=FH2011>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

[Human rights in Kuwait](/wiki/Human_rights_in_Kuwait) has been the subject of criticism, particularly regarding [foreign workers rights](/wiki/Migrant_worker). Expatriates account for 70% of Kuwait's total population. The [kafala system](/wiki/Kafala_system) leaves foreign workers prone to exploitation. Kuwait has the most liberal labor laws in the GCC.[[81]](#cite_note-81)[[82]](#cite_note-82) As a result, the [International Labor Organization](/wiki/International_Labor_Organization) removed Kuwait from the list of countries violating workers rights.[[83]](#cite_note-83)

### Political culture[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

Kuwait is the most democratic country in the region. Regionally, Kuwait is noted for having a robust [public sphere](/wiki/Public_sphere) and active [civil society](/wiki/Civil_society) with greater freedom for political and social organizations that are [parties](/wiki/Political_parties) in everything but name.[[84]](#cite_note-84)[[85]](#cite_note-85)<ref name=greo>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref> Professional groups like the [Chamber of Commerce](/wiki/Kuwait_Chamber_of_Commerce_and_Industry) maintain their autonomy from the government.[[85]](#cite_note-85)[[86]](#cite_note-86) The National Assembly is the [legislature](/wiki/Legislature) and has oversight authority. The National Assembly consists of fifty elected members, who are chosen in elections held every four years. Since the parliament can conduct inquiries into government actions and pass motions of no confidence, [checks and balances](/wiki/Checks_and_balances) are robust in Kuwait.[[84]](#cite_note-84) The parliament can be dissolved under a set of conditions based on constitutional provisions.[[87]](#cite_note-87) The Constitutional Court and Emir both have the power to dissolve the parliament, although the Constitutional Court can invalidate the Emir's dissolve.

[Executive power](/wiki/Executive_power) is executed by the government. The Emir appoints the prime minister, who in turn chooses the ministers comprising the government. According to the constitution, at least one minister has to be an elected MP from the parliament. The parliament is often rigorous in holding the [government accountable](/wiki/Government_accountable), government ministers are frequently interpellated and forced to resign.[[87]](#cite_note-87)[[88]](#cite_note-88) Kuwait has more government accountability and transparency than other GCC countries.[[85]](#cite_note-85) The [judiciary](/wiki/Judiciary) is nominally independent of the executive and the legislature, and the Constitutional Court is charged with ruling on the conformity of laws and decrees with the constitution.[[87]](#cite_note-87) The judiciary's independence has come under question, although the Constitutional Court is widely regarded as one of the most judicially independent courts in the Arab world.[[89]](#cite_note-89) The Constitutional Court has the power to dissolve the parliament and invalidate the Emir's decrees, as what happened in 2013 when the dissolved 2009 parliament resumed its role.

The political participation of [Kuwaiti women](/wiki/Kuwaiti_women) has been limited,[[90]](#cite_note-90) although Kuwaiti women are among the most emancipated women in the [Middle East](/wiki/Middle_East). In 2014 and 2015, Kuwait was ranked first among Arab countries in the [Global Gender Gap Report](/wiki/Global_Gender_Gap_Report).[[91]](#cite_note-91)[[92]](#cite_note-92)[[93]](#cite_note-93) In 2013, 53% of Kuwaiti women participated in the labor force.[[94]](#cite_note-94) Kuwait has higher female citizen participation in the workforce than other GCC countries.[[95]](#cite_note-95)<ref name=gnw/><ref name=gend/> Kuwaiti women outnumber men in the workforce.[[96]](#cite_note-96) Political groups and parliamentary voting blocs exist, although most candidates run as independents. Once elected, many deputies form voting blocs in the National Assembly. Kuwaiti law does not recognize political parties.<ref name=cc>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> However, numerous political groups function as de facto political parties in elections, and there are blocs in the parliament. Major de facto political parties include the [National Democratic Alliance](/wiki/National_Democratic_Alliance_(Kuwait)), [Popular Action Bloc](/wiki/Popular_Action_Bloc), [Hadas](/wiki/Hadas) (Kuwaiti [Muslim Brotherhood](/wiki/Muslim_Brotherhood)), [National Islamic Alliance](/wiki/National_Islamic_Alliance) and the [Justice and Peace Alliance](/wiki/Justice_and_Peace_Alliance).

Kuwait follows the "[civil law system](/wiki/Civil_law_(legal_system))" modeled after the French legal system,[[97]](#cite_note-97)[[98]](#cite_note-98)[[99]](#cite_note-99) Kuwait's legal system is largely secular.[[100]](#cite_note-100)[[101]](#cite_note-101)[[102]](#cite_note-102) [Sharia law](/wiki/Sharia_law) governs only [family law](/wiki/Family_law) for Muslim residents,[[101]](#cite_note-101)[[103]](#cite_note-103) non-Muslims in Kuwait have a secular family law. For the application of [family law](/wiki/Family_law), there are three separate court sections: Sunni, Shia and non-Muslim.[[104]](#cite_note-104) According to the [United Nations](/wiki/United_Nations), Kuwait's legal system is a mix of [British common law](/wiki/British_common_law), [French civil law](/wiki/French_civil_law), [Egyptian civil law](/wiki/Egyptian_Civil_Code) and Islamic law.[[105]](#cite_note-105) The [court system](/wiki/Court_system) in Kuwait is secular.[[106]](#cite_note-106)[[107]](#cite_note-107) Unlike other Gulf states, Kuwait does not have Sharia courts.[[107]](#cite_note-107) Sections of the civil court system administer family law.[[107]](#cite_note-107) Kuwait has the most secular [commercial law](/wiki/Commercial_law) in the Gulf.[[108]](#cite_note-108)

### Foreign relations[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|400px|Location of diplomatic missions of Kuwait:](/wiki/File:Diplomatic_missions_of_Kuwait.png) [Template:Legend](/wiki/Template:Legend) [Template:Legend](/wiki/Template:Legend)

Foreign affairs relations of Kuwait is handled at the level of the [Ministry of Foreign Affairs](/wiki/Ministry_of_Foreign_Affairs_(Kuwait)). The first foreign affairs department bureau was established in 1961. Kuwait became the 111th member state of the United Nations in May 1963. It is a long-standing member of the [Arab League](/wiki/Arab_League) and [Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf](/wiki/Cooperation_Council_for_the_Arab_States_of_the_Gulf).

Before the [Gulf War](/wiki/Gulf_War), Kuwait was the only "pro-[Soviet](/wiki/Soviet)" state in the Gulf.[[109]](#cite_note-109) Kuwait acted as a conduit for the Soviets to the other Gulf states and Kuwait was used to demonstrate the benefits of a pro-Soviet stance.[[109]](#cite_note-109) Between 1961 and 1991, Kuwait had an uneasy relationship with the [United States](/wiki/United_States) characterized by mistrust and hostility.[[110]](#cite_note-110) In July 1987, Kuwait refused to allow U.S. military bases in its territory.[[111]](#cite_note-111) As a result of the [Gulf War](/wiki/Gulf_War), Kuwait's relations with the U.S. have improved significantly and currently hosts thousands of [US military personnel](/wiki/United_States_Armed_Forces) and contractors within active U.S. facilities.

### Military[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

The [Military of Kuwait](/wiki/Military_of_Kuwait) traces its original roots to the Kuwaiti cavalrymen and infantrymen that used to protect Kuwait and its wall since the early 1900s. These cavalrymen and infantrymen formed the defense and security forces in metropolitan areas; charged with protecting outposts outside the wall of Kuwait.

The Military of Kuwait consists of several joint defense forces. The governing bodies are the [Kuwait Ministry of Defense](/wiki/Ministry_of_Defense_(Kuwait)), the [Kuwait Ministry of Interior](/wiki/Ministry_of_Interior_(Kuwait)), the [Kuwait National Guard](/wiki/Kuwait_National_Guard) and the Kuwait Fire Service Directorate. The [Emir of Kuwait](/wiki/Emir_of_Kuwait) is the [commander-in-chief](/wiki/Commander-in-chief) of all defense forces.

### Administrative divisions[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

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Kuwait is divided into [six governorates](/wiki/Governorates_of_Kuwait). The governorates are further [subdivided into areas](/wiki/Areas_of_Kuwait).

## Geography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

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[thumb|350px|A satellite image of Kuwait.](/wiki/File:Satellite_image_of_Kuwait_in_November_2001.jpg) [thumb|350px|A map of Kuwait.](/wiki/File:Kuwait_pol_06.jpg) Located in the north-east corner of the Arabian Peninsula, Kuwait is one of the smallest countries in the world in terms of land area. Kuwait lies between latitudes [28°](/wiki/28th_parallel_north) and [31° N](/wiki/31st_parallel_north), and longitudes [46°](/wiki/46th_meridian_east) and [49° E](/wiki/49th_meridian_east). The flat, sandy [Arabian Desert](/wiki/Arabian_Desert) covers most of Kuwait. Kuwait is generally low lying, with the highest point being [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) [above sea level](/wiki/Above_sea_level).[[112]](#cite_note-112) Kuwait has [nine islands](/wiki/List_of_islands_of_Kuwait), all of which, with the exception of [Failaka Island](/wiki/Failaka_Island), are uninhabited.[[113]](#cite_note-113) With an area of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), the [Bubiyan](/wiki/Bubiyan_Island) is the largest island in Kuwait and is connected to the rest of the country by a [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) long bridge.[[114]](#cite_note-114) 0.6% of Kuwaiti land area is considered arable[[112]](#cite_note-112) with sparse vegetation found along its [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) long coastline.[[112]](#cite_note-112) [Kuwait City](/wiki/Kuwait_City) is located on Kuwait Bay, a natural deep-water harbor.

Kuwait's [Burgan field](/wiki/Burgan_field) having a total capacity of approximately [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of proven oil reserves. During the 1991 [Kuwaiti oil fires](/wiki/Kuwaiti_oil_fires), more than 500 oil lakes were created covering a combined surface area of about [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert).[[115]](#cite_note-115) The resulting soil contamination due to oil and soot accumulation had made eastern and south-eastern parts of Kuwait uninhabitable. Sand and oil residue had reduced large parts of the Kuwaiti desert to semi-asphalt surfaces.[[116]](#cite_note-116) The oil spills during the Gulf War also drastically affected Kuwait's marine resources.[[117]](#cite_note-117)

### Climate[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

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The spring season in March is warm with occasional thunderstorms. The frequent winds from the northwest are cold in winter and hot in summer. Southeasterly damp winds spring up between July and October. Hot and dry south winds prevail in spring and early summer. The shamal, a northwesterly wind common during June and July, causes dramatic sandstorms.[[118]](#cite_note-118)The temperature in Kuwait during summer is above [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert). The highest recorded temperature was [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) which is the highest temperature recorded in Asia.[[119]](#cite_note-119)[[120]](#cite_note-120) Kuwait experiences colder winters than other GCC countries because of its location in a northern position near Iraq and Iran.

### National parks[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]

At present, there are five [protected areas](/wiki/Protected_areas) in Kuwait recognized by the [IUCN](/wiki/IUCN). In response to Kuwait becoming the [169th signatory](/wiki/List_of_parties_to_the_Ramsar_Convention) of the [Ramsar Convention](/wiki/Ramsar_Convention), Bubyan island's Mubarak al-Kabeer reserve was designated as the country's first Wetland of International Importance.[[121]](#cite_note-121) The 50,948 ha reserve consists of small lagoons and shallow [salt marshes](/wiki/Saltmarsh) and is important as a stop-over for migrating birds on two migration routes.[[121]](#cite_note-121) The reserve is home to the world's largest breeding colony of [crab-plover](/wiki/Crab-plover).<ref name=ramsar>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

### Biodiversity[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=14)]

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More than 363 species of birds were recorded in Kuwait, 18 species of which breed in the country.<ref name=bsc-eoc>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> Kuwait is situated at the crossroads of several major bird migration routes and between 2 and 3 million birds pass each year.<ref name=natstrat>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> The marshes in northern Kuwait and Jahra have become increasingly important as a refuge for passage migrants.[[122]](#cite_note-122) Kuwaiti islands are important breeding areas for four species of [tern](/wiki/Tern) and [socotra cormorant](/wiki/Socotra_cormorant).[[122]](#cite_note-122) Kuwait's marine and littoral ecosystems contain the bulk of the country's biodiversity heritage.[[122]](#cite_note-122) 28 species of mammals are found in Kuwait, animals such as [gazelles](/wiki/Gazelles), desert rabbits and [hedgehogs](/wiki/Hedgehog) are common in the wild.[[122]](#cite_note-122) Other large carnivores such as the [wolf](/wiki/Wolf), [caracal](/wiki/Caracal) and [jackal](/wiki/Jackal) are now extremely rare.[[122]](#cite_note-122) Among the endangered mammalian species are the [red fox](/wiki/Red_fox) and [wild cat](/wiki/Wild_cat).[[122]](#cite_note-122) Causes for wildlife extinction are habitat destruction and extensive unregulated hunting.[[122]](#cite_note-122) Kuwait also faced a serious destruction of its habitat during the gulf war. [[123]](#cite_note-123) Kuwait was the first country in the world to use desalination to supply water for large scale domestic use. The history of desalination in Kuwait dates back to 1951 when the first distillation plant was commissioned.<ref name=scidi>[Template:Cite journal](/wiki/Template:Cite_journal)</ref>

In 1965, the Kuwaiti government commissioned the Swedish engineering company of VBB ([Sweco](/wiki/Sweco)) to develop and implement a plan for a modern [water-supply system](/wiki/Water-supply_system) for Kuwait City. The company built [five groups of water towers](/wiki/Kuwait_Water_Towers), thirty one in all, designed by its chief architect [Sune Lindström](/wiki/Sune_Lindström), called "the mushroom towers". For a sixth site, the Emir of Kuwait, Sheikh [Jaber Al-Ahmed](/wiki/Jaber_al-Ahmad_al-Jaber_al-Sabah), wanted a more spectacular design. This last group, known as [Kuwait Towers](/wiki/Kuwait_Towers), consists of three towers, two of which also serve as water towers.[[126]](#cite_note-126) Water from the desalination facility is pumped up to the tower. The thirty-three towers have a standard capacity of 102,000 cubic meters of water. "The Water Towers" (Kuwait Tower and the Kuwait Water Towers) were awarded the [Aga Khan Award for Architecture](/wiki/Aga_Khan_Award_for_Architecture) (1980 Cycle).[[127]](#cite_note-127) Kuwait's fresh water resources are limited to groundwater, desalinated seawater, and treated wastewater effluents.[[124]](#cite_note-124) There are three major municipal wastewater treatment plants.[[124]](#cite_note-124) Most water demand is currently satisfied through seawater desalination plants.[[124]](#cite_note-124)[[125]](#cite_note-125) Sewage disposal is handled by a national sewage network that covers 98% of facilities in the country.[[128]](#cite_note-128)

## Economy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|350px|A proportional representation of Kuwait's exports.](/wiki/File:Kuwait_Export_Treemap.jpg) [Template:Multiple image](/wiki/Template:Multiple_image)

Kuwait has a [petroleum](/wiki/Petroleum)-based economy, petroleum is the main export product. The [Kuwaiti dinar](/wiki/Kuwaiti_dinar) is the highest-valued unit of currency in the world.<ref name=curr>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> According to the [World Bank](/wiki/World_Bank), Kuwait is the fourth richest country in the world [per capita](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_(PPP)_per_capita#List_of_countries_and_dependencies).[[129]](#cite_note-129) Kuwait is also the second richest GCC country per capita (after [Qatar](/wiki/Qatar)).<ref name=worldbank>["GDP per capita, PPP (current international $)", World Development Indicators database](http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.PP.CD?order=wbapi_data_value_2014+wbapi_data_value+wbapi_data_value-last&sort=desc), World Bank. Database updated on 14 April 2015.</ref>[[130]](#cite_note-130)[[131]](#cite_note-131) Petroleum accounts for nearly half of GDP and 94% of export revenues and government income.[[112]](#cite_note-112) Non-petroleum industries include shipping, water desalination and financial services.[[112]](#cite_note-112) Kuwait has a well developed banking system. The [Kuwait Stock Exchange](/wiki/Kuwait_Stock_Exchange) is the second-largest [stock exchange](/wiki/Stock_exchange) in the Arab world. The [National Bank of Kuwait](/wiki/National_Bank_of_Kuwait) is the largest bank in the country and one of the largest in the Arab world. Other prominent financial institutions based in Kuwait include the [Gulf Bank of Kuwait](/wiki/Gulf_Bank_of_Kuwait) and [Burgan Bank](/wiki/Burgan_Bank), which is named after the largest oilfield in the country.

Kuwait was the pioneer in the Middle East in [diversifying](/wiki/Diversification_(finance)) its earnings away from oil exports. However the country has struggled to diversify its economy since the Gulf War. In recent years, the hostile relationship between the elected parliament and government has prevented the implementation of economic reforms.<ref name=meed>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

In the past five years, there has been a significant rise in [entrepreneurship](/wiki/Entrepreneurship) and small business start-ups in Kuwait.[[132]](#cite_note-132)[[133]](#cite_note-133) The [informal sector](/wiki/Informal_sector) is also on the rise,[[134]](#cite_note-134) mainly due to the popularity of Instagram businesses.[[135]](#cite_note-135)[[136]](#cite_note-136)[[137]](#cite_note-137) Many Kuwaiti entrepreneurs use the Instagram-based business model.[[138]](#cite_note-138) Kuwait has been a major source of foreign economic assistance to other states through the [Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development](/wiki/Kuwait_Fund_for_Arab_Economic_Development), an autonomous state institution created in 1961 on the pattern of Western and international development agencies. Over the years aid was annually provided to Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, as well as the Palestine Liberation Organization. In 1974, the fund's lending mandate was expanded to include all developing countries in the world. During the Iran-Iraq war, significant Kuwaiti aid was given to the Iraqis. The Kuwait Fund issued loans and technical assistance grants totaling over $520 million during its fiscal year ending 30 June 2000.

### International holdings[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]

The [Kuwait Investment Authority](/wiki/Kuwait_Investment_Authority) (KIA) is Kuwait's [sovereign wealth fund](/wiki/Sovereign_wealth_fund) specializing in foreign investment. The KIA is the world's oldest sovereign wealth fund. Since 1953, the Kuwaiti government has directed investments into Europe, United States and [Asia Pacific](/wiki/Asia_Pacific). [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), the holdings were valued at $592 billion in assets.[[139]](#cite_note-139) It is the [5th largest](/wiki/Sovereign_wealth_fund#Largest_sovereign_wealth_funds) sovereign wealth fund in the world.

Kuwait is the Arab world's largest foreign investor, with $8.4 billion in [FDI outflows](/wiki/Foreign_direct_investment) in 2013.[[140]](#cite_note-140) Kuwait consistently tops regional rankings in FDI outflows. In 2013, Kuwait almost tripled its foreign investments.[[140]](#cite_note-140) Over the last 10 years, Kuwait has doubled investments in the [UK](/wiki/UK) to more than $24 billion.[[141]](#cite_note-141)[[142]](#cite_note-142) In 2014, Kuwait became the largest foreign investor in [China's](/wiki/China) [RMB](/wiki/RMB) market.[[143]](#cite_note-143)

### Transportation[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|300px|A highway in Kuwait City](/wiki/File:Kuwait_highway.jpg)

Kuwait has an extensive and modern network of [highways](/wiki/Highway). Roadways extended [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), of which [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) is paved. There are more than 2 million passenger cars, and 500,000 commercial taxis, buses, and trucks in use. On major highways the maximum speed is [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert). Since there is no railway system in the country, most people travel by automobiles. The government plans to construct US$11 billion rail network which will include a city metro for its capital.

The country's public transportation network consists almost entirely of bus routes. The state owned Kuwait Public Transportation Company was established in 1962. It runs local bus routes across Kuwait as well as longer distance services to other Gulf states.<ref name=KPTC>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> The main private bus company is CityBus, which operates about 20 routes across the country. Another private bus company, Kuwait Gulf Link Public Transport Services, was started in 2006. It runs local bus routes across Kuwait and longer distance services to neighbouring Arab countries.<ref name=KGL>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

There are two airports in Kuwait. [Kuwait International Airport](/wiki/Kuwait_International_Airport) serves as the principal hub for international air travel. State-owned [Kuwait Airways](/wiki/Kuwait_Airways) is the largest airline in the country. A portion of the airport complex is designated as Al Mubarak Air Base, which contains the headquarters of the [Kuwait Air Force](/wiki/Kuwait_Air_Force), as well as the Kuwait Air Force Museum. In 2004, the first private airline of Kuwait, [Jazeera Airways](/wiki/Jazeera_Airways), was launched.[[144]](#cite_note-144) In 2005, the second private airline, [Wataniya Airways](/wiki/Wataniya_Airways) was founded.

Kuwait has one of the largest shipping industries in the region. The Kuwait Ports Public Authority manages and operates ports across Kuwait. The country’s principal commercial seaports are [Shuwaikh](/wiki/Shuwaikh) and Shuaiba which handled combined cargo of 753,334 TEU in 2006.[[145]](#cite_note-145) Mina Al-Ahmadi, the largest port in the country, handles most of Kuwait's oil exports.[[146]](#cite_note-146) Construction of another major port located in [Bubiyan](/wiki/Bubiyan) island started in 2007. The port is expected to handle 1.3 million [TEU](/wiki/TEU) when operations start.

## Demographics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|Kuwaiti youth celebrating Kuwait's independence and liberation, 2011](/wiki/File:Kuwaityouth5020.jpg) Kuwait's 2014 population was 4.1 million people, of which 1.2 million were Kuwaitis, 1.1 million are Arab, 1.4 million Asian expatriates, and 76,698 Africans.[[147]](#cite_note-147)

### Ethnic groups[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]

Expatriates account for 70% of Kuwait's total population. 60% of Kuwait's total population is [Arab](/wiki/Arab) (including Arab expats).[[112]](#cite_note-112) [Indians](/wiki/Indian_people) and [Egyptians](/wiki/Egyptians) are the largest expat communities respectively.[[148]](#cite_note-148)

### Religion[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=21)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [Template:Bar box](/wiki/Template:Bar_box) The majority of Kuwait's citizen population is Muslim;<ref name=rel>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref><ref name=ssi>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> there are no official figures, but it is estimated that 60-70% are [Sunni](/wiki/Sunni_Islam) and 30%-40% are [Shia](/wiki/Shia_Islam_in_Kuwait),<ref name=irfr2002>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>[[149]](#cite_note-149)<ref name=irfr>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>[[150]](#cite_note-150) with other minor Muslim sects existing in very small numbers. 2007 estimates indicate that Kuwait also has a large community of expatriate Christians (est. 450,000), [Hindus](/wiki/Hinduism) (est. 600,000), [Buddhists](/wiki/Buddhism) (est. 100,000), and [Sikhs](/wiki/Sikhism) (est. 10,000).[[151]](#cite_note-151) The country includes a [native Christian](/wiki/Christianity_in_Kuwait#Kuwaiti_Christians) community, estimated to be composed of between 259 and 400 Christian Kuwaiti citizens.<ref name=ref>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> Kuwait is the only [GCC country](/wiki/Cooperation_Council_for_the_Arab_States_of_the_Gulf) besides Bahrain to have a local Christian population who hold citizenship. There is also a small number of [Bahá'í](/wiki/Bahá'í) Kuwaiti citizens.<ref name=irfr2007>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>[[152]](#cite_note-152)

### Languages[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=22)]

Kuwait's official language is [Modern Standard Arabic](/wiki/Modern_Standard_Arabic). [Kuwaiti Arabic](/wiki/Kuwaiti_Arabic) is the variant of Arabic used in everyday life, except in formal communication which is done in the state's official language. [Kuwaiti Sign Language](/wiki/Kuwaiti_Sign_Language) is used by the deaf community. [English](/wiki/English_language) is taught since first grade at all schools and is widely understood and often used as a business language. Beside English, [French](/wiki/French_language) is taught as a third language for the students of humanities section at schools, but for two years only. Due to historical immigration, [Persian](/wiki/Persian_language) is widely used especially among [Ayam Kuwaitis](/wiki/Ayam_(people)).

Kuwaiti Arabic is a variant of [Gulf Arabic](/wiki/Gulf_Arabic), sharing similarities with the dialects of neighboring coastal areas in Eastern Arabia.[[153]](#cite_note-153) [Abdulhussain Abdulredha](/wiki/Abdulhussain_Abdulredha) is the most prominent actor. Bye Bye London and Saif al Arab are among the most important theatrical productions in the region.

In 1975, the Higher Institute of Theatrical Arts was founded by the government to provide [higher education](/wiki/Higher_education) in theatrical arts.[[185]](#cite_note-185) The institute has several divisions. Many actors have graduated from the institute, such as [Souad Abdullah](/wiki/Souad_Abdullah), Mohammed Khalifa, [Mansour Al-Mansour](/wiki/Mansour_Al-Mansour), along with a number of prominent critics such as [Ismail Fahd Ismail](/wiki/Ismail_Fahd_Ismail).

### Arts[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=26)]

Kuwait has the oldest [modern arts](/wiki/Modern_arts) movement in the Arabian Peninsula.[[186]](#cite_note-186) Beginning in 1936, Kuwait was the first Gulf country to grant scholarships in the arts.[[186]](#cite_note-186) The Kuwaiti artist [Mojeb al-Dousari](/wiki/Mojeb_al-Dousari) was the earliest recognized [visual artist](/wiki/Visual_artist) in the Gulf region.[[187]](#cite_note-187) He is regarded as the founder of [portrait](/wiki/Portrait) art in the region.[[188]](#cite_note-188) In 1943, al-Dousari launched Kuwait's first art gallery.

Kuwait is home to more than [20 art galleries](/wiki/Tourism_in_Kuwait#Art_galleries). The Sultan Gallery was the first art gallery in the Gulf region.[[189]](#cite_note-189)[[190]](#cite_note-190) [Khalifa Al-Qattan](/wiki/Khalifa_Al-Qattan) was the first Kuwaiti artist to hold a solo artist exhibition in Kuwait. He founded a new art theory in the early 1960s known as "circulism".[[191]](#cite_note-191)[[192]](#cite_note-192) Other notable Kuwaiti artists include [Sami Mohammad](/wiki/Sami_Mohammad), [Thuraya Al-Baqsami](/wiki/Thuraya_Al-Baqsami) and [Suzan Bushnaq](/wiki/Suzan_Bushnaq).

Kuwait was the pioneer of literary movement in the region. In 1958, [*Al Arabi*](/wiki/Al_Arabi_Magazine) magazine was first published, the magazine went on to become the most popular magazine in the Arab world.<ref name=pioneer>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref> In the 1970s, many writers in the Arab world moved to Kuwait to make use of the freedom of expression.<ref name=newsmedia>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref> [Ismail Fahd Ismail](/wiki/Ismail_Fahd_Ismail) was one of the first Kuwaiti writers to achieve success in the Arab world. [Taleb al-Refai](/wiki/Taleb_Alrefai), [Laila al-Othman](/wiki/Laila_al-Othman), [A. H. Almaas](/wiki/A._H._Almaas), [Taibah Al-Ibrahim](/wiki/Taibah_Al-Ibrahim), [Najma Idrees](/wiki/Najma_Idrees), and [Fatimah Yousif al-Ali](/wiki/Fatimah_Yousif_al-Ali) are also among the pioneer writers.

### Music[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=27)]

Traditional Kuwaiti music is a reflection of the country's seafaring heritage,[[193]](#cite_note-193)[[194]](#cite_note-194) which is known for songs such as "[fidjeri](/wiki/Fidjeri)".[[195]](#cite_note-195)[[196]](#cite_note-196) Kuwaiti music contains musical influences from many cultures,[[195]](#cite_note-195) including India and East Africa. [Saleh and Daoud Al-Kuwaity](/wiki/Saleh_and_Daoud_Al-Kuwaity) were prominent Kuwaiti musicians who wrote over 650 songs, many of which are considered traditional and still played daily on radio stations both in Kuwait and the rest of the Arab world.[[197]](#cite_note-197)[[198]](#cite_note-198) Kuwait pioneered [contemporary music in the Gulf](/wiki/Khaliji_(music)),[[199]](#cite_note-199)[[200]](#cite_note-200)[[201]](#cite_note-201) Kuwaitis were the first commercial recording artists in the Gulf region.[[199]](#cite_note-199)[[200]](#cite_note-200)[[201]](#cite_note-201) Kuwait has a reputation for being the central music influence of the [modern Khaliji genre](/wiki/Khaliji_(music)). Over the last decade of satellite television stations, many Kuwaiti musicians have become household names in other Arab countries. [Abdallah Al Rowaished](/wiki/Abdallah_Al_Rowaished), [Nawal El Kuwaiti](/wiki/Nawal_El_Kuwaiti), Abdul Kareem Abdul-Qader, and Nabeel Shoail are the most prominent contemporary performers.

In 2002, the Higher Institute of Musical Arts was founded by the government to provide [higher education](/wiki/Higher_education) in music. The institute has several divisions. Many prominent musicians have graduated from the institute.

### Sport[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=28)]

[thumb|](/wiki/File:Jaber_Al-Ahmad_International_Stadium-2.JPG)[Jaber Stadium](/wiki/Jaber_Al-Ahmad_International_Stadium) is the largest stadium in Kuwait

[Football](/wiki/Association_football) is the most popular sport in Kuwait. The [Kuwait Football Association](/wiki/Kuwait_Football_Association) (KFA) is the governing body of football in Kuwait. The KFA organises the [men's](/wiki/Kuwait_national_football_team), [women's](/wiki/Kuwait_women's_national_football_team), and [futsal](/wiki/Futsal) national teams. The [Kuwaiti Premier League](/wiki/Kuwaiti_Premier_League) is the top league of Kuwaiti football, featuring eighteen teams. They have been the champions of the [1980 AFC Asian Cup](/wiki/1980_AFC_Asian_Cup), runners-up of the [1976 AFC Asian Cup](/wiki/1976_AFC_Asian_Cup), and have taken third place of the [1984 AFC Asian Cup](/wiki/1984_AFC_Asian_Cup). Kuwait has also been to one FIFA World Cup, in [1982](/wiki/1982_FIFA_World_Cup), but tied 1-1 with [Czechoslovakia](/wiki/Czechoslovakia_national_football_team) on the first round. Kuwait is home to many football clubs including [Al-Arabi](/wiki/Al-Arabi_SC_(Kuwait)), [Al-Fahaheel](/wiki/Fahaheel_(football_club)), [Al-Jahra](/wiki/Al_Jahra_(football_club)), [Al-Kuwait](/wiki/Al_Kuwait_Kaifan), [Al-Naser](/wiki/Al_Naser_Sporting_Club), [Al-Salmiya](/wiki/Al_Salmiya_Club), [Al-Shabab](/wiki/Al-Shabab_(Kuwait)), [Al Qadsia](/wiki/Al_Qadsia_Kuwait), [Al-Yarmouk](/wiki/Al_Yarmouk_(football_club)), [Kazma](/wiki/Al_Kazma_Kuwait), [Khaitan](/wiki/Khaitan), [Sulaibikhat](/wiki/Sulaibikhat), [Sahel](/wiki/Sahel_(Kuwaiti_football_club)), and [Tadamon](/wiki/Tadamon,_Kuwait). The biggest football rivalry in Kuwait is between [Al-Arabi](/wiki/Al-Arabi_SC_(Kuwait)) and [Al Qadsia](/wiki/Al_Qadsia_Kuwait).

Basketball is one of the country's most popular sports.[[202]](#cite_note-202) The [Kuwait national basketball team](/wiki/Kuwait_national_basketball_team) is governed by the Kuwait Basketball Association (KBA). Kuwait made its international debut in 1959. The national team has been to the [FIBA Asian Championship](/wiki/FIBA_Asian_Championship) in basketball eleven times. The [Kuwaiti Division I Basketball League](/wiki/Kuwaiti_Division_I_Basketball_League) is the highest professional basketball league in Kuwait. [Cricket in Kuwait](/wiki/Kuwait_national_cricket_team) is governed by the [Kuwait Cricket Association](/wiki/Kuwait_Cricket_Association). Other growing sports include [rugby union](/wiki/Rugby_union_in_Kuwait).

The [Kuwait national handball team](/wiki/Kuwait_national_handball_team) is controlled by the Kuwait Handball Association. Kuwait has achieved handball success at both the national and club level. The sport is widely considered to be the national icon of Kuwait, although football is more popular among the overall population. Kuwait is also the founding member of the Asian Handball Federation, the Asian Championship and Club Champions League.

[Hockey in Kuwait](/wiki/Kuwait_national_ice_hockey_team) is governed by the [Kuwait Ice Hockey Association](/wiki/Kuwait_Ice_Hockey_Association). Kuwait first joined the [International Ice Hockey Federation](/wiki/International_Ice_Hockey_Federation) in 1985, but was expelled in 1992 due to a lack of ice hockey activity.[[203]](#cite_note-203) Kuwait was re-admitted into the IIHF in May 2009.[[204]](#cite_note-204) In 2015, Kuwait won the [IIHF Challenge Cup of Asia](/wiki/IIHF_Challenge_Cup_of_Asia).[[205]](#cite_note-205)[[206]](#cite_note-206)

## Education[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=29)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) The largest university is [Kuwait University](/wiki/Kuwait_University) which is free for Kuwaitis and has over 1,500 faculty members and approximately 30,000 students. There are also a number of private universities such as [American University of Kuwait](/wiki/American_University_of_Kuwait) and [Gulf University for Science and Technology](/wiki/Gulf_University_for_Science_and_Technology).

To date, Kuwait has registered 384 [patents](/wiki/Patents), the second highest figure in the Arab world.[[207]](#cite_note-207)[[208]](#cite_note-208)[[209]](#cite_note-209) Along with [Egypt](/wiki/Egypt) and Saudi Arabia, Kuwait has been the Arab region’s main driving force behind [S&T output](/wiki/Science_and_technology) at the international level.[[210]](#cite_note-210) Kuwait produces the largest number of patents per capita in the Arab world and [OIC](/wiki/OIC).[[211]](#cite_note-211)[[212]](#cite_note-212)[[213]](#cite_note-213)[[214]](#cite_note-214) The government has implemented various programs to foster innovation resulting in patent rights.[[215]](#cite_note-215)<ref name=mit/> Between 2010 and 2015, Kuwait registered the highest growth in patents in the Arab world.[[209]](#cite_note-209)[[211]](#cite_note-211)[[215]](#cite_note-215) Kuwait has the highest [literacy rate](/wiki/Literacy_rate) in the Arab world.[[216]](#cite_note-216) The public school system is undergoing a revamp due to a project in conjunction with the [World Bank](/wiki/World_Bank).[[217]](#cite_note-217) In April 2013, the Kuwaiti government partnered with the World Bank to launch a pilot project in 48 schools across the state called the National Curriculum Framework.[[217]](#cite_note-217) The curriculum is set to be implemented in the next two or three years.[[217]](#cite_note-217)[[218]](#cite_note-218) The Kuwaiti government sends many citizens to universities in United States, United Kingdom, Germany and other countries. The international mobility of Kuwaiti students is close to record levels.[[219]](#cite_note-219) According to official figures in 2012, 50,000 Kuwaiti students were studying at universities overseas.[[220]](#cite_note-220) The main push factor is the shortage of domestic university places and perceived prestige of overseas university credentials.[[219]](#cite_note-219) The Kuwaiti government's overseas scholarship program aims to transform Kuwait into a center for IT, financial services and medical sciences.[[221]](#cite_note-221)[[222]](#cite_note-222) In 2012, Kuwait became a top 25 sending country to [US universities](/wiki/US_universities) with a total of 5,100 Kuwaiti students.[[222]](#cite_note-222)[[223]](#cite_note-223)[[224]](#cite_note-224)

## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=30)]

[Template:Portal](/wiki/Template:Portal)

* [Outline of Kuwait](/wiki/Outline_of_Kuwait)

[Template:Clear](/wiki/Template:Clear)

## Notes[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=31)]

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## References[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=32)]

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## Further reading[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=33)]

[Template:Refbegin](/wiki/Template:Refbegin)

* [Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)
* [Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)
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## External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=34)]

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* [Template:GovPubs](/wiki/Template:GovPubs)
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