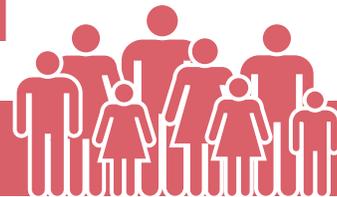




Saudi Arabia



Family Life

Rarely do grandparents, aunts, uncles or cousins live in the same house, even if they live in the same town, though the youngest child of a family will house the grandparents. In Saudi Arabia it is common for the father to be professional and financially responsible for the family, but not the mother. Parents are likely to have different authority over household decisions, and it varies by household, but authority is shared. Respect is shown to elder family and community members by the youth and a formal relationship is maintained. In Saudi Arabia,

generally lunch and dinner are eaten all together as a family, unless parents work late. It is considered respectful to allow family members to regular, individual time by themselves, to pursue their own activities, socialize with friends or to simply relax. Saudi teenagers are not accustomed to gender equality amongst peers or family when it comes to division of tasks or chores. Chores are divided along strict gender lines with women responsible for most household activity, including cooking and cleaning. Men are responsible for life outside of the home and for more laborious tasks.

Teen Life: If a Saudi child has something, it is generally his or her own, and not understood to be the shared property of siblings, including clothing. When siblings want to borrow something from each other, it is generally understood that they must ask first.

Responsibilities: Saudi household members are rarely given specific tasks or chores, although in many cases the female and male members help in specific areas. It is, however, very common for each household to have a housekeeper. Typically both male and female students will not have experience preparing meals. Saudi parents give allowances to their teenage children in regular, fixed amounts. It is rare for a Saudi student to work, even part-time. Saudi teenagers are not accustomed to planning daily routines independently, yet they are not necessarily reliant on their parents either.

Parental Involvement: Some Saudi parents monitor their children's online activities, while others do not. Generally, though, students are accustomed to unlimited usage or access to the internet. Many Saudi parents are in direct contact with their children's school and are kept aware of their academic progress.

Pets: It is not common to have pets in Saudi homes.

Personal Interactions



Mixed Gender Socializing: It is not traditionally acceptable for Saudi teens to have friends of the opposite sex and to socialize with them individually, however, it is still done and it is becoming more and more acceptable.

Friendships: Saudi teenagers sometimes socialize in groups, and sometimes one-on-one. Both ways are considered appropriate, and the choice is left up to the individual. Saudi teenagers make friends through common activities and interests, as well as family and neighborhood connections. It is common for Saudi teenagers to share money with each other. Saudi teenagers don't often think of peers with whom they are only casually associated as friends, rather they are considered acquaintances. In Saudi Arabia, greetings are easily dragged to larger conversations, although this is mostly true for adults rather than teenagers.

Communication Styles: Saudi teenagers are generally not comfortable expressing negative emotions to their friends and family. Saudis tend to communicate indirectly out of humility.

Eye Contact: Eye contact is not important in the Saudi culture and looking down is more of a sign of respect.

Cultural Norms: Saudis tend to expect a large amount of personal space, both in terms of living space and during personal interactions. Punctuality is respected in Saudi Arabia; however, lack of punctuality is not considered a grave sign of disrespect. Being a little bit late to an appointment can go unnoticed or even be expected.

Riyadh

School



Classes: Saudi schools are segregated by gender. Saudi high school classes generally have around 25 students, though this could vary from school to school. Saudi schools generally grade with more weight given to examinations than day to day assignments and participation. Students in Saudi Arabia remain in one classroom during the day and teachers rotate to different rooms. They follow a standard high school curriculum and cannot choose to study or not study certain subjects.

School Relationships: Students in Saudi Arabia generally have formal relationships with their teachers and use formal titles when addressing them (Miss/Mr.; Dr., if credentials warrant it).

Extracurricular Activities: Saudi high schools generally do not have a variety of extracurricular activities, if any at all. If a student participates in a private club sport or other activity, Saudi parents involvement in that activity may vary.

School Rules and Attire: Saudi high schools have a “zero tolerance” policy regarding cell phone usage, and fighting. These are not allowed at all in school and the penalties for engaging in them are often severe. Saudi students are accustomed to school uniforms (thoubs – long white robes, for males). Girls wear long-sleeved shirt, covered by sleeveless jumper, colors vary based on the grade level.

Returning from Exchange: Students must submit their U.S. school documents to the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission in Washington, D.C. prior to returning home for validation; AFS provides these instructions at the end of the academic year to students. Without this validation, Saudi schools will not accept the U.S. school documents; with the validation, they will likely get credit for their work done in the U.S., though it may depend on the quality of the work and grade level in which they are placed.

Food and Culture



Religion: Generally Saudi males are expected to attend the Friday prayer at the mosque.

Holidays: School, work, and marketplace hours change during Ramadan. There are increased family and friend visits and gatherings as well. Eid al-Fitr is celebrated amongst families. Major holidays in Saudi Arabia include Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, national day, and spring holiday.

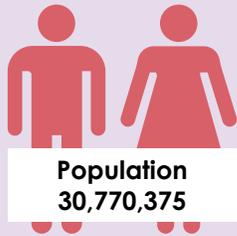
Guest Culture: In Saudi Arabia, guests, especially those whom the host does not see very often, get a very special treatment when they visit someone. A guest is most of the times someone the host knows, though this is not always the case. A guest can be anyone and will be welcomed and treated well at any time, day or night, no matter what their reason is for the visit. This culture is inherited from Arabian traditions and from the Islamic teachings as well. Hosts frequently offer coffee or tea, and possibly a full meal.

Lunch and Diets: It is very easy for Saudis to find halal meat at home in Saudi Arabia. Most Saudi families prepare meals from scratch. Eating leftovers is normal, because the religion demands to respect what Allah gives, so Saudis believe that they should not leave any food or throw it away.

Personal Hygiene



Saudi teenagers generally take a quick shower once a day and sometimes maybe twice if they are involved in physical activities. However, it is possible that they are accustomed to longer showers if they are of middle-class or higher. Most Saudis rely on the household maid to keep bathrooms clean and dry. It is generally thought to be unclean in Saudi Arabia to wear the same clothes two days in a row or twice without washing them. Saudis usually change clothes upon entering the house, especially females since they wear uniforms at school. Saudi students will have a choice whether to keep clothes on or change them upon entering the house depending on their activities.



Population
30,770,375



Square Miles
830,000

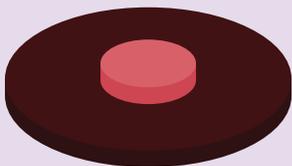


Currency
Saudi Riyal

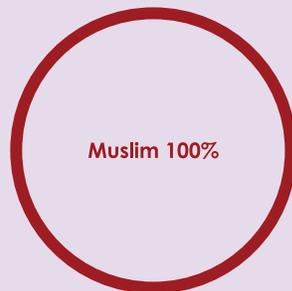


Literacy rate
92%

Literacy rate
97%



Arab 90%
Afro-Asian 10%



Muslim 100%