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# Chapter 1

## 230

### 1.1 230.guide

Texified version of data for Syria.

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Syria

### 1.2 230.guide/Syria

Syria

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Geography (Syria)

People (Syria)

Government (Syria)

Government (Syria 2. usage)

Economy (Syria)

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Economy (Syria 2. usage)

Communications (Syria)

Defense Forces (Syria)

### 1.3 230.guide/Geography (Syria)

Geography (Syria)

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Location:

Middle East, along the Mediterranean Sea, between Turkey and Lebanon

Map references:

Africa, Middle East, Standard Time Zones of the World

Area:

total area:

185,180 km<sup>2</sup>

land area:

184,050 km<sup>2</sup>

comparative area:

slightly larger than North Dakota

note:

includes 1,295 km<sup>2</sup> of Israeli-occupied territory

Land boundaries:

total 2,253 km, Iraq 605 km, Israel 76 km, Jordan 375 km, Lebanon 375 km,  
Turkey 822 km

Coastline:

193 km

Maritime claims:

contiguous zone:

41 nm

territorial sea:

35 nm

International disputes:

separated from Israel by the 1949 Armistice Line; Golan Heights is Israeli occupied; Hatay question with Turkey; periodic disputes with Iraq over Euphrates water rights; ongoing dispute over water development plans by Turkey for the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers; Syrian troops in northern Lebanon since October 1976

Climate:

mostly desert; hot, dry, sunny summers (June to August) and mild, rainy winters (December to February) along coast

Terrain:

primarily semiarid and desert plateau; narrow coastal plain; mountains in west

Natural resources:

petroleum, phosphates, chrome and manganese ores, asphalt, iron ore, rock salt, marble, gypsum

Land use:

arable land:

28%

permanent crops:  
   3%  
 meadows and pastures:  
   46%  
 forest and woodland:  
   3%  
 other:  
   20%  
 Irrigated land:  
   6,700 km2 (1989)  
 Environment:  
   deforestation; overgrazing; soil erosion; desertification  
 Note:  
   there are 38 Jewish settlements in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights

## 1.4 230.guide/People (Syria)

### People (Syria)

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Population:  
   14,338,527 (July 1993 est.)  
 note:  
   in addition, there are at least 14,500 Druze and 14,000 Jewish settlers in  
   the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights (1993 est.)  
 Population growth rate:  
   3.76% (1993 est.)  
 Birth rate:  
   44.08 births/1,000 population (1993 est.)  
 Death rate:  
   6.44 deaths/1,000 population (1993 est.)  
 Net migration rate:  
   0 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1993 est.)  
 Infant mortality rate:  
   43.9 deaths/1,000 live births (1993 est.)  
 Life expectancy at birth:  
   total population:  
     66.12 years  
   male:  
     65.07 years  
   female:  
     67.22 years (1993 est.)  
 Total fertility rate:  
   6.75 children born/woman (1993 est.)  
 Nationality:  
   noun:  
     Syrian(s)  
   adjective:  
     Syrian  
 Ethnic divisions:  
   Arab 90.3%, Kurds, Armenians, and other 9.7%  
 Religions:  
   Sunni Muslim 74%, Alawite, Druze, and other Muslim sects 16%, Christian

(various sects) 10%, Jewish (tiny communities in Damascus, Al Qamishli, and Aleppo)  
 Languages:  
 Arabic (official), Kurdish, Armenian, Aramaic, Circassian, French widely understood  
 Literacy:  
 age 15 and over can read and write (1990)  
 total population:  
 64%  
 male:  
 78%  
 female:  
 51%  
 Labor force:  
 2.951 million (1989)  
 by occupation:  
 miscellaneous and government services 36%, agriculture 32%, industry and construction 32%; note - shortage of skilled labor (1984)

## 1.5 230.guide/Government (Syria)

Government (Syria)

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Names:  
 conventional long form:  
 Syrian Arab Republic  
 conventional short form:  
 Syria  
 local long form:  
 Al Jumhuriyah al Arabiyah as Suriyah  
 local short form:  
 Suriyah  
 former:  
 United Arab Republic (with Egypt)  
 Digraph:  
 SY  
 Type:  
 republic under leftwing military regime since March 1963  
 Capital:  
 Damascus  
 Administrative divisions:  
 14 provinces (muhafazat, singular - muhafazah); Al Hasakah, Al Ladhiqiyah, Al Qunaytirah, Ar Raqqah, As Suwayda', Dar'a, Dayr az Zawr, Dimashq, Halab, Hamah, Hims, Idlib, Rif Dimashq, Tartus  
 Independence:  
 17 April 1946 (from League of Nations mandate under French administration)  
 Constitution: 13 March 1973  
 Legal system:  
 based on Islamic law and civil law system; special religious courts; has ←  
 not  
 accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction  
 National holiday:

National Day, 17 April (1946)

Political parties and leaders:  
 ruling party is the Arab Socialist Resurrectionist (Ba'th) Party; the Progressive National is dominated by Ba'thists but includes independents ← and ←  
 members of the Syrian Arab Socialist Party (ASP); Arab Socialist Union (ASU); Syrian Communist Party (SCP); Arab Socialist Unionist Movement; and Democratic Socialist Union Party

Other political or pressure groups:  
 non-Ba'th parties have little effective political influence; Communist ← party ←  
 ineffective; conservative religious leaders; Muslim Brotherhood

Suffrage:  
 18 years of age; universal

Elections:  
 President:  
 last held 2 December 1991 (next to be held December 1998); results - President Hafiz al-ASAD was reelected for a fourth seven-year term with 99.98% of the vote

People's Council:  
 last held 22-23 May 1990 (next to be held NA May 1994); results - Ba'th 53.6%, ASU 3.2%, SCP 3.2%, Arab Socialist Unionist Movement 2.8%, ASP 2%, Democratic Socialist Union Party 1.6%, independents 33.6%; seats - (250 total) Ba'th 134, ASU 8, SCP 8, Arab Socialist Unionist Movement 7, ASP 5, Democratic Socialist Union Party 4, independents 84; note - the People's Council was expanded to 250 seats total prior to the May 1990 election

Executive branch:  
 president, three vice presidents, prime minister, three deputy prime ministers, Council of Ministers (cabinet)

Legislative branch:  
 unicameral People's Council (Majlis al-Chaab)

## 1.6 230.guide/Government (Syria 2. usage)

Government (Syria 2. usage)

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Judicial branch:  
 Supreme Constitutional Court, High Judicial Council, Court of Cassation, State Security Courts

Leaders:  
 Chief of State:  
 President Hafiz al-ASAD (since 22 February 1971 see note); Vice Presidents 'Abd al-Halim KHADDAM, Rif'at al-ASAD, and Muhammad Zuhayr MASHARIQA (since 11 March 1984); note - President ASAD seized power in the November 1970 coup, assumed presidential powers 22 February 1971, and was confirmed as president in the 12 March 1971 national elections

Head of Government:  
 Prime Minister Mahmud ZU'BI (since 1 November 1987); Deputy Prime Minister Lt. Gen. Mustafa TALAS (since 11 March 1984); Deputy Prime Minister Salim YASIN (since NA December 1981); Deputy Prime Minister Rashid AKHTARINI (since 4 July 1992)

Member of:



ABEDA, AFESD, AL, AMF, CAEU, CCC, ESCWA, FAO, G-24, G-77, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICC, IDA, IDB, IFAD, IFC, ILO, IMF, IMO, INTELSAT, INTERPOL, IOC, ISO, ITU, LORCS, NAM, OAPEC, OIC, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNRWA, UPU, WFTU, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO

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Flag:

three equal horizontal bands of red (top), white, and black with two small green five-pointed stars in a horizontal line centered in the white band; similar to the flag of Yemen, which has a plain white band and of Iraq, which has three green stars (plus an Arabic inscription) in a horizontal line centered in the white band; also similar to the flag of Egypt, which has a symbolic eagle centered in the white band

## 1.7 230.guide/Economy (Syria)

Economy (Syria)

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Overview:

Syria's state-dominated Ba'thist economy has benefited from the Gulf war, increased oil production, good weather, and economic deregulation. Economic growth averaged nearly 12% annually in 1990-91, buoyed by increased oil production and improved agricultural performance. The Gulf war of early 1991 ←

provided Syria an aid windfall of nearly \$5 billion dollars from Arab, European, and Japanese donors. These inflows more than offset Damascus's war-related costs and will help Syria cover some of its debt arrears, restore suspended credit lines, and initiate selected military and civilian purchases. In 1992 the government spurred economic development by loosening controls on domestic and foreign investment while maintaining strict political controls. For the long run, Syria's economy is still saddled with a large number of poorly performing public sector firms and industrial and agricultural productivity is poor. A major long-term concern is the additional drain of upstream Euphrates water by Turkey when its vast dam ← and irrigation projects are completed by mid-decade.

## National product:

GDP - exchange rate conversion - \$30 billion (1991 est.)

## National product real growth rate:

9% (1991 est.)

## National product per capita:

\$2,300 (1991 est.)

Inflation rate (consumer prices): 20% (1992 est.)

## Unemployment rate:

5.7% (1989)

## Budget:

revenues \$5.4 billion; expenditures \$7.5 billion, including capital expenditures of \$2.9 billion (1991 est.)

## Exports:

\$3.5 billion (f.o.b., 1992 est.)

## commodities:

petroleum 45%, farm products 11%, textiles, phosphates 5% (1990)

## partners:

USSR and Eastern Europe 44%, EC 34%, Arab countries 17%, US/Canada 1% ←  
(1990)

## Imports:

\$2.7 billion (f.o.b., 1992 est.)

## commodities:

foodstuffs and beverages 21%, machinery 15%, metal and metal products 15%,  
textiles 7%, petroleum products (1990)

## partners:

EC 42%, USSR and Eastern Europe 13%, other Europe 13%, US/Canada 11%, Arab  
countries 6% (1990)

## External debt:

\$5.3 billion (1990 est.)

## Industrial production:

growth rate 6% (1991 est.); accounts for 18% of GDP

## Electricity:

3,205,000 kW capacity; 11,900 million kWh produced, 830 kWh per capita  
(1992)

## Industries:

textiles, food processing, beverages, tobacco, phosphate rock mining,  
petroleum

## Agriculture:

accounts for 27% of GDP and one-third of labor force; all major crops  
(wheat, barley, cotton, lentils, chickpeas) grown mainly on rain-watered  
land causing wide swings in production; animal products - beef, lamb, eggs,  
poultry, milk; not self-sufficient in grain or livestock products

## 1.8 230.guide/Economy (Syria 2. usage)

### Economy (Syria 2. usage)

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## Illicit drugs:

a transit country for Lebanese and Turkish refined cocaine going to Europe  
and heroin and hashish bound for the Persian Gulf area

## Economic aid:

US commitments, including Ex-Im (FY70-81), \$538 million; Western (non-US)

ODA and OOF bilateral commitments (1970-89), \$1.23 billion; OPEC bilateral aid (1979-89), \$12.3 billion; former Communist countries (1970-89), \$3.3 billion

Currency:

1 Syrian pound (#S) = 100 piasters

Exchange rates:

Syrian pounds (#S) per US\$1 - 22.0 (promotional rate since 1991), 22.0 (official rate since 1991), 42.0 (official parallel rate since 1991), 11.2250 (fixed rate 1987-90)

Fiscal year:

calendar year

## 1.9 230.guide/Communications (Syria)

### Communications (Syria)

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Railroads:

1,998 km total; 1,766 km standard gauge, 232 km 1.050-meter (narrow) gauge

Highways:

29,000 km total; 670 km expressways; 5,000 km main or national roads; ←  
23,330

km secondary or regional roads (not including municipal roads); 22,680 km ←  
of

the total is paved (1988)

Inland waterways:

870 km; minimal economic importance

Pipelines:

crude oil 1,304 km, petroleum products 515 km

Ports:

Tartus, Latakia, Baniyas, Jablah

Merchant marine:

41 ships (1,000 GRT or over) totaling 117,247 GRT/183,607 DWT; includes 36 cargo, 2 vehicle carrier, 3 bulk

Airports:

total:

104

usable:

100

with permanent-surface runways:

24

with runways over 3,659 m:

0

with runways 2,440-3,659 m:

21

with runways 1,220-2,439 m:

3

Telecommunications:

fair system currently undergoing significant improvement and digital upgrades, including fiber optic technology; 512,600 telephones (37 telephones per 1,000 persons); broadcast stations - 9 AM, 1 FM, 17 TV; satellite earth stations - 1 Indian Ocean INTELSAT and 1 Intersputnik; 1 submarine cable; coaxial cable and microwave radio relay to Iraq, Jordan,

Lebanon, and Turkey

## 1.10 230.guide/Defense Forces (Syria)

Defense Forces (Syria)

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Branches:

Syrian Arab Army, Syrian Arab Navy, Syrian Arab Air Force, Syrian Arab Air  
Defense Forces

Manpower availability:

males age 15-49 3,168,429; fit for military service 1,777,413; reach  
military age (19) annually 151,102 (1993 est.)

Defense expenditures:

exchange rate conversion - \$2.2 billion, 6% of GDP (1992)