Iraqi Kurdistan Adventure

10 Days

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS
AS THE PIONEER OF ADVENTURE TRAVEL
Iraqi Kurdistan is a historically and culturally rich region with a turbulent legacy, but opportunities for travel here do exist. Join MT Sobek on a brand-new exploratory adventure through this minimally touristed area, experiencing first-hand its past glories and present struggles. Behold ancient Erbil - the world’s oldest continuously inhabited city, tour third-century monasteries, the world’s oldest-known bridge and aqueduct ruin, a biblical prophet’s tomb, a mysterious Yazidi Pilgrimage site, explore Neanderthal Shanidar Cave, and learn about the moving history of Halabja. With expert guides leading you every step of the way, this is a unique chance to explore a spellbinding region of Iraq.

**Details**

- **Arrive:** Erbil, Iraq
- **Depart:** Erbil, Iraq
- **Duration:** 10 Days
- **Group Size:** 6-14 Guests
- **Minimum Age:** 16 Years Old
- **Activity Level:**

**Testimonials**

“Wow, I had a wonderful time in Iraqi Kurdistan and Balin is a fantastic guide! The mountain scenery is really exquisite, but it was the local people who drove this trip for me.”

Marilyn A.

“Iraqi Kurdistan is an amazing country with a fascinating and ancient history. Balin Zrar is an extraordinary guide with excellent knowledge of his country’s stories and customs.”

Mary G.

GOT QUESTIONS? SPEAK WITH AN EXPERT.

1.888.831.7526  INFO@MTSOBEK.COM
Why Take This Trip With Us?

REASON #01  
MT Sobek has been trailblazing edgy and unknown destinations for 50 years and creating exploratory adventures that few other companies run.

REASON #02  
You will be in the company of expert guides who have over 25 years’ experience leading groups in the Middle East and in Iraqi Kurdistan.

REASON #03  
We have successfully operated trips throughout the Middle East, including to Iran, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Saudi Arabia.

What to Expect

ACTIVITIES  
Cultural touring by private van and on foot, with easy walks to discover ancient towns and historical wonders.

LODGING  
Elegant resorts with spacious rooms and modern amenities. Includes two nights at the stunning Korek Mountain Resort.

CLIMATE  
It’s temperate and dry. Temperatures range from the low 50’s to mid-70’s F in March and from the mid-70’s to low 100’s F in September.

Meet Our Guides

Our expert guides and trip leaders are truly the key to our trips’ success. Many are locals who live in-country year-round; others have made it their second home—all are passionate, enthusiastic and endlessly knowledgeable. Meet two of the guides that might be on your trip.

Balin Zrar is a highly experienced tour guide and an Iraqi native with expert regional knowledge. As both a Kurdish and British citizen, he possesses a unique ability to blend local flavor with International standards. After his studies, he went to London where he opened a restaurant in Soho (1997—2005), giving him an exceptional window into the hospitality industry. He has traveled extensively in Europe, China and the Middle East. Several years ago Balin returned to his homeland to take an active role in building what he believes will become one of Kurdistan’s largest economic sectors—tourism.

Balin Zrar

GOT QUESTIONS? SPEAK WITH AN EXPERT.  
1.888.831.7526  INFO@MTSOBEK.COM
Itinerary

DAY 1
ARRIVE IN ERBIL, IRAQ
Upon arrival at Erbil International Airport, in the capital of Kurdistan, meet your guide outside of customs and transfer to the hotel. Have a drink in the lounge while receiving a briefing on your stay in Kurdistan, then enjoy a welcome dinner with the group.
Meals: D

DAY 2
EXPLORE THE CULTURAL TREASURES OF ERBIL
After breakfast, tour the 7,000-year-old Erbil Citadel — the oldest continuously inhabited city on earth, currently under UNESCO-funded restoration. Once a Sumerian city, journeying Abraham allegedly passed through here, and Darius III fled here after facing defeat by Alexander the Great. Explore the citadel’s famous Kurdish Textile Museum, then browse the food market and Qaysari Bazaar for jewelry, carpets, antiques, and delicacies. After a lunch of local cuisine, briefly visit 12th-century Choli Minaret, one of Erbil’s most famous landmarks. Dinner is at the hotel’s fine restaurant.
Meals: B, L, D

DAY 3
VISIT LALISH & ANCIENT SITES EN ROUTE TO DUHOK
Depart Erbil for fourth-century Dayro d-Mor Matay Monastery (St. Matthew’s Monastery) and a tour conducted by the monastery’s monks, then continue to Gaugamela, site of the famous battle between King Darius III and Alexander the Great. Behold amazing Jirwana, the world’s oldest-known bridge and aqueduct (from 690 BC). After lunch of traditional Kurdish fare, visit holy Lalish — pilgrimage site of the mysterious and fascinating Yazidi people — for a unique cultural experience amidst its famous shrines and welcoming residents. Arrive in Duhok in time for dinner.
Meals: B, L, D

DAY 4
TAKE A DAY TRIP TO ALQOSH
Today visit Alqosh, the tomb of Old Testament prophet Nahum (7th-century BC), and ancient monasteries and churches carved into the mountains, including Rabban Hormizd Monastery, founded around 640. After lunch, in the beautiful region of Sarsinc near Gara Mountain, explore the ruins of Saddam Hussein’s ten palaces, replete with man-made lakes and miles of sandstone steps alongside streams that led into the mountains where rocket emplacements guarded the valley. Return to hotel for dinner and an evening of local entertainment at one of Duhok’s finest restaurants.
DAY 5  HEAD EAST TO RAWANDUZ & KOREK MOUNTAIN VIA AMADIYA

Leave for the ancient fortress city of Amadiya and its 100-foot-high minaret, pass by a third-century synagogue, and visit an ancient Egyptian madrassa reportedly founded by the University of Cairo centuries ago. Continue to Barzan, stopping at the Mullah Mustapha Memorial to learn about Kurdistan’s most famous leader. Pass — and, if you choose, climb to — the famous Shanidar Cave, where Neanderthal remains were discovered in the 1950s. Travel the incredibly engineered Hamilton Road to Rawanduz, where one of the world’s longest cable-car lifts carries you to the famed Korek Mountain Resort.

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 6  HIKE IN RAWANDUZ GORGE

Today enjoy hiking in the stunning Rawanduz Gorge. Walk along a trail that borders the gorge, through a rocky valley crouched between the Korek and Bradost mountains. Enjoy a picnic lunch along the way. In the afternoon, return to Korek Mountain Resort to relax or explore the area. Enjoy dinner at the resort’s restaurant, an incredible blend of culture and cuisine.

Activity: 3 hours/3 miles hiking with negligible elevation gain and loss

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 7  TRAVEL TO SULYMANIYA & THE AMNA SURAKA

Travel to Sulymaniya, stopping in the beautiful town of Dokan for lunch. Upon arriving in Sulymaniya, visit the infamous Sulaymaniyah’s Amna Suraka, or Red House. The cavern-like entrance of this prison turned museum is covered with tiny mirrors representing the more than 185,000 Kurds who Saddam Hussein "disappeared" during his bloody reign of terror. Visit Sulymaniya’s bazaar, famous Sha’ab teahouse, and, time permitting, Goizha Mountain to enjoy a spectacular view for hundreds of miles to the Iranian border.

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 8  VISIT SULYMANIYA MUSEUM & HALABJA

Visit the Sulymaniya Museum, Kurdistan’s largest and Iraq’s second-largest antiquities collection. Learn about the issues around preserving Kurdistan’s antiquities. Depart for Halabja, one of the Kurdish villages attacked by

GOT QUESTIONS? SPEAK WITH AN EXPERT.
1.888.831.7526 INFO@MTSOBEK.COM
Saddam’s chemical weapons in 1988 that killed at least 5,000 people and injured an estimated 10,000. Today the city lives again — testimony to the Kurds' amazing resilience — and the Halabja Museum and Memorial Cemetery is both fascinating and moving. Gaze on the beautiful Ahmed Awa waterfall where we'll have a simple picnic lunch. Return to Sulaymaniya and freshen up in your hotel. A festive farewell dinner will be taken in one of Suly's fine dining establishments in the city.

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 9  KAYAK ON DOKAN LAKE & RETURN TO ERBIL

After breakfast at the hotel, depart for Dokan Lake for some pleasant kayaking. Enjoy lunch around the lake. On the way back to Erbil, visit Koi Senjaq, an ancient caravanserai (hostel on the ancient Silk Road), and old Jewish silver bazaar. Upon arriving in Erbil, check into the hotel and get ready for a wonderful farewell dinner.

Activity: 2 hours kayaking
Meals: B, L, D

DAY 10  DEPART FROM IRAQ

After breakfast at the hotel, have one final opportunity for a Q

Meals: B

GOT QUESTIONS? SPEAK WITH AN EXPERT.
1.888.831.7526  INFO@MTSOBEK.COM
Dates

Apr 1 - 10, 2020

Sep 26 - Oct 5, 2020
Pricing

2019

$ 5,095 per person

Additional Cost

$ 715 Single Supplement

2020

$ 5,095 per person

Additional Cost

$ 715 Single Supplement

PRICE INCLUDES

- Expert leadership from experienced adventure guides
- Accommodations as noted in the itinerary
- Meals as noted in the daily itinerary
- Potable water and snacks throughout
- All tips and gratuities for support staff with the exception of your lead adventure guide(s)
- 1 glass of wine or beer at welcome and farewell dinners
- All necessary kayaking gear
- All group entrance fees, activities, and ground transportation
- Arrival and departure day airport transfers

PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE

- International airfare, any airport taxes, or excess baggage charges
- Optional tips to your lead adventure guides
- Personal expenses such as medical immunizations, phone calls, laundry, or souvenirs
- Airport transfers if arriving outside of Day 1 or staying after the trip ends
- Optional travel protection

For full terms and conditions please visit www.mtsobek.com/terms. Please note that our itineraries may be subject to change.

GOT QUESTIONS? SPEAK WITH AN EXPERT.

☎️ 1.888.831.7526 📧 info@mtsobek.com
The World of MT Sobek

At Mountain Travel Sobek, we believe life is an adventure and adventure is life.

As the originators, innovators and leaders in adventure travel for more than five decades, we passionately create, craft and share indelible, transformative journeys to the world’s most memorable places. Our more than 200 unique and once-in-a-lifetime trips are designed to inspire and exhilarate, enliven and excite--opening eyes and minds through profoundly personal connections with nature and culture.

Our small group and custom adventures span the globe, and the spectrum—of interests, environments and activities—every one expertly planned and knowledgeably and passionately guided. And our commitment to making every experience a remarkable one has earned us preferred travel outfitter status for National Geographic Active Expeditions, Active New York Times Journeys, and Smithsonian Active Journeys.

We are the adventure company.

Awards

GOT QUESTIONS? SPEAK WITH AN EXPERT.

1.888.831.7526  INFO@MTSOBEK.COM
TWO HUNDRED ADVENTURES.
SEVEN CONTINENTS.
A WORLD OF DISCOVERY.

Where’s Your Next Adventure?

The Adventure Company | EST. 1969

MT-SOBEK™
MOUNTAIN TRAVEL SOBEK

1-888-831-7526 | MTSOBEK.COM
1266 66TH STREET, SUITE 4, EMERYVILLE, CALIFORNIA 94608-1117

FOLLOW US ONLINE @MTSOBEK