



# Excursion Guide

## Middle East

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### Read Aloud Folktale, Legend or Myth:

Both selections are taken from *Tales from The Arabian Nights*, retold by Stella Maidment (Pavilion, 2010).

“Sinbad and the Jewelled River”: In this story, the well-known hero Sinbad is shipwrecked on an island. He finds a river filled with jewels, and then meets a kind king, who helps him get back home. There is very little dialogue, but the story is engaging. It is the shorter of the two selections.

“Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves”: Readers may be familiar with “Open Sesame!” and the treasure in the thieves’ cave, but this story goes on to tell about Ali Baba’s servant Marjanah, who is clever and observant enough to save her family from the thieves. Marjanah’s brave tricks will keep readers interested, and of course, she is married to her true love at the end.

### Remember to:

- Greet each person individually
- Use a globe or large map to show each person the starting point and destination
- Engage people in informal conversation
- Include supplemental materials such as music, souvenirs, coloring pages, or food to enhance the program



# Five Facts About The Middle East

1. The Dead Sea, in Israel, is the saltiest body of water on Earth.
2. In ancient times, Iraq was known as Mesopotamia and Babylonia.
3. During the summer, temperatures in the Arabian Desert can reach 129 degrees.
4. People have been living in the area of Jerusalem since the Copper and Bronze ages – for about 5,000 years.
5. Eighteen countries make up the Middle East, including Egypt, Iran, Israel, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen, among others.



# Annotated Bibliography

Unless otherwise specified, the non-fiction books listed here have many color photographs and images (but not cartoon-style illustrations); and they do not have an intimidating or distracting amount of text on the page. Although many of the selections are children's books, they are not obviously juvenile in their layout and illustrations. Titles of a more religious nature are listed as Alternate Selections since not all groups may be interested in using them.

## Top Selections

*Israel* by Nel Yomtov (Children's Press, 2012): Like other books in this series, there is a good balance among text, white space, and images. The photographs cover a range of subjects, including art, everyday and famous people, and nature. Other topics include: history, sports, and religion.

*Jerusalem and the Holy Land: Eyewitness Travel Guides* (DK Travel, 2007): Although there is more text in this book than perhaps any other on the list, the quality of the photos is very good. There is a broad range of photos, including nature, people, and ancient art; and there are also many maps of different cities and regions. It could be browsed and enjoyed for a long time.

*National Geographic Countries of the World: Iraq* by Charlie Samuels (National Geographic, 2007): This book includes five maps, and a handful of full-page photographs. Since it is a National Geographic publication, all of the photos are beautiful! The familiar "yellow rectangle" of National Geographic shows up frequently, which might be a positive association for some readers. Topics include: geography, nature, history, culture, and government.

*Syria* by Nel Yomtov (Children's Press, 2013): Just as engaging as *Israel* in this same series. Chapters include: "Ancient and Modern", "Crossroads in the Middle East", and "Rich Traditions", among others.



*Welcome to Iraq* by Sonali Malhotra (Garth Stevens Publishers, 2004): In addition to many photographs, at least half a page in size, this book has the added bonus of being in large print. The images are bright and captivating, and do a very good job of presenting a picture of Iraq that is quite different from what we often see on the news. Topics include art, leisure, history, people, and more.

*A World of Food: Lebanon* by Cath Senker (Clara House Books, 2010): This unique title introduces readers to the agriculture and climate of Lebanon; and to the ways that Lebanese celebrate with food. There are photographs of people cooking, eating in restaurants, and celebrating. By looking at Lebanon through its food, this book provides a cross-section of the many cultures that live there.

There are also “Enchantment of the World” books on Iran, Iraq, and Kuwait. Based on the quality of *Israel* and *Syria*, they would likely be valuable additions or substitutions to the program.

### **Alternate Selections**

*DK Eyewitness Books: Islam* by Caroline Stone (DK Children, 2005): This is a beautiful book, like the others in this series. It contains many captivating photos, images, and maps that balance the text. It is a good alternative for readers who are interested in Islamic arts but have trouble holding *Islamic Arts*.

*Islamic Arts* by Jonathon Bloom & Sheila S. Blair (Phaidon Press, 1997): This is an overview of Islamic arts, including architecture, textiles, ceramics, and calligraphy. There is more text here than in the other selections, but the elegant design of the book itself means there is a good deal of white space, and not too many text pages between the photographs. It is a smaller and thicker book than the other ones here, so some patrons might need help holding on to it; however the beautiful pictures make it a worthwhile selection.

*Judaism* by Michael Keene (World Almanac Library, 2006): The images in this book include maps, art, and photographs, and they are well-balanced

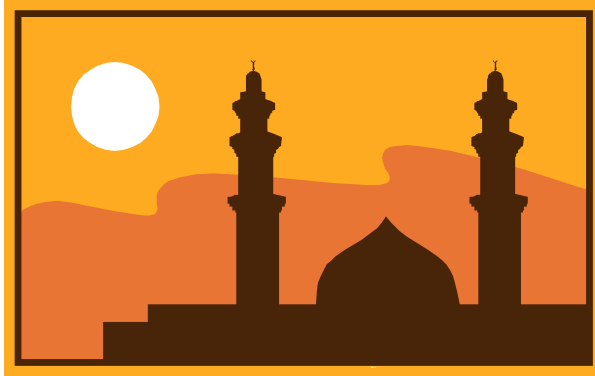


with the text. Topics include: history, holy books and worship, Judaism today, and more.

*Saudi Arabia in Pictures* by Catherine Broberg (Lerner Publications Library, 2003): This book combines many medium sized pictures with text, and also has 2-page photographs introducing each chapter. The selection of photographs does a good job of showing a Saudi Arabia that is beyond the traditional conception of desert and oil rigs. It is listed as an alternate selection because of the small size of the photographs as compared to the amount of text.



# Supplemental Materials



Souvenirs: bags of chocolate “gold” or plastic gold or jewels to go along with either folktale



Food: pita bread or pita chips with hummus and baba gannouj, olives, tabbouleh salad, coffee

Music Suggestions (to search on <http://www.youtube.com> or in your own library’s collection): Arabic folk or classical music; Israeli folk songs

Free coloring pages are available on the Internet from helpful resources such as <http://www.coloring.ws> and <http://www.supercoloring.com>. All coloring pages are subject to their own terms of use, separate from the Tales & Travel Creative Commons License. The following links are suggested for this Excursion:

“Camel on the Go Through Desert,”  
(<http://www.supercoloring.com/pages/camel-on-the-go-through-desert/>)