## **SYRIA**

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Syria, officially known as the Syrian Arab Republic is a country located in the Middle East in Western Asia. <u>Damascus</u>, the capital, is the major cultural center in the region. The majority of Syrians are Muslims, with a minority of Christians and Druze. Arabic is the official language while the <u>Syrian Pound (SYP)</u> is the national currency.

Syria was ruled by General Hafez Al Assad for three decades. Syria's National Day is celebrated on the 17th of April marking the evacuation of French soldiers in Syria putting an end to the French mandate over the country.

The four national colors that appear on the Syrian flag are white, red, green, and black. The <u>Syrian emblem</u> is symbolized by the hawk of Quraish holding a shield with the Syrian National Flag. The national anthem "<u>Humāt ad-Diyār</u> was written by Khalil Mardam Bey and the music was composed by Mohammed Flayfel.

*Dabkeh*, a traditional folk dance combining circular and line dancing, is popular all over Syria. Thus it is considered the national dance. Men's national dress is a long gown called Kaftan while women wear a long robe known as *Abaya*.

Syria is known for its rich Middle Eastern cuisine. One of the most popular national dishes is *Kibbeh* which consists of bulgur mixed with ground meat and spices to be served in various ways. No gathering or visit is complete without coffee! Thus coffee is the most popular drink in the country.

The <u>olive tree</u> is not just the national tree of Syria, it is also a symbol of life and dignity. The <u>fragrant</u> <u>Jasmine</u> is the national flower. It is widely cultivated in Syria, to the extent that Damascus was called the City of Jasmine.

The <u>Syrian Brown Bear</u> is the national animal of Syria while the <u>Northern Bald Ibis</u> is the national bird. Football is the most popular sport in the country; thus it's Syria's national sport.

- Further information regarding the symbols and knowledge of Syria can be found in the table of contents -

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