In general, information available as of 1 January 2003 was used in the preparation of The World Factbook 2003.

This page was last updated on 18 December, 2003.
Introduction

Kuwait

Background:
Britain oversaw foreign relations and defense for the ruling Kuwaiti AL-SABAH dynasty from 1899 until independence in 1961. Kuwait was attacked and overrun by Iraq on 2 August 1990. Following several weeks of aerial bombardment, a US-led, UN coalition began a ground assault on 23 February 1991 that liberated Kuwait in four days. Kuwait spent more than $5 billion to repair oil infrastructure damaged during 1990-91.

Geography

Kuwait

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

Geographic coordinates: 29 30 N, 45 45 E

Map references: Middle East

Area:

total: 17,820 sq km
water: 0 sq km
land: 17,820 sq km

Area - comparative: slightly smaller than New Jersey

Land boundaries:

total: 462 km
border countries: Iraq 240 km, Saudi Arabia 222 km

Coastline: 499 km

Maritime claims:
territorial sea: 12 NM

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

Terrain:
flat to slightly undulating desert plain

Elevation extremes:
lowest point: Persian Gulf 0 m
highest point: unnamed location 306 m

Natural resources:

petroleum, fish, shrimp, natural gas

Land use:

arable land: 0.34%
permanent crops: 0.06%
other: 99.6% (1998 est.)

Irrigated land:
60 sq km (1998 est.)

**Natural hazards:**

sudden cloudbursts are common from October to April and bring heavy rain, which can damage roads and houses; sandstorms and dust storms occur throughout the year, but are most common between March and August.

**Environment - current issues:**

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

**Environment - international agreements:**

party to: Climate Change, Desertification, Environmental Modification, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Nuclear Test Ban, Ozone Layer Protection

signed, but not ratified: Biodiversity, Endangered Species, Marine Dumping

**Geography - note:**

strategic location at head of Persian Gulf

**People - Kuwait**

**Population:**

2,183,161

*note:* includes 1,291,354 non-nationals (July 2003 est.)

**Age structure:**

0-14 years: 27.9% (male 310,008; female 298,474)
15-64 years: 69.5% (male 970,282; female 547,753)
65 years and over: 2.6% (male 36,306; female 20,338) (2003 est.)

**Median age:**

total: 25.9 years
male: 28.4 years
female: 21.8 years (2002)

**Population growth rate:**

3.34%

*note:* this rate reflects a return to pre-Gulf crisis immigration of expatriates (2003 est.)

**Birth rate:**

21.83 births/1,000 population (2003 est.)

**Death rate:**

2.45 deaths/1,000 population (2003 est.)

**Net migration rate:**

14.04 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2003 est.)

**Sex ratio:**

at birth: 1.04 male(s)/female
under 15 years: 1.04 male(s)/female
15-64 years: 1.77 male(s)/female
65 years and over: 1.79 male(s)/female

**Infant mortality rate:**

total: 10.57 deaths/1,000 live births
male: 11.58 deaths/1,000 live births
female: 9.53 deaths/1,000 live births (2003 est.)
Life expectancy at birth:

- total population: 76.65 years
- male: 75.72 years
- female: 77.62 years (2003 est.)

Total fertility rate: 3.08 children born/woman (2003 est.)

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate: 0.12% (2001 est.)

HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS: NA

HIV/AIDS - deaths: NA

Nationality:

- noun: Kuwaiti(s)
- adjective: Kuwaiti

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

Religions: Muslim 85% (Sunni 70%, Shi'a 30%), Christian, Hindu, Parsi, and other 15%

Languages: Arabic (official), English widely spoken

Literacy: definition: age 15 and over can read and write
- total population: 83.5%
- male: 85.1%
- female: 81.7% (2003 est.)

Government

Country name: State of Kuwait

conventional long form: State of Kuwait
conventional short form: Kuwait
local short form: Al Kuwayt
local long form: Dawlat al Kuwayt

Government type: nominal constitutional monarchy

Capital: Kuwait

Administrative divisions: 5 governorates (muhafazat, singular - muhafazah); Al Ahmadi, Al Farwaniyah, Al 'Asimah, Al Jahra', Hawalli

Independence: 19 June 1961 (from UK)

Constitution: approved and promulgated 11 November 1962

Legal system: civil law system with Islamic law significant in personal matters; has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction

Suffrage: adult males who have been naturalized for 30 years or more or have resided in Kuwait since before 1920 and their male descendants at age 21

note: only 10% of all citizens are eligible to vote; in 1996, naturalized citizens who do not meet the pre-1920 qualification but have been naturalized for 30 years were eligible to vote for the first time

Executive branch:

chief of state: Amir JABIR al-Ahmad al-Jabir Al Sabah (since 31 December 1977)

head of government: Prime Minister SABAH al-Ahmad al-Jabir Al Sabah (since 13 July 2003); First Deputy Prime Minister NAWWAF al-Ahmad Al Sabah (since 2003); Deputy Prime Ministers JABIR MUBARAK al-Hamad Al Sabah (since 2001) and Muhammad Dayfallah al-SHARAR (since 2003)

cabinet: Council of Ministers appointed by the prime minister and approved by the monarch

elections: none; the monarch is hereditary; prime minister and deputy prime ministers appointed by the monarch

Legislative branch: unicameral National Assembly or Majlis al-Umma (50 seats; members elected by popular vote to serve four-year terms)

elections: last held 6 July 2003 (next to be held NA 2007)

election results: percent of vote - NA%; seats - Islamists 21, government supporters 14, liberals 3, and independents 12; note - all cabinet ministers are also ex officio members of the National Assembly

Judicial branch: High Court of Appeal

Political parties and leaders: none; formation of political parties is illegal

Political pressure groups and leaders: several political groups act as de facto parties: Bedouins, merchants, Sunni and Shi’a activists, and secular leftists and nationalists


Diplomatic representation in the US:

chief of mission: Ambassador Sheikh SALIM al-Abdallah Jabir Al Sabah

FAX: [1] (202) 966-0517

telephone: [1] (202) 966-0702

chancery: 2940 Tilden Street NW, Washington, DC 20008

Diplomatic representation

chief of mission: Ambassador Richard H. JONES
from the US: embassy: Bayan, Area 14, Al-Masjed Al-Aqsa Street (near the Bayan palace),
Kuwait City
mailing address: P. O. Box 77 Safat, 13001 Safat, Kuwait Unit 69000, APO AE 09880-9000
telephone: [965] 539-5307, ext. 2240
FAX: [965] 538-0282

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

Economy - Kuwait

Economy - overview: Kuwait is a small, rich, relatively open economy with proved crude oil reserves of
about 98 billion barrels - 10% of world reserves. Petroleum accounts for nearly half of
GDP, 95% of export revenues, and 80% of government income. Kuwait's climate limits
agricultural development. Consequently, with the exception of fish, it depends almost
wholly on food imports. About 75% of potable water must be distilled or imported.
Kuwait continues its discussions with foreign oil companies to develop fields in the
northern part of the country. Oil production declined by an estimated 8% in 2002 but is
expected to return to the 2001 level in 2003.

GDP: purchasing power parity - $36.85 billion (2002 est.)
GDP - real growth rate: -2% (2002 est.)
GDP - per capita: purchasing power parity - $17,500 (2002 est.)
GDP - composition by sector: agriculture: 60%
industry: 39.7%
services: 0.3% (2000)

Population below poverty line: NA%
Household income or consumption by percentage share:
lowest 10%: NA%
highest 10%: NA%
Inflation rate (consumer prices): 2% (2002 est.)
Labor force: 1.3 million
note: non-Kuwaitis represent about 80% of the labor force. (1998 est.)
Labor force - by occupation:
agriculture NA, industries NA, services NA
Unemployment rate: 7% (2002 est.)
Budget:

- Revenues: $11 billion
- Expenditures: $17.5 billion, including capital expenditures of $NA (FY 02/03)

Industries:

- Petroleum, petrochemicals, desalination, food processing, construction materials

Industrial production growth rate:

- 5% (2002 est.)

Electricity - production:

- 31.49 billion kWh (2001)

Electricity - production by source:

- Fossil fuel: 100%
- Hydro: 0%
- Other: 0% (2001)
- Nuclear: 0%

Electricity - consumption:

- 29.29 billion kWh (2001)

Electricity - exports:

- 0 kWh (2001)

Electricity - imports:

- 0 kWh (2001)

Oil - production:

- 2.117 million bbl/day (2001 est.)

Oil - consumption:

- 273,000 bbl/day (2001 est.)

Oil - exports:

- NA (2001)

Oil - imports:

- NA (2001)

Oil - proved reserves:

- 97.68 billion bbl (37257)

Natural gas - production:

- 9.5 billion cu m (2001 est.)

Natural gas - consumption:

- 9.5 billion cu m (2001 est.)

Natural gas - exports:

- 0 cu m (2001 est.)

Natural gas - imports:

- 0 cu m (2001 est.)

Natural gas - proved reserves:

- 1.548 trillion cu m (37257)

Agriculture - products:

- Practically no crops; fish
Exports: $16 billion f.o.b. (2002 est.)

Exports - commodities: oil and refined products, fertilizers

Exports - partners: Japan 24.4%, South Korea 12.9%, US 11.9%, Singapore 10.1%, Taiwan 7%, Netherlands 4.5%, Pakistan 4.4% (2002)

Imports: $7.3 billion f.o.b. (2002 est.)

Imports - commodities: food, construction materials, vehicles and parts, clothing

Imports - partners: US 13.1%, Japan 11.1%, Germany 9.7%, Saudi Arabia 6.6%, UK 6%, Italy 5.4%, France 5.2% (2002)

Debt - external: $10.4 billion (2000 est.)

Economic aid - recipient: NA

Currency: Kuwaiti dinar (KD)

Currency code: KWD

Exchange rates: Kuwaiti dinars per US dollar - 0.3 (2002), 0.31 (2001), 0.31 (2000), 0.3 (1999), 0.3 (1998)

Fiscal year: 1 April - 31 March

Communications

Telephones - main lines in use: 412,000 (1997)

Telephones - mobile cellular: 210,000 (1997)

Telephone system: general assessment: the quality of service is excellent
domestic: new telephone exchanges provide a large capacity for new subscribers; trunk traffic is carried by microwave radio relay, coaxial cable, and open-wire and fiber-optic cable; a cellular telephone system operates throughout Kuwait, and the country is well supplied with pay telephones
international: coaxial cable and microwave radio relay to Saudi Arabia; linked to Bahrain, Qatar, UAE via the Fiber-Optic Gulf (FOG) cable; satellite earth stations - 3 Intelsat (1 Atlantic Ocean, 2 Indian Ocean), 1 Inmarsat (Atlantic Ocean), and 2 Arabsat

Radio broadcast stations: AM 6, FM 11, shortwave 1 (1998)
Television broadcast stations: 13 (plus several satellite channels) (1997)

Internet country code: .kw

Internet Service Providers (ISPs): 3 (2000)

Internet users: 200,000 (2002)

Transportation

Railways: 0 km

Highways: total: 4,450 km
paved: 3,587 km
unpaved: 863 km (1999 est.)

Waterways: none

Pipelines: gas 169 km; oil 540 km; refined products 57 km (2003)

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

Merchant marine: total: 39 ships (1,000 GRT or over) 2,273,628 GRT/3,638,645 DWT
ships by type: bulk 1, cargo 1, container 6, liquefied gas 6, livestock carrier 5, petroleum tanker 19, roll on/roll off 1

note: includes some foreign-owned ships registered here as a flag of convenience: Monaco 1, Saudi Arabia 1 (2002 est.)


Airports - with paved runways: total: 3
over 3,047 m: 1
2,438 to 3,047 m: 2 (2002)

Airports - with unpaved runways: total: 3
under 914 m: 2 (2002)
1,524 to 2,437 m: 1

Heliports: 3 (2002)

Military

Military branches:
Army, Navy, Air Force (including Air Defense Force), National Police Force, National Guard, Coast Guard

Military manpower - military age:
18 years of age (2003 est.)

Military manpower - availability:
males age 15-49: 845,026 (2003 est.)

Military manpower - fit for military service:
males age 15-49: 508,399 (2003 est.)

Military manpower - reaching military age annually:
males: 18,885 (2003 est.)

Military expenditures - dollar figure:
$1,967.3 million (FY01)

Military expenditures - percent of GDP:
5.5% (FY01)

Transnational Issues

Disputes - international:
the Kuwait 1994 land and Khawr ’Abd Allah channel boundary demarcation ended Iraqi claims to Kuwait and Bubiyan and Warbah islands; Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are negotiating maritime boundary with Iran

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