

LIFE IN PAKISTAN

THE COUNTRY

When you view Pakistan on the map, you'll see China to the northeast, old Russia to the north, Afghanistan and Iran to the west and India to the southeast. Imagine high mountain passes and the history of caravans moving back and forth between ancient cultures and the sights and smells of market trading. Pakistan is a land of contrasts with the old and the modern side by side. Pakistan is also a country of spectacular beauty, culture, and diversity.

ISLAMABAD

Travel books offer the following description: "Pakistan's new capital is nestled against the backdrop of the Margalla Hills, 15 kilometers from Rawalpindi. It is a modern and carefully planned city with wide tree lined streets, large houses, elegant public buildings and well-organized bazaars. The walkways are shaded, safe, and separated from the traffic by rows of flame trees, jacaranda and hibiscus. Roses, jasmine and bougainvillea fill the parks, and scenic viewpoints show the city to its advantage." In other words, we think you will thoroughly enjoy living and working in Islamabad.

CLIMATE

From mid-September to mid-May, the weather in Islamabad is absolutely perfect. December and January are even a little chilly, and there are even mornings white with a hard frost. The monsoon season starts in June. Rains are heavy and the air very hot and humid.

SAFETY

This is a frequently asked question. Newspapers and CNN can create horrible images of what it must be like to live and work overseas. Islamabad remains a relatively safe environment. The local military and police have worked diligently to increase security in the city. Movement into and within the city has come under greater scrutiny. The school with the guidance of the Regional Security officer of the US Embassy has detailed security plans to ensure safety.

WOMEN IN PAKISTAN

Women can drive automobiles and circulate in Islamabad without fear of harassment. Western dress is common; conservative dress would always be prudent.

TRAVEL

Several major airlines serve Islamabad directly, others via Karachi and Lahore. There are daily flights to Dubai. Car travel is relatively easy, but "defensive" driving will serve you well. Air travel within the country is inexpensive. Internal travel is often dictated by weather, road conditions, and security updates. Some organizations have restricted travel outside of the Islamabad until military operations have been completed.

RECREATION

If you like to bicycle and hike, Islamabad will probably meet your recreational needs, but there is much more. The school boasts the finest swimming pool in Pakistan. Both Islamabad and Rawalpindi have better-than-average golf courses. There is tennis at the American Club, Canadian Club, British Club, French Club and the school. Expatriates may join the Canadian Club, British Club, French Club and the American Club. Slow pitch softball, horseback riding, and yoga are popular weekend activities. The local Asian Study Group also schedules a wide variety of outings and events. There are more than enough opportunities to occupy your leisure time.

CULTURAL ENTERTAINMENT

Maybe Islamabad falls short of New York City or London, but there are surprises and new discoveries. The various embassies have clubs, which sponsor dances, musical concerts and social events. Pakistan has unique cultural and tribal music. Again, the Asian Study Group sponsors a wide variety of cultural activities, programs and study groups.

SHOPPING

We hear few complaints about the availability of desired foods, meats and vegetables. Overseas US citizen contracted faculty also has limited access to the US Embassy Commissary. If you are into carpets, leather, brass and antiques, Pakistan is where you want to be. The school does provide new faculty with a lengthy list of what is, or is not available in the local markets. Electronics are readily available and should be purchased here to avoid import duties.

TECHNOLOGY

Broadband is available as is cable television. Both are exceptionally reasonable in cost.

FAMILY VISITS

Tourist visas can be obtained and staff members are encouraged to invite parents, family members and friends to visit Pakistan. Many choose to have guests during the winter and spring holidays when the weather is ideal. It is always wise to check the visa restrictions when arranging travel between Pakistan and India as they may be somewhat fluid.