

7 Day Trip to Kurdistan

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badda

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I did a trip through Iraqi Kurdistan in February 2017. I had a great time and was witnessing amazing nature sites and met a lot of interesting people. I can really recommend the experience. I flew into Erbil and left the country at the Penjwen land border to Iran.

The visa procedure at Erbil International Airport was a breeze. No questions asked, just a bored glance at my passport, and I got the stamp. For the first few days I was staying in Erbil with trips to Dohuk, Alqosh, and the Hamilton-Road. I can highly recommend doing a one-day tour along the Hamilton Road, the nature-sites in that are are amazing. For my tours I was relying on the services of Karwan Wahed. I can warmly recommend him as a driver in Kurdistan. His english is excellent, and he is very friendly and very helpful.

The last days in Kurdistan I spent in the are around Sulaymaniyah. I can recommend visiting the Red Prison, which displays very impressive testimonials of the Saddam Regime. I also did a day-trip to Halabdjia by Shared Taxi, which was also very interesting.

Crossing the border at Penjwen was challenging, as I had bad luck considering the weather (lots and lots of snow), but in principal it is doable. I took a shared Taxi from Sulaymaniyah to Penjwen (8.000 IQD), from there I took a border taxi to the border point (2.000 IQD). There was a checkpoint just before Penjwen, where they asked me some questions about my trip for a few minutes, questioned me about my reasons to go to Iran, and checked my passport, but they eventually let me through. At the border they checked my passport very thoroughly again, but eventually gave me my exit stamp. On the iranian side there were multiple officers who wanted to take a look at my passport and my luggage, but after a few minutes I got my entry stamp to Iran and was good to go (Of course I had a visa prearranged, there are no visa on arrival for europeans at the border). After crossing the border I got a Taxi into Marivan for 100.000 Rial. There were a few money exchange offices, but they were all closed. But on the iranian side there are plenty of people standing around offering to exchange your Dinar for Rial.

