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Mecca

Arabic *Makkah*, sacred city of Islam, birthplace of Muhammad, which every Muslim must visit at least once. Origins have been proposed in Phoenician *maqqa* "ruined" or Arabic *mahrab* "sanctuary." Figurative sense of "any place one holds supremely sacred" (usually with lower-case *m-*) is in English from 1850. Related: *Meccan*.

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Introduction and abbreviations

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