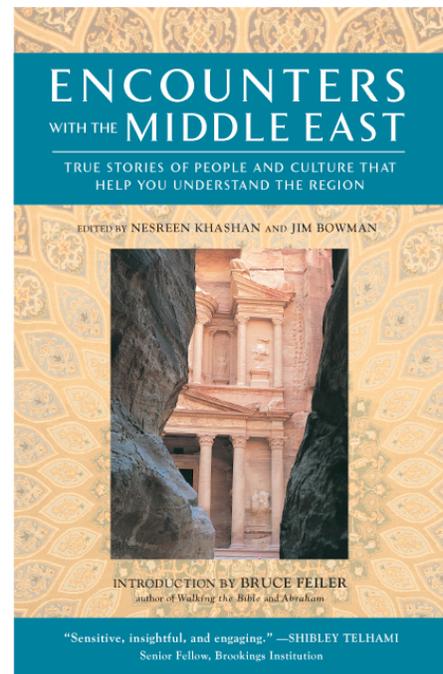


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

***Encounters with the Middle East* reveals everyday life throughout the region**

Americans are inundated with news coming out of the Middle East, but coverage typically focuses on policy while overlooking the experiences of ordinary people. *Encounters with the Middle East: True Stories of People and Culture That Help You Understand the Region* delivers compelling, authentic stories that Americans can't get from embedded reportage, CNN, the Discovery Channel, or a college course. It offers an alternative to the daily onslaught of headlines marked by strife and violence, encouraging readers to reconsider what they have learned about the Middle East. An introductory essay by Bruce Feiler, best-selling author of *Abraham*, *Walking the Bible*, and *Where God Was Born*, sets the tone for this thoughtful collection. Feiler's contribution to *Encounters with the Middle East* positions this title as one among a few that seek to foster dialogue among Westerners and Middle Easterners during a time of discord.

- ∞ Discover the depths of hospitality in a hulking steamer as the fasting locals voyage back to Egypt during the holy month of Ramadan
- ∞ Take in the stunning sights, sounds, and scents of the sacred Shia ritual of Ashura as experienced by a family of Bahraini women from their balcony in Manama
- ∞ Journey back in time to Jerusalem for an intimate glimpse of the city in the 1960s as remembered by a boy coming of age in its cobbled streets and bustling souks
- ∞ Inhale the sweet fumes of the hookah, chew the beloved qat, and soak up the lively atmosphere found in the salons of some of the most notable and politically active women of Yemen
- ∞ Sip the apple tea in Turkey and reconsider your impressions about arranged marriages as an Anatolian carpet seller and his wife lovingly recount their courtship...and much more.



**What people are saying about the book:**

“Each of the more than two dozen well-written tales in this dazzling collection is a brightly colored stone in a mosaic revealing, warts and all, a Middle East that is often charming and always complex. For those Americans who see a Middle East inhabited exclusively by terrorists and fundamentalists, these stories bring to life ordinary Middle Easterners (Arabs, Turks, Iranians, Israelis, and Cypriots) and help us understand our shared humanity.”

—David Dunford, former U.S. Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman

“There are as many impressions of the Middle East as there are visitors fortunate enough to travel there, and this book earnestly and engagingly samples a wide swathe of them.”

—Alan Weisman, author of *The World Without Us*

“Free from any hint of political correctness or academic pretense, this highly readable collection presents tableau after tableau of travelers’ encounters with the colorful and sometimes confusing intensity of the Middle East. Over and over we see Westerners’ fear and ignorance give way to flashes of insight and real appreciation of the shared humanity, the generosity, the humor, and the serendipity of the life and people of this misunderstood region. This book will provide background, reassurance, and interpretive guidance for the increasing number of North Americans and Europeans traveling to the Middle East.”

—Leila Hudson, Assistant Professor of Near Eastern Studies, University of Arizona

“*Encounters with the Middle East* provides a beautiful collage of snapshots from many corners of the Middle east, adding up to a picture that’s not often seen in the violence-obsessed coverage of the Middle East. It’s a sensitive, insightful, and engaging account.”

—Shibley Telhami, Anwar Sadat Professor for Peace and development, University of Maryland, and Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution

“It’s refreshing to find a place (the most headlined in our time) described and interpreted not by experts and academics but by writers and poets. The ones gathered here all approach their subject with curiosity, compassion, and a desire to comprehend—to the benefit of both the reader and the region.”

—Thomas Swick, Travel Editor, South Florida *Sun-Sentinel* and author of *Roads Not Taken*

### **About the Editors:**

Nesreen Khashan has for the past decade been a frequent traveler to the Middle East. Whether to the Palestinian territories and Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt or Morocco, each of her trips has been marked with special purpose and has carried with it one or more of her passions. She teaches in the Global Studies Program at Mission Community College near San Jose, CA and lives in Washington, DC. Earlier she worked as a newspaper reporter for six years, filing stories for *The Salt Lake Tribune*, the South-Florida *Sun-Sentinel*, *The Boston Globe*, and *The Daily Star* of Lebanon, among others.

Jim Bowman has developed his understanding of the Middle East through years of living in Turkey, traveling through the region, and now studying about the Middle East from afar. He is currently at work on a doctoral dissertation about Turkey and travel writing. He teaches and studies in the departments of English and Near Eastern Studies at the University of Arizona.

### **About Solas House/Travelers’ Tales:**

Solas House/Travelers’ Tales publishes the best in travel, humor, and spiritual writing from world-famous authors and emerging writers. Celebrating 14 years in publishing, the series has won many awards for excellence, including three Lowell Thomas Awards for Best Travel Book, and multiple best book awards from the Independent Publishers Association, ForeWord Magazine, and the Benjamin Franklin Awards.

### ***Encounters with the Middle East: True Stories of People and Culture That Help You Understand the Region***

Edited by Nesreen Khashan and Jim Bowman

Solas House

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