

Language

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ARABIC

Arabic is the official language of all Middle Eastern countries except Iran, Israel and Turkey. While English (and to a lesser extent, French – mainly in Lebanon and Syria) is widely spoken in the region, any effort to communicate with the locals in their own language will be well rewarded. No matter how far off the mark your pronunciation or grammar might be, you'll often get the response (usually with a big smile), 'Ah, you speak Arabic very well!'. Unlike English, the language is written from right to left, and it's a very good idea to at least familiarise yourself with the alphabet (p680).

Learning the basics for day-to-day travelling doesn't take long at all, but to master the complexities of Arabic would take years of constant study. In the absence of a viable phrasebook that encompasses all the varieties of spoken Arabic, Lonely Planet's *Egyptian Arabic Phrasebook* will prove very useful – despite its occasional limitations – thanks in no small way to the predominance of Egyptian TV programmes being broadcast throughout the Middle East.

TRANSLITERATION

It's worth noting here that transliterating from Arabic script into English is at best an approximate science. The presence of a number of sounds unknown in European languages, and the fact that the script is 'incomplete' (most vowel sounds are not written), combine to make it nearly impossible to settle on one method of transliteration. A wide variety of spellings are therefore possible for words when they appear in Roman script.

The matter is further complicated by the wide variety of dialects and the imaginative ideas Arabs themselves often have on appropriate spelling in, say, English. Words spelt one way in Egypt may look very different in Syria, which is heavily influenced by French. Not even the most venerable of Western Arabists have been able to come up with an ideal solution.

PRONUNCIATION

Pronunciation of Arabic can be tongue-tying for someone unfamiliar with the intonation and combination of sounds. Much of the vocabulary in this language guide would be universally understood throughout the Arab world, although some of it,

SPELLING THAT NAME

While we have tried to standardise all spellings in this book there are some instances in which flexibility seemed to be more appropriate than consistency. For example, if two alternative transliterations for the same thing exist in different countries, we may go with both if it's clear that these are the spellings any visitor to those countries will find on local maps and road signs.

Differences in spelling also arise through the same word having several variants in the different languages of the region – 'square' in Arabic is traditionally transliterated as *midan*, but in Turkish it's written *maydan* and in Persian *meidun* (or *meidun-é*; 'the square of'). Here lies great potential for confusion, as in the case with *hamam*, which is Turkish for the famed 'bathhouse', but Arabic for 'pigeon'; if you're looking for a good steam-cleaning, in Arabic you ask for a *hammad*, with the two syllables sounded distinctly.

We have also been forced to modify some spellings because of regional differences in Arabic pronunciation. The most obvious example of this occurs with the hard Egyptian sounding of the letter *jeem*, like the 'g' in 'gate', whereas elsewhere in the Arab world it's a softer 'j' as in 'jam' – hence we have used both *gadid* and *jadid* (new), and *gebel* and *jebel* (mountain).

THE STANDARD ARABIC ALPHABET

| Final | Medial | Initial | Alone | Transliteration | Pronunciation |
|-------|--------|---------|-------|-----------------|---|
| ا | | | ا | aa | as in 'father' |
| ب | ب | ب | ب | b | as in 'bet' |
| ت | ت | ت | ت | t | as in 'ten' |
| ث | ث | ث | ث | th | as in 'thin' |
| ج | ج | ج | ج | j (g/zh) | as in 'jet'; (g or as the 's' in 'measure' in Egypt) |
| ح | ح | ح | ح | H | a strongly whispered 'h', like a sigh of relief |
| خ | خ | خ | خ | kh | as the 'ch' in Scottish <i>loch</i> |
| د | د | د | د | d (z) | as in 'dim' (as z in Egypt) |
| ذ | ذ | ذ | ذ | dh | as the 'th' in 'this'; also as d or z |
| ر | ر | ر | ر | r | a rolled 'r', as in the Spanish word <i>caro</i> |
| ز | ز | ز | ز | z | as in 'zip' |
| س | س | س | س | s | as in 'so', never as in 'wisdom' |
| ش | ش | ش | ش | sh | as in 'ship' |
| ص | ص | ص | ص | ṣ | emphatic 's' |
| ض | ض | ض | ض | ḍ | emphatic 'd' |
| ط | ط | ط | ط | ṭ | emphatic 't' |
| ظ | ظ | ظ | ظ | ẓ | emphatic 'z' |
| ع | ع | ع | ع | ' | the Arabic letter 'ayn'; pronounce as a glottal stop – like the closing of the throat before saying 'Oh-oh!' (see Other Sounds, p681) |
| غ | غ | غ | غ | gh | a guttural sound like Parisian 'r' |
| ف | ف | ف | ف | f | as in 'far' |
| ق | ق | ق | ق | q | a strongly guttural 'k' sound; also often pronounced as a glottal stop |
| ك | ك | ك | ك | k | as in 'king' |
| ل | ل | ل | ل | l | as in 'lamb' |
| م | م | م | م | m | as in 'me' |
| ن | ن | ن | ن | n | as in 'name' |
| ه | ه | ه | ه | h | as in 'ham' |
| و | و | و | و | w | as in 'wet' |
| و | | | | oo | long, as in 'food' |
| و | | | | ow | as in 'how' |
| ي | ي | ي | ي | y | as in 'yes' |
| ي | | | | ee | as in 'beer', only softer |
| ي | | | | ai/ay | as in 'aisle'/as the 'ay' in 'day' |

Vowels Not all Arabic vowel sounds are represented in the alphabet. For more information on the vowel sounds used in this language guide, see Vowels (p681).

Emphatic Consonants To simplify the transliteration system used in this book, the emphatic consonants have not been included.

especially where more than one option is given, reflects regional dialects. For best results, pronounce the transliterated words slowly and clearly.

Vowels

Technically, there are three long and three short vowels in Arabic. The reality is a little different, with local dialect and varying consonant combinations affecting their pronunciation. This is the case throughout the Arabic-speaking world. At the very least, five short and three long vowels can be identified:

| | |
|----|---|
| a | as in 'had' |
| e | as in 'bet' |
| i | as in 'hit' |
| o | as in 'hot' |
| u | as in 'push' |
| aa | as in 'father' or as a long pronunciation of the 'a' in 'had' |
| ee | as the 'ea' in 'eagle' |
| oo | as the 'oo' in 'food' |

Consonants

Pronunciation for all Arabic consonants is covered in the Arabic alphabet table (p680). Note that when double consonants occur in transliterations, both are pronounced. For example, *el-hammaam* (toilet, bathhouse), is pronounced 'el-ham-mam'.

Other Sounds

Arabic has two sounds that are very tricky for non-Arabs to produce, the 'ayn and the glottal stop. The letter 'ayn represents a sound with no English equivalent that comes even close. It is articulated from deep in the throat, as is the glottal stop (which is not actually represented in the alphabet), but the muscles at the back of the throat are gagged more forcefully – it has even been described as the sound of someone being strangled!

In many transliteration systems 'ayn is represented by an opening quotation mark, and the glottal stop by a closing quotation mark. To make the transliterations in this language guide (and throughout the rest of the book) easier to use, we have not distinguished between the glottal stop and the 'ayn, using the closing quotation mark to represent both sounds. You should find

that Arabic speakers will still understand you through the context of your topic of conversation.

CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

Arabs place great importance on civility, and it's rare to see any interaction between people that doesn't begin with profuse greetings, inquiries into the other's health and other niceties.

Arabic greetings are more formal than greetings in English, and there is a reciprocal response to each. These sometimes vary slightly, depending on whether you're addressing a man or a woman. A simple encounter can become a drawn-out affair, with neither side wanting to be the one to put a halt to the stream of greetings and well-wishing. As an *ajnabi* (foreigner), you're not expected to know all the ins and outs, but if you come up with the right expression at the appropriate moment, they'll love it.

The most common greeting is *salaam* 'alaykum (peace be upon you), to which the correct reply is *wa alaykum as-salaam* (and upon you be peace). If you get invited to a birthday celebration or are around for any of the big holidays, the common greeting is *kul sana wa intum bi-kher* (I wish you well for the coming year).

After having a bath or a haircut, you will often hear people say to you *na'iman*, which roughly means 'heavenly' and boils down to an observation along the lines of 'nice and clean now!'

Arrival in one piece is always something to be grateful for. Passengers will often be greeted with *al-hamdu lillah 'al as-salaama*, meaning 'thank God for your safe arrival'.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Hi. | <i>marhaba</i> |
| Hello. (literally 'welcome') | <i>ahlan wa sahan/ahlan</i> |
| Hello. (response) | <i>ahlan beek or ya hala</i> |
| Goodbye. | <i>ma'a salaama/ Allah ma'ak</i> |
| Good morning. (response) | <i>sabah al-khayr sabah an-noor</i> |
| Good evening. (response) | <i>masaa al-khayr masaa an-noor</i> |
| Good night. (response) | <i>tisbah 'ala khayr wa inta min ahlu aywa/na'am</i> |
| Yes. | <i>la</i> |
| No. | <i>la</i> |

| | |
|--|---|
| Please. (request) | <i>min fadlak</i> (m)/ <i>min fadlik</i> (f) |
| Please. (polite, eg in restaurants) | <i>law samaht</i> (m)/ <i>law samahtee</i> (f) |
| Please. (come in/ go ahead) | <i>tafadal</i> (m)/ <i>tafadalee</i> (f)/ <i>tafadalu</i> (pl) |
| Thank you. | <i>shukran</i> |
| Thanks a lot. | <i>shukran jazeelan</i> |
| You're welcome. | <i>'afwan</i> or <i>ahlan</i> |
| How are you? | <i>kayf haalak?</i> (m)/ <i>kayf haalik?</i> (f) <i>al-hamdu lillah</i> |
| Fine. (literally 'thanks be to God') | <i>fursa sa'ida</i> |
| Pleased to meet you. (departing) | <i>'afwan</i> |
| Pardon/Excuse me. | <i>'assif!</i> |
| Sorry! | <i>mabrook!</i> |
| Congratulations! | <i>shu-ismak?</i> (m)/ <i>shu-ismik?</i> (f) |
| What's your name? | <i>ismee ...</i> |
| My name is ... | <i>min wayn inta?</i> |
| Where are you from? | |
| Do you speak ...? | <i>btah-ki ...?/hal tatakallam ...?</i> |
| I speak ... | <i>ana bah-ki .../ana atakallam ...</i> |
| English | <i>ingleezi</i> |
| French | <i>faransi</i> |
| German | <i>almaani</i> |
| I understand. | <i>ana af-ham</i> |
| I don't understand. | <i>ma bif-ham/la af-ham</i> |
| What does this mean? | <i>yanaee ay?</i> |
| I want an interpreter. | <i>ureed mutarjem</i> |
| I (don't) like ... | <i>ana (ma) bahib/ana (la) uhib ...</i> |
| No problem. | <i>mish mushkila</i> |
| Never mind. | <i>ma'alesh</i> |

Questions like 'Is the bus coming?' or 'Will the bank be open later?' generally elicit the inevitable response *in sha' Allah* (God willing) an expression you'll hear over and over again. Another less common one is *ma sha' Allah* (God's will be done), sometimes a useful answer to probing questions about why you're not married yet!

HEALTH

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| I'm ... | <i>'andee ...</i> |
| asthmatic | <i>azmit raboo</i> |
| diabetic | <i>is sukkar</i> |
| I'm allergic ... | <i>'andee Hasasiyya ...</i> |
| to antibiotics | <i>min mudad Haiowi</i> |
| to aspirin | <i>min asbireen</i> |
| to nuts | <i>min mukasarat</i> |
| to penicillin | <i>min binisileen</i> |

EMERGENCIES – ARABIC

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Help me! | <i>saa'idoonee!</i> |
| I'm sick. | <i>ana mareed</i> (m)/ <i>ana mareeda</i> (f) |
| Call the police! | <i>ittusil bil boleet!</i> |
| Go away! | <i>rouh min hoon!</i> |
| Shame on you! | <i>istiHi a'la Haalak!</i> |
| | (said by woman to a man bothering her) |

| | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| antiseptic | <i>mutahhir</i> |
| diarrhoea | <i>is-haal</i> |
| doctor | <i>duktoor/tabeeb</i> |
| headache | <i>sudaa'</i> |
| hospital | <i>mustashfa</i> |
| medicine | <i>dowa</i> |
| pharmacy | <i>agzakhana/saydaliyya</i> |

ACCOMMODATION & SERVICES

| | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| Do you have ...? | <i>fee'andakum ...?</i> |
| a room | <i>ghurfa</i> |
| a single room | <i>ghurfa mufrada</i> |
| a double room | <i>ghurfa bee sareerayn</i> |
| a shower | <i>doosh</i> |
| hot water | <i>mayy harr</i> |
| a toilet | <i>twalet/mirhad/hammaam</i> |
| air-con | <i>kondishon/takyeef</i> |
| electricity | <i>kahraba</i> |

| | |
|--|--|
| Where is (the) ...? | <i>wayn ...?</i> |
| bank | <i>al-masraf/al-bank</i> |
| hotel | <i>al-funduq</i> |
| market | <i>as-sooq</i> |
| Mohammed St | <i>sharia Mohammed</i> |
| mosque | <i>al-jaami'/al-masjid</i> |
| museum | <i>al-mat'haf</i> |
| passport & immi- gration office | <i>maktab al-jawaazaat</i> <i>wa al-hijra</i> |
| police | <i>ash-shurtaal-boleet</i> |
| post office | <i>maktab al-bareed</i> |
| restaurant | <i>al-mat'am</i> |
| tourist office | <i>maktab as-siyaaHa</i> |

| | |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| How much? | <i>qaddaysh/bikam?</i> |
| How many? | <i>kam wahid?</i> |
| How much money? | <i>kam fuloos?</i> |
| money | <i>fuloos/masaari</i> |
| big | <i>kabeer</i> |
| small | <i>sagheer</i> |
| good | <i>kwayyis</i> |
| bad | <i>mish kwayyis/mu kwayyis</i> |
| cheap | <i>rakhees</i> |
| expensive | <i>ghaali</i> |
| cheaper | <i>arkhas</i> |

| | |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| open | <i>maftooh</i> |
| closed | <i>maghlooh/musakkar</i> |

TIME & DAYS

| | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| What is the time? | <i>adaysh as-saa'?</i> |
| It's 5 o'clock. | <i>as-sa'a khamsha</i> |
| When? | <i>mata/emta?</i> |
| yesterday | <i>imbaarih'/ams</i> |
| today | <i>al-yom</i> |
| tomorrow | <i>bukra/ghadan</i> |
| minute | <i>daqiqqa</i> |
| hour | <i>sa'a</i> |
| day | <i>yom</i> |
| week | <i>usbu'</i> |
| month | <i>shaher</i> |
| year | <i>sana</i> |

| | |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| Monday | <i>al-itneen yom</i> |
| Tuesday | <i>at-talaata yom</i> |
| Wednesday | <i>al-arba'a yom</i> |
| Thursday | <i>al-khamees yom</i> |
| Friday | <i>al-jum'a yom</i> |
| Saturday | <i>as-sabt yom</i> |
| Sunday | <i>al-ahad yom</i> |

MONTHS

The Hejira calendar year has 12 lunar months and is 11 days shorter than the Western (Gregorian) calendar year, so important Muslim dates will fall 11 days earlier each (Western) year.

There are two Gregorian calendars used in the Arab world. In Egypt and the Gulf States, the months have virtually the same names as in English (eg January is *yanaayir*, October is *octobir*), but in Lebanon, Jordan and Syria, the names are quite different. Talking about, say, June as 'month six' is the easiest solution, but for the sake of completeness, the months from January are:

| | |
|------------------|---------------------------|
| January | <i>kaanoon ath-thaani</i> |
| February | <i>shubaat</i> |
| March | <i>aazaar</i> |
| April | <i>nisaan</i> |
| May | <i>ayyaar</i> |
| June | <i>huzayran</i> |
| July | <i>tammooz</i> |
| August | <i>'aab</i> |
| September | <i>aylool</i> |
| October | <i>tishreen al-awal</i> |
| November | <i>tishreen ath-thani</i> |
| December | <i>kanoon al-awal</i> |

SIGNS – ARABIC

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Entrance | <i>مدخل</i> |
| Exit | <i>خروج</i> |
| Open | <i>مفتوح</i> |
| Closed | <i>مغلق</i> |
| Prohibited | <i>ممنوع</i> |
| Information | <i>معلومات</i> |
| Hospital | <i>مستشفى</i> |
| Police | <i>شرطة</i> |
| Men's Toilet | <i>حمام للرجال</i> |
| Women's Toilet | <i>حمام للنساء</i> |

The Hejira months also have their own names:

| | |
|-------------|--------------------------|
| 1st | <i>moharram</i> |
| 2nd | <i>safar</i> |
| 3rd | <i>rabee' al-awwal</i> |
| 4th | <i>rabee' ath-thaani</i> |
| 5th | <i>jumada al-awwall</i> |
| 6th | <i>jumada al-akheera</i> |
| 7th | <i>rajab</i> |
| 8th | <i>sha'baan</i> |
| 9th | <i>ramadaan</i> |
| 10th | <i>shawwaal</i> |
| 11th | <i>zool-qe'da</i> |
| 12th | <i>zool-hijja</i> |

NUMBERS

| | | |
|-----------|---------------------------|----|
| 0 | <i>sifr</i> | ٠ |
| 1 | <i>waahid</i> | ١ |
| 2 | <i>itneen</i> | ٢ |
| 3 | <i>talaata</i> | ٣ |
| 4 | <i>arba'a</i> | ٤ |
| 5 | <i>khamsha</i> | ٥ |
| 6 | <i>sitta</i> | ٦ |
| 7 | <i>saba'a</i> | ٧ |
| 8 | <i>tamaniya</i> | ٨ |
| 9 | <i>tis'a</i> | ٩ |
| 10 | <i>ashra</i> | ١٠ |
| 11 | <i>Hida'ash</i> | ١١ |
| 12 | <i>itna'ash</i> | ١٢ |
| 13 | <i>talata'ash</i> | ١٣ |
| 14 | <i>arbatash</i> | ١٤ |
| 15 | <i>khamistash</i> | ١٥ |
| 16 | <i>sittash</i> | ١٦ |
| 17 | <i>sabi'tash</i> | ١٧ |
| 18 | <i>tamanta'ash</i> | ١٨ |
| 19 | <i>tisita'ash</i> | ١٩ |
| 20 | <i>'ishreen</i> | ٢٠ |
| 21 | <i>waahid wa 'ishreen</i> | ٢١ |
| 22 | <i>itneen wa 'ishreen</i> | ٢٢ |

| | | |
|------|--------------|------|
| 30 | talateen | ۳۰ |
| 40 | arbi'een | ۴۰ |
| 50 | khamseen | ۵۰ |
| 60 | sitteen | ۶۰ |
| 70 | saba'een | ۷۰ |
| 80 | timaneen | ۸۰ |
| 90 | tis'een | ۹۰ |
| 100 | imia | ۱۰۰ |
| 200 | imiatayn | ۲۰۰ |
| 1000 | 'alf | ۱۰۰۰ |
| 2000 | 'alfayn | ۲۰۰۰ |
| 3000 | thalath-alaf | ۳۰۰۰ |

TRANSPORT

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| How many kilometres? | kam kilometre? |
| airport | al-mataar |
| bus station | mahattat al-baas |
| train station | mahattat al-gitaar |
| car | as-sayaara |
| 1st class | daraja awla |
| 2nd class | daraja thani |
| here/there | hena/henak |
| left | yasaar |
| right | shimal/yameen |
| straight ahead | 'ala tool |

FARSI

Farsi (Persian) is the national language of Iran. Although the vast majority of Iranians can speak it, it's the first language for only about 60% of the population. The most predominant minority languages are Azeri, Kurdish, Arabic, Baluchi and Lori.

PRONUNCIATION

Vowels & Diphthongs

| | |
|----------|---|
| a | as the 'u' in 'must'; sometimes long, as in 'far' |
| e | as in 'bed' |
| i | as in 'marine' |
| o | as in 'mole' |
| u | as in 'rule' |

Consonants

The letters **b, d, f, j, k, l, m, n, p, s, sh, t, v** and **z** are pronounced as in English.

| | |
|-----------|--|
| ch | as in 'chip' |
| g | as in 'go' |
| y | as in 'yak' |
| zh | as in 'Zhivago' |
| r | slightly trilled as in Italian <i>caro</i> |

| | |
|-----------|---|
| h | always pronounced; like r , it doesn't lengthen the preceding vowel |
| kh | as the 'ch' in Scottish <i>loch</i> |
| gh | a soft guttural sound like the noise made when gargling |
| ' | a weak glottal stop, like the double 't' in the Cockney pronunciation of 'bottle' |

Double consonants are always pronounced as two distinct sounds. Stress generally falls on the last syllable of a word.

CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

| | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Hello. | salam |
| Peace be upon you. | salam aleikom |
| Goodbye. | khodafez/khoda hafez (more polite) |
| Good morning. | sobh bekheir |
| Good night/Good evening. | shab bekheir |
| Please. (request, literally 'kindly') | lotfan |
| Please. (when offering something, eg 'please help yourself') | befarmayin |
| Thank you. | mersi/tashakkor/motashakkeram |
| Don't mention it. | ghabel nabud |
| Excuse me/I'm sorry. | bebakhshid |
| Yes. | bale |
| No. | nakheir/na (less formal) |
| OK. | dorost |
| Where are you from? | shoma ahl-e koja hastid? |

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Do you speak ...? | shoma ... baladid? |
| English | englisi |
| French | feranse |
| German | almani |

HEALTH

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| I have ... | ... dalam |
| asthma | asm |
| diabetes | diyabet |
| I'm allergic ... | be ... hassasiyat dalam |
| to antibiotics | antibiyutik |
| to aspirin | asperin |
| to peanuts/nuts | badum zanini/ajil |
| to penicillin | penisilin |

| | |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| antiseptic | zedd e ufuni konande |
| diarrhoea | es-hal |
| doctor | doktor |
| hospital | bimarestan |
| medicine | daru |
| pharmacy | darukhune |

EMERGENCIES – FARSI

| | |
|---|--|
| Help! | komak! |
| I'm sick. | mariz am |
| I wish to contact my embassy/consulate. | mikham ba sefarat/ konsulgari khod am |
| Go away! | tamas begiram |
| Shame on you! (said by a woman to a man bothering her) | gom sho! |
| Call ...! | ... khabar konin! |
| a doctor | ye doktor |
| the police | polis o |

ACCOMMODATION & SERVICES

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| hotel | hotel/mehmunkhune |
| cheap hotel/guesthouse | mosaferkhune |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Do you have ... for tonight? | emshab ... darid? |
| a room | otagh |
| a single room | otagh-e ye nafari |
| a double room | otagh-e do nafari |
| a cheaper room | otagh-e arzuntar |
| a better room | otagh-e behtar |

| | |
|--|----------------------|
| How much is the room per night? | otagh shabi chand e? |
|--|----------------------|

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Excuse me, where is the ...? | bebakhshid, ... koja st? |
| consulate | konsulgari |
| embassy | sefarat |
| mosque | masjed |
| post office | postkhune |
| restaurant | restoran/chelo kababi/salon-e gheza |
| street/avenue | kheyabun |
| toilet | tuvalet |
| town centre | markaz-e shahr |

| | |
|------------------------|-----------|
| How many? | chand ta? |
| How much is it? | chand e? |
| cheap | arzun |
| expensive | gerun |

TIME, DAYS & NUMBERS

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| When? | kei? |
| At what time? | chi vaght? |
| (at) ... o'clock | sa'at-e ... |
| today | emruz |
| tonight | emshab |

SIGNS – FARSI

| | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| Entrance | ورود |
| Exit | خروج |
| Open | باز |
| Closed | بسته |
| No Entry | ورود ممنوع |
| No Smoking | دخانیت ممنوع |
| Prohibited | ممنوع |
| Hot | گرم |
| Cold | سرد |
| Toilets | توالت |
| Men | مردانه |
| Women | زنانه |

| | |
|----------------------------|-------|
| tomorrow | farda |
| (in the) morning | sobh |
| (at) night, evening | shab |

| | |
|------------------|---------------------------------|
| Monday | doshambe |
| Tuesday | seshambe |
| Wednesday | chaharshambe |
| Thursday | panjshambe |
| Friday | jam'e |
| Saturday | shambe (1st day of Muslim week) |
| Sunday | yekshambe |

| | | |
|-----------|----------|----|
| 1 | yek | ۱ |
| 2 | do | ۲ |
| 3 | se | ۳ |
| 4 | chahar | ۴ |
| 5 | panj | ۵ |
| 6 | shesh | ۶ |
| 7 | haft | ۷ |
| 8 | hasht | ۸ |
| 9 | noh | ۹ |
| 10 | dah | ۱۰ |
| 11 | yazdah | ۱۱ |
| 12 | davazdah | ۱۲ |

TRANSPORT

| | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Where is the ... (to Tabriz)? | ... (betabriz) kojast? |
| bus | otobus |
| train | ghetar |
| boat | ghayegh |
| ship/ferry | kashti |
| taxi (any kind) | taksi |
| car (or taxi) | mashin |
| minibus | minibus |
| airport | forudgah |
| jetty/dock/harbour | eskele |

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| bus/train station ticket | <i>terminal/istgah belit</i> |
| ticket office | <i>daftar-e belit forushi</i> |
| open/closed | <i>baz/ta'til</i> |
| left | <i>dast-e chap</i> |
| right | <i>dast-e rast</i> |
| far (from ...) | <i>dur (az ...)</i> |
| near (to ...) | <i>nazdik (-e ...)</i> |
| straight ahead | <i>mostaghim</i> |

HEBREW

Written from right to left, Hebrew has a basic 22-character alphabet – but from there it starts to get very complicated. Like English, not all these characters have fixed phonetic values and their sound can vary from word to word. You just have to know that, for instance, Yair is pronounced ‘Ya-ear’ and doesn’t rhyme with ‘hare’ or ‘fire’.

As with Arabic, transliteration of Hebrew script into English is at best an approximate science. The presence of sounds not found in English, and the fact that the script is ‘incomplete’ (most vowels are not written) combine to make it nearly impossible to settle on one consistent method of transliteration. Numerous spellings are therefore possible for words when they appear in Roman script, and that goes for place and people’s names as well.

For a more comprehensive guide to Hebrew than can be given here, get a copy of Lonely Planet’s *Hebrew Phrasebook*.

CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

| | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| Hello. | <i>shalom</i> |
| Goodbye. | <i>shalom</i> |
| See you later. | <i>lehitra'ot</i> |
| Good morning. | <i>boker tov</i> |
| Good evening. | <i>erev tov</i> |
| Goodnight. | <i>layla tov</i> |
| Thank you (very much). | <i>toda (raba)</i> |
| Please. | <i>bevakasha</i> |
| You're welcome. | <i>al lo davar</i> |
| Yes. | <i>ken</i> |
| No. | <i>lo</i> |
| Excuse me. | <i>slikha</i> |
| Wait. | <i>regga</i> |
| What? | <i>ma?</i> |
| When? | <i>matai?</i> |
| Where is ...? | <i>eifo ...?</i> |

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Do you speak English? | <i>ata medaber/medaberet anglit? (m/f)</i> |
|------------------------------|--|

ACCOMMODATION & SERVICES

| | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| bill | <i>kheshbon</i> |
| hotel | <i>malon</i> |
| room | <i>kheder</i> |
| toilet | <i>sherutim</i> |

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| How much is it? | <i>kama ze ole?</i> |
| money | <i>kesef</i> |
| bank | <i>bank</i> |
| post office | <i>do'ar</i> |
| letter | <i>mikhtav</i> |
| stamps | <i>bulim</i> |
| envelopes | <i>ma'atafar</i> |
| air mail | <i>do'ar avir</i> |
| pharmacy | <i>bet mirkakat</i> |
| shop | <i>khanut</i> |
| cheap | <i>zol</i> |
| expensive | <i>yakar</i> |
| right (ie correct) | <i>nakhon</i> |

TIME, DAYS & NUMBERS

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| What is the time? | <i>ma hash'a'a?</i> |
| seven o'clock | <i>hash'a'a sheva</i> |
| minute | <i>daka</i> |
| hour | <i>sha</i> |
| day | <i>yom</i> |
| week | <i>shava'a</i> |
| month | <i>khodesh</i> |
| year | <i>shana</i> |

| | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| Monday | <i>yom sheni</i> |
| Tuesday | <i>yom shlishi</i> |
| Wednesday | <i>yom revi'i</i> |
| Thursday | <i>yom khamishi</i> |
| Friday | <i>yom shishi</i> |
| Saturday | <i>shabbat</i> |
| Sunday | <i>yom rishon</i> |

Hebrew uses standard Western numerals for written numbers.

| | |
|-----------|----------------|
| 0 | <i>efes</i> |
| 1 | <i>akhat</i> |
| 2 | <i>shta'im</i> |
| 3 | <i>shalosh</i> |
| 4 | <i>arba</i> |
| 5 | <i>khamesh</i> |
| 6 | <i>shesh</i> |
| 7 | <i>sheva</i> |
| 8 | <i>shmona</i> |
| 9 | <i>tesha</i> |
| 10 | <i>eser</i> |

| | |
|-------------|--------------------------|
| 11 | <i>eakhat-esre</i> |
| 12 | <i>shteim-esre</i> |
| 20 | <i>esrim</i> |
| 21 | <i>esrim ve'akhat</i> |
| 30 | <i>shloshim</i> |
| 31 | <i>shloshim ve'akhat</i> |
| 50 | <i>khamishim</i> |
| 100 | <i>me'a</i> |
| 200 | <i>matayim</i> |
| 300 | <i>shalosh mayat</i> |
| 500 | <i>khamaysh mayat</i> |
| 1000 | <i>elef</i> |
| 3000 | <i>shloshet elefim</i> |
| 5000 | <i>khamayshet elefim</i> |

TRANSPORT

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Which bus goes to ...? | <i>eize otobus nose'a le ...?</i> |
| Stop here. | <i>atsor kan</i> |
| airport | <i>sde te'ufa</i> |
| bus | <i>otobus</i> |
| near | <i>karov</i> |
| railway | <i>rakevet</i> |
| station | <i>takhana</i> |

TURKISH

Ottoman Turkish was written in Arabic script, but this was phased out when Atatürk decreed the introduction of Latin script in 1928. In big cities and tourist areas, many locals know at least some English and/or German. In the southeastern towns, Arabic or Kurdish is the first language.

For a more in-depth look at the language, including a comprehensive list of useful words and phrases, get a copy of Lonely Planet’s *Turkish Phrasebook*.

PRONUNCIATION

The letters of the new Turkish alphabet have a consistent pronunciation; they’re reasonably easy to master, once you’ve learned a few basic rules. All letters except **ğ** (which is silent) are pronounced, and there are no diphthongs.

Vowels

| | |
|------------|----------------------|
| A a | as in ‘shah’ |
| E e | as in ‘fell’ |
| İ i | as ‘ee’ |
| I ı | as ‘uh’ |
| O o | as in ‘hot’ |
| U u | as the ‘oo’ in ‘moo’ |

| | |
|------------|----------------------|
| Ö ö | as the ‘ur’ in ‘fur’ |
| Ü ü | as the ‘ew’ in ‘few’ |

Note that **ö** and **ü** are pronounced with pursed lips.

Consonants

Most consonants are pronounced as in English, but there are a few exceptions:

| | |
|------------|---|
| Ç ç | as the ‘ch’ in ‘church’ |
| C c | as English ‘j’ |
| Ğ ğ | not pronounced – it draws out the preceding vowel |
| G g | as in ‘go’ |
| H h | as in ‘half’ |
| J j | as the ‘s’ in ‘measure’ |
| S s | as in ‘stress’ |
| Ş ş | as the ‘sh’ in ‘shoe’ |
| V v | as the ‘w’ in ‘weather’ |

CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

| | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Hello. | <i>Merhaba.</i> |
| Goodbye/Bon Voyage. | <i>Allaha ismarladık/Güle güle.</i> |
| Please. | <i>Lütfen.</i> |
| Thank you. | <i>Teşekkür ederim.</i> |
| That's fine/You're welcome. | <i>Bir şey değil.</i> |
| Excuse me. | <i>Affedersiniz.</i> |
| Sorry. (Excuse me/ Forgive me.) | <i>Pardon.</i> |
| Yes. | <i>Evet.</i> |
| No. | <i>Hayır.</i> |
| How much is it? | <i>Ne kadar?</i> |
| Do you speak English? | <i>İngilizce biliyor musunuz?</i> |
| Does anyone here speak English? | <i>Kimse İngilizce biliyor mu?</i> |
| I don't understand. | <i>Anlamıyorum.</i> |
| Just a minute. | <i>Bir dakika.</i> |
| Please write that down. | <i>Lütfen yazın.</i> |

HEALTH

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| I'm ... | <i>... var.</i> |
| asthmatic | <i>astımım</i> |
| diabetic | <i>şeker hastalığı</i> |
| I'm allergic to ... | <i>... alerjim var.</i> |
| to antibiotics | <i>antibiyotiklere</i> |
| to nuts | <i>çerezlere</i> |
| to peanuts | <i>fıstığa</i> |
| to penicillin | <i>penisiline</i> |

EMERGENCIES – TURKISH

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Help!/Emergency! | <i>İmdat!</i> |
| I'm ill. | <i>Hastayım.</i> |
| Could you help us, please? | <i>Bize yardım edebilirsiniz lütfen?</i> |
| Call a doctor! | <i>Doktor çağırım!</i> |
| Call the police! | <i>Polis çağırım!</i> |
| Go away! | <i>Gidin!/Git!/Defol!</i> |
| I'm lost. | <i>Kayboldum.</i> |

| | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| antiseptic | <i>antiseptik</i> |
| diarrhoea | <i>ishali</i> |
| hospital | <i>hastane</i> |
| medicine | <i>ilaç</i> |
| nausea | <i>mide bulantı</i> |
| pharmacy | <i>eczane</i> |

ACCOMMODATION & SERVICES

| | |
|---|------------------------------|
| Where is a cheap hotel? | <i>Ucuz bir otel nerede?</i> |
| What is the address? | <i>Adres ne?</i> |
| Please write down the address. | <i>Adres yazarmısınız?</i> |
| Do you have any rooms available? | <i>Boş oda var mı?</i> |

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| I'd like ... | <i>... istiyorum.</i> |
| a bed | <i>bir yatak</i> |
| a single room | <i>tek kişilik oda</i> |
| a double room | <i>İkikişilik oda</i> |
| a room with a bathroom | <i>banyolu oda</i> |
| to share a dorm | <i>yatakhane bir yatak</i> |

| | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| How much is it per night? | <i>Bir gecelik ne kadar?</i> |
| May I see it? | <i>Görebilir miyim?</i> |
| Where is the bathroom? | <i>Banyo nerede?</i> |

| | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| I'm looking for the/a ... | <i>... arıyorum.</i> |
| bank | <i>bir banka</i> |
| city centre | <i>şehir merkezi</i> |
| ... embassy | <i>... büyükelçiliğini</i> |
| hotel | <i>otelimi</i> |
| market | <i>çarşını</i> |
| police | <i>polis</i> |
| post office | <i>postane</i> |
| public toilet | <i>tuvalet</i> |
| telephone centre | <i>telefon merkezi</i> |
| tourist office | <i>turizm danışma bürosu</i> |

TIME, DAYS & NUMBERS

| | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| What time is it? | <i>Saat kaç?</i> |
| today | <i>bugün</i> |
| tomorrow | <i>yarın</i> |
| in the morning | <i>sabahleyin</i> |
| in the afternoon | <i>öğleden sonra</i> |
| in the evening | <i>aşamda</i> |

| | |
|------------------|------------------|
| Monday | <i>Pazartesi</i> |
| Tuesday | <i>Salı</i> |
| Wednesday | <i>Çarşamba</i> |
| Thursday | <i>Perşembe</i> |
| Friday | <i>Cuma</i> |
| Saturday | <i>Cumartesi</i> |
| Sunday | <i>Pazar</i> |

| | |
|------------------|----------------|
| January | <i>Ocak</i> |
| February | <i>Şubat</i> |
| March | <i>Mart</i> |
| April | <i>Nisan</i> |
| May | <i>Mayıs</i> |
| June | <i>Haziran</i> |
| July | <i>Temmuz</i> |
| August | <i>Ağustos</i> |
| September | <i>Eylül</i> |
| October | <i>Ekim</i> |
| November | <i>Kasım</i> |
| December | <i>Aralık</i> |

| | |
|-----------|-----------------|
| 0 | <i>sıfır</i> |
| 1 | <i>bir</i> |
| 2 | <i>iki</i> |
| 3 | <i>üç</i> |
| 4 | <i>dört</i> |
| 5 | <i>beş</i> |
| 6 | <i>altı</i> |
| 7 | <i>yedi</i> |
| 8 | <i>sekiz</i> |
| 9 | <i>dokuz</i> |
| 10 | <i>on</i> |
| 11 | <i>on bir</i> |
| 12 | <i>on iki</i> |
| 13 | <i>on üç</i> |
| 14 | <i>on dört</i> |
| 15 | <i>on beş</i> |
| 16 | <i>on altı</i> |
| 17 | <i>on yedi</i> |
| 18 | <i>on sekiz</i> |
| 19 | <i>on dokuz</i> |
| 20 | <i>yirmi</i> |
| 21 | <i>yirmibir</i> |
| 22 | <i>yirmiiki</i> |
| 30 | <i>otuz</i> |
| 40 | <i>kırk</i> |
| 50 | <i>elli</i> |

SIGNS – TURKISH

| | |
|---|-----------------------|
| Giriş | <i>Entrance</i> |
| Çıkış | <i>Exit</i> |
| Danışma | <i>Information</i> |
| Açık | <i>Open</i> |
| Kapalı | <i>Closed</i> |
| Polis/Emniyet | <i>Police</i> |
| Polis Karakolu/Emniyet Müdürlüğü | <i>Police station</i> |
| Yasak(tır) | <i>Prohibited</i> |
| Tuvalet | <i>Toilet</i> |

| | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 60 | <i>altmış</i> |
| 70 | <i>yetmiş</i> |
| 80 | <i>seksen</i> |
| 90 | <i>doksan</i> |
| 100 | <i>yüz</i> |
| 200 | <i>ikiyüz</i> |
| 1000 | <i>bin</i> |
| 2000 | <i>ikibin</i> |
| 1,000,000 | <i>bir milyon</i> |

TRANSPORT

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Where is the bus/tram stop? | <i>Otobüs/tramvay durağınere?</i> |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| I want to go to (İzmir). | <i>(İzmir)'e gitmek istiyorum.</i> |
| Can you show me on the map? | <i>Haritada gösterebilir misiniz?</i> |
| Go straight ahead. | <i>Doğru gidin.</i> |
| Turn left. | <i>Sola dönün.</i> |
| Turn right. | <i>Sağa dönün.</i> |
| near | <i>yakın</i> |
| far | <i>uzak</i> |

| | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| When does the ... leave/arrive? | <i>... ne zaman kalkar/gelir?</i> |
| ferry/boat | <i>feribot/vapur</i> |
| city bus | <i>şehir otobüsü</i> |
| intercity bus | <i>otobüs</i> |
| train | <i>tren</i> |
| tram | <i>tramvay</i> |

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| next | <i>gelecek</i> |
| first | <i>birinci/ilk</i> |
| last | <i>son</i> |
| timetable | <i>tarife</i> |
| train station | <i>istasyon</i> |

| | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| I'd like a ... ticket. | <i>... bileti istiyorum.</i> |
| one-way | <i>gidiş</i> |
| return | <i>gidiş-dönüş</i> |

Glossary

Here, with definitions, are some unfamiliar words and abbreviations you may meet in the text or on the road in the Middle East. This glossary contains English, Arabic (Ar), Egyptian (E), Farsi (Far), Hebrew (Heb), Jordanian (J), Lebanese (Leb), Libyan (Lib) and Turkish (T) words.

Abbasid dynasty – Baghdad-based successor dynasty to the *Umayyad dynasty*; ruled from AD 750 until the sacking of Baghdad by the Mongols in 1258

abd (Ar) – servant or slave

abeyya (Ar) – woman's full-length black robe

abra (Ar) – small motorboat

abu (Ar) – father or saint

acropolis – high city; hilltop citadel of a classic Hellenic city

agal (Ar) – headropes used to hold a *keffiyeh* in place; also 'iqal

agora – open space for commerce and politics in a classic Hellenic city

ahl al-kitab (Ar) – 'people of the book'; the position of special respect traditionally accorded to Jews and Christians in the *Quran*

ahwa – see *qahwa*

aile salonu (T) – family room for use by couples, families and single women in a Turkish restaurant

ain (Ar) – spring or well; also *ayn*, *ein*

akhbar (Ar) – great

Al-Ahram (E) – the Pyramids at Giza

arasta (T) – row of shops beside a mosque

arg (Far) – citadel

Ashkenazi – a Jew of German or eastern European descent

ateshkade (Far) – Zoroastrian fire temple

ayn – see *ain*

Ayyubid dynasty – Egyptian-based dynasty (1169–1250) founded by *Saladin*

azan – call to prayer

bab (Ar) – gate

badia (J) – stone or basalt desert

bagdir – see *barjeel*

bait – see *beit*

bakala (Ar) – corner shop

baksheesh – alms or tip

balad (Ar) – land or city

barjeel (Ar) – wind towers; *badgir* in Iran

basbut – see *bazbort*

bawwab (Ar) – doorman

bazbort – passport; also *basbut*, *pispot*

beit (Ar) – house; also *bait*

beit ash-sha'ar – Bedouin black goat-hair tent

bey (T) – junior officer in Ottoman army; a term of respect that corresponds to Mr

bijous – service taxi

Book of the Dead – ancient Egyptian theological compositions or hymns that were the subject of most of the colourful paintings and reliefs on tomb walls

bukhnoq (Ar) – girl's head covering

burg – see *burj*

burj (Ar) – tower; *burg* in Egypt

burnous (Lib) – white robe worn by women; it exposes only one eye

buyut ash-shabaab (Lib) – youth hostel

calèche (E) – horse-drawn carriage

caliph – Islamic ruler

Camel Period – the period of Saharan rock art from 200 BC to the present

cami(i) (T) – mosque

Canopic jars – pottery jars that held the embalmed internal organs and viscera of the mummy; these were placed in the burial chamber near the sarcophagus

capitol – decorated top part of a column in Roman or Greek architecture

caravanserai – see *khan*

cardo – road running north–south through a Roman city

carnet de passage – permit allowing entry of a vehicle to a country without incurring taxes

çarşı (T) – market or bazaar

cartouche – oblong figure enclosing the hieroglyphs of royal or divine names

centrale – telephone office

chador (Ar) – black, one-piece, head-to-toe covering garment; worn by many Iranian women

cipolin – white marble with veins of green or grey

curia – senate house or municipal assembly in ancient Rome

dalla (Ar) – traditional coffeepot

dammous (Lib) – underground Berber houses in Libya

Decapolis – league of 10 cities, including Damascus, in the northeast of ancient Palestine

decumanus – road running east–west through a Roman city

deir (Ar) – monastery or convent

dervish – Muslim mystic; see also *Sufi*

Diaspora – Jewish dispersion or exile from the Land of Israel; the exiled Jewish community worldwide

ein – see *ain*

eivan – rectangular hall opening onto a mosque's courtyard

emam (Far) – see *imam*

emir – literally 'prince'; Islamic ruler, military commander or governor

Eretz Yisrael – the Land of Israel, commonly used by Israel's right wing to refer to their preferred borders for the Jewish State, which includes the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and sometimes Jordan and/or the Sinai

evi (T) – house

fadl (Ar) – large metal platters for serving food

falaj (Ar) – irrigation channel

Fatimid dynasty – Shiite dynasty (908–1171) from North Africa, later based in Cairo, claiming descent from Mohammed's daughter Fatima; founders of Al-Azhar, the oldest university in the world

felaful – deep-fried balls of chickpea paste with spices served in a piece of flat bread with tomatoes or pickled vegetables; *ta'amiyya* in Egypt

fellaheen (E) – peasant farmers or agricultural workers who make up the majority of Egypt's population; literally 'ploughman' or 'tiller of the soil'

foggara (Lib) – underground channels leading to water in the Sahara

funduq (Lib) – hotel

fuul – paste made from fava beans

galabiyya (E) – see *jalabiyya*

gebel (E) – see *jebel*

ghibli (Lib) – hot, dry wind of northern Libya

gület (T) – traditional wooden yacht

haj – annual Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca; one of the five pillars of Islam

hamada – plateaus of rock scoured by wind erosion in the Sahara

hamam (T) – see *hammam*

Hamas – militant Islamic organisation that aims to create an Islamic state in the pre-1948 territory of Palestine; acronym (in Arabic) for Islamic Resistance Movement

hammam (Ar) – bathhouse; *hamam* in Turkish

hantour – horse and carriage

haram – anything that is forbidden by Islamic law

hared – (plural *hasidim*) member of an ultra-orthodox Jewish sect; also *hasid* (plural *hasidim*)

hasid – see *hared*

hejab (Ar) – woman's headscarf, worn for modesty; *hegab* in Egypt

Hejira – Mohammed's flight from Mecca to Medina in AD 622; the starting point of the Muslim era and the Muslim era itself

hisar (Ar) – fortress, citadel; *kale* in Turkish

hızlı feribot (T) – fast car ferries

Horse Period – the period of Saharan rock art from 1000 BC to AD 1

hypostyle hall – hall in which the roof is supported by columns

idehan – a vast area of shifting sand dunes in the Libyan Sahara known as sand seas

imam – prayer leader or Muslim cleric; *emam* in Farsi

intifada – Palestinian uprising against Israeli authorities in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem; literally 'shaking off'

'**iqal** – see *agal*

iqama – residence permit

iskele(si) (T) – landing-place, wharf or quay

iwān – vaulted hall, opening into a central court in a *madrasa* or a mosque

jalabiyya – full-length robe worn by men; *galabiyya* in Egypt

jamaa – see *masjid*

jamahiriyā (Lib) – republic or 'state of the masses' in post-Revolutionary Libya

jammour – crescent atop a minaret

janissaries – professional soldiers who ruled Ottoman Libya

jawazzat (Lib) – passport office

jebel (Ar) – hill, mountain; *gebel* in Egypt

jihad – literally 'striving in the way of the faith'; holy war

ka – spirit or 'double' of a living person that gained its own identity with the death of that person; the survival of the ka, however, required the continued existence of the body, hence mummification

Kabaa – the rectangular structure at the centre of the Grand Mosque in Mecca (containing the Black Stone) around which *haj* pilgrims circumbulate; also *Qaaba*

kababi (Far) – basic kebab shop

kale(si) (T) – see *hisar*

kanyon (Heb) – shopping plaza

keffiyeh (Ar) – checkered scarf worn by Arabs

khan – travellers' inn, usually constructed on main trade routes, with accommodation on the 1st floor and stables and storage on the ground floor; also *caravanserai*, *wikala* in Egypt

khedive – Egyptian viceroy under Ottoman suzerainty (1867–1914)

khor – rocky inlet

khutba (Ar) – sermon delivered by an *imam*, especially at Friday noon prayers

kibbutz – (plural *kibbutzim*) Jewish communal settlement run cooperatively by its members

kibbutznik – member of a *kibbutz*

kilim – woven rug

knanqah – *Sufi* monastery

Knesset – Israeli parliament

komite – Iranian religious police
konak (T) – mansion
Koran – see *Quran*
kosher – food prepared according to Jewish dietary law
köy(ü) (T) – village
kufic – type of highly stylised old Arabic script

Likud – Israeli right-wing political party
liman(i) (T) – harbour
lokanta (T) – restaurant

madhhab – ‘school’ of Islamic law and interpretation
madrassa – Muslim theological seminary; modern Arabic word for school; *medrese(si)* in Turkey
mafraj (Ar) – literally ‘room with a view’; top room of a tower house
mahalle(si) (T) – neighbourhood, district of a city
mahattat servees – taxi depot
majlis – formal meeting room or parliament
maktab amn al-aam (Leb) – general security office where visas are extended
Mamluk – slave-soldier dynasty that ruled out of Egypt from 1250 to 1517
manzar (Ar) – attic; room on top of a tower house
mashrabiyya – ornate carved wooden panel or screen; feature of Islamic architecture
masjid (Ar) – mosque; also *jamaa*
masraf (Ar) – bank
mastaba – Arabic word for ‘bench’; mud-brick structure above tombs from which the pyramids were developed
medina – city or town, especially the old quarter of a city
medrese(si) (T) – see *madrassa*
menorah – eight-pronged candelabra; an ancient Jewish symbol associated with the Hanukkah festival
Mesopotamia – ancient name for Iraq from the Greek meaning ‘between two rivers’
meydan(i) – see *midan*
meyhane (T) – (plural *meyhaneler*) tavern
midan (Ar) – town or city square; *meydan(i)* in Turkish (plural *meydanlar*)
midrahov (Heb) – pedestrian mall
mihrab – niche in a mosque indicating direction of Mecca
minbar – pulpit used for sermons in a mosque
mosaferkhuncheh (Far) – cheap hotel
moshav (Heb) – cooperative settlement, with private and collective housing and industry
moulid (Ar) – festival celebrating the birthday of a local saint or holy person
muezzin – cantor who sings the call to prayer
mullah – Muslim scholar, teacher or religious leader

nargileh (Ar) – water pipe used to smoke tobacco; *qalyan* in Iran, *sheesha* in Egypt
Nilometer – pit descending into the Nile containing a central column marked with graduations; the marks were

used to measure and record the level of the river, especially during the inundation
norias – water wheels

obelisk – monolithic stone pillar with square sides tapering to a pyramidal top; used as a monument in ancient Egypt
Omayyad dynasty – see *Umayyad dynasty*
OPEC – Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries
otogar (T) – bus station

pansiyon – pension, B&B or guesthouse
pasha – Ottoman governor appointed by the sultan in Constantinople
Pastoral Period – the period of Saharan rock art from 5500 to 2000 BC, also known as the Bovidian Period
Pentapolis – ancient federation of five cities (Barce, Cyrene, Eusperides, Tocra and Apollonia) in Greek Libya
pispot – see *bazbort*
PLO – Palestine Liberation Organization
PTT (T) – Posta, Telefon, Telgraf; post, telephone and telegraph office
Punic – ancient Phoenician people with capital at Carthage
pylon – monumental gateway at the entrance to a temple

qa’a (Ar) – reception room
Qaaba – see *Kabaa*
qahwa (Ar) – coffee, coffeehouse; *ahwa* in Egypt
qalyan (Far) – see *nargileh*
qaryat as-siyah (Lib) – tourist village
qasr – castle or palace; also used to describe fortified Berber granary stores in Libya
Quran – the holy book of Islam; also *Koran*

rakats (Ar) – cycles of prayer during which the *Quran* is read and bows and prostrations are performed
Ramadan – ninth month of the lunar Islamic calendar during which Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset
ras (Ar) – cape, headland or head
Riconquista – 1922 policy of reconquest of Libya by the Italians under Mussolini
Round Head Period – the period of Saharan rock art from 8000 to 6000 BC

sabil (Ar) – public drinking fountain
sabkha – soft sand with a salty crust; low-lying area or salt pan
sadu – Bedouin-style weaving
sahn (Ar) – courtyard of a mosque
Sala – the Muslim obligation of prayer, ideally to be performed five times a day; one of the five pillars of Islam
Saladin – (Salah ad-Din in Arabic) Kurdish warlord who retook Jerusalem from the Crusaders; founder of the *Ayyubid dynasty*

Sanusii Movement – organised Islamic opposition to Ottoman and the Italian occupation of Libya
Sawm – the Muslim month of *Ramadan*
şehir (T) – city or municipality
şehirçi (T) – minibus
serdab – a secret chamber in an ancient Egyptian tomb
serir – basins, formed by *wadis*, in which salt is left after water has evaporated
settler – term used to describe Israelis who have created new communities on territory captured from the Arabs during the 1967 War
Shabbat – Jewish Sabbath observed from sundown on Friday to one hour after sundown on Saturday
Shahada – Islam’s basic tenet and profession of faith: ‘There is no god but Allah, and Mohammed is the Prophet of Allah’; one of the five pillars of Islam
shai (Ar) – tea
sharia – Islamic law
sheesha (E) – see *nargileh*
sheikh – venerated religious scholar; also *shaikh*
sherut (Heb) – shared taxi with a fixed route
shwarma – grilled meat sliced from a spit and served in pita-type bread with salad; also *doner kebab* and *döner kebab* in Turkish
siq (Ar) – narrow passageway or defile such as the one at Petra
soor (Ar) – wall
sooq – market or bazaar
stele – (plural *stelae*) stone or wooden commemorative slab or column decorated with inscriptions or figures
Sufi – follower of any of the Islamic mystical orders that emphasise dancing, chanting and trances in order to attain unity with God; see also *dervish*
sultan – absolute ruler of a Muslim state
sura – chapter in the *Quran*

ta’amiyya (E) – see *felafel*
Tamashek – Tuareg language
tawaabi – stamps
tawle – backgammon
TC – Türkiye Cumhuriyeti (Turkish Republic); designates an official office or organisation
tell – ancient mound created by centuries of urban rebuilding
tirma – Iranian silk
toman (Far) – unit of 10 rials
Torah – five books of Moses, the first five Old Testament books; also called the Pentateuch
Tripolis – literally ‘Three Cities’; referred to Leptis Magna, Oea and Sabratha in Roman Libya

Umayyad dynasty – first great dynasty of Arab Muslim rulers, based in Damascus (661–750); also *Omayyad dynasty*

velayat-e faqih (Far) – Iranian ‘supreme leader’

wadi – dried up river bed; seasonal river
wikala (E) – see *khan*
Wild Fauna Period – the period of Saharan rock art from 10,000 to 6000 BC
willayat – village

Zakat – the Muslim obligation to give alms to the poor; one of the five pillars of Islam
zawiya (Ar) – small school dedicated to the teaching of a particular *sheikh*
ziggurat (Far) – rectangular temple tower or tiered mound built in *Mesopotamia* by the Akkadians, Babylonians and Sumerians
zirkane – wrestling ground

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