

# Inside the Middle East

Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Iran are in the news for all the wrong reasons. In 2009, just before the present violence in Syria and Iraq, I unravelled a picture quite different from the news stories of the time as I followed a winding route via the Euphrates, Kurdistan and the Valleys of the Assassins to finish eventually on the Persian Gulf. I met a spectacular variety of people – Druze, Maronites, Arabs, Kurds, Yazidis and both Shia and Sunni Iranians – and despite their differences I often found them working together to survive the harsh climate and make ends meet.

Astonishingly I found little evidence of the chaos that was about to engulf Syria and Iraq. Continuing through Iran, I rather worryingly managed to get arrested in the holy city of Qom, but luckily was let off with a caution. I then turned south through the desert to Qeshm Island in the Persian Gulf, a rocky no-man's-land that hasn't changed much since Marco Polo was there in 1271.



As always I took lots of photographs, and I've put the best of them into a revealing presentation, which I'm updating as the tragedies in Syria and Iraq unfold.

The slide/sound show **Inside the Middle East** generally lasts an hour but can easily be adjusted to your needs. I provide all equipment, including a choice of big screens.

My fee for this talk is £425 plus travelling expenses. If you'd like to make a booking please get in touch.

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