

GEOGRAPHY OF THE MIDDLE EAST



THE MIDDLE EAST



DESERT

Many countries of the Middle East are located in the desert region. Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Yemen, Oman, and Egypt all have a long history of people adapting to the harsh desert environment. These people used creativity and determination to survive.

NOMADS

Nomads are people who move from place to place. Nomadism is a lifestyle adapted to infertile regions such as steppe, tundra, or desert, where mobility is the most efficient strategy for using scarce resources. As of 1995, there were an estimated 30-40 million nomads in the world.

They usually live in tents made of goats hair, and own few possessions so that they can move quickly and easily. Most nomads of the desert regions own herds of camels and goats. Both of these types of animals are very hardy and able to survive with little water. Nomads use the entire animal to help them survive: the milk, meat, and skin.



CAMELS

THE SHIPS OF THE DESERT

Camels have long been used by nomads and travellers in the Middle East. They are perfectly suited to carry people & goods through the barren desert.

Camels have nostrils that can close and three sets of eyelids to block out the sand. Their feet are large & leathery, helping them to not sink in the soft sand. Camel mouths, tongues, and stomachs are tough enough to eat almost anything, even leather, cloth, and bone!

Camels store water in their fat, allowing them to survive without water for days at a time. Traders used camel trains to carry vast amounts of goods to various trading centers throughout the Middle East.

OASIS

An oasis is a place that has water in the middle of a desert. The water bubbles up from underground springs, allowing many plants to grow. Oases are where nomads water their herds, find relief from the hot desert temperatures, and trade with other people.



ADAPTING TO THE DESERT



<http://www.mccullagh.org/db9/1ds-4/date-palm.jpg>

Date palms thrive in oases, needing very little water. They provide fruit (seen above) that is sweet and healthy.

The trunks of the trees can be used to build homes or for firewood. The leaves can be used for roofs, the fibers for rope, and the trunks can be hollowed to make pipes or carry water for irrigation.

MOUNTAINS

The Middle East is not all desert—there are also mountainous regions.



MOUNTAIN VILLAGES

Mountain settlements developed in extreme isolation. The rugged mountains cut people off from the desert and other areas, so the culture of each town developed separately. The way these people build their homes & live their lives is very unique.



<http://www.reportages-pictures.com/YEMEN/R00039%20Yemen%201985/images/prevs/P111662.jpg>

TERRACING

Terracing is when people carve steps into the side of a mountain. This practice is used throughout the world to help grow crops on a steep slope. These terraces help catch rainfall as it flows down the mountain, irrigating the crops.



ARABLE LAND

Arable land is land that can support crops. The mountainous region in the Middle East is able to grow exotic foods such as oranges and dates.



COASTAL PLAINS

- The Coastal Plains region of the Middle East includes all the flat areas of land that touch an ocean or sea.



THRIVING CITIES



The coastal plains region has always been the area where wealthy cities and kingdoms arose. This is because:

1. The coastline provides an easy way for trade
2. There is enough water and arable land to grow many crops

NATURAL RESOURCES



One reason the Middle East is so important for us to study is because of all the natural resources found in the region. The amount of oil found in this region is staggering.

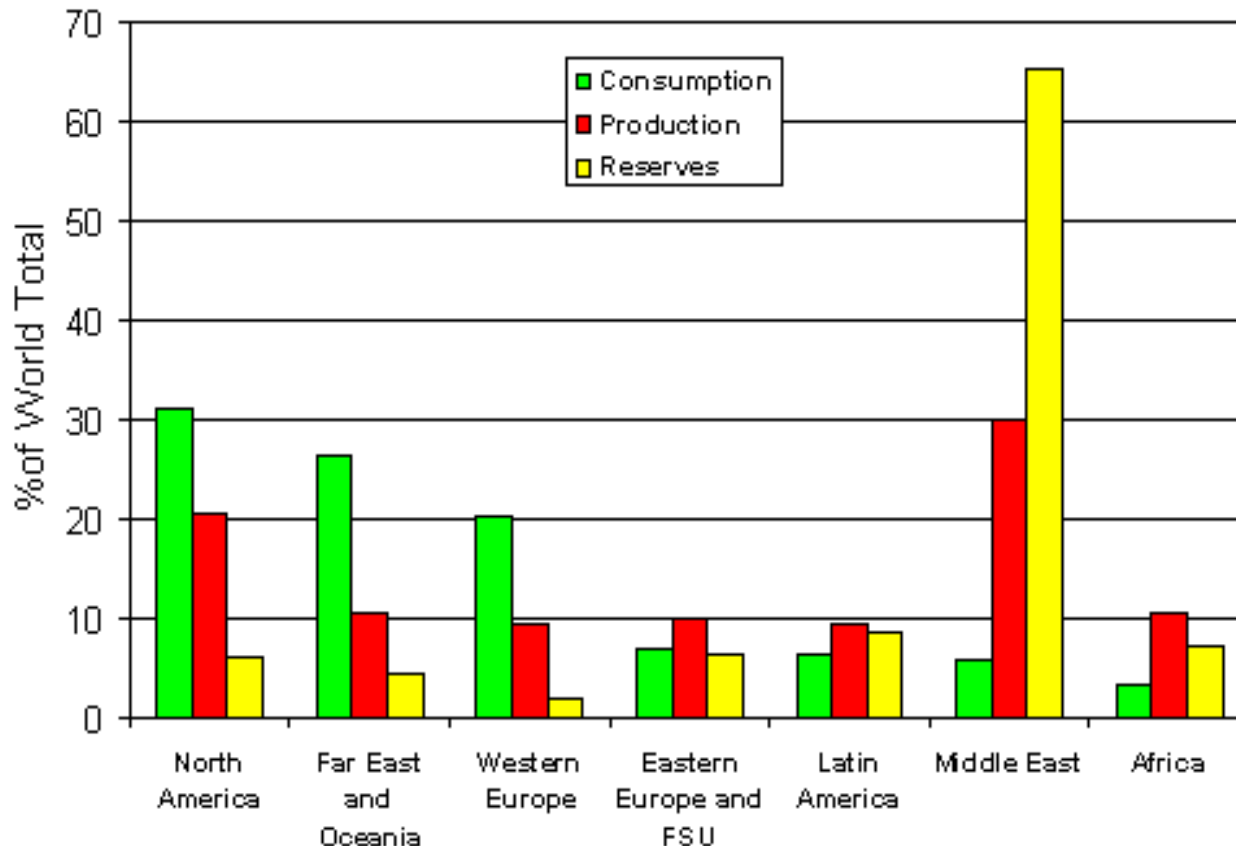
Consumption:

how much oil a region uses in cars, factories, etc.

Production: how much oil a region takes from their land and makes usable.

Reserves: how much oil a country still has left in their land

Global Consumption and Production (as at end 1998)
and Reserves (end 1999)



<http://www.mbendi.co.za/indy/oilg/p0005.htm#5>