Iran, Iraq: What’s the Difference?

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Similarities:

• Several hundred years of common history.
• Regional identity and shared traditions (close association).
• Both have a Shi’a Muslim majority and share pilgrimage sites.
• Both write their languages in the same alphabet and share some common terms.
Differences:

• Several thousand years of separate history (in modern times, for example, Iran was not part of the Ottoman Empire).
• Different enemies (in modern times).
• Iranian traditions shaped by Zoroastrian religion; Iraq influenced by Sunni Islam.
• Different languages (Iran’s main language is Persian; Iraq’s is Arabic.)
Babylon, Iraq

www.uoregon.edu/~klio/im/ane/Babylon%20-%20Stadtansicht%20-%20Zeichnung.jpg
Persepolis, Iran

http://tabisite.com/gallery_as/iran/h940821persepolis_lion.JPG
Euphrates River, Iraq
Desert in Iraq

http://www.snifflegear.com/Photos/Iraqi%20Desert%202.jpg
Dohuk Province, Iraq

http://travel.u.nu/pic/iq/4642.jpg
Baghdad, Iraq
Bandar Abbas (as seen from the Persian Gulf)
Desert in Iran

http://aitotours.net/images/desert.jpg
Iranian Kurdistan

http://ashtarydesign.com/gallery/kurdistan/lg/16.jpg
Caspian Sea, Iran
Snow in Tehran (not a rare sight in winter)

Persian Language (Iran)

- Also called “Farsi”
- Indo-European (Aryan)
- Dialects of Persian also spoken in Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and among minorities in other states
- Arabic alphabet (with some differences) and some borrowed words from Arabic
Arabic language (Iraq)

• Semitic language (like Hebrew)
• Spoken throughout North Africa and southwestern Asia
• Also the liturgical language of Islam
Nooruz (New Year), celebrated by the Kurds of Iraq

http://time-blog.com/middle_east/Nowruz.jpg
Shi’a Muslim holy place – Qom, Iran

http://www.mojesafar.com/IMAGES/places/QOM.JPG
Shi’a Muslim holy place – Karbala, Iraq

http://www.pictureninja.com/pages/iraq/karbala-mosque.JPG
Afghani children in Torbat-e Jam refugee “guest city” in Iran

http://www.iranproject.org/images/
Iranian children

http://www.geocities.com/Pentagon/Base/1406/Pictures/more/kids2.jpg
Iraqi children