Full name: Republic of Iraq
Government: parliamentary democracy

Location: Middle East, bordering the Persian Gulf, between Iran and Kuwait
Capital: Baghdad
Area: 438,317 sq km (169,235 sq miles); slightly more than twice the size of Idaho

Climate: mostly desert; mild to cool winters with dry, hot, cloudless summers; northern mountainous regions along Iranian and Turkish borders experience cold winters with occasionally heavy snows that melt in early spring, sometimes causing extensive flooding in central and southern Iraq

Terrain: mostly broad plains; reedy marshes along Iranian border in south with large flooded areas; mountains along borders with Iran and Turkey

Natural Hazards: dust storms, sandstorms, floods

Population: 26.5 million (UN, 2005)
Ethnicity: Arab 75%-80%, Kurdish 15%-20%, Turkoman, Assyrian or other 5%
Major Language: Arabic, Kurdish
Religion: Muslim 97% (Shi'a 60%-65%, Sunni 32%-37%), Christian or other 3%
Life expectancy: 57 years (men), 60 years (women) (UN)

Currency: 1 Iraqi dinar = 1,000 fils