

#CULTURE

Who Are the Kurds?

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The Kurds are an ethnic group native to a mountainous region known as Kurdistan, which spans parts of southern Turkey, northern Syria, northern Iraq, and western Iran. With an estimated

population of 25 to 35 million people, they are one of the largest ethnic groups in the Middle East without a sovereign state of their own. The Kurdish people have a distinct language, culture, and history that have shaped their identity over millennia.

Origins and History

The Kurds trace their origins to ancient Indo-European tribes, who settled in the region, thousands of years ago. Throughout history, they have lived under the rule of various empires, including the Persian, Ottoman, and Arab Caliphates, often maintaining a degree of autonomy due to the difficult terrain of their homeland. Despite these influences, the Kurds have preserved their own language, customs, and social structures.

Language and Culture

The Kurdish language belongs to the Iranian branch of the Indo-European language family. It has several dialects, with Kurmanji and Sorani being the most widely spoken. Kurdish culture is rich and diverse, featuring traditional music, dance, clothing, and storytelling. Festivals like Newroz, the

Kurdish New Year celebrated around March 21, are significant cultural events symbolizing renewal and resistance.

Kurdish society traditionally values tribal and clan structures, with strong family ties and community cohesion. Hospitality and honour hold important places in Kurdish social customs.

Political Struggles and Aspirations

Throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, the Kurds have pursued greater autonomy and rights within the countries they inhabit. In Iraq, the Kurds established the autonomous Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) after the Gulf War in 1991, gaining significant self-governance. Kurdish forces played a crucial role in combating ISIS

in Iraq and Syria, earning international recognition.

However, Kurdish populations in Turkey, Iran, and Syria continue to face various levels of cultural suppression, political restrictions, and military conflict. Kurdish political movements vary widely, from peaceful advocacy for cultural rights to armed struggle.

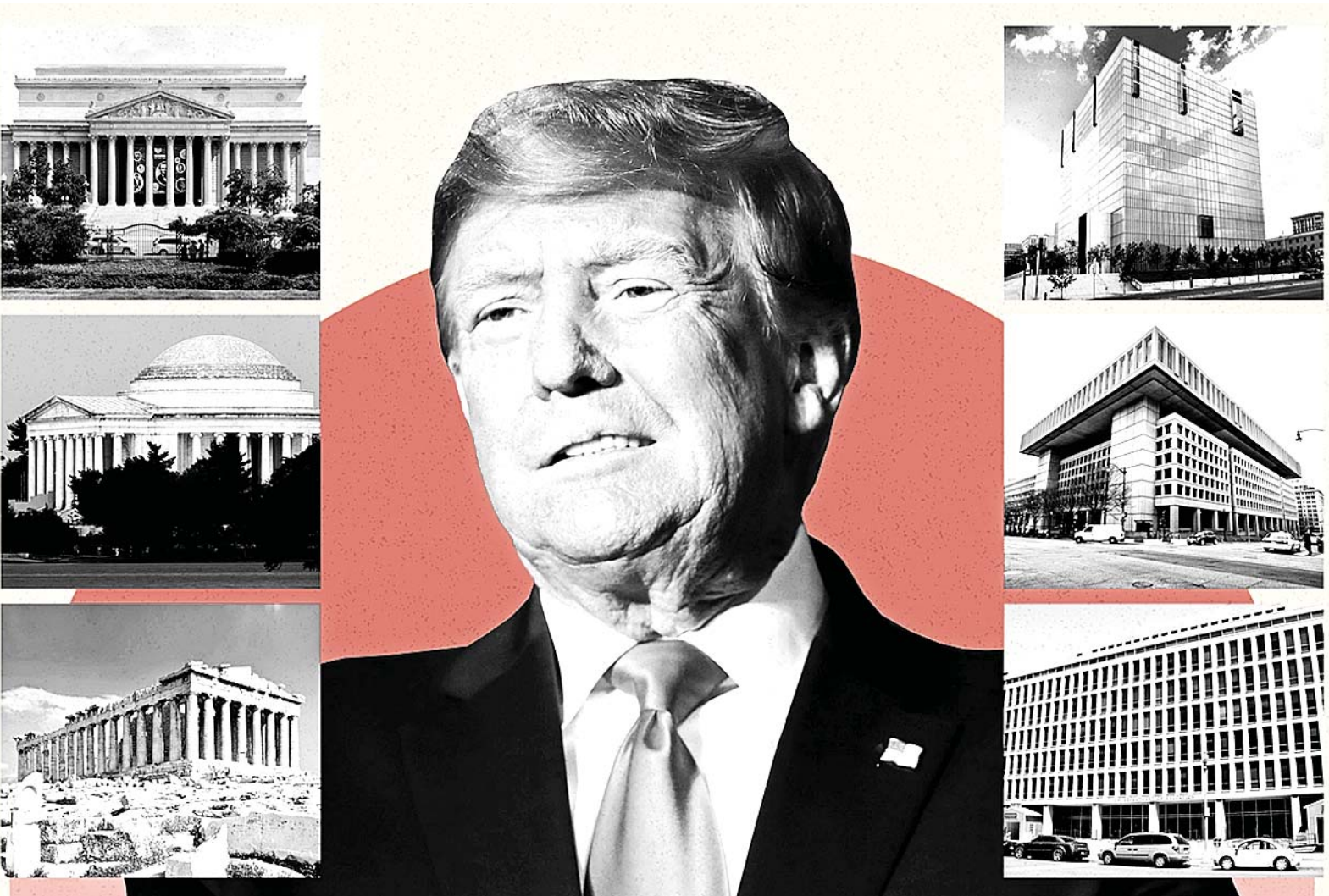
The Kurdish Diaspora

Due to conflicts and persecution, millions of Kurds have migrated worldwide, forming diasporas in Europe, North America, and beyond. These communities work to preserve Kurdish culture and advocate for Kurdish rights on the global stage.

The Kurds are a resilient and vibrant ethnic group with a rich cultural heritage and a long history marked by both struggle and survival. Their ongoing quest for recognition and autonomy remains a central issue in Middle Eastern politics today.



The candidates' position on architecture, not their tastes, really, so much as their opinion on whether design mandates should flow from the White House, will guide decisions about billions of dollars in spending. Trump posted on Truth Social in December, for example, that he opposes the effort to move the Federal Bureau of Investigation from its Brutalist headquarters in downtown Washington, DC, to Greenbelt, Maryland. This particular relocation plan has drawn opposition from Republicans and even some Democrats for reasons that have little to do with design. But Trump has posted specifically that he wants to keep the agency in Washington, in a "new and spectacular building."



Donald Trump Wants A Bit Of History For America

● Kshema Jatuhkarna

Days after his second presidential inauguration, Donald Trump issued an order that mandated all new federal public buildings be built in the neoclassical style. The President argues that neoclassical architecture, with its roots in ancient Greek and Roman styles, is inherently beautiful and embodies democratic ideals. The push for Neoclassical design is seen as a continuation of the Trump administration's broader effort to promote traditional American values and aesthetics.

This meant that new government buildings, whatever their function or location, should have classical Greek and Roman styling, symmetry, proportion and architectural elements. In a memorandum issued on January 20, 2025, titled 'Promoting Beautiful Federal Civic Architecture,' the POTUS specified 'that Federal public buildings should be visually identifiable as civic buildings and respect regional, traditional and classical architectural heritage in order to uplift and beautify public spaces and enoble the United States and our system of

self-government.'

This is not the first time Trump has expressed his disaffection with contemporary expressions of architecture. Late in his first term, he was even more trenchant.

In an 'Executive Order on Promoting Beautiful Federal Civic Architecture,' (issued on December 21, 2020) the US president specified that 'classical architecture shall be the preferred and default architecture for federal public buildings, absent exceptional factors necessitating another kind of architecture.'

The order even foregrounded brutalist or deconstructivist architecture as one that 'subverts the traditional values of architecture.' Within three months of being issued, it was revoked by incoming president Joe Biden. Soon after taking office, President Joe Biden also purged Trump's appointees from the US Commission of Fine Arts. Gone, too, was Trump's proposal for a park of classical statues, the National Garden of American Heroes. Yet, a handful of federal buildings were commissioned during this brief window when the General Services Administration required architects to submit traditional designs, including a by-the-book neoclassical federal courthouse opening in October in Huntsville, Alabama, and a federal

courthouse to be built in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

This time, the new order is likely to be implemented, however, considering that Trump is in full throttle as POTUS for the second time. "We will get rid of bad and ugly buildings and return to the magnificent classical style of Western civilization," Trump told the Conservative Political Action Conference in 2023.

This is no longer exclusively Trump's fixation, either. Indiana Rep. Jim Banks introduced legislation to require traditional federal architecture in 2023, surfacing the cause in Congress. A companion bill in the Senate was sponsored by none other than Ohio Senator and vice presidential nominee JD Vance, who has registered his admiration for beautiful public buildings over the years.

One can imagine a plethora of new civic buildings in Washington DC and other state capitals, all displaying giant orders (columns extending beyond two storeys), grand stairways, pediments and neorealist sculptures or murals on their façades. Current star architects such as Frank Gehry, Norman

#CITYSCAPES



The Manner S. Eccles Federal Reserve Board Building, designed by Paul Cret in 1937 in Washington, DC, is a modern version of a classical building.

Foster, Bjarke Ingels or even the late Zaha Hadid, lauded all over the world, shall presumably become persona non grata. Very likely, a bunch of new, state-approved architects shall fill the vacuum, with the American equivalent of our public works department carrying out orders from above.

Vance is a true champion of neoclassical design, according to Justin Shubow, president of the nonprofit National Civic Art Society and CFA chair under Trump. "Like Daniel Patrick Moynihan before him, JD Vance is a public intellectual," says Shubow, referring to the senator who wrote the guiding principles for federal architecture in 1992. "It would not be surprising if Vance grasps the public value of a classical architecture mandate."

Design makes an appearance in the 2024 GOP Platform. Under a section about restoring American civilization, Republicans promise to 'promote beauty in Public Architecture and preserve our Natural Treasures.' Architecture doesn't merit a mention in Project 2025, the presidential transition planning document from the

National Moon Day

Every once in a while, the human race achieves something truly remarkable, and National Moon Day celebrates the occasion when we first left footprints upon our nearest neighbour. It's probably best to gloss quietly over how long it is since the last visitors landed there, but that's no reason to skip on the celebrations. After all, there'll never be a better excuse to launch firework rockets over your neighbourhood and dress up in a tin foil suit with a fishbowl on your head. Alternatively, you might prefer to drag a telescope out into the garden, or maybe, sit in a circle howling like wolves as the moon rises.



unlikely to emerge as a heated issue in JD Vance-Tim Walz debate.

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The order has faced criticism from architects and preservationists, who argue that it limits design freedom and imposes a single, potentially outdated style.

Retrograde positions are not new in architectural history. The late 19th and early 20th centuries were steeped in revivalism. Choosing a 600- or 2,000-year-old building style to cloak a contemporary building was the norm in Europe and the colonies. From the

Renaissance onwards, this normalised the idea of 'formalism' and 'appropriateness' in civic architecture. Architects continued to promote revivalism down to the early 20th century, ignoring structural changes (in a Marxian sense) that were happening all around, particularly as a result of the Industrial Revolution.

During this time, engineers became the new innovators while architects remained stragglers. It required several modernist forays, especially between the two world wars, to overcome this stranglehold. There are no apparent beneficiaries in applying 'historical wallpaper' (to use Charles Correa's phrase) to a new building of our times. The only thing pandered to is sentimentality and a pompous sense of self.

Mussolini's buildings in Rome and Milan as well as Albert Speer's visions of a new Berlin for Hitler also displayed such 'stripped classicism' on different scales. There is a sense of regimentation associated with the kind of neoclassical buildings that Trump is propagating. Such monumental buildings would be uniform, orderly, symmetrical, with ceremonial features highlighted by architectural ornament, sculptures and murals.

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Fentress Architects designed the \$103 million Neoclassical Federal Courthouse in Huntsville, Alabama.

#TRIED AND TASTED

Rainy Day Treats

These cheesy paneer bites are soft, mildly spiced, and absolutely delicious. Kids go crazy for them, and they're so simple to make!



A rainy day wonder moment for your children, likely to give them reasons to pray for more rains, special snack treats. Stay indoors, help prepare and then savor them.

Cheesy Paneer Bites



These cheesy paneer bites are soft, mildly spiced, and absolutely delicious. Kids go crazy for them, and they're so simple to make!

Ingredients
● 200g paneer, cut into cubes
● 1/2 cup yogurt
● 1 tsp ginger-garlic paste

● 1/2 tsp turmeric powder
● 1/2 tsp cumin powder
● 1/2 tsp garam masala
● Salt to taste

Method
1. Mix the yogurt with ginger-garlic paste, spices, and salt in a bowl.
2. Add the paneer cubes and let

them soak up the flavors for 15 minutes.
3. Heat oil in a pan and cook the paneer until it's golden all over.
4. Serve hot with a side of mint chutney.
These bites are protein-packed and a guaranteed crowd-pleaser!

Sweet Potato Sticks



Sweet potato sticks are a healthier take on fries, and their natural sweetness makes them a kid favourite. You'll love how easy they are!

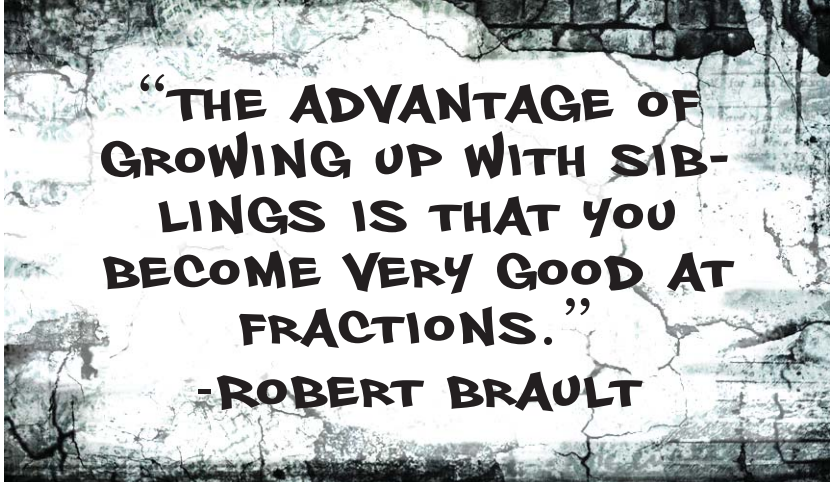
Ingredients
● 2 medium sweet potatoes,

peeled and cut into sticks
● 1 tbsp olive oil
● 1/2 tsp paprika
● Salt to taste

Method
1. Preheat your oven to 200°C.
2. Toss the sweet potato sticks

with olive oil, paprika, and salt.
3. Spread them out on a baking tray and bake for 20-25 minutes, flipping halfway.
4. Serve with a fun dip.
Crispy, sweet, and good for you, these sticks are a rainy day must-have!

THE WALL

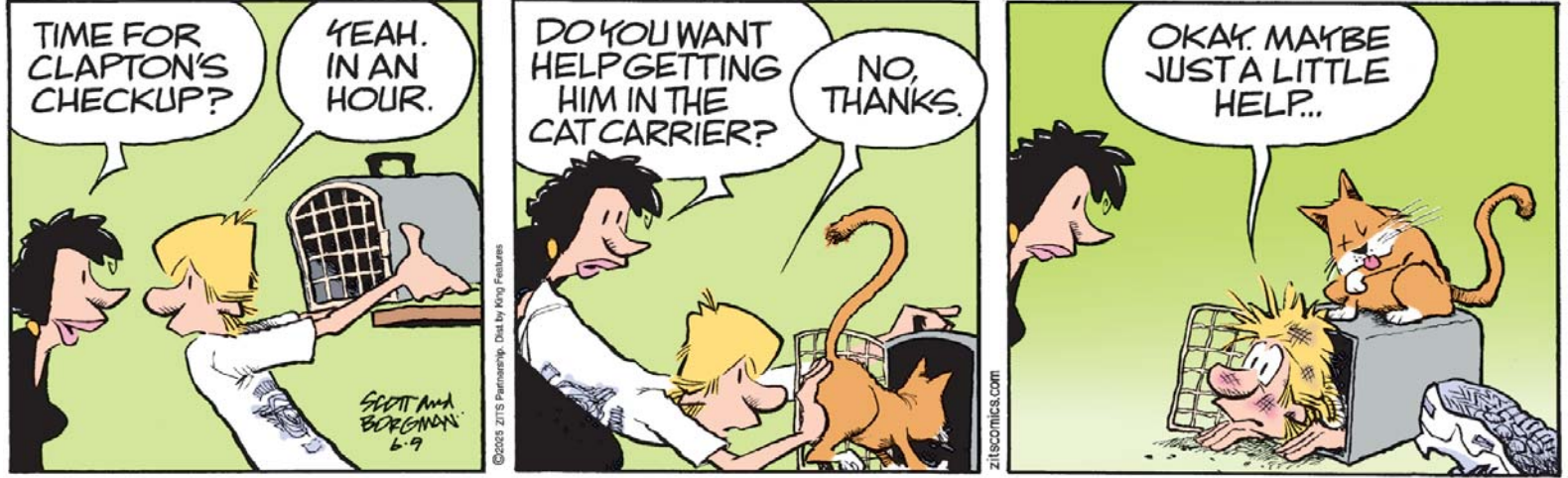


BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman