

# The Survival Guide To Kabul

کابل، افغانستان  
Autumn 2002

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## **THE SURVIVAL GUIDE TO KABUL – ONLINE FOR YOU TO PRINT**

Below is a direct copy of the A5, 16 pages, booklet version (without the centrespread map and photos) which was available in Kabul from September 2002. 3000 copies were given to the streetkids to sell; they kept all the money they made from sales for themselves.

In June 2003 a new 40,000 word pocket mini guide was published by Bradt Travel Guides.

# THE SURVIVAL GUIDE TO KABUL

Autumn 2002

## WELCOME TO KABUL

*So you made it off the UN or Ariana plane. And you've arrived in Kabul for the "Great Game." Welcome. Salaam a-laykum! We've designed this small guide to update some of the old information in various books and guides. Also we've included some useful reference material and phone numbers. Kabul is constantly changing. People have returned with great speed and in huge numbers. Businesses are starting up and competition, especially in the guesthouse business, is thriving. A few restaurants have opened, curfew is getting later, and it's time you began to see the sights on that Friday off. Of course we're aware this guide will very soon be out of date, so please send us any ideas and suggestions. Inshallah, you'll have a safe and enjoyable time, but no doubt full on visit. Best wishes,*

## DARI PHRASEBOOK

<b>How are you?</b>	<i>Chi-toor-hasty</i>	<b>One</b>	<i>Yak</i>
<b>I am fine</b>	<i>Khub-os-tom</i>	<b>Two</b>	<i>Du</i>
<b>Thank you</b>	<i>Ta-shar-koor</i>	<b>Three</b>	<i>Say</i>
<b>Goodbye</b>	<i>Khuda Hafiz</i>	<b>Four</b>	<i>Char</i>
<b>My name is</b>	<i>Nam man</i>	<b>Five</b>	<i>Panj</i>
<b>What is your name?</b>	<i>Nama-shuma cheast</i>	<b>Six</b>	<i>Shash</i>
<b>Left</b>	<i>Chap</i>	<b>Seven</b>	<i>Aft</i>
<b>Right</b>	<i>Rost</i>	<b>Eight</b>	<i>Asht</i>
<b>Straight</b>	<i>Rubaru</i>	<b>Nine</b>	<i>Nu</i>
<b>Back</b>	<i>Posht or akib</i>	<b>Ten</b>	<i>Da</i>
<b>Monday</b>	<i>Dushanbe</i>	<b>Eleven</b>	<i>Yaazdah</i>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<i>Seshanbe</i>	<b>Twelve</b>	<i>Duaazdah</i>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<i>Charshanbe</i>	<b>O'clock</b>	<i>Baja</i>
<b>Thursday</b>	<i>Panjshanbe</i>	<b>I am going</b>	<i>Man merawam</i>
<b>Friday</b>	<i>Juma</i>	<b>I'm sorry</b>	<i>Bubakhshen</i>
<b>Saturday</b>	<i>Shanbe</i>	<b>Yesterday</b>	<i>Diroz</i>
<b>Sunday</b>	<i>Yakshanbe</i>	<b>Today</b>	<i>Emroz</i>
		<b>Tomorrow</b>	<i>Farda</i>
		<b>Everyday</b>	<i>Harroz</i>
		<b>Crazy</b>	<i>Dewana</i>
		<b>Once again</b>	<i>Yak dafa digar</i>

Afghanistan – land of the Afghan – has a history and culture going back 5000 years. Population estimated to be 21-26 million. Four major ethnic groups: Pashtoons, Tajiks, Uzbeks and Hazaras. Other ethnic groups include Nuristanis, Baluchis, Turkmens and Kuchis. 99% of Afghans belong to the Islamic faith with small groups of Sikhs, Hindus and Jews. Official languages are Pashto and Dari.

## KABUL GPS LOCATION

(Taken from Pashtoonistan Square in front of the Khyber Restaurant)

Latitude North: 34° 31' 12.01"; Longitude East: 69° 10' 48.94"; Altitude: 1777m

EXCLUSIVE FOR  
THE SURVIVAL GUIDE  
*Ahmed Rashid's Kabul*

Ahmed Rashid is author of the bestsellers *Taliban*  
and *Jihad* and correspondent for *The Daily Telegraph*  
and *The Far Eastern Economic Review*

Since the 1960s no city has witnessed as many dramatic changes and as much destruction as Kabul. For former King Zahir Shah who returned to his capital earlier this year after nearly 30 years in exile, the changes were extremely emotional and apparent. The last time Zahir Shah saw Kabul it was an international diplomatic backwater, but a thriving, bustling town where the elite had a hectic social life.

The Cold War was at its height and both the Soviet Union and the US were mildly courting the Afghan monarch with economic aid. The Americans built airports and roads in the south of the country, while the Soviets did the same in the north. Often their contractors would meet up such as when the Kabul-Kandahar highway was built.

Only after the coup that toppled Zahir Shah in 1973, did the coup maker - his cousin Mohammed Doud - turn wholeheartedly to the Soviets for military training for his army and the disgruntled Americans abandoned Afghanistan. By then Kabul was the centre of late hippiedom as Westerners travelled to India and stopped off at Kabul for cheap hashish and the ability to live on next to nothing.

Wine and cognac were cheap, courtesy of adventurous Italians who set up a wine factory in Kabul based on the grapes grown in the Shomali plain. The wine was exported to Pakistan, Iran and the Soviet Union. There was a vibrant teahouse culture where men and women students from Kabul University would discuss politics and the latest fashions. The most popular place was the Café in Pushtunistan Square opposite the central Post Office where the dating game was played furiously after 4 pm and it was all a matter of seeing and being seen.

Kabul's elite would then move to the Kabul Hotel and newly constructed Intercontinental Hotel where foreign bands offered live dance music. Pasta and saukaraut and sausages were available in German and Italian restaurants, which were run by hippies who had decided to stay on. Tourists from neighbouring Pakistan and Iran would flock to Kabul for weekends in order to shop for duty free foreign goods, see Indian movies, drink and dance.

The communist revolution in 1978 changed the city as the two warring factions of Khalq and Parcham battled each other in the capital and the first wave of exiles – mostly royalists - escaped to Pakistan and later the West. A year later the Soviet invasion bought in tens of thousands of young Soviet troops who initially acted in the same manner as their Western counterparts – smoking cheap dope, shopping for carpets and Western electronic goods in Chicken Street and hanging out in cafes.

Then the war started in earnest as the Mujheddin launched guerrilla attacks from Pakistan. The Soviet troops were restricted to their barracks. Girl students took part in anti-Soviet demonstrations in the city and were brutally suppressed. At the same time tens of thousands of Kabulis took part in a massive literacy campaign launched by the Soviets and many students were shipped off to the Soviet Union to further their education and to be indoctrinated in communism.

However for many women the war was in a sense a liberating experience. As Kabul's male population were forced into the Afghan army, women took over many jobs. Eventually some 40% of jobs in government ministries, schools and hospitals were taken up by women – many of them from poorer classes who were for the first time going to work dressed in skirts and high heels.

Although living conditions were hard there was no major fighting around the city until the Mujheddin captured Kabul in 1992. That led to the start of the brutal civil war which lasted a decade and destroyed large parts of central Kabul as well as creating wave upon wave of refugees leaving the city until there were hardly any educated or technically qualified people left. The fighting around Kabul only came to

an end when the Taliban captured the city in 1996, bringing with them relative security, but also harsh Islamic measures that destroyed the vitality of the city's population.

Kabul quickly became a ghost town; women became invisible and social life outside the home next to impossible. Cinema halls were shut down, the radio played only religious speeches and cafes were shut down. The only place where social interaction took place was the mosque.

The revival of Kabul's social life after November 2001 has been dramatic in the extreme. Within days of the retreat of the Taliban and even though the majority of people were desperately poor, the bazaars were once again thronged with people, women appeared in the streets for the first time and music blared in every bazaar. As education and clinics and hospitals revived with the help of international aid agencies, women were back at work in large numbers.

The future of the city now depends on funds being made available for genuine reconstruction work – providing water, sewerage, electricity and a telephone system and rebuilding the battered roads of the city. Kabul's expectations from the international community are enormous and fulfilling them will not be easy and will take time.

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Ahmed Rashid has established the *Open Media Fund for Afghanistan* to support the print press. Donate by contacting JoAnne Sullivan of Internews in Washington.

**Telephone 1-202-833-5740. Fax 1-202-833-5745.**  
**[jsullivan@internews.org](mailto:jsullivan@internews.org)      [www.internews.org](http://www.internews.org)**

## **CULTURAL, SPORTING EVENTS & FACILITIES**

*Limited but constantly getting better:*

*\*Tuesday nights at the Aina Media and Cultural Centre: big screen open air cinema on the lawn under the stars at 19:30.*

*\*Tennis and squash courts at the German Club, UNICA, Intercontinental and British Embassy.*

*\*Fitness centres around town. Turkish baths for women.*

*\*Swimming pools at UNICA, ICRC, Italian and French Embassies (invitation only), and Intercontinental Hotel (guests only).*

*\*Macroyan public swimming pool (mmm!). On 19<sup>th</sup> August, Independence Day, the place was full of Afghan men, cost 20,000, and the water was very cold and murky leaving little to the imagination as to what was at the bottom.*

*\*Football every afternoon in Shahre Naw Park with the Afghan All Stars (local kids having a kick around, boisterous but fun).*

*\*Rugby – 7 a side. Tuesdays, Fridays and Sundays at 17:30 on the ISAF base across from the US Embassy.*

*\*The Hash House Harriers in Kabul started in August. The first meeting was on a Friday at the Intercontinental and cost \$3. Conservative clothing a must for all runners. Contact "Lonesome Cowboy" for future venues: [BrueggemannD@afg.emro.who.int](mailto:BrueggemannD@afg.emro.who.int).*

## **AFGHAN PROVERBS**

**Yak roz didi dost. Digar roz didi brodar**

*Lit: The first day you meet, you are friends.*

*The next day you meet, you are brothers*

*Friendship grows into brotherhood*

**Har guli bi khar neest**

*Lit: No rose is without thorns*

*No one is perfect*

**Har amal axol amalley dorrad**

*Lit: A tree does not move unless there is wind*

*Every effect has a cause*

**Yak tir du budanah**  
*Lit: One throw, two finches*  
To kill two birds with one stone

For all your electrical goods go down "Technology Street." Turn left outside the Khyber Restaurant and the world of TVs and videos has come to Kabul in force.

#### **ON THE WWW**

[www.afghansite.com](http://www.afghansite.com)

[www.afghan-web.com](http://www.afghan-web.com)

[www.eurasianet.org](http://www.eurasianet.org)

[www.afghanonline.com](http://www.afghanonline.com)

[www.afghan-info.com](http://www.afghan-info.com)

[www.afghanan.com](http://www.afghanan.com)

#### **ON THE RADIO IN KABUL: 89.0 FM BBC WORLD SERVICE**

### **PLACES TO VISIT**

*There's a lot to see, even if most of it is wrecked. Touring Kabul is best done on a Friday when the city is quieter. A three-hour trip will give you time to see some of the must-sees such as the spectacular views from TV Tower Hill, the Darulaman Palace, Kabul Museum and destroyed West Kabul area and King Nadir Shah's Tomb. Of course cameras and foreigners attract the baksheesh brigade but everyone is very friendly. Afghans love posing for photographs and digital cameras mean you can show the results immediately or print them out and deliver copies later (photographs as gifts are much appreciated). Remember, Kabul is one of the most mined cities in the world, so don't wander off the beaten track.*

*Fighting from 1992 onwards destroyed the Darulaman Palace. It's an impressive building and was used by King Zahir Shah as a palace and later as a museum. The equally striking former Defence Ministry is on the hills behind. The Kabul Museum is in front of the Palace.*

*King Nadir Shah's Mausoleum is the resting place for the Royal family. King Zahir Shah's wife was buried here in July 2002; she died in Italy waiting to rejoin her husband in Kabul. Usually there's a man on duty who will take you into the catacombs. Good views of the city.*

No trip around Kabul is complete without Nancy Hatch Dupree's pocket guidebook widely available at street bookshops or at the Intercontinental Hotel. Originally published in 1965 the second edition was printed in 1972. Five suggested tours around the city are laid out in detail with sights to see and maps to guide you. Needless to say Kabul has changed dramatically in the last 30 years but the book gives an interesting insight into what the city was like. Eight tours for outside the city are also suggested. Most notable is a trip to Ghazni to see the minarets, though these days the 140km drive takes closer to 4 hours in a 4x4. The shopping section offers an interesting insight, which has perhaps changed little today: *The richness of Kabul's bazaars is legend: they are as fascinating today as they have always been. We recommend departing from this general guideline so that you may experience the pleasure of discovering a favourite bazaar or an unique "find."*

*For traditional carpets check out the old building next door to the money market. Go across Kabul River on the Froshga pedestrian bridge.*

*The Ariana Graveyard, as the collection of circa 1960-1985 trashed aviation memorabilia is called, will probably be the first thing you see on arrival in Kabul. The rusting heap of vintage planes lies to the right of the airport as you head into the city; much of it, the result of coalition attacks in 2001. But the real damage was done between 1991 and 1996 as rival Mujhadeen factions battled for control of the city. Gulbaddin Heckmatyer, the leader of Hezbe Islami (Islamic Faction) launched constant attacks on the airport right up until the Taliban take-over of the city.*

*West Kabul suffered a similar fate to the airport. The only difference being that West Kabul was a residential area. Thousands of people were forced to flee. Today it remains a haunting reminder of Kabul's recent history.*

*Chicken Street is the Oxford Street (Rue St Honore, Fifth Avenue or Via Condotti) of Kabul. This is where you come to shop! Small, single-storey, ramshackle buildings teem with silk scarves, pakoul hats (the type made famous by the deceased 'Lion of Panshir' General Masoud), carpets, jewellery, glassware, lapis-lazuli chess-sets and trinkets and baubles of every colour, shape and form imaginable! Eager shopkeepers will do their best to lure you in with their winning patter, but it's all good-natured.*

Prices are high (one carpet-seller we know of came down from US\$300 to US\$50 for a rug) so beware of the sharks and be ready to do some haggling. Carry on into Flower Street. There you can find some pretty good grocery stores selling those home-brand luxuries like Earl Grey Tea, Nutella, and Kellogg's Cornflakes. A word of warning, the concentration of Westerners here has made Chicken Street a security concern. Do not linger.

**KABUL ZOO** Donatella the bear was skulking in her lair when we went, but she may grace you with her famous grisly stare. Kabul Zoo is not a great place for its inhabitants, however it is hugely popular with Kabulis. According to the zookeeper, Aziz Ahmad, up to 2,000 people can visit in a day during the weekend.

A British animal protection group ensures there is enough food for the 17 different species behind bars and Mr Ahmad is hopeful that some new animals, including big cats, will be sent to the zoo from China in the near future. Currently the zoo boasts two bears, one deer, four wolves, two monkeys, a couple of foxes, some birds of prey, budgerigars and hundreds of rabbits. Mr Ahmad is an obliging guide with gruesome stories about the fate of the zoo's last elephant and for a small tip will show you the final resting place of the zoo's most famous resident, Marjan, the one-eyed lion. He died in January, aged 40. Ironically the lion had survived all the rocket attacks on the zoo as the city was engulfed by civil war, only to pass away two short months after the fall of the Taliban. The zoo is open from 06.00 until 18.30 every day and entry costs 2,000 Afs.

## AFGHAN RECIPE

*Qabeli Pilau (Yellow Rice with Carrot & Raisins)*

1 lb (2 ½ cups) long grain rice	4 oz black seedless raisins
6 tablespoons of vegetable oil	2 tsp <i>char masala</i> or cumin
2 medium onions, chopped	¼ tsp saffron
1 ½ - 2 lbs lamb on the bone or 1 chicken	salt
2 large carrots	pepper

### Directions:

Rinse the rice and leave to soak for at least half an hour. Heat 4 tablespoons of the vegetable oil in a large pan and add the chopped onions. Stir and fry them until brown. Add the lamb. Brown well on all sides in the oil. Add about 1 cup of water, and salt and pepper. Bring to a boil, then turn down the heat, cover and simmer until the meat is tender. While the meat is cooking, wash and peel the carrots and cut into pieces the size of a matchstick. Heat 2 tablespoons of oil in a small pan and add the carrots. Cook the carrots gently until they are lightly browned and tender. Remove the carrots from the oil, add the raisins, and cook these gently until they begin to swell up. Bring 5 cups of water to a boil and add about 1 teaspoon of salt. Drain the rice and add to the boiling water. Parboil for 2 to 3 minutes before draining the rice in a large sieve. Put the rice in a large casserole and sprinkle with *char masala* and saffron. Then place the cooked meat on one side of the casserole and the carrots and raisins on the other. Cover with a tightly fitted lid and place in a preheated oven at 300 degrees F for about 45 minutes. Remove from oven and serve.

## COOK'S RECOMMENDATION

Buy your meat from Butchery Street near the Mosque in Shahre Naw. Choose the cut you want from the hanging carcasses in the shop fronts. Not for the faint-hearted

## GENERAL TIPS

- AWCC local GSM Mobile phones and top-up cards can be bought at the airport, central post office and Intercontinental Hotel. Handset and SIM card ready to go costs about \$300. Quickest place to get more minutes on your phone is at the Intercon. It costs 56 cents a minute to call the US and Canada, 58 cents a minute to call Europe and 64 cents to call Pakistan. Local calls cost 10 cents a minute. A significant saving on the old Sat phone!
- Currently citywide government curfew starts at midnight and lasts until 4am everyday. There's talk it may be lifted soon altogether.
- Learn the language: Dari lessons are available at the Aina Media and Cultural Centre next to the Ministry of Planning. Most classes start at 5pm.

- English language newspapers in Kabul are pretty much restricted to two publications. *The Kabul Times* and *The Kabul Weekly*. Both have interesting insights to Kabuli life and some stimulating gossip as well. The papers are available from street sellers at traffic lights and cost 10,000 Afs.

## RESTAURANTS

### POPO'LANO

Italian restaurant at the INSAF Hotel with a good menu, reasonably priced, with pizzas at \$5, takeaway and delivery available. Manager is Abdullah.  
070 27 6843.

### DELHI DARBAR

Indian Restaurant (House 91, Street 4), a few streets along from B's Place in Qali Fatullah. \$6 buffet at lunch and dinner. Good popadums and great garlic nan. Delivery available. 070 27 7566.

### GOLDEN LOTUS

Across from the German Embassy. Chinese, European and Afghan food (so they say). Cheaper than other places but very rice based.

### MARCO POLO, HERAT, KHALID

Three typical Kebab and rice places. Khalid used to be a cinema destroyed by the Taliban. Marco Polo near to Chicken and Flower streets. Herat seems to be an attempt at a fast food restaurant with the guys running around in baseball caps.

### B's PLACE

Qali Fatullah. Run by Australian Matt (070 27 6416). Good food but pricey. Great Thai Green Curry and shrimps flown in from Dubai (sometimes!). Pizzas (\$12), Greek salad, hummus, steak, chocolate fudge cake. Lovely garden tables, lanterns and a flower shop. Better to book places and food in advance.

### KHYBER

Pashtoonistan Square down from the Hotel Kabul. \$6 lunch and dinner Afghan buffet. Good for large lunch and dinner parties.

### KABUL RESTAURANT

Part of the Hotel Kabul serving a variety of food. Nice garden and terrace area.

## ESSENTIAL READING

*Afghanistan – Essential Field Guides to Humanitarian and Conflict Zones* edited by Edward Girardet and Jonathan Walker. Originally published in 1998 a revised edition is due out in January 2003. This is a handbook anyone visiting Afghanistan should not be without.

Other books worth reading include: *Afghanistan, A History of Conflict* by John C. Griffiths; *An Unexpected Light, Travels in Afghanistan* by Jason Elliot; *Soldier Sahibs, The Men Who Made the North-West Frontier* by Charles Allen; *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan* by Barnett R. Rubin; *A Short Walk in the Hindu Kush* by Eric Newby; *Afghanistan, A Military History from Alexander the Great to the Fall of the Taliban*, by Stephen Tanner; *The Great Game*, by Peter Hopkirk; Ahmed Rashid's *Taliban and Jihad*.

## HOTELS

### INTERCONTINENTAL

Opened in September 1969. 200 rooms, 170 in use at \$63-73 a night. Swimming pool, tennis court, sauna, ping pong, billiards, barber, shops, Ariana Airlines office and 24 hour Bamiyan Coffee Shop. Ideal for conferences. Ballroom sits 400 for dinner, or 600 for a conference.  
Sat: +873 761 469690 or 020 2201320.

**AWCC Internet Café in the basement with high speed connection. Open 07:00-22:00 daily. \$5 an hour, \$3 half hour. \$1 to print page. Scanner. [www.afghanwireless.com](http://www.afghanwireless.com)**

### **MUSTAFA**

Run by Wais Faizi. Popular with journalists. 50 rooms at \$35-40 a night. Kebab night on Thursdays on the roof terrace. Pizzas, pool table, darts, DVD room, basketball court. Wais featured in July 2002 Newsweek "The Exiles Return". (070 27 6021, [mustafa@inmarsat.francetelecom.fr](mailto:mustafa@inmarsat.francetelecom.fr)).

### **INSAF**

Shahre Naw. 43 rooms at \$35-50 a night. Home to the Popo'Lano Italian restaurant.

### **HOTEL KABUL**

Pashtoonistan Square next to Ariana Airlines office. 50 years old, large Soviet style Hotel. 73 rooms. \$80 for a two-roomed suite. \$40 for single rooms. Nice large garden area. Kabul Restaurant here as well.

### **PARK RESIDENCE**

On Shahre Naw Park next to the old Czechoslovakian Embassy. Manager: Naqib (070 28 0576). 30 rooms from \$30-75 a night. All rooms have ensuite shower, fridge, TV and modern fixtures. Large garden for "live music" and parking area.

### **FLYING TO KABUL**

UNHAS flights are still the favoured route for most people flying from Dubai and Islamabad. UN Dubai flights now cost \$400 one way for all agencies and are restricted to UN, international NGOs and diplomats. Anyone can use and pay for the Islamabad leg.

Ariana is slowly expanding its schedule after the donation of an Airbus from Air India. Check at the Ariana office in the Hotel Kabul for the latest details. Destinations include Dubai, Delhi and Islamabad. PIA flies from Islamabad to Kabul. Mahan flies to Tehran

*IHLAS News Agency, on WAK main road by the roundabout (+873 762 000250), can deliver international publications to your door – e.g. subscribe to The News from Pakistan (daily), Time and The Economist for \$45 a month.*

### **GUESTHOUSES**

#### **Wazir Akbar Khan (WAK) area and elsewhere**

<b>Faisal</b>	Street 10, No 531	<b>Bibi Haji</b>	070 27 4696
<b>House 492</b>	Street 13, 5th Lane	<b>Jamshid</b>	070 28 0541
<b>Shamal</b>	Street 13, No 452	<b>Mirjan</b>	070 27 8601
<b>Hendokush</b>	Street 11, No 520	<b>Moieen</b>	070 27 8074
<b>Ajmal Wali</b>	Street 10	<b>Ajmal</b>	070 27 7657
<b>House 150</b>	Street 10	<b>Bashir</b>	070 27 8734
<b>Marvellous</b>	Street 10, No 214	<b>Ahmad</b>	070 27 5519
<b>Sultan</b>	Street 10	<b>Azam</b>	070 27 7374
<b>Silk Route</b>	Street 10, No 138	<b>Hamid</b>	070 27 5800
<b>Japan</b>	Street 15, No 21	<b>Musbar</b>	070 27 8386
<b>Everest</b>	Street 10, No 192	<b>Ahmad</b>	070 28 1277
<b>Haseeb</b>	Street 13, No 556	<b>Parwaz</b>	+88 216 511 58710

<b>Gandamak Lodge</b>	No 5 Passport Lane	<i>Peter</i>	070 27 6937
<b>Chez Ana</b>	Passport Lane	<i>Ana</i>	070 28 2699
<b>B's Place</b>	Qali Fatullah	<i>Matt</i>	070 27 6416

*Most guesthouses in Wazir Akbar Khan are pretty much the same, though furniture, fixtures and fittings do vary. Charges range from between \$30-60 a night (always negotiate especially for long stays). Rooms usually have 2-4 beds in them. Dining and lounge facilities include satellite TV. B's Place, run by an Australian, is more expensive at \$75, but is more modern than the others. The garden is great here – you just need the ocean and you could be in the Mediterranean. Renowned cameraman Peter Jouvenal runs Number 5 Passport Lane. Rooms at Chez Ana for \$30-40 a night.*

*If you're staying for a short period of time and are on a budget then you probably won't be interested in luxury. But for long stays try and get your own room, with a bathroom nearby and negotiate accordingly. It will always work out cheaper than renting a full house in WAK (prices per month are \$3,000-10,000 or more, cash in advance).*

## **MINE AWARENESS**

Handicap International Belgium (HIB) runs mine awareness courses for aid-workers and journalists. 3-4 sessions run per week for up to 20 participants (09:00-11:00, 14:00-16:00). Sessions are in English, Dari and Pashto and are also held in Kandahar, Jalalabad, Herat and Mazar-e-Sharif. For more details contact: [mineawareness@handicap.org](mailto:mineawareness@handicap.org), 070 27 7314. Or call in at HIB at Qali Fatullah, House No 104, opposite the Zarghoona High School.

### **HIB Statistics:**

- *More than 730 km<sup>2</sup> of contaminated land makes Afghanistan the most heavily mined country in the world.*
- *There is another 500 km<sup>2</sup> of battlefields littered by UXO and/or landmines.*
- *150 to 300 people are injured or killed by mines or UXO every month.*
- *De-mining has cost 666 million US dollars since the UN Mine Action Program for Afghanistan was started in 1989.*

## **FATIMA'S STORY**

*Jude Barrant, Caritas Internationalis*

One of the NGOs struggling to put an end to the vicious trend of landmine victims is Caritas local partner OMAR (Organisation for Mine clearance and Afghan Rehabilitation)

It takes two men 5 1/2 hours to clear 3m<sup>2</sup> of a minefield. There are more than 10 million mines in Afghanistan spread over 824 km<sup>2</sup>. More than 100 deaths and injuries are caused every month by the hidden killers.

19-year-old Fatima Abraham is one of those victims. She lost her right arm and left leg after treading on a mine as she played with other children in a field behind her house when she was 10. Her brothers and sisters ran screaming back to the house, her friends ran away. Only Fatima's mother ventured into the minefield to rescue her daughter.

Fatima was taken to the small local clinic where her severed limbs were dressed with temporary bandages. The next day, Fatima set out on what she says was the most excruciating journey of her life. Her village was a 3-hour drive from Herat City and the nearest hospital facilities.

Fatima's older brother had died from a landmine explosion while she was still an infant. Now Fatima thought she too would die. Despite her terrible injuries Fatima survived. But her recovery was to be a painful ordeal spanning more than four years.

On arrival at the hospital doctors amputated her left leg at the knee. Three days later after the first signs of gangrene began to show they took off four fingers from her right hand. However, her whole hand became infected and a few days later the surgeons operated again. This time amputating her hand at the wrist.

The poor health care in Herat hospital led to Fatima getting tetanus and the infection again spread up her arm. Six weeks after her first operation, Fatima's arm was amputated just below the shoulder.

The operations were costly and Fatima's parents were forced to sell their land and home to pay for her healthcare. Three months later she was finally able to return to her village where she started learning to walk again. But for Fatima, it was clear something was wrong with her amputated leg. As time passed it became more and more painful. After four years she was taken back to hospital where the doctors told her they would have to operate again. The bone was still growing. This time they amputated at the mid-thigh level.

Amazingly Fatima fought back from her injuries and aged 15 she married. At 16 she became pregnant. "It was very difficult for me to carry a child with only one leg. I spent most of my pregnancy sitting down," she says. I gave birth to a daughter, but after five months she died of dysentery." Shortly afterwards Fatima's husband repudiated her, blaming the child's death on her disability, and they divorced. Fatima says most of the time she feels very isolated; she lives alone with her elderly parents whom she supports by working as a secretary for one of the international NGOs. They have no other source of income. Fatima cooks and cleans and does the shopping for the household although, "People stare at me when I go shopping, and sometimes make rude comments." Fatima has lived almost half her life as a landmine victim; she says she has accepted her fate, but every now and then the anger still surfaces.

***Visit the OMAR Museum in Wazir Akbar Khan  
for more details on mines and de-mining.  
[www.caritas-network-for-afghanistan.org](http://www.caritas-network-for-afghanistan.org)***

**A word on the organizations the editors of *The Survival Guide To Kabul* work for.**

*Caritas Internationalis* is a confederation of **154** Catholic relief, development and social service organizations present in **198** countries and territories. Its mandate is to answer the needs of poor and vulnerable people wherever they may be regardless of faith, race or sex. Today there are four national Caritas organizations working together in Afghanistan. They are Caritas USA, known as CRS. Caritas Holland, known as Cordaid, Caritas Ireland, known as Trocaire and Caritas Germany.

*Caritas* is committed to life-saving activities, (emergency relief), stabilizing communities (assistance for basic needs, building schools, homes, clinics, irrigation schemes, digging wells, helping farmers with their agricultural needs etc) and promoting tolerance and peace. This year, Caritas has committed US \$24 and a half million to more than 30 programmes in 21 provinces in Afghanistan.  
[www.caritas-network-for-afghanistan.org](http://www.caritas-network-for-afghanistan.org)

*Internews* supports open media worldwide. In Afghanistan, the Internews project, funded by USAID, trains journalists and gives radio stations equipment. So far Internews has trained more than 100 journalists from all 14 regional radio stations as well as Radio Afghanistan, Bakhtar Information Agency, Kabul University Journalism Faculty and other media groups.

*Internews* fosters independent media in emerging democracies, helps local groups work for the adoption of open broadcasting, telecommunications and Internet policy, produces innovative television and radio programming as well as internet content, and uses mass media to help reduce conflict within and between countries.  
[www.internews.org](http://www.internews.org)

## **MEDICAL EMERGENCIES**

There are reports of good medical care from the Emergency Hospital near UNAMA Compound A (+873 762 651 690).

There's a German Field Hospital and Czech Hospital at the ISAF base on the Jalalabad road. Just turn up for emergency treatment and things seem to move pretty fast.

In an emergency make sure your colleagues know your evacuation plan and have your health details to hand.

## **United Nations Humanitarian Air Services (UNHAS)**

[Islamabad.UNHAS@wfp.org](mailto:Islamabad.UNHAS@wfp.org), [Kabul.UNHAS@wfp.org](mailto:Kabul.UNHAS@wfp.org)

### **Faxes:**

+92 51 22 64 054 (Islamabad)	+873 763 044 986 (Kandahar)
+873 762 904 936 (Kabul)	+873 761 351 935 (Mazar)
+873 763 089 751 (Herat)	

### **Telephones:**

Kabul: +93 70 28 2559-60	020 2100216 Ext 2444/5/6
Islamabad: +92 51 22 64 077	

**AIR SERV** Charter flight service. WAK, Street 13, Lane 1. +93 70 27 6660. Islamabad: +92 51 210 5261. [pakbooking@airserv.org](mailto:pakbooking@airserv.org).

**PACTEC** Internet café for “approved NGOs.” WAK, Street 13, Lane 1. \$4 an hour. Sat-Wed: 08:00-17:00. Thurs: 08:30-12:00.

**Courier services:**

**DHL** WAK, Street 10, House 310. Tel: 070 27 6362. [kbl-co@bah.hub.com](mailto:kbl-co@bah.hub.com).

Mon, Thurs, Fri, Sat, Sun: 08:00-17:00. Tues, Weds: 08:00-13:00.

**TNT** Tel: +93 70 27 6503. Fax: 020 290218

**We’ve spoken to a number of security gurus. Five pointers from “Shaft”:**

\***ONLY YOU** are responsible for your safety. Your actions will determine your future.

\***HEALTH** - People working under pressure must keep themselves in excellent physical condition. You must allow time for relaxation, even if this means putting off important work. Get regular periods of leave because the physical affects the mental.

\***CONDUCT** - Avoid behaviour likely to arouse suspicion. Cameras, binoculars and tape recorders should be used with discretion and only after the necessary permission has been granted.

\***OFFICIAL PROPERTY** - When faced with an attacker whose main purpose seems to be looting rather than physical harm, **DO NOT PUT THE LIVES** of the staff in jeopardy over protecting organization equipment.

\***KEEP YOUR HEAD DOWN** - If there is danger avoid the instinct to see what it is going on, do not expose yourself and do not move unless you’re going from a place of greater danger to a place of less danger.

*AIMS (Afghanistan Information Management Service) is a UN project established to provide information products and services to the assistance community. As well as carrying a wide range of map products, they advise on survey work, database design, analysis, and distribution of data and documents. [www.aims.org.pk](http://www.aims.org.pk) [info@aims.org.pk](mailto:info@aims.org.pk)*

*ICRC NGO security briefings on Thursdays at Shahre Naw, ICRC HQ, 08:30.*

*UN NGO security briefings on Saturdays at UNDP compound, 14:00.*

*ACBAR NGO security briefings on Mondays, 09:00.*

*UNAMA pressers Thursdays and Sundays at UNAMA Compound A, 10:00.*

*ISAF pressers everyday at ISAF HQ, opposite US Embassy, 09:30.*

*With thanks to all those who gave advice and suggestions!*

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