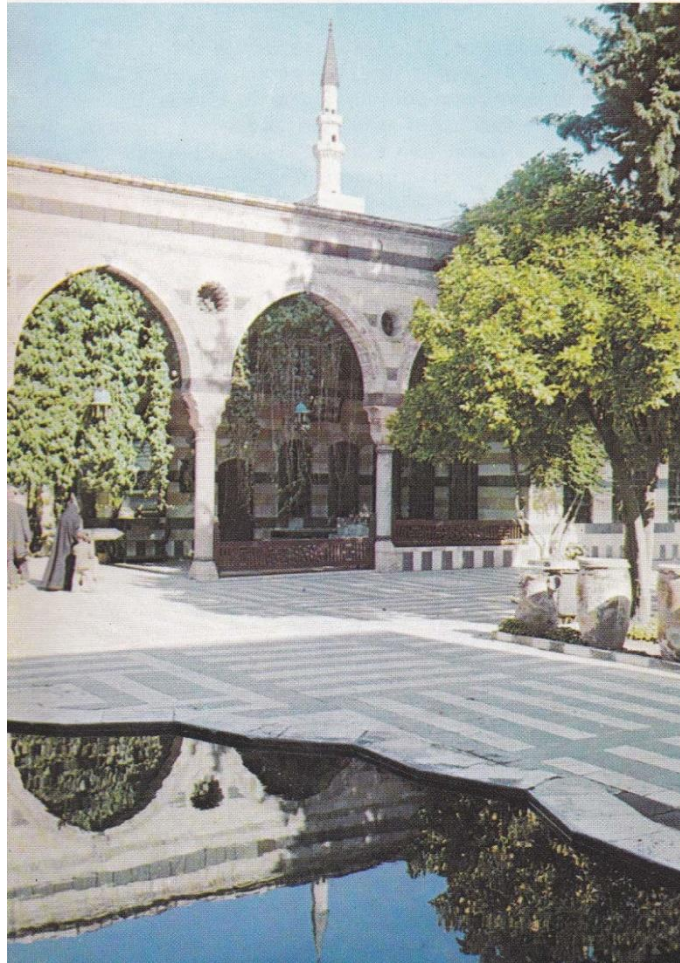




SAS CITY PORTRAIT

# Damascus

**SAS** SCANDINAVIAN AIRLINES



<b>Introduction to Syria</b>	3	City map and useful addresses	8
		Entertainment and night life	13
<b>Damascus</b>	4	Tipping	13
Your arrival	4	Shopping and souvenir hunting	13
Currency	5	Business hours	14
Hotels	5	Transportation	15
Restaurants and cuisine	5	Climate and clothing	15
City sights	6	Photography	15
Excursions	7	Public holidays and festivals	15

**This is the 1st edition of Damascus City Portrait printed in 30,000 copies – with information based on facts available in February 1977.**

## Syria

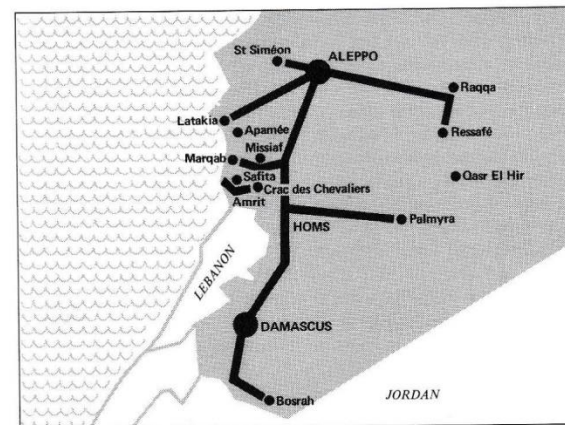
Syria – a country as old as man. Of ancient civilizations which helped shape the world. At the crossroads of three continents. A link between East and West. A jewel forever coveted, Syria has seen the Amorites, the Arameans, the Phoenicians, Alexander the Great, the Seleucians, the Romans, Tamerlane, the Ottoman Turks, the Omayyades and the Abbassides . . .

Its ruins are reminders of an intriguing and often traumatic past . . . from the building genius of the Romans to the devastation of the Mongols . . . from the turretted castles of the Crusaders to the citadels of Saladin . . . from the oldest Christian churches to Byzantine ghost towns . . . from the classical architecture of Palmyra's desert kingdom to the exquisite mosaics of the Omayyades.

Today the Syrian Arab Republic covers an area of 188,000 square kilometers with a population of some 8 millions. Where tractors will soon outnumber donkeys. Bedouins prefer pick-up trucks to camels. Artisans revive age-old handicrafts and a new breed of engineers help build the colossal Euphrates Dam.

A land of Mediterranean resorts, desert oases, cotton plantations, sugar-loaf clay houses, modern villas, oil wells, whirling dervishes, souks . . .

Syria is an exciting country to visit for business and vacation traveler – a nation in the midst of an industrial and touristic revolution.



# Damascus

The oldest continually-inhabited city in the world, Damascus is mentioned in Egyptian texts from the 18th dynasty, in Assyrian tablets – and in the Bible.

Present-day Damascus spreads out from the slopes of the Cassioun Mountains into a sprawling metropolis of two million inhabitants, with tree-lined avenues, 350 mosques, green parks and narrow alleyways glinting with brass and copperware.

A city whose name comes easily to our lips. The biblical place associated with the conversion of St. Paul: "... go at once to Straight Street to the house of Judas and ask for a man from Tarsus called Saul..." You can still walk the Street Called Straight and see the spot where Saul escaped from the city in a basket.

Damascus, the capital of the Omayyades who turned it into a center of Islamic Arab culture. The Omayyad Mosque is a typical example of the elegant architecture which has made Damascus "The beautiful holy city".

And who has not heard of Damascus silk, Damascene mosaics and the famous chased copper?

Damascus is the clamour and color of the covered bazaars. A glass-blower. White kaffirs. The National Museum with the world's oldest alphabet. Fountains and flowers. Friendly invitations to glass of hot tea. The more you know Damascus... the more you like it.

## Your arrival

Before you set out for Syria, remember that you must have an entry visa in your passport issued by the Syrian consular office in your country. In the case of groups of more than 10 persons a collective visa is usually granted free of charge. Entry visas can be obtained at the airport but naturally this can take some time.

On arrival at Damascus International Airport (14 miles – 23 km – from capital), a ground hostess will show you to the arrival hall where there is health and visa control. After you have collected your baggage you pass through customs control – red entry if you have anything to declare, otherwise green – and should ensure that your suitcases are marked by the official as having been checked.

You are allowed to take the following duty-free goods into Syria: 200 cigarettes or 50 cigars or 50 grams of tobacco, a bottle of wine and liquor plus a reasonable amount of perfume.

## Currency

The monetary unit in Syria is the Syrian pond (SP or SLE).

## Hotels

The accommodation situation in Damascus has greatly improved in the past few years with the opening of two first class hotels – and others are now planned or under construction. But it is still advisable to make a reservation well in advance before visiting Syria. You can do this through your travel agent or SAS office.

### Airport Hotel

near Airport.  
Tel. 22 54 00, 22 54 01.

### Cattan Hotel (E7)

Jemhoriet Street.  
Tel. 11 25 13, 11 25 14.

### International (E6)

Bahsa Street.  
Tel. 11 16 00, 11 16 01,  
11 34 00, 11 34 04.

### Meridien (C9)

Shoukry el Kowatly Street.  
Tel. 22 92 00, 22 92 04,  
22 92 02.

### New Omayyad Hotel (D7)

Brazil Street.  
Tel. 11 17 00.

### Orient Palace (F8)

Hijaz Square.  
Tel. 11 15 10, 11 15 11,  
11 15 12, 22 05 01, 22 05 00.

### Samir Palace (F6)

Merjeh Square.  
Tel. 11 95 02, 11 95 03.

### Semiramis (E7)

Jemhoriet Street.  
Tel. 11 38 13, 11 38 14,  
11 38 15.

## Restaurants and cuisine

Syrian cuisine in the best-known restaurants in Damascus has a Mediterranean and French flavor, and the visitor who wants to sample the local dishes will find a tasty selection including *kebab*, meat; *kebbeh* (meat and beans); *makzoubeh* (rice, eggplant, tomatoes and meat); *hommos* (beans) and *babaghannoj* (eggplant with garlic).

International liquor, beer and wines are available – but do try the Syrian red wine which is quite palatable.

Meal times are as follows – breakfast 7.30 a.m. to 10 a.m., lunch 1 p.m. to 3.30 p.m., dinner 8 p.m. to 11 p.m.

A selection of restaurants (it is advisable to book a table):

### Ali Baba (D6)

Fardoss Street. Tel. 11 98 81.

### Chemier (A9)

Abu Rommane Street.  
Tel. 33 88 83.

### Cordoba (C8)

Abu Rommane Street.  
Tel. 33 29 49.

### Snak Omayyad (D7)

Brazil Street. Tel. 11 17 00.

### Toledo (A10)

Maliki District.  
Tel. 33 38 10.

### Vandome (A9)

Abu Rommane District.  
Tel. 33 83 62.

### Versailles (A9)

Abu Rommane District.  
Tel. 33 00 17.

## City sights

Here is a selection of some of the sights you must not miss during a visit to Damascus. The letter/number in brackets is a map reference for use with the center spread map.

**Omayyad Mosque (H4)**, in the center of the old section of Damascus, with its dramatic and unusual architecture evokes memories of the vow of its builder, Omayyad Caliph Alwalid "I want to build a mosque the equal of which was never designed by anyone before me nor anyone after me". Judge for yourself if he succeeded, certainly the mosque is a magnificent example of Islamic architecture and a visible reminder of the history of the city. On this site in 1000 BC the Arameans built a temple to their god Hadad.

In the third century AD the Romans constructed a temple to the god Jupiter and in the 4th century AD when Christianity became the religion of the Byzantine Empire the temple was converted into a cathedral named after St. John the Baptist. When the Moslem Arabs arrived in Damascus in 636 AD they established a mosque in the eastern part of the building, leaving the western part to the Christians – and for the next 70 years both religions were practised there.

When Caliph Alwalid came to power in 705 AD he negotiated with the Christians and compensated them for their portion of the building before starting to create the present mosque which is regarded as one of the finest examples of the Omayyad art. In the courtyard note the Al-Khasne Dome standing on tall pillars – this was the former treasure house of the city of Damascus and look at the minaret in the opposite corner named the "Jesus" minaret as it was constructed on top of a tower from the Byzantine Cathedral.

Inside the mosque the floor is covered by some 900 hand-made carpets. The Sanctuary contains the mausoleum of St. John the Baptist erected on the spot where the saint's head was buried.

There is a special visitor's entrance to the mosque where one leaves shoes and the female tourists are given black robes to cover their arms, legs and head.

**Azem Palace (I5)**. Pass through the large brown door, walk along a short corridor and suddenly you are in a quiet courtyard with ornamental gold fish pools and lemon trees. The Azem Palace was built in 1749 by Assaad Pasha El Azem, Governor of Damascus and now houses the Museum of Art and Folklore. The building with its multi-colored bricks and stone is well preserved and considered one of the finest examples of 18th-century oriental architecture. The museum section gives an insight of what life was like for the governor's family in the 18th century.

**The Tekiye Suleimaniye Mosque (D9)**. Popularly known as the Turkish Mosque, this edifice was built on the orders of Sultan Suleiman (The Magnificent) between 1554 and 1560. It is a typical example of Turkish architecture in black and white stone with a large dome and two slender polygonal

minarets. The courtyard has a large pool and is surrounded by domed buildings which were once used as kitchens to feed the poor – and are now administrative offices for the nearby Military Museum. The vendors in the courtyard are selling phials of perfume.

**Damascus Muesum (D9)**. This is the national history museum. Save at least two to three hours to view this rich collection of the treasures from many Eastern civilizations – and if you are really interested in history you'll probably spend most of the day here! Here are baked tablets from the 14th century BC with the world's first cunieform alphabet, coins from the time of Alexander the Great, Roman coins, buckles, bracelets, nose clips made from gold, a priceless silver mask-helmet from 100 AD, Byzantine mail armour, beautiful brass lamps from mosques and 14th century glass and ceramicware.

**The souks (G/H5)**. No visit to Damascus would be complete without a stroll through the covered bazaars, the souks – for here is the biggest spice market in the world as well as the impressive Hamidye souk complex selling old and new products (see "Shopping and souvenir hunting").

**Ananias's Chapel (L3)**. Located near the Eastern Gate, this church represents the first Christian edifice in Damascus.

**St. Paul's Window Church (L4)**. This is built on the spot from where St. Paul was lowered down the city wall in a basket during his escape from Damascus.

**The Street Called Straight (J/I3)**. This street "Via Recta" stretched for a mile from the Eastern Gate of the city and still follows the same course along which St. Paul walked when he was converted to christianity. The Roman arch which St. Paul walked through has been restored but most of the columns which lined the avenue are still to be excavated and lie buried underground. Today the street is called Madhat Pasha.

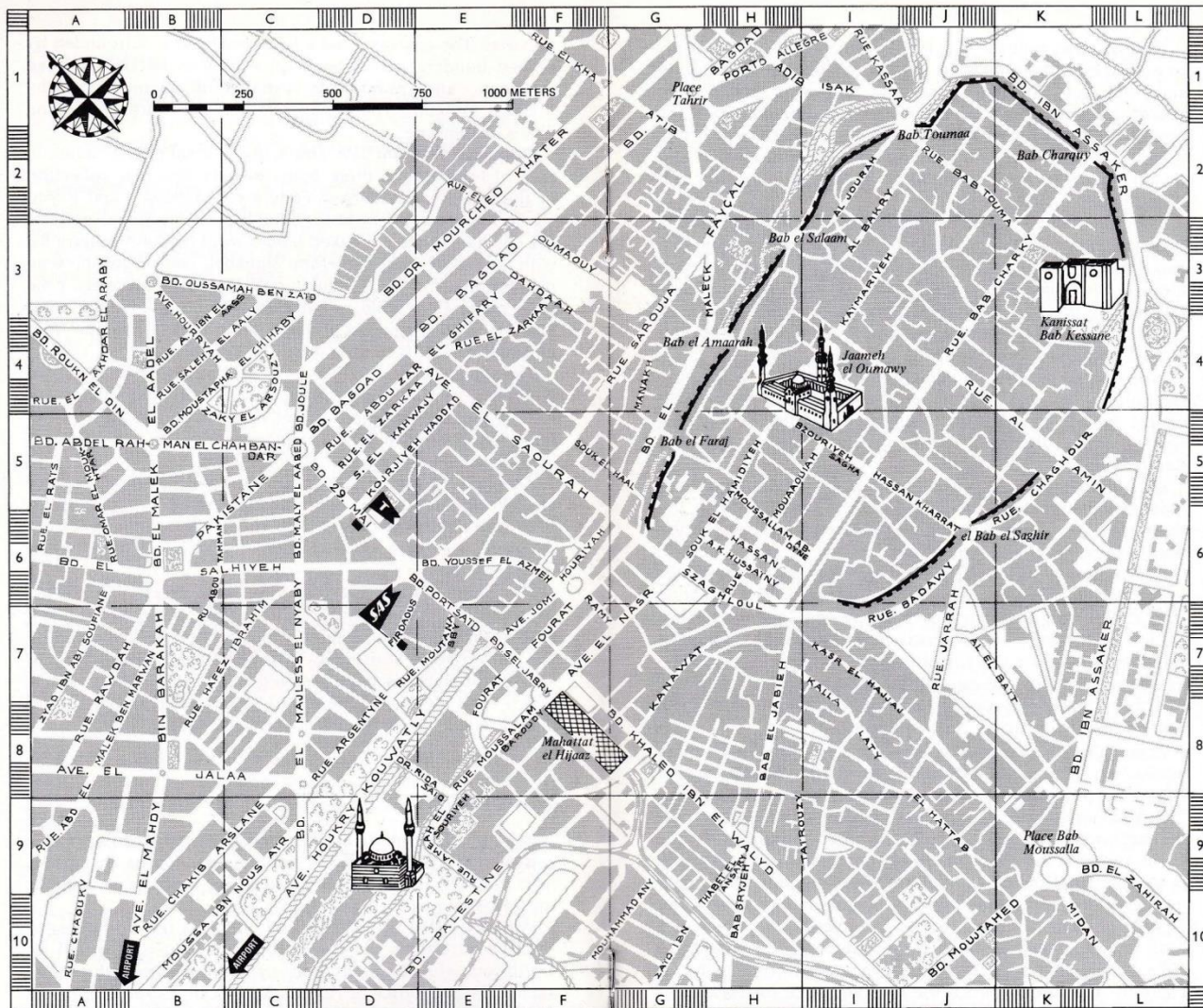
## Excursions

In this Cradle of Civilization where it has been said that you merely have to pick up a stone to uncover an ancient relic, naturally it is part and parcel of any business or vacation trip to participate in an excursion tour.

We have listed on pages 10, 11 and 12 a few of the major touristic attractions but there are many more and it will be worth your while to discuss your sightseeing plans with a travel agent. The SAS office at Fardoss Street can also help for they have suggestions ranging from a one-day tour of southern Syria to an 8-day "special" taking in Crusaders' castles, long-forgotten desert kingdoms, Roman ruins and famous biblical locations.

Tourist guides are available – they are licensed by the Ministry of Tourism and such is their knowledge that it will certainly pay you to hire one if you are really interested in learning something about the country. Details can be obtained at tourist information offices – or again contact SAS if you need further information.

(cont'd on page 10)



Code numbers in this booklet refer to the above map. Thus (D7) is located where lines drawn from "D" and "7" cross each other.

### Interesting sights in Damascus

- |                                     |                                    |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| (H4) Omayyad Mosque.                | (G/H5) The Souks.                  |
| (I5) Azem Palace.                   | (L3) Ananias' Chapel.              |
| (D9) The Tekiye Suleimaniye Mosque. | (L4) St. Paul's Window Church.     |
| (D9) Damascus Museum.               | (J/13) The Street Called Straight. |

### Useful addresses

**SAS** **SAS Ticket Office:**  
 Nahas Travel and Tourism Agency, Fardoss Street (D7),  
 tel. 22 08 54, 22 39 88.  
 Open hours: daily (except Friday) 8.30 a.m. to 1.30 p.m., 4.30 p.m.  
 to 7.30 p.m.

**T** **Tourist Information Office:**  
 Boulevard 29 May.  
 Open hours: 24-hours-a-day.

Distance from city center to Damascus International Airport: 14 miles (23 km).

(cont'd from page 7)

**Palmyra** (150 miles – 240 km – from Damascus). Possibly one of the least-appreciated of the world's major historical sites, Palmyra will shortly become known to many more tourists for a new hotel with 250 rooms is due to open at the end of 1977. At present time, it is suggested that you will find it easier to visit Palmyra by joining a package tour which also includes visits to Homs and the Crusaders' fortress, Crac des Chevaliers.

Whichever way you choose to see Palmyra – there is also a regular bus service taking 4½–5 hours – you will not be disappointed. There has been human habitation in this part of the world for some 50,000 years. Palmyra, itself, was originally founded by the Canaanites. But your main reason for seeing the ruins will be to admire the classical architecture from the Second and Third Centuries AD.

Protected on all sides by desert and an army of fierce mih-rates (desert soldiers), Palmyra remained an unconquered oasis amidst the powerful Roman Empire until the first century AD when it finally became a Roman garrison. Later it became a Roman colony.

But throughout these years the Palmyrenes retained their independent thinking and when Queen Zenobia came to the throne she virtually ignored Roman sovereignty occupying the rest of Syria, Egypt and Asia Minor.

It was during this Golden Age that the present buildings in the ancient city were erected. Unfortunately, the romantic story of Zenobia does not have a happy ending: for after her armies were beaten in two battles by the Romans, Emperor Aurelian lay siege to the city of Palmyra and later captured the queen as she tried to escape across the Euphrates. But in victory the Emperor was merciful and Queen Zenobia ended her days in the Tivoli Palace, outside Rome.

Zenobia's city covers an area of approximately six square kilometers. The major attractions are: **The Temple of Bel** where the outer walls and inner temple building still remain. The Palmyrenes were pagans and worshipped some 30 gods, the most important being Bel. This temple was built in 43 AD. In the center of the courtyard where ritual sacrifices took place is the principal building, noteworthy for its monolithic ceiling decorated with planets and the signs of the zodiac. **The Temple of Baal-Shamine** – second in importance was the god Baal, known to the Greeks as Zeus and to the Palmyrenes as "The Unknown God". The temple has a vestibule with six columns. **The Agora** – once the meeting place for social and commercial events. It had 11 gateways and the square was lined with 200 statues. Note the water-troughs in the corners in remarkable condition. **Valley of Tombs** – outside the city walls were the cemeteries which underlined the uniqueness of the Palmyrene civilization. The desert valley is dotted with no less than 150 Tower Tombs. Visit the tomb of Jambaleek to see how the Palmyrenes buried their dead, storing the coffins in layers. There are also underground tombs, hypogea, individual and house tombs. Apply to the museum if you would like to look inside the Tower and Underground tombs.

**The Museum** – located on the outskirts of present-day Palmyra. Among the relics on display are stone sculptures detailing the gods of Palmyra. The tesseraes, bronze and pottery "invitation cards", plus the bronze, gold and glass objects, point to the sumptuous life enjoyed in this city at the time of Queen Zenobia.

**The Castle of Ibn Maan.** Though not part of Zenobia's city, this Arab fortress, perched on the brow of a hill, offers a fine panorama over ancient and modern Palmyra.

**Maaloula** (35 miles – 56 km – from Damascus). This is a pretty blue and white village of flat-roofed houses huddled on the side of a sheer cliff. Many of the houses are hewn out of the rock. There are two old convents, a mosque, shops selling the local red wine which is particularly good – but for once, the reason you will probably want to visit this community is because of a language. In addition to their native Arabic, the citizens of Maaloula are quite unique in that they speak Aramean . . . the same language spoken by Jesus Christ. If you are with a guide he will ask the local people to converse in this ancient language . . . it is a strange, eery experience to hear a child of today speaking the same words which Christ probably spoke to his disciples.

**Sednaya** (19 miles – 30 km – from Damascus). Not far from Maaloula, is another pretty village of white, flat-roofed dwellings famous for its 6th century convent which contains a number of valuable icons. It is said that the convent was originally built by the Emperor Justinian and one of the priceless icons was drawn by St. Luke.

**Hama** (30 miles – 48 km – from Homs). An ancient town with a history embracing the Arameans (1000 BC), the Babylonians, Hittites, Byzantines and finally the Arabs from 638 AD. In a fertile agricultural area dominated by the Orontes river, Hama is a picturesque town with orchards and century-old wooden wheels which raise water from the river. Be sure to visit the old city with its souks and products of local crafts. The museum, former government palace, includes archaeological discoveries from the Orontes Valley, the most famous of which are the mosaic portraits.

**Homs** (98 miles – 156 km from Damascus). Today Homs is a busy, industrial city with an oil refinery and fertilizer factories, as well as being an important communication center linking central Syria with the port of Tartus. Homs has a rich history and was the home town of at least three Roman emperors while Septimus Severus married Julia Donna, a Homs citizen. Today's major sights include the twin-minaretted mosque of Arab warrior, Khaled Ibn el Walid, a Syrian Aramean Church where a sash, said to belong to the Virgin Mary, was found under the altar in 1953. Many of the treasures found in a Roman cemetery at Al Dayamee are on view at the National Museum in Damascus including a helmet with a silver mask.

**Crac des Chevaliers** (40 miles – 64 km – from Homs). A magnificent example of a Crusaders' fortress. Of all the castles in Syria – and there are many – this is the best preserved of

12th and 13th century military architecture. Located at an altitude of 2,200 feet (650 m), the fortress occupies a strategic position and between 1142 and 1271 (The crusading days of Richard the Lion Heart) at times it was manned by 2,000 Knights Hospitallers. The castle was protected by watch towers and observation posts. The Knights Hospitallers maintained their own farms with lush crops and pasture land providing all the necessary supplies.

**Aleppo** (200 miles – 320 km – from Damascus). Number two city in Syria with a population of one million – and rival to Damascus for the claim “oldest city in the world”. In fact, Aleppo is known to date from 2000 BC when it was called Hal-pa and was the center of the prosperous kingdom of Yamhad.

Present-day Aleppo is an attractive city, with many fine buildings, mosques and parks, dominated by the Citadel, a superb example of Arab military architecture dating from the 13th century. The entrance is still intact and most impressive. From the ramparts there is a panoramic view over the city.

In addition to the Citadel, Aleppo also boasts an intriguing area of souks, each bazaar specializing in one particular product such as footwear, jewellery or textiles. Under the arches, in the small shops, one can buy hand-made copper- and brassware, silver and gold items, silks, brocades, kaftans and carpets.

The Aleppo Museum is quite outstanding with unique collections of Assyrian, Babylonian, Hittite and Ugaritic relics as well as Greek, Roman, Byzantine and Islamic sections.

**Latakia** (225 miles – 360 km – from Damascus). Latakia has three faces. It is a busy port and together with neighbouring Tartus the Syrian gateway to the Mediterranean. It is also a popular seaside resort with golden sands, swimming pools, open-air cafés and an ideal vacation climate. And thirdly, it is a historic spot where Roman ruins from the second century AD, including the Temple of Bacchus and a huge stone lion (now in National Museum, Damascus) have been discovered.

**Tartus** (187 miles – 300 km – from Damascus). South of Latakia is Tartus, a modern port with a history which encompasses the Greeks, the Romans and the Crusaders. One can still see a path along which the Crusaders reached their boats in 1291 and escaped to Cyprus. Legend has it that the town was originally established by the residents of the Arwad Island which lies anchored in the sea opposite to Tartus . . . an isle of Phoenician ruins, two Arab castles and a lively fishing harbor . . . said to have been visited by St. Paul on his way to Rome. South of Tartus is Amrit and the ruins of a temple built in the 5th century BC.

**Bosra** (100 miles – 160 km – from Damascus). A small town in southern Syria with enormous reminders of its fascinating past. It was once the capital of the Roman province of Arabia in 108 AD and gave Rome one of its emperors, Marcus Julius Philippus – Philip the Arab. At that time it had the rank of metropole with its own currency.

Its most remarkable edifices are the 2nd century Roman theater, wonderfully preserved, where performances are often given on the stage, and a citadel built in the 12th century by the Ayubite Sultans.

Bosra, in fact, has the oldest minaret from the Moslem epoch still standing and the largest cryptoporticus of the Roman period.

## Entertainment and night life

Night club entertainment in Damascus tends to be limited – and in keeping with other capitals of the world, a little expensive. Most visitors start off the evening in the bars of the Meridien or International Hotels – and then move on to one of the restaurants listed under “Restaurants”.

There are, however, a number of clubs which might appeal to you and here is a selection:

### Meridien Hotel's (C9)

#### Casino

Airport Hotel.

### International Hotel's (E6)

#### Al Kasa (D6)

Salihieh Street.  
Arabic.

### Semiramis Hotel's (E7)

#### Caravan (E7)

Hijaz Street.  
Arabic.

#### Blow-up (D7)

near SAS office.

For an inexpensive evening, why not combine a late evening shopping trip (in the summer shops close at 9 p.m.) with a spot of lifeseeing? It is quite safe to walk the streets – and you'll find yourself copying the Mediterranean habits of the Damascans who love strolling up and down the avenues in the cool of a summer evening. Over there is a man selling hot chestnuts from his brazier . . . and across the road a tea stall with steaming kettles . . . the flash of a kaffir, a kaftan, a veiled woman, a jeans-clad black-haired beauty . . . a donkey carrying turnips . . . a floodlit fountain . . . Damascus by night is a curious mixture of East and West.

## Tipping

Tipping is not prevalent in Syria and hotel and restaurant staff are not forever holding out their hands. If you feel the service warrants a small recognition we would suggest the following scale – parlour maid 2 S.P. at the end of your stay; hotel porter 1 S.P. (for hailing taxis, carrying bag, etc.); waiter 2 S.P. Taxi drivers do not expect a tip.

## Shopping and souvenir hunting

Throughout the ages, Syrian handicrafts have been sought after by those who appreciate hand-made quality products. Damascus continues to be the leading artisan center of the

country and in the shops and souks there is a wide, exciting range of Syrian goods to take home.

**Copper and brassware** – old and new – are particularly good buys. Take a look at the 70–100-year-old coffee pots with the beak-like spouts and the chased copper plates.

**Glassware** – hand-painted glass, engraved, iridescent glass.

**Textiles** – exquisite silk brocade which you can see woven in the souks. Expensive but still bargain buys in Damascus because of its high quality. Kaftans too with gold and silver threads. Embroidered table-cloths.

**Woodwork** – mother-of-pearl cigarette boxes, inlaid and painted wood cases. Syria is famous for its decorative wood mosaics.

Wickerwork, carpets, gold and silver jewelry, antique fire-arms, leather pouffes . . . just a few suggestions to give you an idea of the tempting array of souvenirs you can purchase in Damascus.

If you want to haggle, there are still some tradesmen who will lower the price of their goods – but more and more the authorities are encouraging the stores to have fixed prices.

A good place to start your shopping tour is at the Government-sponsored Craftwares Market located in an old Medrassa (a 16th-century Koranic School) near the Turkish Mosque where there are shops selling almost every type of hand-made item on sale in Damascus. There is no bargaining – you pay the amount listed on the price tag.

Naturally, from here one must go to the souks, the real shopping center of Damascus for hundreds of years. Even if you do not buy a single thing – and it's well nigh impossible not to open your wallet – a visit to the souk is an unforgettable experience of sights and sounds.

Some well-known shops:

**Azem School** (I5)  
near Azem Palace.

**Tony Stephen** (H5)  
Hamidye Souk.

**Hassan** (H4)  
opp. entrance Omayyad  
Mosque.

**Dabdoub** (I5)  
near Azem Palace.

**Koutarje & Safar** (L3)  
near Ananias' House.

**Giovanni** (L3)  
near Ananias' House.

This is a very short list and there are, of course, many equally fine stores.

Remember too, if your time is at a premium, that several of the first class hotels have shops in the lobby selling Syrian and oriental goods.

## Business hours

**Shops** are open as follows – summer: 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.; winter: 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.

**Government offices** are open from 8.30 a.m. to 2.30 p.m.

## Transportation

Within Damascus it is recommended that you use taxis. There are bus services but they tend to be rather crowded and confusing for the visitor who does not speak Arabic. Taxis, on the other hand, are cheap and plentiful. There is a fixed fare within the city of approximately one dollar.

It is not easy to rent a car and again we would recommend you join a guided tour when exploring the hinterland. There are tours by car, mini coach and motorcoach (see "Excursions").

There is also a well-organized network of buses serving the principal cities of Syria. Ask the SAS office (see center map) to give you details of the transportation facilities available.

## Climate and clothing

Syria has a pleasant Mediterranean climate with temperatures in spring and fall averaging 70°F (20°C) to 84°F (27°C), in the winter 40°F (5°C) to 60°F (15°C) and in the summer from 90°F (30°C) to 100°F (35°C).

Lightweight clothes are essential in mid-summer, an overcoat is often useful in the winter . . . and remember to bring something warm to slip on in Spring and Summer for it can sometimes be chilly in the evenings.

Remember when entering mosques to remove one's shoes – and women should cover their heads and arms. Of course, when an excursion tour includes visits to religious edifices, shorts, short dresses and beach-type wear must not be worn.

## Photography

There are virtually no restrictions against photography, except that pictures must not be taken in military zones. The local people do not mind their photographs being taken – but in all cases you will find a much more helpful attitude if you ask before pressing the button! Most makes of films are available in Damascus shops.

## Public holidays and festivals

El Adha; El Fitr; Prophet's Birthday; Holy Cross Day (only in Maaloula) 14th September; Soweida Wine Festival, July; Cotton Festival (in Aleppo), October; Flower Festival (Latakia), April; Damascus International Fair, August/September.

*Edited by Mike Simon*

© World-copyright 1977 SCANDINAVIAN AIRLINES SYSTEM 982523/7702  
No part of this publication may be reproduced without permission in writing from SAS. All prices quoted within are subject to change without notice, and in event of such a change, SAS can bear no responsibility.



**Ask SAS for a date!**

*The SAS International Events Service can supply you with comprehensive details of over 1,000 major events all over the world.*

*Our close cooperation with hundreds of organizations and fairs enables us to keep a world business, professional and cultural diary. We can even offer information about functions which will take place in five years' time!*

*Ask your nearest SAS office for more details.*

*Let SAS help you plan ahead.*

