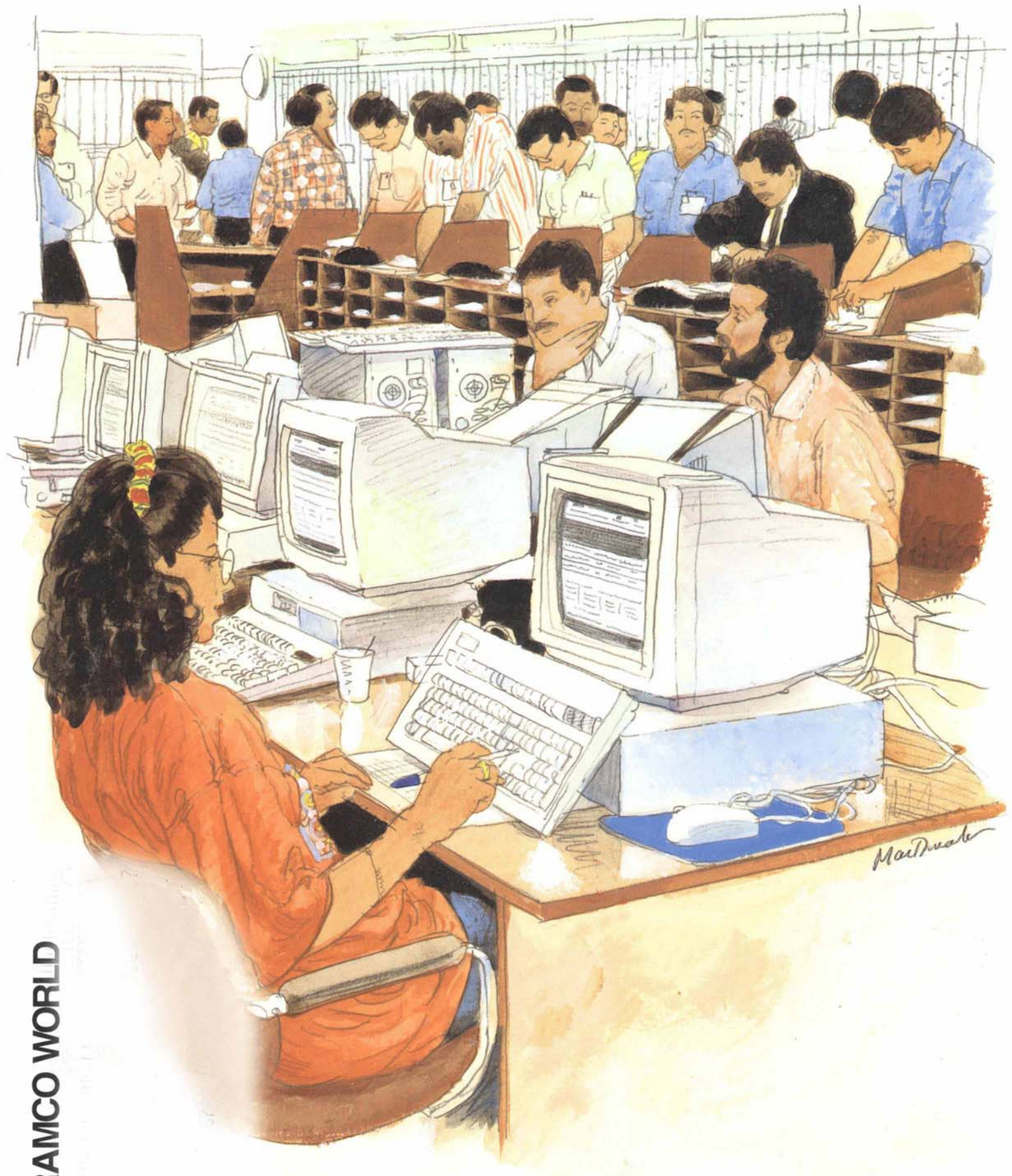
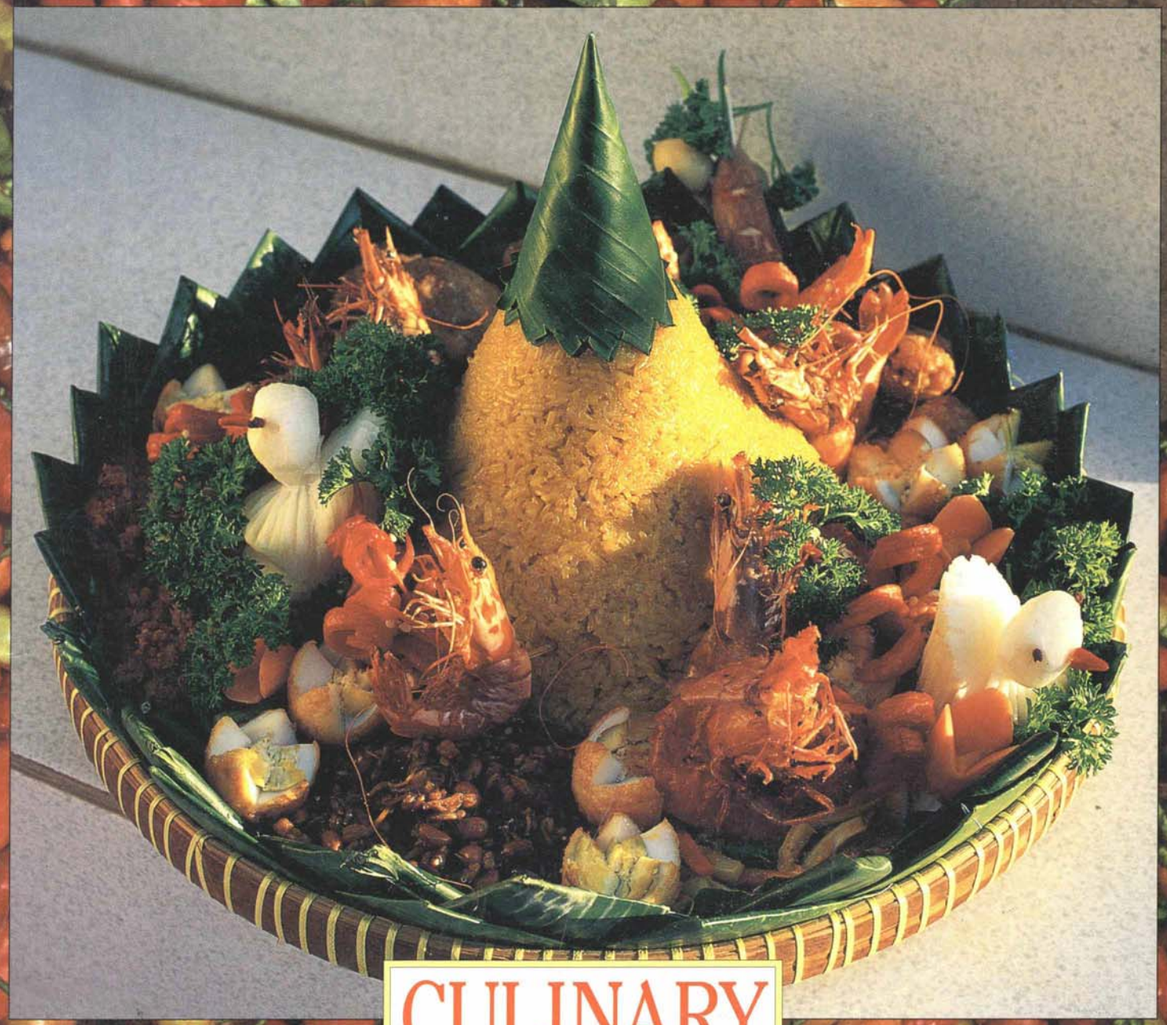


ARAMCO WORLD

ARAMCO WORLD

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1996



CULINARY RECONNAISSANCE: INDONESIA

Published by
Aramco Services Company
9009 West Loop South
Houston, Texas 77096, USA

ISSN 1044-1891

Mustafa A. Jalali
PRESIDENT

Shafiq W. Kombargi
DIRECTOR
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Robert Arndt
EDITOR

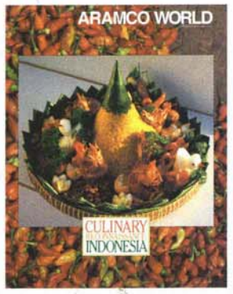
Dick Doughty
ASSISTANT EDITOR

DESIGN AND PRODUCTION
Herring Design

PRINTED IN THE USA
Gulf Printing

Saudi Aramco, the oil company born as a bold international enterprise more than half a century ago, distributes *Aramco World* to increase cross-cultural understanding. The magazine's goal is to broaden knowledge of the culture of the Arab and Muslim worlds and the history, geography and economy of Saudi Arabia. *Aramco World* is distributed without charge, upon request, to a limited number of interested readers.

Address editorial correspondence to:
The Editor, Aramco World
Post Office Box 2106
Houston, Texas 77252-2106, USA
Send subscription requests and changes of address to:
Aramco World
Box 469008
Escondido, California 92046-9008



Cover: In central Java, communal feasts include *nasi tumpeng*: plain and sticky rice cooked together in turmeric-tinted coconut milk, then steamed in a bamboo cone. Side dishes include carved cucumbers, shrimp, anchovies, pickled vegetables, eggs, greens and, certainly, hot peppers. Photo: Brynn Bruijn. Back cover: One Jordanian in five owns stock traded on the Amman Financial Market, among the most active Arab stock markets. Illustration: Norman MacDonald.

◀ Belkıs Balpınar's modern kilim designs have their roots in traditional weaving motifs.

ARAMCO WORLD

VOL. 47 NO. 1 PUBLISHED BIMONTHLY JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1996

TAKING STOCK

WRITTEN BY JOSH MARTIN ILLUSTRATED BY NORMAN MACDONALD

Every weekday morning at 11:00 sharp, inside a white building with castle-like crenelated towers, a horn blasts. A cluster of men—and a few women—gathers around a horseshoe-shaped wooden rail beneath a large, green board inscribed with the names of companies.

"120," cries the reader under the board.

No answer.

"120," the reader cries again. "110," says a man on the right of the horseshoe. The reader leans over and chalks in the number on the board.

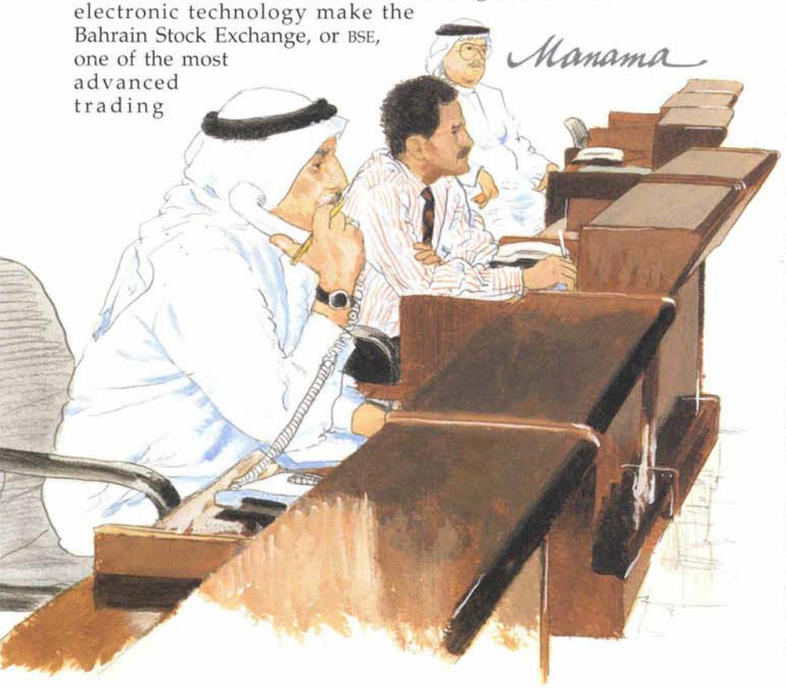
He is recording the "open-outcry" price negotiation for a share of stock, quoted in Moroccan dirhams. At the Casablanca Bourse des Valeurs—the stock exchange—business has been done this way since 1929. Trading is open for only two hours a day, and the pace is relaxed, even familial. Except for a few computer screens flickering below the board, the scene resembles the Paris stock exchange late in the last century.

It will not do so for long.

The government of Morocco, which privatized its national foreign-trade bank last year, is selling off all or parts of its stakes in 74 holding companies and some 400 subsidiaries. One-third of these sales are slated for public offer on the Bourse, which has grown from 46 listed companies as recently as 1992 to 65 companies in mid-1995, and from a total capitalization of 12 billion Moroccan dirhams ($1.5 billion) to 40 billion dirhams ($5 billion). Tax laws that offer incentives to listed companies are expected to stimulate further growth.

"The Casablanca bourse is only about one-fifth the size it should be," says Alfred H. Saulniers, an advisor to Morocco's Ministry of Economic Affairs and Privatization. Saulniers believes that only 10 to 15 percent of the country's investor demand is being met, because there is presently no other outlet for capital in Morocco's controlled-currency economy. Government issues—one of few places Moroccans have been able to invest their money—have routinely been oversubscribed. "There is a major unsatisfied demand for shares," Saulniers concludes.

On the other side of the Arab world, in a steel-and-glass office block in downtown Manama, Bahrain, the scene is dramatically different. Polished marble floors, burnished wood desks and the latest in global-market electronic technology make the Bahrain Stock Exchange, or BSE, one of the most advanced trading floors in the world. Here, a flurry of international traders and investors crowd what is also among the newest Arab stock markets, founded in 1989.



Unlike the Casablanca Bourse, which is designed to support Moroccan business and securities, the BSE is aiming at an international market. Foreign participation is not intended primarily to capitalize domestic companies but rather to secure Bahrain's role as a key world financial market. "The plan is not only to organize a local market, but to support Bahrain as a financial center in the region," says Fawzi Behzad, director of the BSE.

The BSE is also different from many other Arab exchanges because, until now, it has listed only stocks. No "government paper," such as treasury bonds, is traded here. However, says Behzad, that may change. "We are now developing a system to issue and trade bonds," he says, adding that the complex legal and procedural framework needed is nearing completion. "One of our objectives is to diversify the range of investment instruments available."

This diversification will include listing non-Arab companies: In early 1992, the BSE invited Gulf, Arab and international firms to apply for listings.

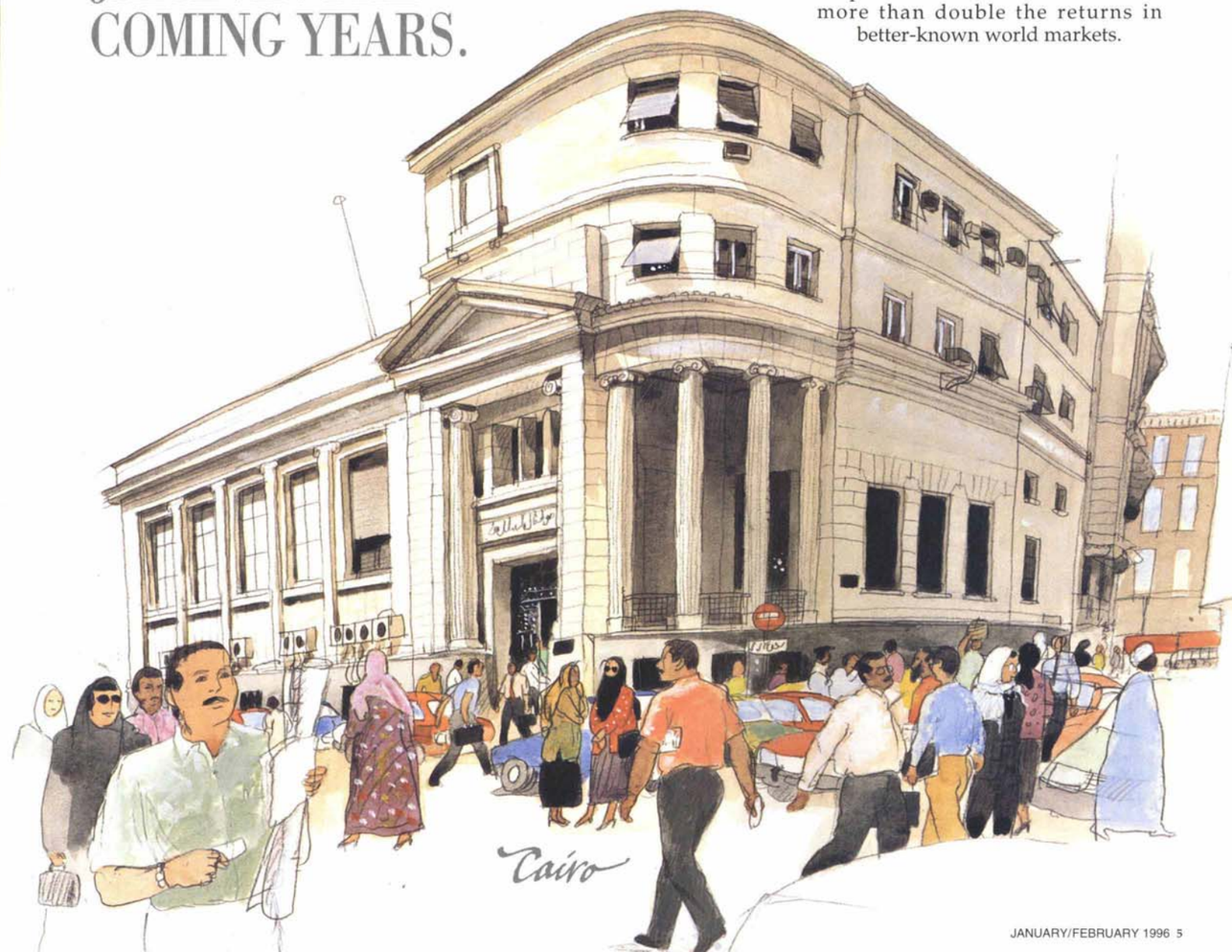
The Casablanca Bourse and the BSE are designed to meet dramatically different economic needs. Morocco promotes internal development by allowing Moroccan companies to raise capital among mostly domestic investors, although foreign participation is increasingly welcomed. Bahrain is soliciting foreign investment that will be based in Bahrain but deployed worldwide. Yet both are part of a regional trend in which more than a dozen Arab stock exchanges are growing, nourished by investors and host governments seeking to meet economic and political needs that are as varied as the national economies in which the exchanges operate. In many of these countries, stock markets have become key elements in development plans, playing significant roles in privatization efforts as well as in tapping new sources of capital.

According to the Emerging Markets Database maintained by the International Financial Corporation, an affiliate of the World Bank, the 11 existing Arab markets—Morocco, Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Tunisia and two in Egypt—have a combined market capitalization of $70 billion.

THE ARAB EXCHANGES, LIKE MANY OTHER EMERGING MARKETS, ARE EXPECTED TO OUTPERFORM THEIR LONG-ESTABLISHED COUNTERPARTS IN THE US, EUROPE AND JAPAN IN THE COMING YEARS.

Market experts believe that by the end of the decade two new exchanges will open, in Algeria and the United Arab Emirates; they, along with the expected growth of all the Arab exchanges, could push the aggregate capitalization above $120 billion. If neighboring non-Arab stock exchanges in Cyprus, Turkey and Iran are included, regional capitalization could reach $200 billion.

Throughout the region, impressive growth rates are catching the attention of would-be investors and fueling pressure for further change. According to International Finance Corporation figures, the Arab exchanges, like many other emerging markets, are expected to outperform their long-established counterparts in the US, Europe and Japan in the coming years. Worldwide, growth among 20 emerging markets has generally exceeded that of the nine largest developed markets. In Morocco and Tunisia, for example, stock market investors realized annual returns ranging between 20 and 30 percent in both 1993 and 1994—more than double the returns in better-known world markets.



Although today's world stock exchanges are usually organized along Western economic lines, some of the most common investment and banking products in use today originated in the Arab world. It was in Abbasid Baghdad of the eighth and ninth centuries that draft accounts—a variation of checking accounts—were first developed. A few centuries later, under the Cairo-based Mamluk caliphate, checking accounts appeared.

From its trade with Egypt, Italy soon assimilated the device into the emerging economy of the Renaissance. Arab financiers of the Middle Ages also devised commodity futures contracts, still an important feature of Western finance as well as a popular investment tool used by Islamic banks.

In Casablanca, Tunis, Alexandria and Cairo, however, the forerunners of today's stock exchanges were set up only during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, under French and British colonial rule. Designed to meet European investment needs rather than local ones, those institutions to this day show signs of their colonial past: In Alexandria, trading chits are printed in English and French; in Casablanca, the language of the trading floor is French.

In the years after World War II, following these countries' independence from colonial rule, nationalist economic policies—sometimes complicated by Cold War politics—often weakened markets. But by the 1970's, governments throughout the region began to see markets—and stock exchanges—as significant tools of economic development. The world debt crisis of the 1980's forced a growing number of countries to turn to the market to stimulate private-sector investment and stanch outflows of much-needed local capital.

SOME OF THE MOST COMMON INVESTMENT AND BANKING PRODUCTS IN USE TODAY ORIGINATED IN THE ARAB WORLD.

Stock exchanges throughout the Arab world today come in two basic forms. The first is typical of emerging markets, resembles the Casablanca Bourse and has counterparts in the other post-colonial countries of North Africa. The companies listed in this type of exchange are often predominantly "hard" industries: manufacturing concerns and utilities. Until recently, these markets have been dominated by relatively small circles of domestic investors who have concentrated their trading activity on limited offerings of government and public-company bonds.

The second type of exchange is typified by Manama's BSE and generally comprises the markets in the Arabian Gulf countries. Its structure is relatively new to the Arab world, and in many ways it has more in common with Singapore or Hong Kong than it does with the formerly colonial exchanges of the Maghrib, the western part of the Arab world. It is driven by a cash-rich economy in which domestic industry often plays a secondary—albeit growing—role in a market dominated by "soft" concerns such as banking and real estate.

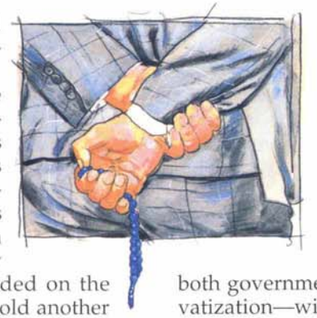
Several of the emerging stock markets, particularly those in Morocco, Tunisia and Jordan, are gradually developing increasingly sophisticated investment rules that will permit the formation of the variety of "investment products" common in the West—mutual funds, for example—that may stimulate both small and large investors. There are also proposals in these markets to allow Arabs from the Gulf countries to participate.

Among the relative newcomers, but not fitting quite neatly into either the emerging-market model of the Maghrib or the global financial model of the Gulf, is Jordan's Amman Financial Market, or AFM. It is, however, presently the liveliest of all the Arab stock markets, and with good reason: An estimated one out of five adult Jordanians hold shares. This is not far shy of the rate in the United States, where one in three adults owns stock, or in the United Kingdom, where the rate is one in four. Trading volume has grown from $10 million in 1978, the AFM's first year of operation, to more than $2 billion in 1994. Total capitalization of the market now stands at $4.5 billion, and institutions and individuals each account for roughly half of the trading activity.

The AFM is also one of the most diverse markets in the Middle East. The 101 listed companies divide well among industry, real estate and finance. Public confidence in the market is buttressed by strict reporting requirements. Beginning this year, listed companies must provide accounts, prepared by external auditors, that conform to guidelines set by ISOSCO, the international association of stock market regulators.

Because the extent of public participation is an indicator of public confidence, market authorities at the AFM take great care to ensure the stability of their market. Companies wishing to be listed must first be audited and tracked for one year by exchange officials. Then, for a full year following the company's initial public offering, shares are traded only on the AFM's parallel market, which offers a less stringent, over-the-counter style of listing. Only after a final review by Jordanian market authorities are the shares transferred to the AFM

proper, and may then be bought and sold on its trading floor, housed in a gleaming-white, terraced tower.



Like all other Arab markets with the exception of Morocco, the AFM distinguishes three categories of investors: its own nationals, other Arabs, and nationals of non-Arab countries. Although regulations in Jordan prohibit foreign investors from holding more than 49 percent of a company, it is estimated that they actually hold only two percent of the shares traded on the AFM, and that non-Jordanian Arabs may hold another 15 percent.

One reason for this low level of non-Jordanian participation is the AFM's lack of mutual funds or other institutional investment vehicles. International investors often use such funds as confidence markers in markets where, because of their lack of familiarity with the local economy, they have difficulty keeping track of developments. But most regional experts believe the lure of increased international investment will lead the AFM to fill this gap in the near future.

Throughout the Middle East, international investment is now widely regarded as one key to national economic growth—yet historically, the Middle East has been "under-lent." In the early 1990's, *The Wall Street Journal* reports, when international capital flows to emerging markets exceeded $200 billion, only three percent was going to the Middle East, including the Gulf region. Especially in relatively volatile, high-growth markets, stability and investor confidence result from a careful balancing of the freedom to invest, on the one hand, and the control of speculation on the other.

Some markets, such as the AFM and Bahrain's BSE, prevent the short-term speculation that can lead to wild market imbalances by requiring investors to hold their shares for a minimum period of time. The BSE also limits share-price movements over time. In Morocco, although new investment laws do allow foreigners to purchase up to 100 percent of the shares of a given company, salaried employees of listed companies get a 20-percent discount from the market price when they buy their own company's shares—a clear and intentional advantage given to small domestic investors. Moreover, the government is retaining some percentage of ownership in certain companies to ensure that new owners do not mismanage them in some way.

There is another balancing act, too, as Arab exchanges seek to manage the direction of growth. Each exchange wants to expand, but equally, none wants to risk compromising its national or Arab identity. Memories of colonial domination are strong, particularly in North Africa and the Levant. By the standards of London or New York, the Arab markets are new, small, and relatively vulnerable to manipulation by outside investors, particularly large multinational corporations. It is against this background that many of today's investment restrictions were put in place. Still, many exchanges are increasingly willing—and are now sufficiently experienced—to begin to favor growth over protection.

One reason is that many observers in both government and the private sector believe that privatization—with the decentralization and diversification that it brings—may actually help national economies escape domination by well-entrenched local investor groups. "As long as we have control in the hands of family-owned banks, and fail to attract middle-class savings, the privatization program won't work," says Muhammad M'jid, a Casablanca businessman and member of the Moroccan Parliament. "Even small savers should have a right to profit. We have had a bad experience with stock markets in the past because they have been controlled and manipulated" by the wealthy.

In Bahrain, the BSE has opened to foreign investment in cautious stages. Initially, only foreigners resident in Bahrain for five years could buy shares. Then, in 1990, the BSE permitted outside investors to trade in shares of the Arab Banking Corporation, one of the largest financial institutions in the Gulf. Non-resident foreigners were then able to invest in four banking firms out of the total of 32 issues on the BSE. Investors from more than 26 countries now hold shares in one or more of those institutions.

In July, 1994, the BSE relaxed the regulations further. Now, foreigners resident in Bahrain may buy and sell shares in any of the 32 listed companies—but foreign holdings cannot exceed 24 percent of any one company's outstanding shares, and no single individual or foreign institution can hold more than one percent of the shares of any company.

Officials say even these restrictions are likely to be lifted further as the BSE completes its linkage with Oman's Muscat Securities Exchange, a move begun in 1993 and aimed at creating a combined market with 130 listed companies and a $7-billion capitalization.

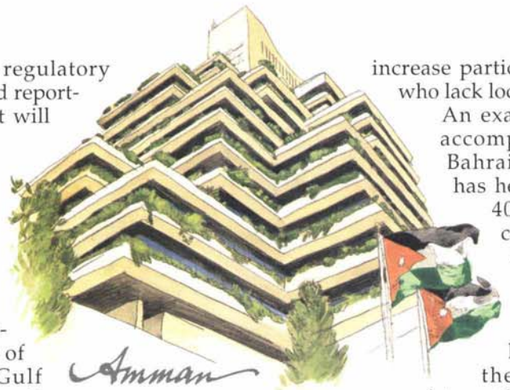
ONE INNOVATIVE WAY MIDDLE EASTERN MARKETS MAY BUILD AN INTERNATIONAL INVESTOR BASE IS THROUGH A NEW FORM OF REGION-SPECIFIC MUTUAL FUND.

One innovative way Middle Eastern markets can build a diverse international investor base is a relatively new form of mutual fund that specializes in one region of the world or in one specific country. These "country funds" are designed specifically to attract international capital. Their investments spread across a variety of long-established and newly privatized firms, domestic securities and government treasury bills in their region or country, but the funds themselves are traded on the London, New York and Tokyo stock exchanges.

Worldwide there are now more than 150 such funds, representing more than $30 billion in capital; two decades ago, they numbered only a handful. But as yet only a few operate on the periphery of the Arab world, in India, Pakistan and Turkey. Within the Arab world, leading stock exchanges have begun their development of mutual funds with several "closed-end" funds—a type that puts a ceiling on capitalization—which are expected to be offered in Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia within the next few years. Some markets are also looking carefully at India's practice of permitting currency convertibility for certain stock and bond portfolios; the goal is to encourage investment by expatriate nationals while still limiting participation by foreigners. All this, market planners believe, will stimulate private-sector, equity-driven development, particularly in those emerging markets with a history of government-led, centralized development.

The drive to increase the role of private capital is particularly powerful in Egypt. Here, a historic rivalry between Alexandria and Cairo has made it the only Arab country with more than one stock market. The Cairo Stock Exchange, founded in 1883, is the older of the two, which, until the early 1950's, were the largest in the Arab world. Economic reforms now being put in place seek to re-establish Cairo as a key financial center. As in Morocco, privatization is taking place in part by floating shares of formerly public companies on the stock market. But it is a significant challenge. As they do elsewhere, international investors are holding back

somewhat as they wait for the regulatory safeguards and more sophisticated reporting and trading mechanisms that will ensure the stability they need.



Over the past two decades, the idea of a pan-Arab stock market has been discussed seriously at most regional economic summits. Such a union—usually envisioned as an expanded version of the Maghrib Union or the Gulf Cooperation Council—would have the advantage of drawing on a far larger body of investors than individual countries can muster.

With its offerings of a larger and more diverse list of companies, such a market might also form a "critical mass" for the Middle East in the world economy. Whereas American, Japanese and European exchanges number their listed companies in the thousands—the three major US exchanges combined list some 7000 companies—each of the Arab exchanges, except for Egypt, trades in fewer than 100 issues. The Kuwait Stock Exchange lists 54 stocks; the Casablanca Bourse trades 65. Saudi Arabia, which accounts for an estimated 50 percent of the region's total capital, has 78 companies listed on ESIS (Electronic Securities Information System), its dispersed electronic over-the-counter exchange.

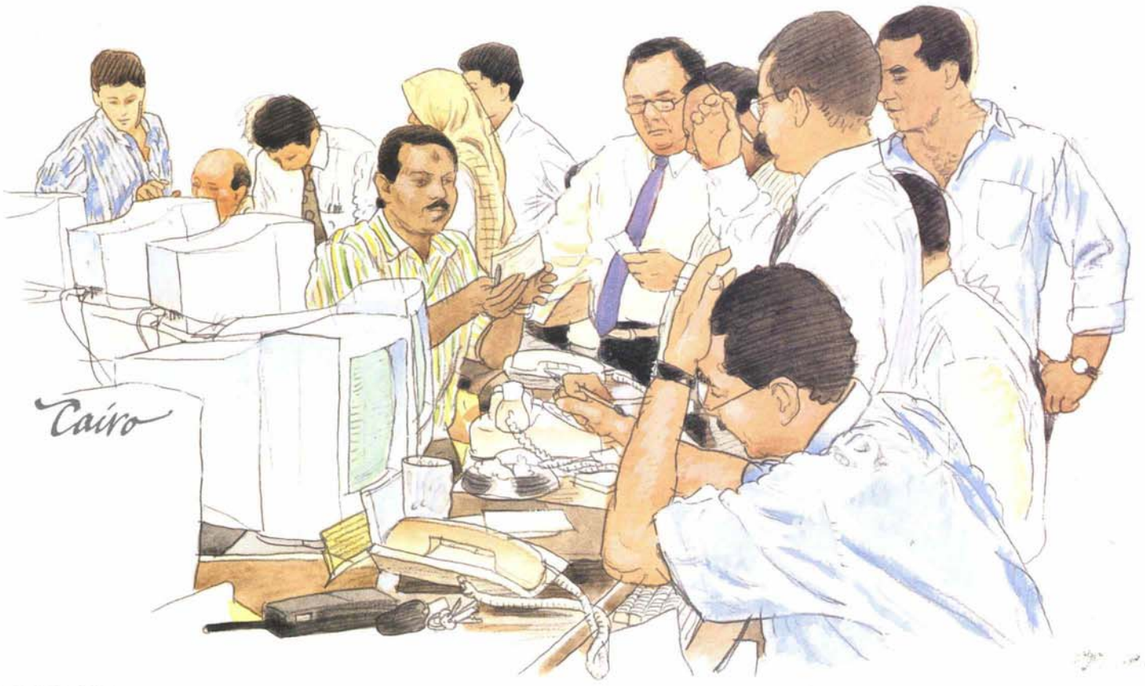
One development that could spur the establishment of a regional or even pan-Arab exchange is the creation of a "stamp of approval" certification by some internationally respected financial entity. That approval, applied to certain stocks traded on national exchanges, would mark them as meeting international criteria, and would increase participation by investors abroad who lack local market knowledge.

An example of how this might be accomplished already exists. The Bahrain Development Bank (BDB) has helped finance the creation of 40 small- and medium-sized companies, and expects several of them to win listing on the BSE within the next three years. "Right now, we do not pressure them to get listed," says Roger J. Webster, the bank's CEO. "But in the future, this will be an element of our development policy. Listing such companies on the BSE will allow us to re-utilize our development capital faster."

There have been several proposals to allow the BDB and the BSE to perform a similar role for companies in other Arab countries. One proposal is that companies could issue a special "BSE" class of shares, with a listing in Bahrain. That country's demanding listing requirements would provide a kind of quality rating in home markets.

Discussion of a smaller, Gulf-based regional exchange linking Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman and the United Arab Emirates has been spurred recently by the link already planned between Bahrain's BSE and Oman. Such a Gulf-wide exchange could list 200 to 300 companies with an initial combined market capitalization of $60 to $70 billion; that would place it on par with the relatively developed exchanges of India and Mexico.

But like the BSE, the Gulf-based exchanges see themselves as potentially more than Arab markets: Officials from Kuwait to the United Arab Emirates have pointed out that they are favorably located between Europe and Japan to be a key link in the 24-hour global market. One goal of a Gulf regional market, officials say, would thus be to solicit trade from large transnational and multinational corporations that are seeking round-the-clock availability of market facilities.



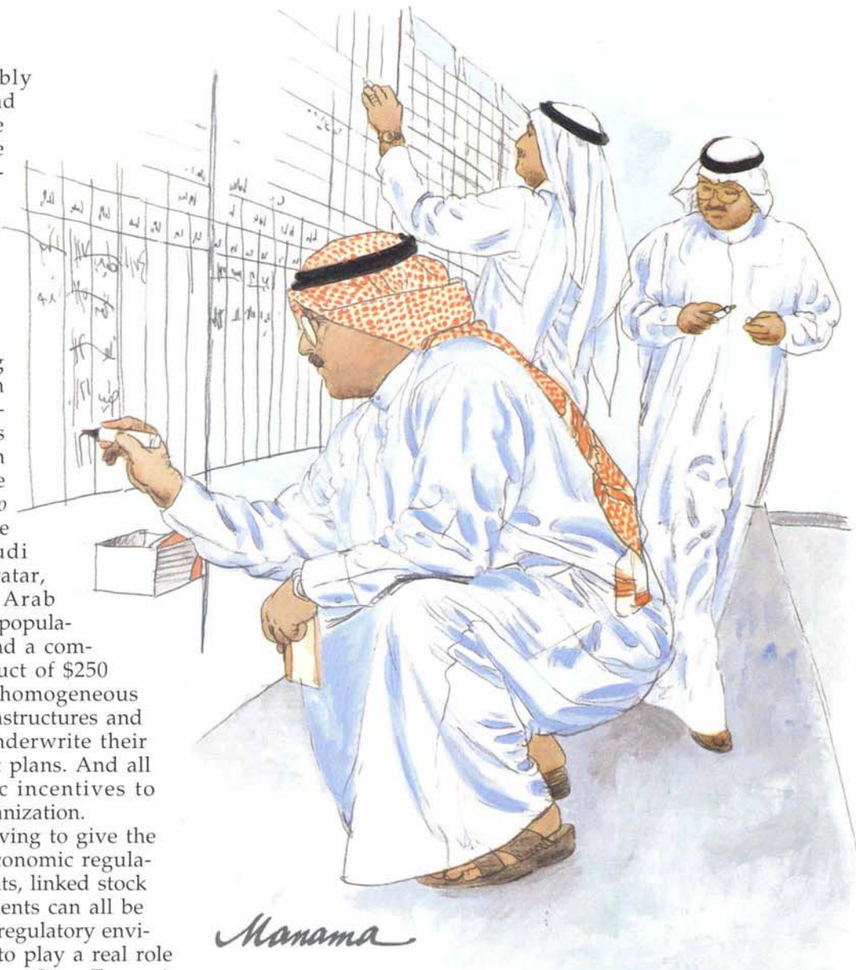
Many regard the existing regulatory structures within the 14-year-old Gulf Cooperation Council, or GCC, as the best vehicle through which a regional exchange could be created (See *Aramco World*, July-August 1990). The six GCC members—Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman and the United Arab Emirates—have a combined population of 26 million people and a combined gross domestic product of $250 billion. All have relatively homogeneous populations, developed infrastructures and the internal resources to underwrite their own economic development plans. And all are aware of the economic incentives to strengthen their regional organization.

Member countries are moving to give the GCC additional powers of economic regulation. Cross-border investments, linked stock exchanges and tariff agreements can all be influenced by the prevailing regulatory environment. "The GCC is likely to play a real role as an economic arbiter," says Jean-François Seznec, a professor at Columbia University's Middle East Institute and an authority on banking in the Arab world. "The only way to develop successfully is to integrate economies regionally."

Individually, Bahrain and the UAE have already relaxed government controls over foreign participation in their equities markets; Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are now exploring ways they might permit foreign investors to participate in theirs. "There is tremendous pressure for change," says Paul Scogna, a US Commerce Department trade analyst.

The GCC has already had some success in establishing an interbank market—useful for raising short-term government funds—that is linked to money centers in London, New York and elsewhere. But experts say that, while the communications facilities are there, the regulatory framework still needs work. "You need an SEC-type agency to ensure that investors will be satisfied and that transactions will be done in an open manner," says Seznec. "These exchanges need independent rating agencies which can give an impartial evaluation of companies and bond or share issues."

One US banker points out that the Gulf countries, with their substantial incomes and reserves, have all the ingredients to hand to build a successful regional financial market: "You just need agreement on the clearing and payments mechanism. All things are possible if the will is there."



"Arab investors are no different from any others," explains a Gulf-based banker. "They want a good return on their investment."

Josh Martin, a New-York–based journalist and consultant, specializes in Middle Eastern economics.

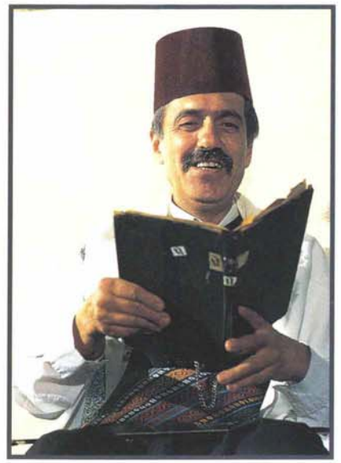
"You will recall, gentlemen, that yesterday, when we left the fighters, they had just made an agreement with General Ma'ruf. They would put King Baybars to the test, they had decided. Then they returned to

TALES IN THE 'HOOD:

tell the king's squire, 'Uthman, who, when he heard this, declared, 'Strike me

blind! Clothe me and unclothe me! What will become of such fighters?'—for he pretended the king would trounce them easily."

Using his own annotated manuscript text and a few costumes and props, Abu Shadi breathes renewed life into the epics of Arab literature, including the romance of Prince 'Antar (opposite, center), in a neighborhood tradition that has enriched the performing arts throughout Syria.



THE LAST HAKAWATI

Written by Barbara Nimri Aziz • Photographed by George Baramki Azar

So our storyteller begins his evening's narrative at the al-Nafurah Café. This month, he is recounting the adventures of al-Zahir Rukn al-Din Baybars, most eminent of the 13th-century Mamluk sultans. The manuscript he holds in his hand is an embellished tale based on Baybars's victory over the invading Crusader armies more than 700 years ago. Baybars was said to be a just ruler and a valiant fighter; as portrayed in this drama, however, his heroic stature goes far beyond the historical evidence: He regularly performs fantastic military feats in a wild adventure laced with sorcery and roguery. His groom, 'Uthman, is half saint and half pickpocket, dares to address his master simply as "Soldier!" and plays sly tricks on his lord.

Most of the audience listening tonight knows the historical facts well enough. They learned them long ago from school texts and history books, and many have seen film portrayals of Sultan Baybars. What attracts them to the al-Nafurah Café is this unique dramatization, available only here at their local coffee house, and only from the expert teller of these tales, the *hakawati*, who brings them to life.

Al-hakawati is a Syrian term for this poet, actor, comedian, historian and storyteller. Its root is *hikayah*, a fable or story, or *haka*, to tell a story; *wati* implies expertise in a popular street-art. The hakawati is neither a troubadour, who travels from place to place, nor a *rawi*, whose recitations are more formalized and less freely interpreted. The hakawati has popular counterparts in Egypt, where he is often called *sha'ir*, or poet, and where he accompanies his tales on a *rababah*, a simple stringed instrument. In Iraq he is known as *qisa khoun*.

Here in Syria, the hakawati sits facing his audience, book in one hand, cane in the other, sometimes reciting from memory, sometimes interjecting poems, jokes and commentary, and sometimes reading the text. And he always performs in a coffee house. In fact, the hakawati is so closely identified with the café in which he performs that some old-timers recall him simply by exclaiming, *"Ah, 'ala al-qahwah!"*—"Ah, the café!"

But the hakawati's craft is a dying one, and here at al-Nafurah can be found the single remaining regularly performing hakawati in all of Damascus, and indeed, experts say, in all of Syria.

Tonight, as usual, members of the audience were quiet as they arrived, each nodding in recognition to the proprietor before taking a seat. Most acknowledged other regulars, too, and nodded to Abu Shadi, the hakawati.

There is no stage around which the customers arrange themselves, no curtain, no props. Some men sit against the wall, while others occupy seats near the kitchen, apparently unconcerned that they have no view of the performance. Leaning back in their chairs, they take up their waterpipes and draw in the smoke. For these moments, they seem lost in their thoughts, or dozing.

The tea boy slips from table to table with a brazier of hot coals swinging from his hand. He stops, places some coals in the trough of a customer's waterpipe, and moves on. Later, he circulates with a tray of glasses of tea, and the tinkling sound of spoons rises into the smoky room. Few eyes turn to Abu Shadi when he takes his place on a chair elevated above the others.

As Abu Shadi begins to read the tale of Sultan Baybars, he speaks in colloquial Arabic, occasionally switching into the accents of a Cairene, a farmer, a citizen of Aleppo, a Turk and so on, depending on the character he is reading. Reaching the scene in which Sultan Baybars receives news of the landing of the enemy Franks at Alexandria, the hakawati's voice grows imperious:

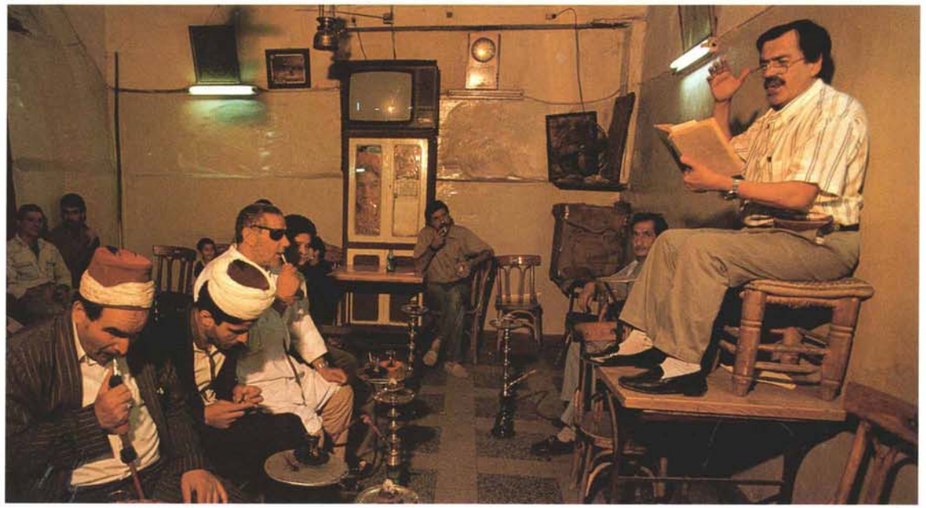
"'Everyone, I command! Mount your horses. God is eternal!', and Baybars gives the order for his troops to depart from Cairo for Alexandria, their arms raised to repel the invaders."

At this, the hakawati pauses and glances up from his book. A shout comes from the far side of the room and he waits, smiling. An elderly gentleman—he had appeared to be sleeping—calls out, "The message to *al-papa*! Read the message to *al-papa*!" To the Arabs of the Middle Ages, *al-papa*, the pope, was the symbolic leader of the invading Crusader armies, and this man is referring to the letter Baybars will shortly send to the leader of the Christian forces.

Abu Shadi seems delighted with the interruption, and he becomes animated at once. His eyes open wide as he scans the room, until his audience too is alert, and he disregards his text. In the street accent of an Egyptian, he becomes Ibrahim, servant of Baybars.

"'I swear on the head of my grandfather, Imam 'Ali; I am your messenger, oh king. This will be his last day!' And he mounts his mare and sets off for the enemy camp. Now, Ibrahim arrived in front of the grand tent of the king of the Franks and shouted 'Good morning, oh pope! Here, stand and take this letter from our lord, your conqueror. Don't be deceived by your general's assurances of victory. Take this message, or I'll take your head.'"

The hakawati assumes a regal posture on his seat as he recites these lines. A customer at the back, stirred by Ibrahim's audacity, cheers. Laughter breaks out across the café, and more cheers rise. This happens at any point in the story at which Baybars or his soldiers demonstrate their fearlessness, as if the home team had scored a goal. The hakawati returns to his text, and the customers bend forward, stir their tea, and settle into their chairs once more as the reading resumes.



Hakawatis work best when the listeners are regulars. "His sympathy with them as a person and as a storyteller is the basis of his success," explains a Syrian actor.

So it continues for almost an hour. At one point Abu Shadi, gesturing broadly, strikes a chair with his "sword." Exclamations from the audience punctuate his reading, and there is muffled laughter when the hakawati's puns become earthy, or when he assumes the exaggerated Egyptian accent of the Falstaffian squire 'Uthman.

Abu Shadi finally arrives at the moment of high drama when Ma'ruf, commander of a group of mountain fighters, openly challenges Baybars:

"Raise your sword, oh king, and face this day alone, for it is your last."

It is a call to battle between erstwhile allies.

But before anything more can happen, the booming voice of the combatants is replaced by prosaic tones as Abu Shadi lifts his eyes from the book and announces, "Today, friends, we end here. Thank you for coming." He closes the book, steps down from his platform and, now indistinguishable from the other customers, moves among the tables to speak with his friends.

The serial style of presentation is a common feature in storytelling around the world: It is how *The Iliad* was first "published," as well as *David Copperfield*, a dramatic technique employed to raise suspense and hold an audience from one day to the next, and it is a particularly common feature of Arab stories. Indeed, the tale of Baybars is of the same epic genre—called *al-malhama*—as *Alf Laylah wa Laylah*, *A Thousand and One Nights*.

The heroic epics from early Arab history make up most of the repertoire of the hakawati, including the epic of King Sayf ibn Thi-Yazzan, set in pre-Islamic Yemen at the time of the Ethiopian invasion; the *Sirat Banu Hilal*, which tells of the Hilal tribe's migration from Arabia across North Africa in the 11th century; and the romance of 'Antar, which the *Encyclopedia of Islam* calls "the model of the Arabic romance of chivalry." There are many versions of each, and all are of uncertain origin. Khairy al-Zahaby, Syrian author and expert on hakawati literature, says that it is possible that these Arab stories may have been influenced by Greek epics, and that they in turn may have inspired the post-Renaissance European versions of tales such as *King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table*.

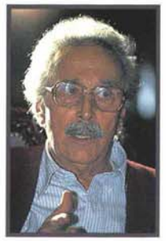
Now, however, this once widespread form of entertainment has grown so rare that few young people have witnessed it. Maisoun Sioufi of New York heard the stories from her grandmother and her aunt, who recited them to her when she was a child in Damascus in the 1950's.

"They did not read, but recited from memory," she recalls. "The story continued for the whole weekend, from Thursday evening to Saturday." Sioufi remembers her grandmother changing her accent, in true hakawati fashion, to fit the character she was voicing, and she laughs when she recalls how her grandmother always left the family in suspense, ending each story at a point when the hero's life was in danger.

"Those were such vivid stories, full of chivalry and humor. The plot was always hackneyed and simple, but we were spellbound," she says. "Those were our Robin Hood and our Batman."

Taysir al-Saadi, a well-known radio dramatist in Damascus, remembers that "it was our fathers who followed the hakawati. This was their local entertainment when they gathered for their evening coffee." And to men who today are over 60, the mere mention of the hakawati can stir memories of heroism, of repartee and ribald jokes, of color and valor and political satire. They remember each hakawati for his style and personality.

Al-Saadi remembers hakawati Abu 'Ali Abouba, for example, and how he "drew crowds to our neighborhood, and we boys ran after him." Al-Saadi himself never heard Abouba perform, but, he says, his grandmother did. "She knew the stories he told, especially the jokes, and I remember them from her." Whether Abouba inspired him to become an actor, al-Saadi does not say, but he admits he has always been fascinated with the hakawatis, and he has collected their texts. He himself played the role of a hakawati in a recent radio drama.



Taysir al-Saadi

The late Abu Ahmad Monis, generally regarded as the last of the great hakawatis, used to perform at the al-Nafurah Café and packed all 200 seats, according to the café's former owner. "He recited without looking at his book," he recalls. "He greeted everyone as they entered, and asked about their families. He could slip into any accent: Aleppan, Egyptian, Turkish, that of a servant or lord, upper class or rural."

Abu Shadi, the surviving hakawati at the al-Nafurah Café, emphasizes the importance of acting in his work. He names the famous contemporary film actor Abbas Nouri as one he aspires to emulate, because Nouri "is especially talented in voice—accents and imitations." Abu Shadi says he regrets he never had an opportunity to study acting professionally. He too recalls seeing Monis as a child, and he admired another old hakawati at al-Nafurah, Abu Shahin, but was not apprenticed to either of them. Nevertheless, Abu Shadi accompanied his father to the café and, when he could, he read passages from Abu Shahin's books. He loved these epic stories, he says.

Abu Shadi knows he is not a master hakawati, and he admits he still has much to learn. If it were not for the Syrian government's support of hakawatis today, in the form of occasional festivals and special performances during Ramadan, he says, the art would have completely disappeared.

Many theater and folklore experts, however, are more critical. The tradition is already gone, they insist. It is just folklore now, and Abu Shadi's performances are a kind of museum piece, says Khairy al-Zahaby. "He is commercialized," says another student of the hakawati literature.

But Damascus professor of history Suhail Zakkar feels differently, insisting that Abu Shadi "is working sincerely." The Damascus expert on the history of the Crusades and the hakawati epics does not seem to mind that some tourists now attend the performances at the al-Nafurah Café, or that the hakawati himself appeals to foreign visitors. Zakkar sees it as a living—and thus changing—art form.

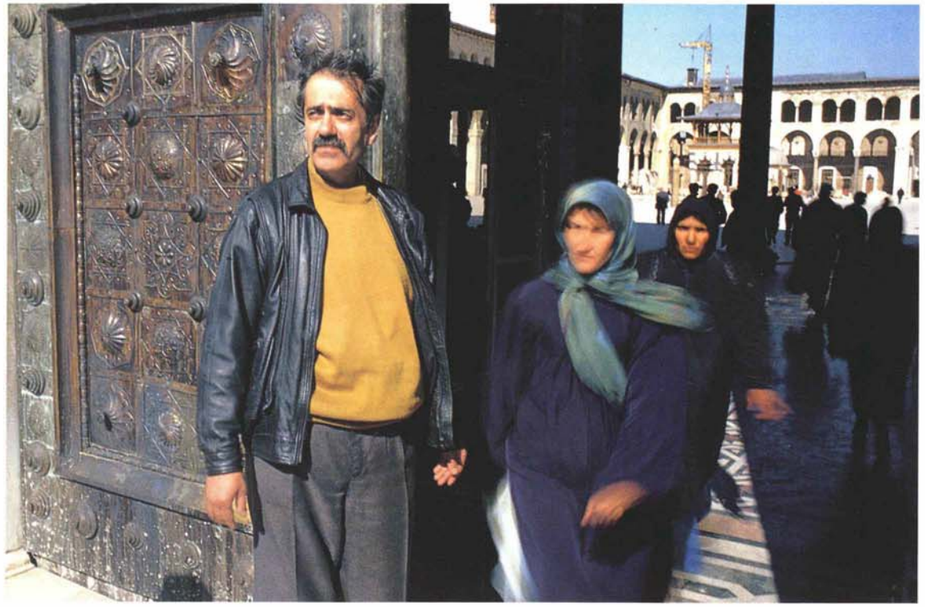
Abu Shadi himself acknowledges that his audience differs dramatically from what it was in the past. "Local Syrians do not support us," he complains. "They want something new. But foreign people understand. To them, something old *is* something new."

Nabil Haffar, professor of theater studies at the Damascus Academy of Theater Arts, respects the hakawatis of the past more than those of the present. "The real hakawatis are gone," he maintains. Yet he studies their tradition keenly, and feels there is much to learn from them. "Voice," he says, "is especially important. I teach the hakawati technique of voice to my students at the Academy."

Though radio actor al-Saadi agrees that voice is crucial to a hakawati's success, he believes that the quintessential skill of a hakawati lies in his ability to work an audience. "It's not like the theater, where you have an opening and closing, where a curtain separates stage and audience. Here the situation is simpler and puts more weight on the performer. A good hakawati has a store of verbal appetizers which he serves at the beginning, to warm his audience up. With each anecdote, he moves closer to the audience. Because he knows his audience, he can draw on their lives for his stories. His sympathy with them as a person and as a storyteller is the basis of his success."

Al-Saadi's anecdote of the famous Abu 'Ali Abouba illustrates this relationship. He recounts that Abouba visited a doctor, complaining of melancholy. "The doctor, ignorant of the identity of his patient, told him 'You need to see the hakawati Abouba, who will sympathize with your problem and cheer you up.' 'But,' said the patient sadly, '*I am* Abouba!'"

Rawa Batbouta, who has helped organize hakawati performances during Ramadan and knows the epics in detail, agrees that the presentations only really work when the audience is involved. "Frequently listeners will side with of one of the heros, cheering him or her on. Sometimes one group cheers on one side of a battle, while other observers take the other side. It cannot work as a simple reading or lecture."



Abu Shadi grew up near the Umayyad Mosque (background), in the neighborhood in which he now performs, steeped in Syrian history.

Of his audience at the al-Nafurah Café, Abu Shadi explains: "I watch them; I feel their mood; I wait for their replies." He calls himself a social guide, a person who points out morals. "I have to be sensitive to the people's problems," he says, and he also depends on men in the audience with whom he can engage in repartee.

He tells of his performance two years ago at a festival in Jordan. "There was a huge audience, and I was the first hakawati they had heard. But," he confides, "they did not know the story. Next time I will insist that I be accompanied by three or four of my friends. It will liven the thing up." Abu Shadi believes that it is his neighborhood associates who will make his true performance possible.

Hakawatis work best, then, when the listeners are regulars, and a relationship has had time to evolve. "Because visitors at the café are increasingly strangers, the atmosphere for hakawati performances is gone," says one who has seen the changes at close hand. Abu Salih al-Rabbat, the 80-year-old manager of the al-Nafurah Café, does not blame radio or television for the decline of storytelling, nor the loss of potential apprentices to compulsory education. Having lived most of his life in the old *suq*, or market, near the Umayyad Mosque, he has watched the nature of the café itself change and the larger social role of the traditional coffee shop decline.

"Forty years ago, those who stopped at my café lived nearby, behind or above the shops you see here in the streets. Men dropped in and listened to the hakawati after closing their businesses in the evening. Today, this neighborhood atmosphere is gone. Shopkeepers live outside the suq, miles away. After work they rush home. Our clients nowadays come from all over the city. They drop in along with the tourists, and few have any real relationship with the hakawati."

Moreover, he notes, "coffee shops are few today compared with the past. In the 'Amarah district of central Damascus, there were 10 cafés a few years ago; now only two remain. Baghdad Street had 15 coffee shops 50 years ago. Today not one survives."

Regardless of the fading of the hakawati's living art, his texts have their own historical role in Arab literature. However skilled as a joker, actor, or poet, the hakawati builds his performances around written accounts of Sultan Baybars, the Banu Hilal, Prince 'Antar and other popular figures. Every hakawati knows and owns these texts, having either purchased them or, more likely, received them from a master.

The books are usually manuscripts copied from an earlier edition, and they may contain supplements and a wealth of marginal notation. Abu Shadi says that he frequently writes notes, adds pages and sometimes inserts or omits passages at any given performance, according to his reading of the audience that day.

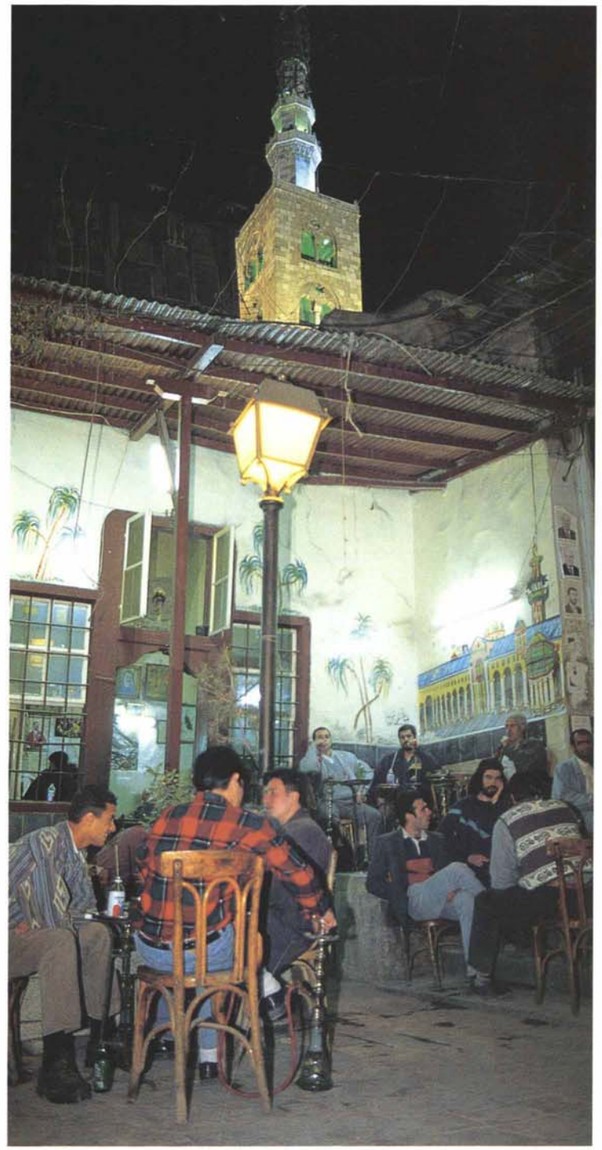
Today these rare manuscript editions are coveted by collectors and theater scholars, but performers rarely give them up. Some of the printed texts from which the manuscripts may derive are themselves extraordinary documents: According to one authority in Damascus, they seem to be limited-edition printings, and they exist in too many versions to catalogue and analyze.

Perhaps the most astonishing and valuable feature of the hakawati texts is their colloquial style, which is virtually unique in Arab literature from any period. Arabic texts—and especially histories—are written, as a rule, in classical Arabic, but the hakawati's *malahim* are not only colloquial, but in some cases richly embellished with rhymes and puns. Damascus-based painter Mustafa Hilaj says that he rereads *A Thousand and One Nights* "not for the story: I read it for the words."

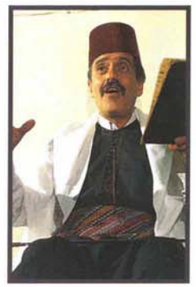
Because of the colloquial nature of the texts, says Professor Nabil Haffar, "historians and critics do not consider these renditions of the epics to be real literature." But he and others value the texts because they understand the word-play in Arabic, the rhythm, the poem. "There's courage in these writing styles. They contain and they feel more of the history of the time."

Moreover, writing Arabic in colloquial form requires considerable sensibility to local nuance and slang. Some editions of these epics contains passages in a prose meter called *saj'*, and one edition of the Banu Hilal epic is so rich in its style that one laughs aloud with delight at the skill of the author, some of whose passages combine poetry, pun and rhyme in a manner not unlike some passages of Shakespeare.

Author al-Zahaby is among those who value the inventive colloquialisms he finds in these texts. Arab writers like him are challenged by the need to go beyond traditional classical forms of writing and to experiment with new language, especially when portraying local characters. They also read the texts to grasp the social and moral norms of the past, to see how powerfully women were portrayed, and to understand how people set against one another—or reconciled—and to see what liberties were taken with language. Ironically, many students of language in Damascus today prefer to study these texts rather than watch the hakawati who helped create them.



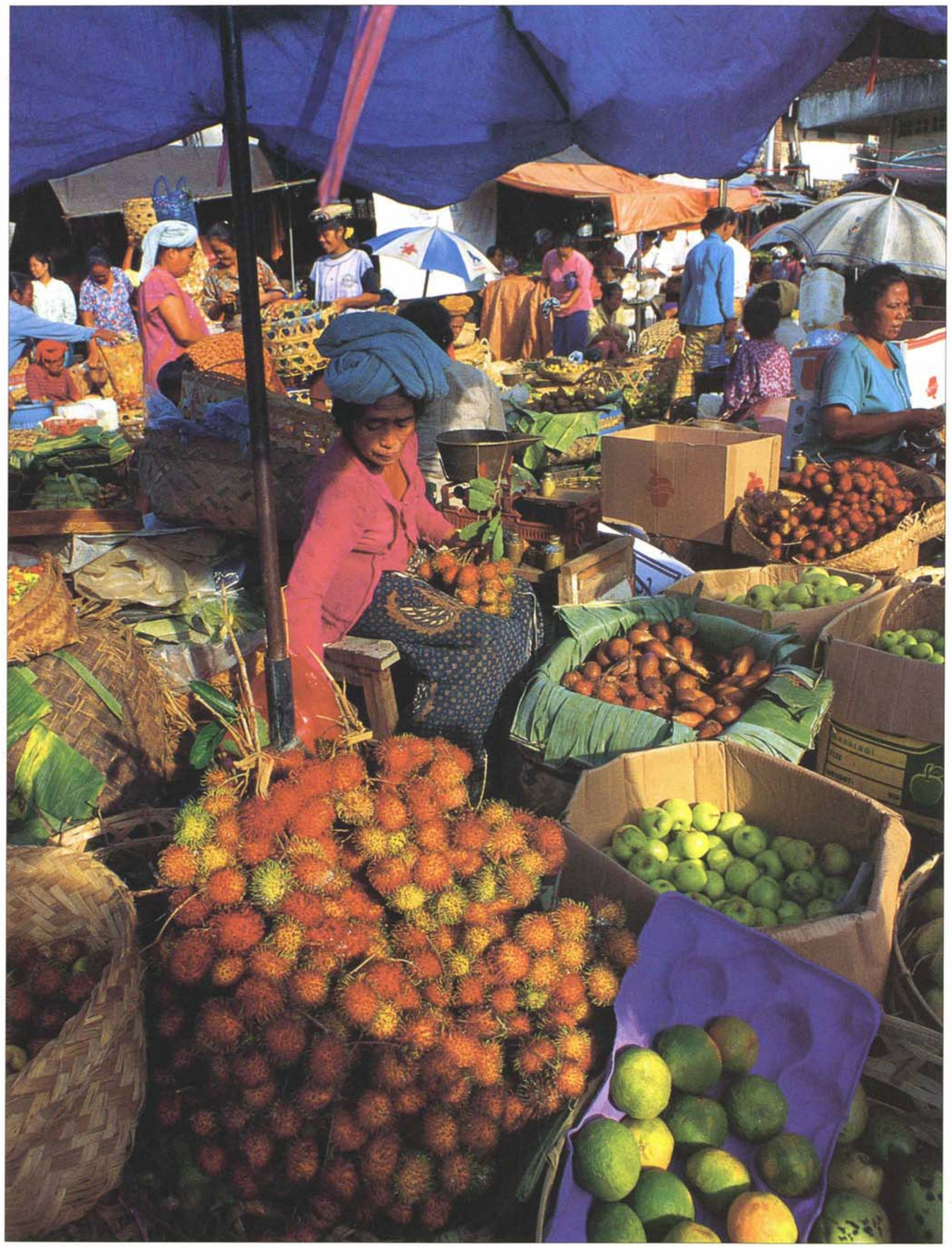
In the shadow of the famous mosque, the al-Nafurah Café is one of the city's increasingly scarce neighborhood coffee houses.



Little of this cultural significance is any use to Abu Shadi, whose nightly audience continues to dwindle, and whose colleagues' performances are increasingly confined to Ramadan, when the Syrian Ministry of Culture and several cafés and hotels sponsor hakawatis. During this month, daily routine changes, and after families break their fast each evening, they often seek out neighborhood activities in a manner once common year-round. Once again they can hear the hakawati at the famous 'Amarah Café, and the Cham Palace Hotel sponsors hakawati performances in Damascus, Aleppo, and Hama. As special events, they often attract large crowds.

Yet Ramadan remains the exception rather than the rule. For eleven months a year, it is only amid the tinkling of tea-glasses and the sweet waterpipe smoke at the old al-Nafurah Café that Abu Shadi holds forth about Sultan Baybars, episode after episode. Whether he is keeping a tradition alive or merely demonstrating what popular Arab culture once was, as long as his and other hakawatis' texts remain, others can take up and transform the ancient art, and return to heal the woes of the neighborhood.

Anthropologist and journalist Barbara Nimri Aziz writes about Middle East issues. She is the host of "Tahrir: Voices of the Arab World," a weekly radio program on the Pacifica network.



CULINARY RECONNAISSANCE: INDONESIA

WRITTEN BY ADA HENNE KOENE PHOTOGRAPHED BY BRYNN BRUIJN

Indonesia must be the most diverse country in the world. Its 190 million people comprise some 50 large ethnic groups and 250 smaller ones. Its approximately 18,000 islands range from tiny atolls to the second- and third-largest islands in the world, some covered with humid rain forests and dense tropical growth, parts of others parched and barren. Topographically, Indonesia is the most volatile segment of the Pacific "ring of fire," with hundreds of high volcanoes that slope down to broad, cool highland plateaus and low-lying wetlands or plains.

The Dutch—Indonesia's colonial occupiers for more than 300 years—affectionately call these islands scattered across the equatorial seas *de gordel van smaragden*, "the belt of emeralds"; the Indonesians call their country *tanah air kitah*, "our land and water," and both land and water are richly productive. The deep layers of nutrient-rich volcanic ash that have accumulated on some islands over millennia have made them so bountiful that even picket fences and rattan lawn chairs have been known to sprout and grow.

Indonesia's people have also accumulated their rich genetic heritage over millennia. Seafaring Australomelanesians were probably the first modern humans to arrive; Indian, Chinese, Arab, Portuguese, Spanish, English and Dutch travelers and traders followed, mixing their genes with those of their predecessors. Some left behind profound cultural, religious and culinary influences that mark Indonesia's population today: Arab traders, for example, are responsible for the rooting of Islam in the islands, and Indonesia is today the world's most populous Muslim country (See *Aramco World*, November-December 1991).

In spite of its great diversity, there are common patterns in Indonesia's foods and foodways. Rice is the basic staple for most of the population. On Ambon, however, the starch is sago, the coarse flour made from the pith of the sago palm; on Irian Jaya, Indonesia's half of New Guinea, it is the sweet potato. Lacking those, Indonesians may eat corn, which was brought to the islands by 16th-century Spanish traders. But rice accompanied by one or two savory side dishes of fish, vegetables or meat, one or two condiments such as chile paste and toasted grated coconut, and *krupuk*, or prawn crackers, constitute a typical Indonesian meal. Elaborations may include fried bananas or fruit salad with a spicy sauce. Meals are washed down with hot coffee or tea or water.

With the help of advanced technology, some Indonesian soils can produce two or three rice crops a year. Rains caused by temperature changes on the mountain peaks flow through the padi terraces, built along the volcanoes' valleys and contours, through well-placed breaches in the small dikes, then down to irrigation canals and the plains. Through an elaborate water-sharing system dictated by customary *adat* law (See *Aramco World*, July-August 1991) and managed by independent guild-like cooperatives of wet- and dry-rice farmers, crops can be staggered. Thus, in a radius of a few kilometers, it is possible to see all the stages of the rice cycle: plowing, transplanting, reaping and winnowing. Between plantings the padi fields are flooded and either turned over to the ducks, which feed on insects, tadpoles and small fish, or stocked with baby eels, freshwater carp and *gurami*, a type of perch.

Near Yogyakarta in central Java, Indonesia's cultural hub and one of its richest rice-producing areas, a farmer plows in preparation for what may be his third rice crop this year. Opposite: Fruits for sale in Bali's Denpasar market include apples, papaya and rambutan, whose name is derived from the Malay word for "hair." The thick skin can be peeled back to reveal a firm fruit that tastes like lychee.

Some of Indonesia's seas teem with life, while others are being fished out. Coast-dwellers can choose from fresh red snapper, milkfish, Spanish mackerel, pomfret, sardine, anchovy, tuna, prawns, shrimp and even lobster. People in the interior eat freshwater fish raised in the padi fields or in tanks or family backyard ponds, or they fish in rivers, lakes and streams. Some fish and seafood is salted or smoked, and much of the shrimp catch is dried and processed into *terasi*, a semi-dry, cake-like paste that is an important protein source in parts of the country.

Chicken is included in most daily meals. Indonesians favor the lean, long-legged village chickens that hunt-and-peck freely in yards, roads and country lanes. They are often boiled first to tenderize them and make a rich stock, then barbecued over charcoal, oven-grilled or fried. Ducks are raised mostly for their eggs on many islands; they provide both eggs and meat on others.

Indonesian Muslims don't eat pork, of course, but they consume almost every part of the water buffalo and the cow: The tongue, heart, brains, lungs, tripe, large and small intestines—even the buffalo skin—all go into the pot. A fondness for goat and lamb may be due to Arab influences. The Hindus of Bali eat pork and rarely eat beef; Indonesian Christians eat a little of both. The foods of the tribes in the interior read like the menu for a survival course.

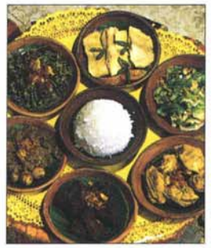
Indonesians look to their trees, bushes and streams for their greens. They eat papaya and cassava leaves, fern tops, round-leaved spinach, swamp cabbage and some unusual water plants that have no Western names. Root vegetables like taro, cassava and sweet potatoes provide starch. They also eat several gourd-like fruits such as bitter melon and chayote, and the egg-shaped white, yellow, purple and green-and-white eggplant varieties, plus the larger European version.

The Dutch planted tomatoes, cabbage, cauliflower, carrots, red globe radishes, green beans and lettuce in the highlands, where they flourish in near-Dutch weather conditions; the Indians brought cucumbers, eggplants and onions; and the Chinese the oriental radish, Chinese cabbage, mustard greens, soy beans, horse tamarind, mung-bean sprouts and broad-leaved mustard. Indonesians also learned the secrets of making *tauco* (fermented black or yellow soybean paste) and *tahu* (soybean cake) from the Chinese—but *tempe* (soybean cake with whole beans) is a purely Indonesian invention.

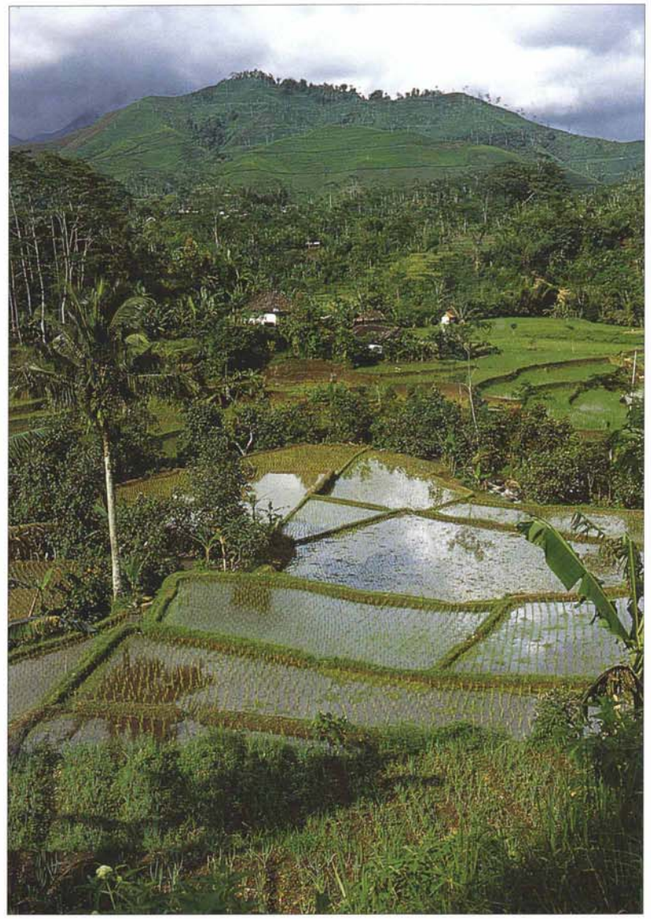
Few regions on this globe can compete with Indonesia when it comes to indigenous fruits. Not only do Indonesians grow all the tropical fruits familiar to Westerners, such as bananas, pineapples, mangoes and papayas, but they produce some unusual ones as well. There is the durian, lauded by some as the "king of all fruits." It looks like an oversized hand grenade and functions like a stink-bomb: It has such a penetratingly foul odor that no hotel and no airline will serve it or even let it be brought indoors—yet people go wild over its taste. Less controversial are the hairy *rambutan*, the fragrant mangosteen, the *salak*, or snake fruit, with its peel like snakeskin, the star-shaped carambola and the lovely *jambu air*, or rose apple.

Each of Indonesia's ethnic groups uses some or all of the country's rich array of spices, but

Between plantings, rice padis produce additional "crops" of carp, eel or ducks. Duck-herds use long switches to guide their flocks. Below, a Ramadan feast meal from Bukittinggi (clockwise from top): red snapper; a salad of lettuce, carrots, cucumbers and egg-yolk;



"wedding" chicken; spiced beef cooked in coconut milk; lamb in a savory sauce; fern-tops; and, in the center, steamed rice. Opposite page, clockwise from top left: widely popular grilled chicken; red snapper cooked in coconut milk; Indonesia's four types of rice; corn fritters, a ceremonial dish on Bali; beef with chile peppers; and deep-fried rice wafers.



Sprouted rice has just been transplanted into these padis in western Java; a crop at a later stage is visible at center right.

chile pepper leaves. To these seasonings they add the sweetness of coconut milk, palm sugar and sweetened soy sauce, and the sourness of tamarind water, lime juice and vinegar. Ground candlenuts, rather than flour, are used as thickeners. The fresh spices are mostly ground into a paste, then mixed with the dry seasonings, before the leaf flavorings are added to the cooking liquid.

Probably the best-loved food of the islands is the spicy, fiery-hot Padang cuisine of the Minangkabau people of West Sumatra. As the western anchor of the archipelago, Sumatra was the first port of call for Indian and Arab traders, and the coastal Sumatrans gladly adopted their spices, as well as their stews, curries and kebabs. In Padang, however, only dried ground coriander and cumin, of the Arab-Indian spices, are used, with the addition of fresh aromatics such as galangal, turmeric, ginger, garlic, shallots, lemon grass, kaffir-lime leaf and turmeric leaf. And Padang cooks add hot chiles with complete abandon: A ratio of 300 grams of chile to 800 grams of meat is not unusual.

Padang restaurants, recognizable by the neatly stacked food basins in their windows, have mushroomed in almost every Indonesian city and town. They have an intriguing way of serving the food: As you sit down, a waiter approaches with an array of dishes all deftly balanced on his left arm and places the food on the table in a kind of Asian buffet. An ordinary meal may comprise curried or stewed meats, fish, eggs, vegetables and innards. You pay either for the meats you eat or by the number of dishes; sauces don't count.

The fish for Padang's tables are caught in the Indian Ocean, but most of the meats, vegetables and fruits come from the Minang cultural capital, Bukittinggi, in the highlands above Padang. It is an extremely productive area, with astounding vistas of rice terraces and cinnamon and clove plantations. Walk through Bukittinggi's hillside central market and you will see a refreshing variety of fruits, vegetables, butchered meats (except pork), live chickens and ducks, fresh and dried fish, dried or squirming baby eels and dried and freshly ground spice pastes, all of a quality as fine as anywhere in the world.

This is a very devoutly Muslim area, and the people know how to share their food at the end of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, here called *Lebaran*. To give us an idea of what they eat, Executive Chef Muchril Muchtar of the Pusako Hotel cooked us a typical Padang *buka puasa*, or fast-breaking meal. There was *rendang sapi*, a spice-encrusted dry beef dish cooked for a long time in coconut milk, now a national classic; *dendeng belado*, beef served with a hot chile sauce; *singgang ayam*, grilled "wedding" chicken; spiced lamb; and fern-top and red-snapper curries cooked in coconut milk. Other dishes included three different kinds of rice.

each has its own combinations, intensities and tastes: spicy, hot, pungent, sweet and sour. Indonesians use dried coriander seeds, cardamom, cinnamon or cassia, cumin and fennel—but nutmeg, cloves and mace appear only sparingly or not at all, although those are the spices that gave Indonesia a role on the world's stage. Heat is created by fiery chiles, a new-world food that was brought here by the Spanish and promptly and passionately adopted.

But the real magic in Indonesian cuisine is in the use of aromatic seasonings: fresh red shallots; fresh garlic; fresh green onions; fresh rhizomes such as ginger, turmeric, greater galangal (known as *lengkuas* or *laos*) and the other galangals, known as *kencur* and *temu kunci*, or Chinese keys. There are also the fresh leaf seasonings that include lemon grass, lemon basil, kaffir lime, *daun salam* (a type of laurel), turmeric, Chinese celery and pandan leaf. On Bali they even use the

The food of Jakarta takes another interesting twist. Located in the Betawi heartland, Jakarta is the nation's capital, the republic's nerve center and the melting pot of the people, as well as the hub of the island of Java. Western-style supermarkets and restaurants mirror the international nature of the city, and the numerous markets and Indonesian restaurants reflect Jakarta's ethnic diversity, which seems to be evolving into a new urban culture with a cuisine of its own.

So what do Jakartans eat? Everyone will tell you that the Javanese, who make up the larger part of the city's population, like their food sweet, and indeed every dish seems to include palm sugar and a tablespoon or more of sweet soy sauce. Javanese prefer red shallots to garlic, and eat some of the ethnic Betawi specialties that include *semur*, the Dutch-inspired smothered beef with a Chinese-Indonesian sweet-soy taste. It is one of the few non-curry dishes that is seasoned with nutmeg and cloves.

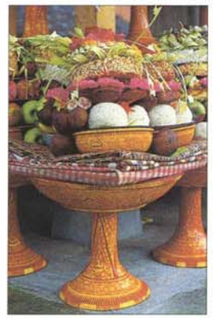
Jakartan food owes much to the ethnic Chinese: Both *nasi goreng* and *bami goreng*—fried rice or egg noodles, respectively, with egg, julienned carrots, red shallots, light soy sauce and chile peppers—originated in China and were adapted to the Indonesian tastes until they are now island favorites. They are garnished with crispy fried shallots, sliced cucumbers, tomato wedges and fried omelet strips, and served with fried chicken, fried shrimp or a few *saté* sticks on the side. As in many Javanese dishes, chile peppers are not included in the cooking but are ground into hot *sambals*—chile-pepper sauces—that are used as condiments or dips.

Soto ayam Madura, chicken soup from Madura island, is also a Jakartan favorite. It can be an elaborate dish, consisting of chicken stock seasoned with lemon grass, shallots and garlic and served with shredded chicken, fried potatoes, bean sprouts and rice vermicelli. It is garnished with crispy fried shallots and celery leaves. The rice vermicelli is a Chinese contribution.

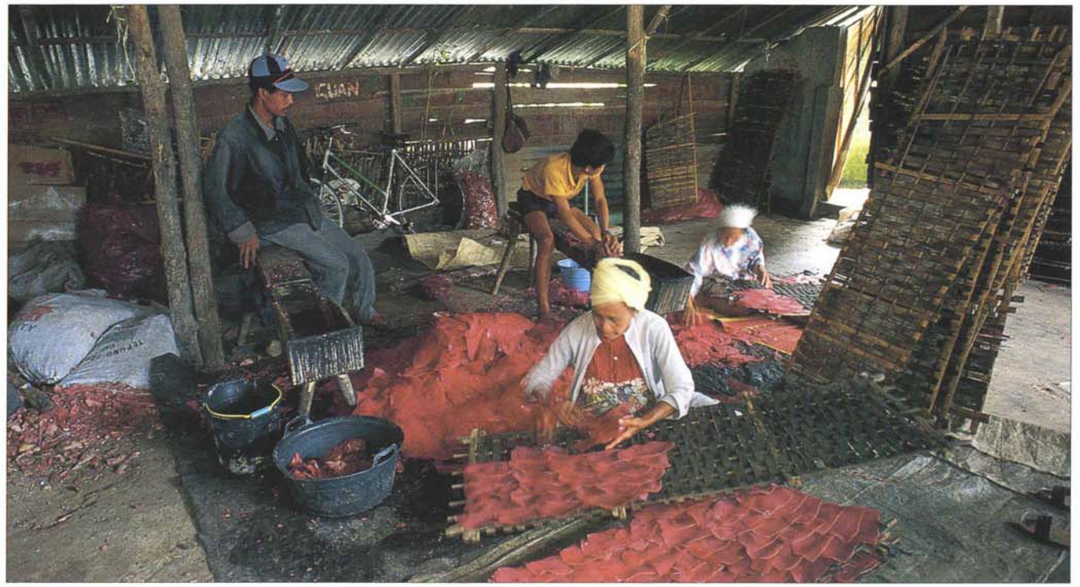
We compared the *buka puasa* meal at the Hilton Hotel in Jakarta with the one we ate in Bukittinggi and found they had many dishes in common. In Jakarta, they broke the fast with a sweet drink of cooked coconut milk, vanilla, sugar and bananas. They also served a discreetly spiced Javanese chicken stew and an Indian-inspired rice dish cooked with lamb or chicken.

While Jakarta is the seat of government, the Sultanate of Yogyakarta in Central Java is Indonesia's cultural throne. Its refinement is mirrored in the region's food, which is spiced in moderation and is more often than not a little sweet. The main Yogya flavorings are shallots, garlic, laos, ginger, turmeric, ground coriander, salam leaf, kaffir-lime leaf, palm sugar and sweet soy sauce. The rice consumed in Yogyakarta comes from the large crescent plain that surrounds the city, one of Java's most productive areas for rice and sugarcane. Typical Yogya dishes are *nasi gudek*, made of young jack-

Though separated from Java only by a narrow strait, Bali is home to an independently developed culture. Ceremonial foods on the island include rice balls, puffed-rice cakes,



salak *or snake fruit, and apples; a full meal might include* lawar, *a famously elaborate dish of several meats, vegetables and* wewangian, *a unique blend of pepper, nutmeg and coriander.*



fruit and boiled eggs stewed in coconut milk with a mixture of the standard Yogya seasonings, and *ayam mbok berek*, a chicken dish typical of the Kalasan area. The chicken is boiled until tender in coconut water that has been flavored with the standard Yogya seasonings, then dipped in a mixture of rice and tapioca flour and deep-fried. It is served with sambal and greens.

The Central Javanese are very fond of communal feasts, or *selamatan*, and hold them to celebrate rites of passage and promote a sense of community. *Nasi tumpeng* is often prepared for such occasions: Plain and sticky rice are cooked together in coconut milk tinted yellow with freshly-grated turmeric, then steamed in a *kukusan*, a woven cone-shaped bamboo container. The container is inverted onto a pannier lined with banana leaf, and the sticky rice holds the whole mound together. Depending on the scale of the *selamatan*, the rice may then be colorfully adorned with a number of dishes like chicken cooked in coconut milk, omelet strips, fried dried anchovies, whole boiled eggs fried in a sauce, sweet and sour pickled vegetables, cucumber slices and red chiles cut into flower shapes.

Yogya gets its fresh vegetables from the 2000-meter-high (6500-foot) Dieng Plateau. To get there, we took a road that snakes skyward up what must be some of the most densely cultivated mountain slopes in the world, with some of the terraces so narrow that they had room for only two rows of cabbage. On the plateau, the Dieng people grow excellent crisp green cabbages, string beans, long beans, mushrooms and even potatoes.

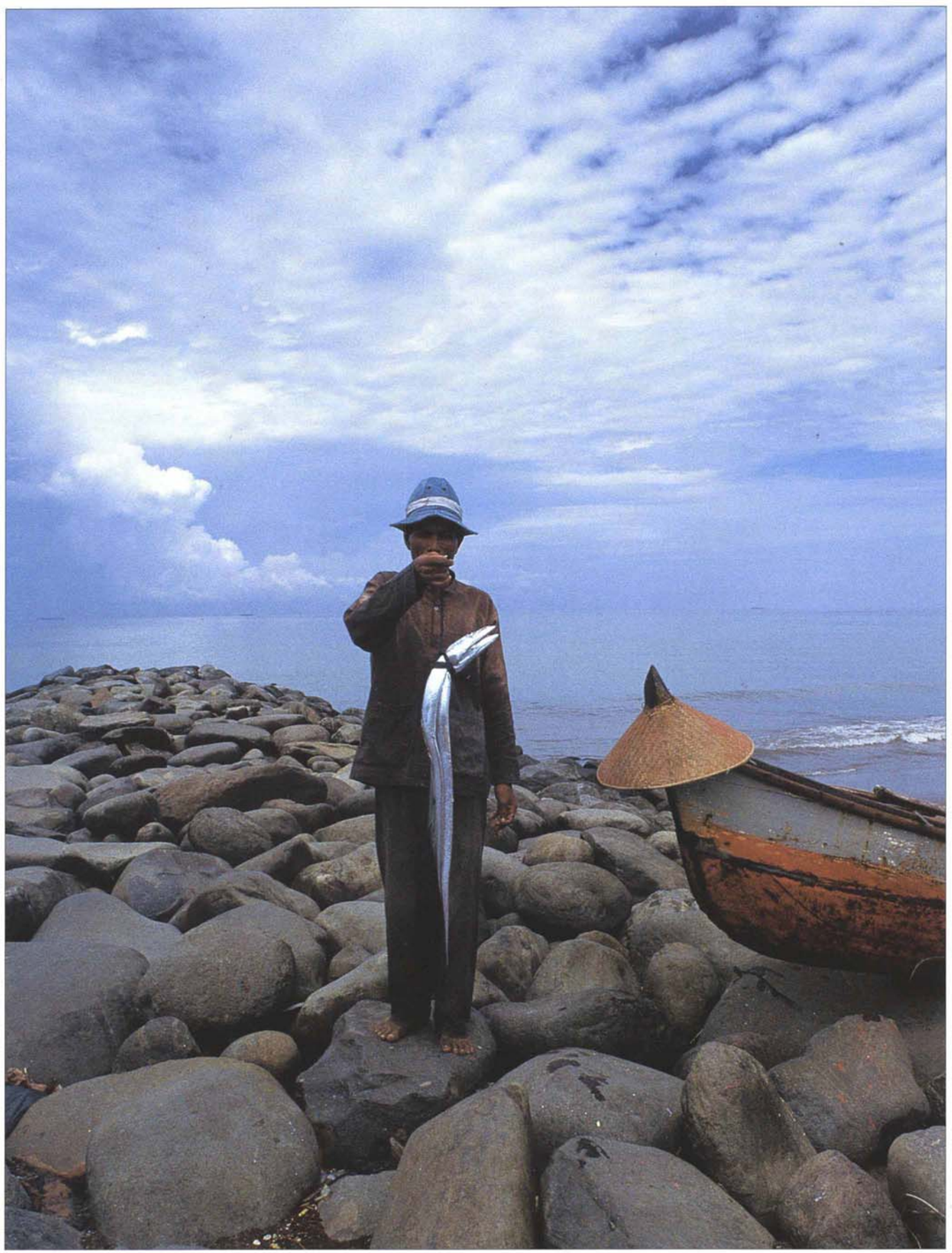
Still on Java, the Sundanese people are centered around Bandung, their capital and Indonesia's third-largest city. It is a highland town where many of Jakarta's vegetables are grown, as well as Indonesia's finest teas, in the surrounding hills, and Cianjur rice, arguably Indonesia's best, in the nearby Priangan plains.

The Javanese good-naturedly poke fun at the vegetable-loving Sundanese. "They are cheap to entertain," they say. At our request, however, the sous-chef at the Chedi Hotel, Dwito Satmoko, cooked us a more elaborate and more truly Sundanese meal. He laid out a mouth-watering banquet of grilled chicken with sweet-soy sambal, hot and sour fish soup, white rice steamed with chicken and spices, soybean-cake fritters, *krupuk* and *lalap*—the raw vegetables Sundanese are fond of—which turned out to consist of watercress, eggplant, turnip leaves, lemon basil and other leaves, served with a hot dipping sauce made with shrimp paste and tomato. The food was moderately seasoned with garlic, shallots, ginger, chile peppers, turmeric, daun salam, lemon grass, sweet soy sauce, a little kencur and lemon-basil leaves.

Manado, in northern Sulawesi—the four-fingered island northeast of Java—is a largely agricultural Minahasan community where coffee, coconuts, nutmeg and cloves are big money-earners. The cloves are shipped to Java to be made into Indonesia's trademark *kretek* cigarettes, half tobacco and half cloves. The

In this cottage industry in west Sumatra, krupuk, *shrimp or prawn crackers, are made with cassava flour and artificially colored. Opposite page: Few countries can compete with Indonesia when it comes to fruit. Clockwise from top left: rambutan; papaya,*

which fruits year-round; manggis, *or mangosteen, reluctant to grow outside tropical Asia; tough jackfruit, cooked like a vegetable in Yogyakarta; rose apples, crisp and refreshing; and bananas, which grow in more than 40 varieties throughout Indonesia.*



nutmeg fruit is candied and eaten as a sweet; it tastes surprisingly like ginger. The Minahasans also grow other wonderful fruits: passion fruit; *jeruk limau*, a small, aromatic greenish orange with a yellow-orange flesh; the diminutive limes known as *jeruk nipis*, which make a wonderfully cooling drink; and the cashew apple, with its strange appendage that is actually the cashew nut itself.

Other Indonesians seem to think that Minahasan food has to be plastered with chile paste to taste good, and we set out to see if this was so. We took a walk through the market in the highland town of Tomohon and saw smoked tuna strung on bamboo racks, as well as blackened fruit bats and white-tailed field rats—the latter sold with the tails on so buyers can be assured they are not ordinary wharf rats. And during a cooking session at her Gardenia Chalets, Bernadette Ratulangi cooked us a grilled chicken dish, *ayam bakar rica*, that called for a paste made of 40 red chiles, a third of a cup of shallots, 1½ centimeters (½ inch) of fresh ginger and a tablespoon of oil. But she also demonstrated other dishes, not quite so hot and more refined, flavored with red shallots, red peppers, turmeric leaves, kaffir-lime leaves, lemon basil and an unusual aromatic not used on most islands: torch ginger.

We tasted a superb grouper soup reminiscent of the Thai prawn soup, seasoned with shallots, ginger, green onions, lemon grass, kaffir-lime leaves, lemon-basil leaves, turmeric leaf and five large green and red chiles; fried tuna in chile paste; banana-heart salad; carp grilled in a palm leaf; and herbed chicken baked in stalks of bamboo. For breakfast we had *burbur Manado*, or rice porridge, with about 14 different condiments and side dishes such as shredded chicken, sweet soy sauce and fried shallots. Of course, there was also a dish of chopped chiles.

Traveling around Indonesia like Napoleon's army—on our stomachs—we knew we were only scratching the surface of the country's culinary riches. Bali, for example, anomalous in every way, has quite different foodways from any other place in Indonesia, though there was as wide a range of local variations everywhere as one would expect in a country that reaches one eighth of the way around the earth. But we learned some useful basic facts.

Indonesians grow four main types of rice: the polished long-grain rice, a highly nutritious red rice that is only considered suitable for children, and two types of sticky rice, white and black, which are used for desserts. The white sticky rice is often ground into flour, while the black rice is mainly used to make *tapé*, a fermented dish especially popular as a treat to break the Lebaran fast. The long-grain Cianjur rice, preferred by most Javanese, is boiled in 1 to 1¼ cups of water until the water is absorbed, then steamed in a conical woven bamboo basket, a *kukusan*, set over a large water-filled urn with a conical lip. Indonesians eat with their fingers or with spoon and fork, and they prefer the rice grains to be separate, light and fluffy.

Rice is called by different names according to the circumstances. Young rice growing in the fields is *padi*; after it is harvested and bagged it is called *beras*, and when it is cooked it becomes *nasi*. It is a fickle plant, and in ancient times was considered the embodiment of the mythological rice goddess Dewi Sri. Then, it was harvested with a small blade kept hidden in the palm of the hand, so the goddess could not see when the harvesters gave the plant the *coup de grace*.

We can credit the Spanish and Portuguese with bringing chile peppers to Indonesia from the Americas. Although there are hundreds of varieties in all sizes, shapes, colors and flavors, all varying in degrees of heat, the ideal chiles for Indonesian cooking are the 12-centimeter (5-inch) *cabé* or *Lombok*, medium hot, and *cabé rawit* or *Lombok rawit*, a fiercely hot bird's-eye chile. Indonesian chiles are further distinguished by their colors: red, *cabé merah*, and green, *cabé hijau*. Their flavor is more important than their heat, which can be reduced by removing the seeds and membranes before use. In Indonesia, chiles are ground into paste, to release their flavor, and mixed with other seasonings before cooking, or are ground into sambal to be used as condiments.

Ever since the first coconut seeds washed ashore, Indonesians have been devising ways to use this precious palm fruit. They drink the liquid of the young coconuts (coconut water) and spoon out the translucent flesh to mix with their drinks. When the coconuts mature, they grate the white flesh and squeeze it with water to make *santen*, or coconut milk. Coconut flesh is also processed into cooking oil, the hard brown coconut shell is made into cooking implements and the fibrous husk, as well as the shell, fuel very hot cooking fires.

Indonesians also eat the fruit of the sweet palm and tap its trunk for *gulah merah*, or palm sugar. The palm leaf is woven into casings for the festive *ketupat* rice cakes, and the lontar palm leaf is used as a container for grilling foods.

We were warmly received on our culinary reconnaissance across Indonesia, and learned and tasted so much that we would like to go back—and go on. But there are thousands of islands left to explore, and hundreds of cultural variations: So much to sample, so little time!

Opposite page: A Padang fisherman shows off his day's catch of layur, *or ribbon fish.*

Ada Koene and Brynn Bruijn are both Americans who live in the Netherlands. Koene learned to cook Asian food during the 18 years she lived in Thailand, South Korea, Indonesia and the Philippines. She has contributed frequently to Asian regional magazines, and is the author of The Food Shopper's Guide to Holland. *Bruijn's photographs have illustrated* Cuba: 500 Years of Images, The Royal Progress of William and Mary *and* Uzbekistan, *as well as magazines and other books; UNESCO selected her photographs of Tibet as a project of the World Cultural Development Decade.* *Both would like to thank the chefs, cookbook authors, cooking instructors and others who helped them in preparing this article: Sri Owen, author of* Indonesian Food & Cookery, The Rice Book *and* Indonesian Regional Cooking; *William and Lucy Wongso of William F&B Management; Daniel Meury, Greg Smith and Dwito Satmoko at the Chedi Hotel in Bandung; Josephine Komarn of Bin House in Jakarta for her beautiful batik fabrics; Rolf Jaeggi, Johannes Pratiwanggana, Iwan Setia Wan and John Pelling of the Jakarta Hilton; Dr. and Mrs. Leonard Ratulangi of Gardenia Chalets in Tomohon, Menado; I Gusti Nyoman and Mrs. Darta of Campuhan/Ubud, Bali; Detlef Skrobanek, author of* The New Art of Indonesian Cooking; *Patu Suwandi and Muchril Muchtar of Pusako Hotel, Bukittinggi; Ibu Hayatinufus A. L. Tobing; Ibu Haryati Desmayeti; and our Jakarta hosts, Suzanne and Garnet Bray.*

OLD WAYS NEW WARPS

Written by Judy Erkanat

THIS PAGE: ERGUN ÇAĞATAY; OPPOSITE: CENGIZ CIVA

At left, "Out of Tradition," 140 x 195 cm. (55 x 77 in.). Below right, Balpınar at work on the full-size color cartoon of a new design.

IN VILLAGES AND TOWNS FROM THE Balkans to Central Asia, and especially in Turkey, the kilim (pronounced kih-*lihm*) was literally the fabric of daily life, the carpet that made a house into a home, or embellished the stony floor of many a mosque.

Many women still weave in Turkey's rural communities today, producing not pile rugs but flat-woven cushion covers, sacks, kilims and other floor coverings that are intended for use in their homes as well as for sale in the plentiful variety that gives Turkish bazaars and shops part of their character.

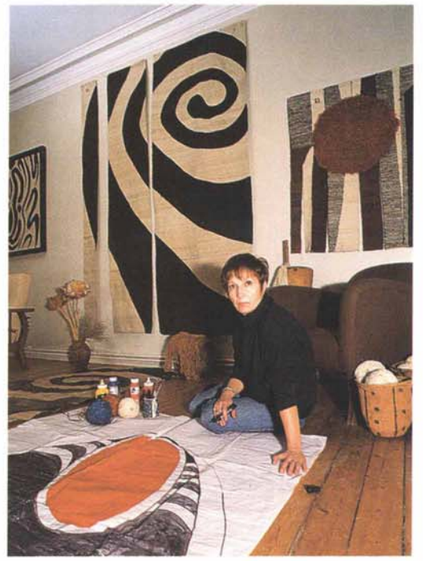
Large or small, Turkish kilims have always been distinguished by their flat weave and their often bold colors patterned into localized, even ritualized designs. Recent archeological finds have led some experts to believe that kilim-weaving techniques first developed in Anatolia—Asia Minor—perhaps as early as 7000 BC.

Lately, kilims have become popular as decorative items in the West as well, and Turkey's urban upper and middle classes too have taken notice of kilims as a distinct—and distinctively Anatolian—form of cultural expression.

For scholar, writer and artist Belkıs Balpınar, Turkish carpets—and especially kilims—are a lifelong passion. They are both the subject of her study and the medium of her artistic expression, her link from past to present, and her path to the future.

Balpınar calls her original pieces "mural kilims," because—unlike traditional kilims, which employ flat, geometrical motifs—they use design and color to create a three-dimensional pictorial space, and thus can be viewed as a form of woven painting. Her pieces are exhibited at galleries in Istanbul, Europe and the US, and her scholarship is manifested on her bookshelves: She has six books including, with archeologist James Mellaart and ethologist Udo Hirsch, *The Goddess from Anatolia*, published in 1989 by Eskenazi, which proposes the idea that many kilim motifs may derive from symbols used in Neolithic wall paintings and on other prehistoric artifacts.

"Belkıs Balpınar's knowledge and background...make her the world's foremost expert on Turkish kilims."



FOR BALPINAR, THE ROAD FROM TRADITION to innovation has spanned more than three decades of work. She was born in Eskişehir in northwest Anatolia; her father, an ethnic Turk, was a teacher who had immigrated from Bulgaria, and her mother was Turkish. In 1963, after graduating from the textile department of Istanbul's Academy of Fine Arts, Balpınar was hired as a carpet designer and researcher by state-owned Sümerbank, where she worked until 1968.

"This marked the start of my interest in carpets," she says. With Sümerbank, she traveled extensively "looking for surviving indigenous carpet weaving, and back in the office I designed imitations of traditional carpets."

But at home, inspired by the multitude of contemporary influences she had encountered in art school, Balpınar was turning out very different work. By modifying the vocabulary of traditional patterns that she was learning so intimately, she created a collection of modern carpets, and held her first exhibit in 1964.

"I was not brought up living the traditional lifestyle of a kilim weaver," says Balpınar, "rural, and innocent of any design possibilities that were not traditional ones. Instead, I had been exposed to influences that gave me the freedom to express my thoughts and feelings. I started with a desire to paint."

As a result of her research, she earned an appointment as curator of carpets and kilims at Istanbul's Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art. In 1973 she went to work for the Vakıflar General Directorate—the government office that administers the property of pious foundations (See *Aramco World*, November-December 1973). There her assignment was to visit mosques throughout

Turkey, where generations of Muslims had donated rugs that, in some cases, had accumulated for centuries. She was to evaluate and collect the important carpets for safekeeping and possible display. Later, she used these carpets to found the Vakıflar Carpet and Kilim Museums in Istanbul.

In 1983 she left the Vakıflar to carry on independent research and to establish her own workshop for restoring antique carpets and kilims.

"To reproduce the structure of the missing part of a rug," Balpınar recalls, "I learned all about thread, varieties of spun woolen yarn, colors, and structure."

But restoration did not satisfy her creative yearnings. Three years later, in 1986, she gathered a small group of weavers in Istanbul's *gecekondu*, the unplatted working-class sections of the city, and gave them dyed, hand-spun wool with which to execute her own full-size designs.

Quickly she realized that her work would not only be aimed at the study and preservation of a great legacy, but also at the development of an entirely new style of kilim.

One day, she says, she visited one of the weavers to check on her progress and noticed the woman weaving a fully traditional kilim—a design the weaver had learned from her own mother—on the warp left at the top of one of Balpınar's recently completed abstract designs.

"She was embarrassed about using my warp, but I was glad she had," laughs Balpınar. "To me, it demonstrated the continuing strength of the tradition."

SOME OF HER EARLY WORKS ENLARGED, distorted, split, or shattered traditional kilim design elements in her attempt to express the energy and tension she saw in them. She employs spirals and swastikas to symbolize regeneration and infinity, and enhances the kinetic forms by adding a layer of continuous, whirling parallel lines to create another plane in the woven surface.

"The traditional motifs found in kilims have been handed down through generations of weavers in rural Anatolia," says Balpınar. "The original meanings of these symbols have been obscured by time. As a scholar, I try to decipher these designs. The marvel of the ancient symbols eventually led me to reinterpret them in my own way.

"Sometimes I look at a seed or a fingerprint in minute detail," says Balpınar. "The idea of chaos coexisting with harmony, or, as the scientists say, 'the ordered disorderliness of the universe,' interests me immensely."

Although she stretches and tests the limits of traditional Anatolian kilim technique, Balpınar avoids methods used in western tapestry, such as dovetailing or shading. She does, however, make use of the variations in color tone that uneven dye absorption produces in the handspun wool thread. Sometimes she uses roughly combed and spun wool, or leaves parts of a design unwoven to

Balpınar's cartoon, suspended on the loom directly behind the warp, helps the weaver replicate the artist's design exactly.

expose the warp beneath. To give depth, she sometimes incorporates patches of knotted pile; to add age, she occasionally stone-washes new kilims.

"I try to give a mysterious, primeval effect to my modern designs," admits Balpınar. "My work combines past and present in a peculiar way that might startle or shock some purists.

"My latest work is like a gigantic prayer rug, with a large niche-gate at its heart," Balpınar says, noting that its inspiration came from combining the Islamic motif with ideas derived from the facade of a building by Swiss architect Mario Botta.

BALPINAR LIVES ALONE IN A HUNDRED-YEAR-old apartment building near the Galata Tower in Istanbul, where the high ceilings display her mural kilims to impressive advantage. Her home serves also as a permanent gallery.

"I have many friends in Turkey and other parts of the world who believe in what I do and encourage me to continue," she says gratefully.

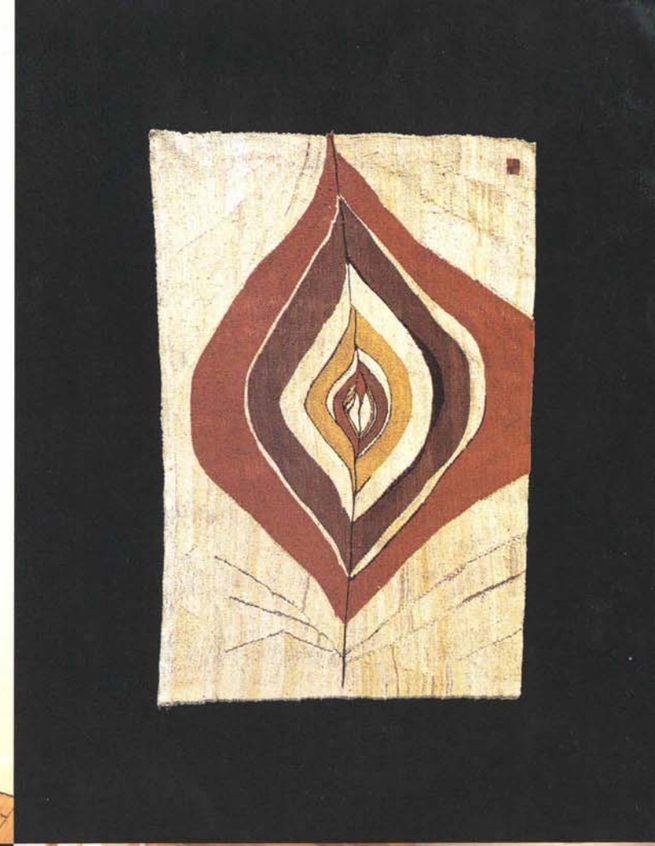
One of these is Dr. John Sommer, president of the San Francisco Bay Area Rug Society. "Belkıs Balpınar's knowledge and background, especially as a woman in a field dominated by extremely traditional individuals, make her the world's foremost expert on Turkish kilims," says Sommer. "She is not as self-promoting as she might be and her unprepossessing manner has endeared her to collectors and students world-wide."

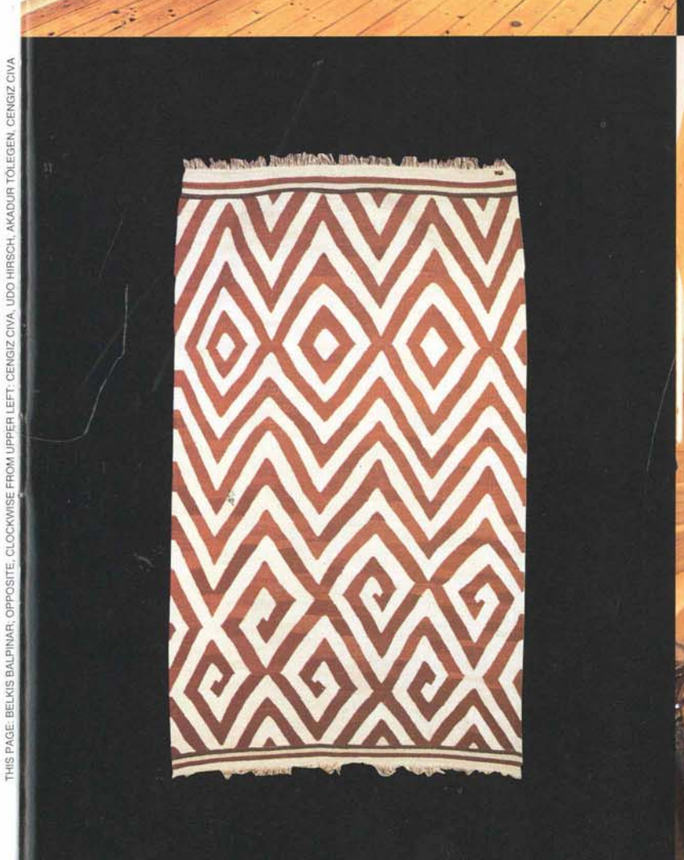
Balpınar's commissioned work is chosen exclusively from her sketches, specifying a size or color range, and her creations are usually woven for an exhibit collection or when she has a workable new design.

"No two of my kilims are ever identical," Balpınar says. "Although I have had to repeat a few of my most popular designs, I have always varied the colors and proportions to ensure the uniqueness of each piece. Usually I like to be creative and try to make every piece represent a new idea or an original design. Realizing my creations through the skills of my weavers is a great challenge. I enjoy weaving all the diverse strands of my life into my kilims."

Judy Erkanat is a free-lance writer living in California.

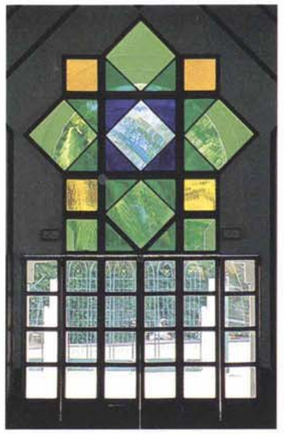
Balpınar's kilims are equally at home in her own apartment in Istanbul's Pera (opposite, top left) or in the entrance hall of an elegant home in the suburb of Bebek (lower right). The kilim at upper right is titled "Seed."





THIS PAGE: BELKIS BALPINAR; OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM UPPER LEFT: CENGIZ CIVA, UDO HIRSCH, AKADUR TOLEGEN, CENGIZ CIVA

A TRADITION OF DIVERSITY: MOSQUES OF CÔTE D'IVOIRE



WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY CHARLES O. CECIL

Many people underestimate the role of Islam in coastal West Africa. But those who visit or live there soon learn that, during the lifetime of the present generation, Islam has spread with relatively little fanfare beyond its historic Saharan heartland to become the faith of a near-majority of people in the lands along Africa's Atlantic coast.

This has been particularly true in Côte d'Ivoire, a New Mexico-sized nation on the underside of Africa's western bulge. The country's 1961 census showed only 25 percent of the population Muslim; by 1988 the figure had risen to 39 percent. Now it is increasingly accepted that Muslims make up at least 50 percent of the population.

It was in the 11th century that Islam first crossed the mountains and savannas that divide the parched Sahara from the more hospitable, forested tropics that are now the nations of Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. Following the conquest of Ghana's Saharan empire in 1076 by the Muslim Almoravid confederation of Marrakesh, Islam gained a toehold as the religion of chieftains and traders. Among the majority of the people, however, it took hold only superficially. When Ibn Battuta visited Mali in 1352, he recorded that Islam was scarcely practiced outside the ruling circles.

This changed little until the 18th century. Then, through studies of long-neglected writings on the Islamic state, clerics in the western Sahel recognized Islam as a force that could unify the diverse peoples of the region. At the same time, Muslim Dyula traders, who had carried on commerce among the region's coastal and desert lands for centuries, settled in northern Côte d'Ivoire. Some of the country's oldest mosques date from this period.

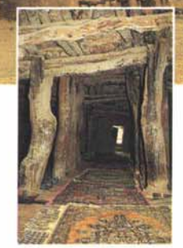
The 19th century saw leaders whose political fortunes rose with the unifying wave of Islam. The French colonial rule under which they operated brought advances in trade, transportation, communications and the consequent flow of ideas, including Islam. Colonial rule also provided a target for nationalism that crossed all tribal boundaries. And in World War II, Côte d'Ivoire, as a French colony, provided large numbers of troops who served mostly in North Africa, where they were exposed to Islam in countries that had been predominantly Muslim for centuries.

Today in Côte d'Ivoire, the country's broad religious tolerance is considered a legacy of the late President Félix Houphouët-Boigny, who, after leading the nation to independence in 1960, served as its president until his death in 1993. It was Houphouët-Boigny, a Catholic, who kept Côte d'Ivoire's borders open to workers from neighboring countries, the majority of whom were Muslims. In addition to indigenous Ivorian Muslims and Muslim guest workers from nearby countries, a Lebanese Muslim community of some 50,000 has resided in Côte d'Ivoire since before World War II.

In response to increasing calls from Ivorian Muslims for official recognition commensurate with their growing numbers, the government in 1993 recognized as national holidays two holidays widely celebrated in Muslim countries. One of the first acts of Houphouët-Boigny's successor, President Henri Konan Bedie, was the announcement of a grant of land for the construction of a long-awaited mosque in downtown Abidjan. And in August 1994, Bedie dedicated the first mosque to be built on an Ivorian military base.

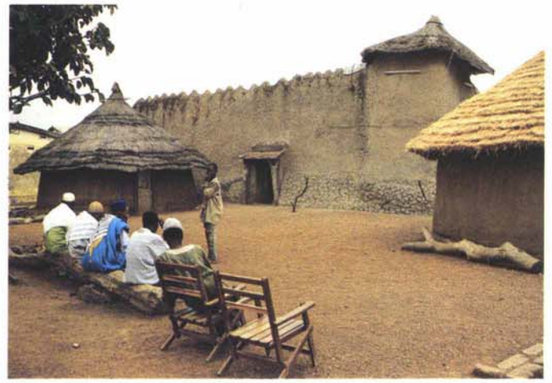
Côte d'Ivoire remains relatively prosperous, by regional standards, despite the fall in coffee and cocoa prices during the 1980's, which depressed the nation's two major export industries. The country's borders remain open to both guest workers and to immigrants, many of the latter also Muslims. Barring a reversal of this pattern of in-migration, it seems likely that Islam will continue to gain strength in Côte d'Ivoire well into the next century.

Charles O. Cecil served with the US Department of State in Abidjan for three years. He is required to note that "the opinions and views expressed are the author's own, and not those of the Department of State."



KONG

A survey of mosques in Côte d'Ivoire reveals architectural influences from North Africa and the Middle East, as well as indigenous styles. The best known of the latter is called "Sudanic" and is characterized by earthen construction using large, tapering pillars or cones rising above the roofline (See Aramco World, *November-December 1990, November-December 1995). Such pillars stand at the corners of the mosque, at the entrances, and wherever they are needed as buttresses. Traditionally, each pillar was topped by an ostrich egg, which helped protect the pillar's tip against the elements, but today, pottery replicas of eggs are most frequently used. Sudanic mosques are reinforced internally with timbers to support the weight of the roof (inset). Smaller timbers protruding externally serve as footholds for the annual refinishing that the earthen walls demand after each rainy season. Roughly a dozen Sudanic mosques are well-preserved today, including this one at Kong.* ***Previous page:*** *The Riviera mosque in Abidjan is one of only two in the country with stained-glass windows.*

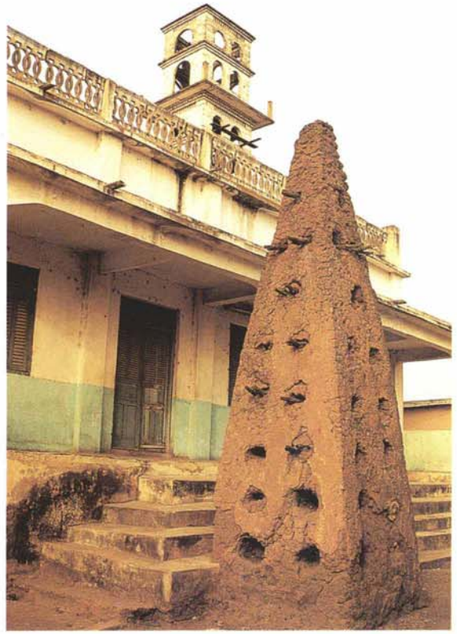


SAMATIGUILA

The mosque in Samatiguila, in the northwest corner of Côte d'Ivoire, is believed to be the nation's oldest. It illustrates the Malinke style, which refers to the cultural group inhabiting parts of eastern Senegal, Guinea and southern Mali. Malinke mosques are also built of timber-reinforced earth, but their outer walls lack the supporting buttresses of Sudanic mosques. The two round, thatched structures in this photograph are annexes for women's worship; more typically, rows at the back of a mosque are reserved for women. To date, the people of Samatiguila have not built any other mosque, and the town's men, women and children all participate in the annual maintenance of this structure. Its roof is divided into eight sections, each of which is maintained by a particular family.

BONDOUKOU

In Bondoukou, a northeastern provincial capital near the Ghanaian border, this free-standing earthen pillar, next to a modern concrete mosque, may offer a clue to the origins of the Sudanic style. Recent research has linked the concentration of Sudanic architecture to areas where pre-Islamic ancestor-worship was often manifested in earthen shrines with conical or pyramidal pillars in the forecourts.

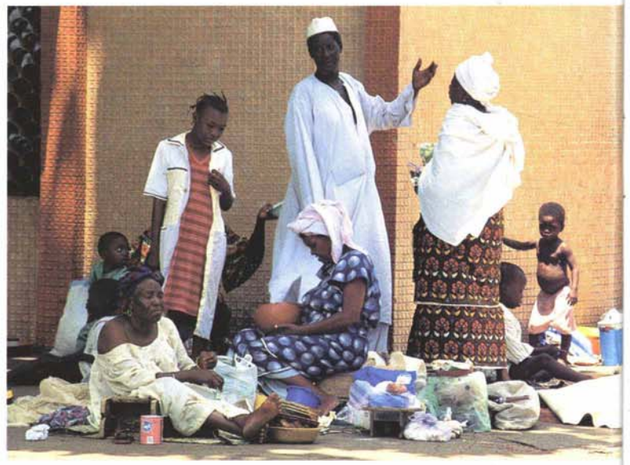


BOUAKE

Far more common today than earthen mosques are those constructed of more durable concrete or concrete block. Most use square or octagonal minarets—or both, as in this mosque at Bouake in central Côte d'Ivoire—which are usually decorated with latticework in molded concrete. The square minarets display Andalusian and North African influence, the octagonal ones recall Arabia and the Middle East, and the onion domes look still farther east to southwest Asia.

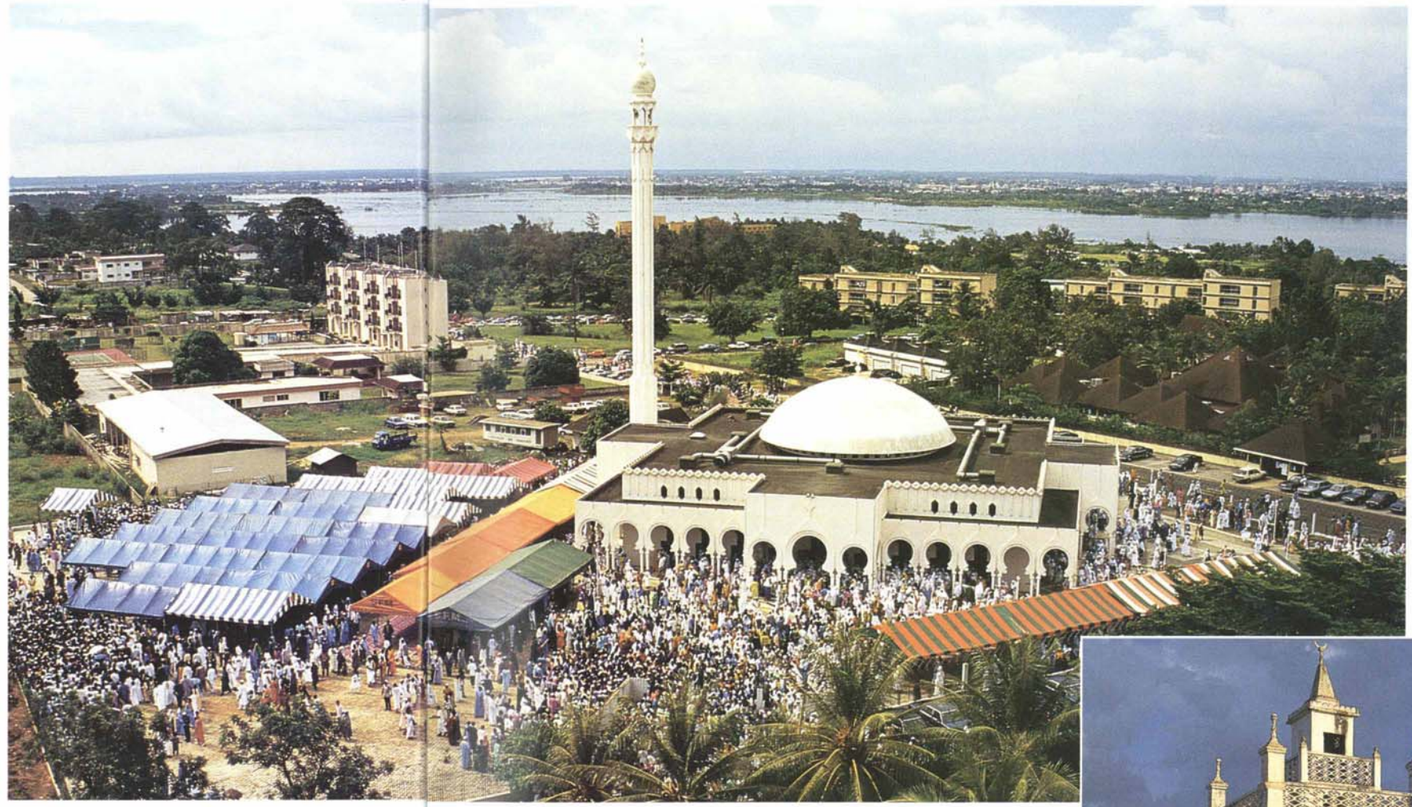
AFRICA

Côte d'Ivoire



ABIDJAN

Reinforced concrete and other modern materials have allowed the construction of tall, slender minarets, as shown in Côte d'Ivoire's newest large mosque, the Riviera mosque of Abidjan. It is unique in the country in its adoption of an almost purely Arabian style. Set in a well-to-do urban neighborhood, where many residents are likely to have traveled to Saudi Arabia on the Hajj, the architecture reflects a common conception among upper-class Ivorians of how a well-designed modern mosque should look.

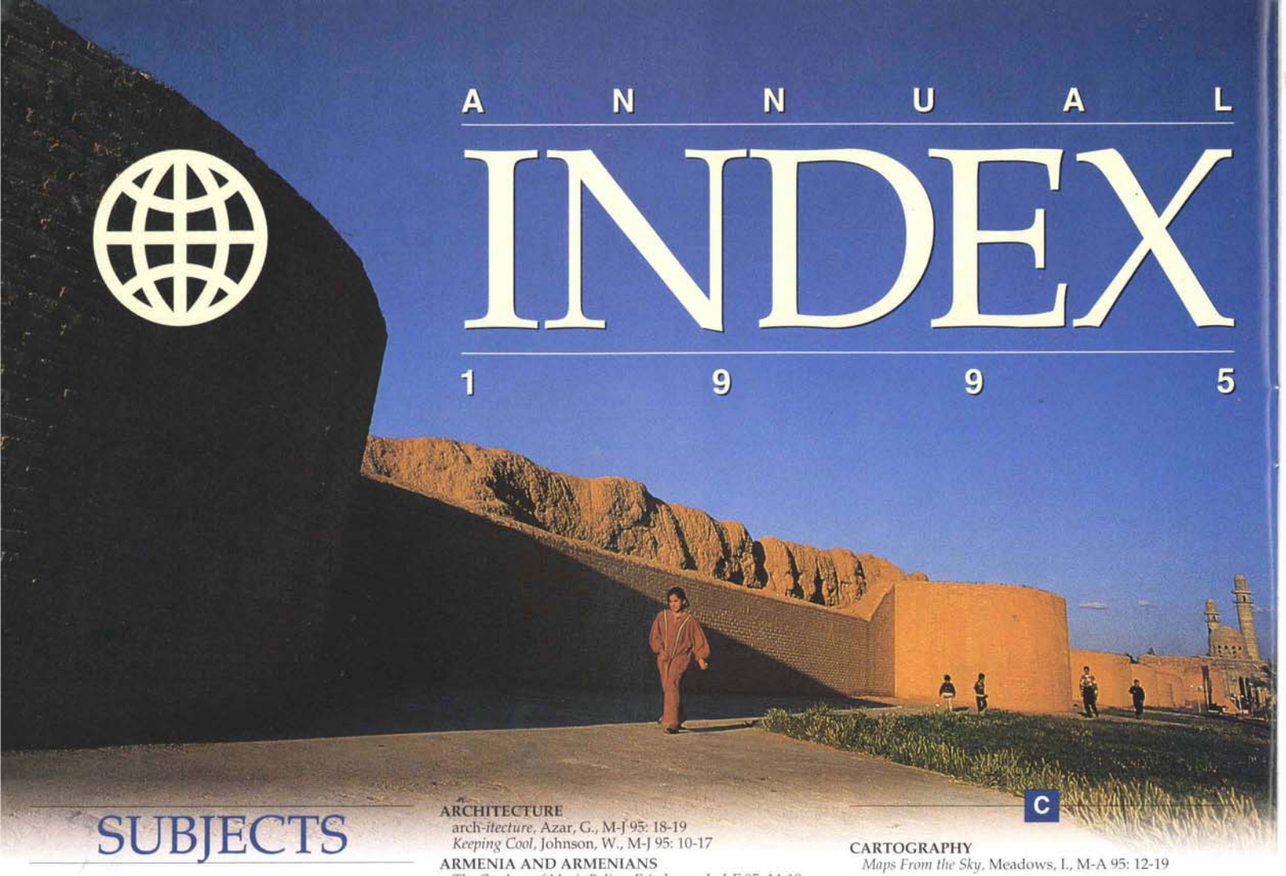


Left: *Besides their main role as places of worship, mosques of various architectural styles are always focal points for markets and for the conversations of daily life throughout the country.* ***Above:*** *An Akan tribal motif, the curved stool that symbolizes the authority and responsibility of the chief, appears in the minaret balustrade of this small mosque on the coast.*

BONDOUKOU

Throughout Côte d'Ivoire, in addition to the large central mosques in towns and villages, there are multitudes of small neighborhood mosques, many built by families. These are almost all of concrete block with square minarets, in a utilitarian style. On top of each minaret of this mosque, in Bondoukou, the family has included ceramic replicas of the traditional Sudanic ostrich egg.

▶ ***Inside back cover:*** *In Abidjan, a neighborhood mosque with Andalusian latticework overlooks a busy market street.*



ANNUAL INDEX 1995

GEORGE BARAMKI AZAR

SUBJECTS

A

B

C

D

E

F

G

H

I

J

K

L

M

N

O

P

R

S

T

U

W

Y

TITLES

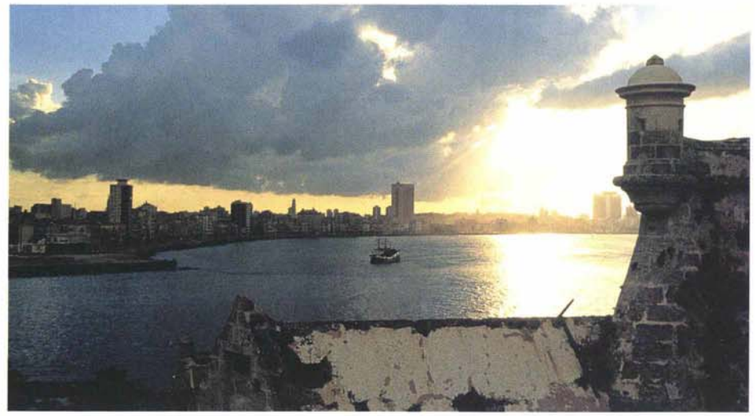
A-L

M-Z

AUTHORS

A-G

H-Z



ANDREAS WOLFENSBERGER

BILL STRUBBE

PHOTOGRAPHERS

A-G

H-Z

ILLUSTRATORS

A-Z

AGENCIES & INSTITUTIONS

A-C

D-Z

EVENTS & EXHIBITIONS

Earth 2U, Exploring Geography fills a hall with things to touch, lift and turn as well as with games, stories, "question stations" and environmental reconstructions. Although designed for children, it shows visitors of all ages that geography is more than capitals and continents: It is connections among people, places and environments. Young visitors pick up a "passport" at the entrance, which is stamped as they travel the multi-section exhibit. Among the "Exploration and Adventure" displays they will find a life-size, "talking" figure of Ibn Battuta, among other explorers. Sponsored by the National Geographic Society, the Smithsonian Institution's SITES and Nissan USA, the exhibition is booked for a five-year, 39-city tour. Curriculum guides will be available nationwide for fourth to sixth grades. National Geographic Society, **Washington, D.C.,** through February 11.

The Telephos Frieze of the Pergamon Altar. The citadel of Pergamon, in what is now northwest Turkey, was the center of one of the richest kingdoms in the Greek-speaking world from the mid-third to the mid-second centuries BC. Twelve blocks illustrate the life of Telephos, the mythological hero of Pergamon, and 50 further works explain the frieze. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York,** January 16 through April 14.

Somewhere East of Suez: *Peoples and Places* exhibits color photographs by Leonard Evelev taken over 40 years of travels in Asia. Sharpe Gallery, University of **Pennsylvania** Museum, **Philadelphia,** January 20 through April 7.

The Word Made Image: *Religion, Art, and Architecture in Spain and Spanish America, 1500-1600* is a symposium exploring the creation of a national Catholic culture—many of whose craftsmen were Muslims—after the Christian conquest of Spain in 1492. Gardner Museum, **Boston,** January 20.

The American Discovery of Ancient Egypt traces the contributions of US scholars to the understanding of ancient Egypt, using more than 250 objects linked to key discoveries. The **Los Angeles** County Museum of Art, through January 21.

Indian Harvest: *Rajasthani Paintings from the Stuart Cary Welch Collection* celebrates the recent acquisition of 77 new works and notes the retirement of Mr. Welch, curator of Islamic and Later Indian Art. Sackler Museum, **Cambridge, Massachusetts,** through January 21 and from February 17 through April 28.

Picturing the Middle East: *A Hundred Years of European Orientalism* uses works in several media from the Danesh collection to document the construction of occidental points of view toward the East. The Danesh Museum, **New York,** through January 27.

Current Archeology of the Ancient World. Talks on current research and discoveries by the specialists involved: Failaka (Kuwait), Sacred Island and Meeting Place: From the Bronze Age to the Early Christian Era, January 19; Rescue Archeology in the Khabour Valley (Syria): The French Tell Mashnaqa Expedition, February 2; Agricultural Communities of Hyrcania (Turkmenistan) From the Iron Age to the Islamic Period, February 16; Amman in the Islamic Era, March 22. The Auditorium, Musée du Louvre, **Paris,** 12 noon.

Crosscurrents in Chinese and Islamic Ceramics explores the mutual influences of broad cultural traditions using objects from the 14th and 15th centuries. Freer Gallery of Art, **Washington, D.C.,** open semi-permanently beginning February 3.

Thundering Hooves: *Five Centuries of Horse Power in the American West*. This 400-piece exhibition examines the roles of horse and rider in a land that drew much from al-Andalus, Muslim Spain. The Children's Museum, **Indianapolis, Indiana,** February 3 through May 5.

Art and Empire: Treasures from Assyria in the British Museum brings large reliefs in stone, ivory and sculpture from the first millennium BC palaces of the Assyrian kings to the Kimbell Art Museum, **Fort Worth, Texas,** through February 4.

Teaching About the Arab World and Islam is the theme of teacher workshops cosponsored by the Middle East Policy Council in Washington, D.C., and conducted by AWAIR, Arab World And Islamic Resources and School Services of Berkeley, California. Confirmed sites and dates include: **Milwaukee,** February 10 and 14; **Louisville, Kentucky,** February 19; **Denver,** March 2. For details, call (202) 296-6767 or (510) 704-0517.

Sons of Ra: *Images of Egyptian Royalty from the Louvre*. The closing of the Egyptian galleries at the Musée du Louvre for renovation made possible this loan of 30 exceptional works for a one-venue exhibition. **Cleveland [Ohio]** Museum of Art, February 14 through April 14.

Contemporary Indian Miniatures. The ninth annual display of this delicate style at the Commonwealth Institute, **London,** through February 18.

Mongolia: *The Legacy of Chinggis Khan* highlights the Mongolian renaissance that began with attempts in the 16th century to re-create the Mongolian empire that had flourished three centuries earlier. The **Denver** Art Museum, through February 25.

Textiles of Late Antiquity reveals well-preserved wall hangings, furniture coverings and design appliqués that highlight the bold colors and ornamentation of the early Islamic era. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York**, through April 7.

Embroideries of the Ottoman Empire presents the museum's collection of 18th- and 19th-century Turkish embroideries. Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, **Geneva**, through May 12.

Power and Gold: *Jewelry from Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines* commemorates the 50th anniversary of the Republic of Indonesia with more than 250 pieces from the island cultures of southeast Asia. Museum voor Volkenkunde, **Rotterdam**, through May 19.

Raiders and Traders on China's Northern Frontier. Contacts among urban Chinese and pastoral nomads to the north of China in the first millennium BC produced unique variations in the arts associated with war and commerce: harness fittings, weapons and vessels made of precious metals. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, **Washington, D.C.,** through August 18.

The Saudi Aramco Exhibit. Centered on the Arab-Islamic technical heritage, this permanent interactive, "learn-by-doing" scientific exhibit relates the historical background to today's petroleum exploration, production and transportation. **Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.**

Information is correct at press time, but please reconfirm dates and times before traveling. Readers are welcome to submit information for possible inclusion in this listing.

ARAMCO WORLD INDEX

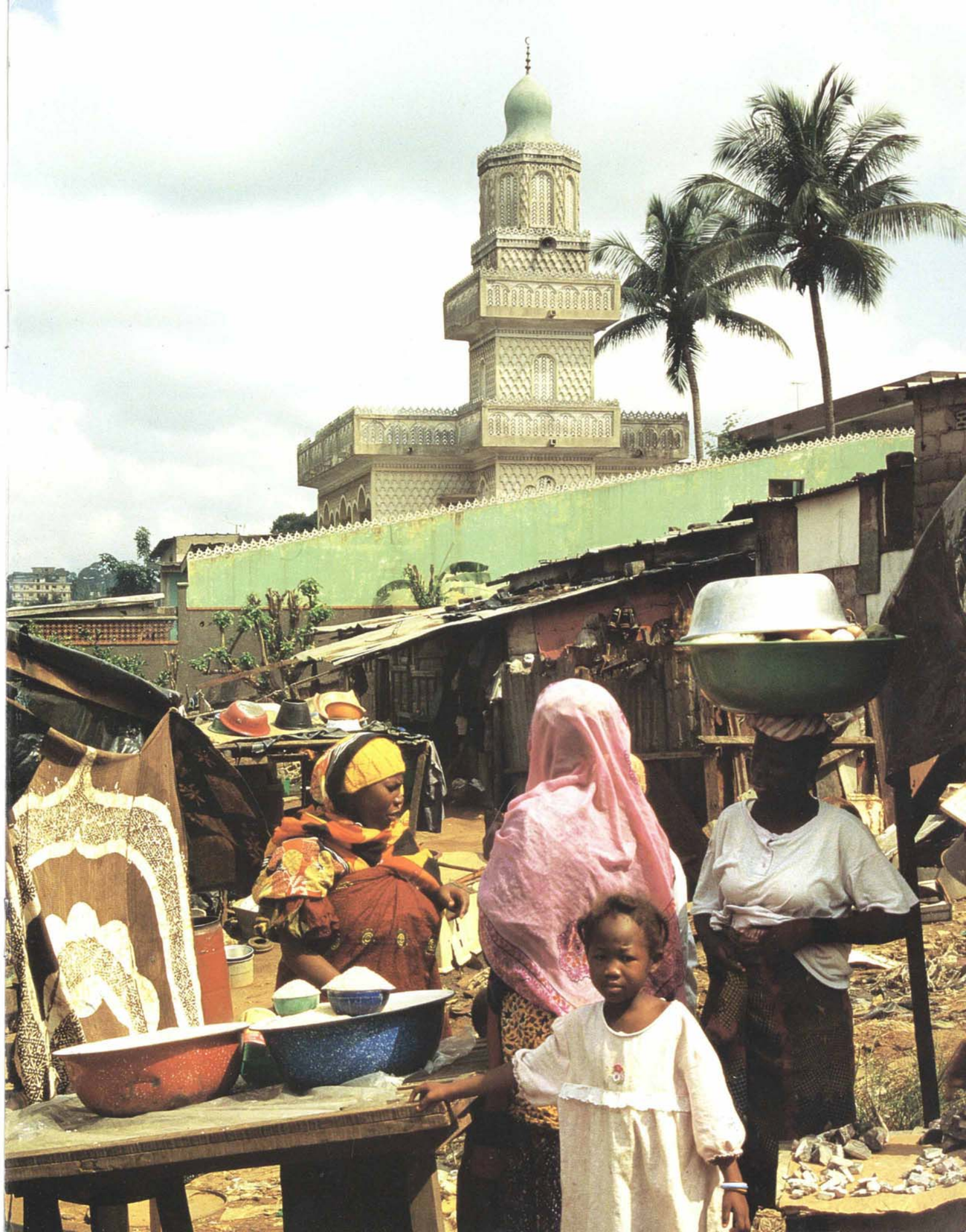
The most recent *Aramco World* cumulative index, covering issues through 1994, was published in the July-August 1995 issue. Copies are available on request.

ARAMCO WORLD BINDERS

Dark-blue gold-stamped binders, specially manufactured to hold 12 issues of *Aramco World*, are now available. Cost per pair of binders is $35, including US shipping and handling. California residents add sales tax; foreign orders add $10 per pair. Make checks payable to "Binders"; send orders to "Binders," AWAIR, 1865 Euclid Avenue, Suite 4, Berkeley, California 94709. Allow six weeks for US delivery.

Aramco World (ISSN 1044-1891) is published bimonthly by Aramco Services Company, 9009 West Loop South, Houston, Texas 77096-1799.

Volume 47, Number 1. Second-class postage paid at Houston, Texas and at additional offices.
POSTMASTER: send address changes to *Aramco World*, Box 469008, Escondido, CA 92046



MARC ROSENTHAL