

Saudi Arabia



Introduction

Saudi Arabia is a monarchy in southwestern Asia, and occupies most of the Arabian Peninsula. Saudi Arabia is bordered on the north by Jordan, Iraq, and Kuwait; on the east by the Persian Gulf and Qatar; on the southeast by the United Arab Emirates and Oman on the south by the Republic of Yemen; and on the west by the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba. The southeast and southern boundaries are not precisely defined.

Fun Fact

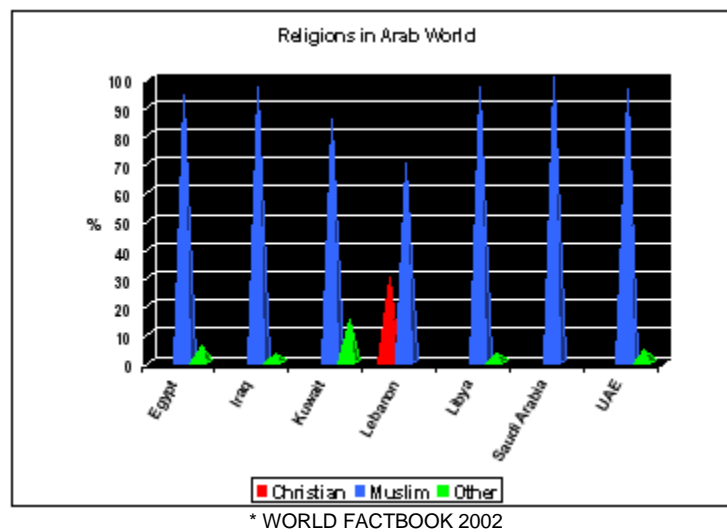
If you are not a Muslim, you may not enter Saudi Arabia without an invitation and you may not leave without an exit permit. Visitors to Saudi Arabia are subject to the same rigorous Islamic law as Saudis. It is not uncommon for Westerners to be imprisoned for possessing illegal substances such as alcohol, pornography, pork or narcotics. Thieves still have their hands amputated and capital crimes are punished by public beheadings.

Geert Hofstede Analysis Saudi Arabia

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The Geert Hofstede analysis for Saudi Arabia is almost identical to other Arab countries their Muslim faith plays a large role in the people's lives. Large power distance and uncertainty avoidance are the predominant characteristics for this region. This indicates that it is expected and accepted that leaders separate themselves from the group and issue complete and specific directives. [More Details](#)

Religion in Saudi Arabia



Appearance

- Never show bare shoulders, stomach, calves and thighs.
- Visitors are expected to abide by local standards of modesty however, do not adopt native clothing. Traditional clothes on foreigners may be offensive.
- Despite the heat, most of the body must always remain covered.
- A jacket and tie are usually required for men at business meetings. Men should wear long pants and a shirt, preferably long-sleeved, buttoned up to the collar. Men should also avoid wearing visible jewelry, particularly around the neck.

- Women should always wear modest clothing in public. High necklines sleeves at least to the elbows are expected. Hemlines, if not ankle-length should at least be well below the knee. A look of baggy concealment should be the goal, pants or pant suits are not recommended. It is a good idea to keep a scarf handy, especially if entering a Mosque.

Behavior

- It is common to remove your shoes before entering a building. Follow the lead of your host.
- Alcohol and pork are illegal.
- In the Muslim world, Friday is the day of rest.
- There are several styles of greetings used; it is best to wait for your counterpart to initiate the greeting. Men shake hands with other men. Some men will shake hands with a woman; it is advisable for a businesswoman to wait for a man to offer his hand. A more traditional greeting between men involves grasping each other's right hand, placing the left hand on the other's right shoulder and exchanging kisses on each cheek.
- The left hand is considered unclean and reserved for hygiene avoid gestures with the right hand. Do not point at another person and do not eat with the left hand.
- Men walking hand in hand is a sign a friendship.
- Try not to cross your legs when sitting. Never show the bottom of your feet.
- The "thumbs up" gesture is offensive.
- Gifts are not necessary, but appreciated. Avoid admiring an item too much, you host may feel obligated to give it to you. When offered a gift, it is impolite to refuse.
- Women in Saudi Arabia are not permitted to drive vehicles.

Communications

- Do not discuss the subject of women, not even to inquire about the health of a wife or daughter. The topic of Israel should also be avoided. Sports is an appropriate topic.
- Names are often confusing. It's best to get the names (in English) of those you will meet, speak to, or correspond with before hand. Find out both their full names and how they are to be addressed in person.

- Communications occur at a slow pace. Do not feel obligated to speak during periods of silence. "Yes" usually means "possibly".
- Your Saudi host may interrupt your meeting or conversation, leave the room and be gone for 15 to 20 minutes for the purpose of his daily prayers.
- At a meeting, the person who asks the most questions is likely to be the least important. The decision maker is likely a silent observer.
- A customary greeting is *salaam alaykum*. Shaking hands and saying *kaif hal ak* comes next.