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Learn Your World: Saudi Arabia

Skills and Professional Development



To support your global practice, ACC Docket offers country-specific fun facts from your peers who've been there — literally.



Population	33,000,000 (2017 estimate)
Economy	US\$1.803 trillion (purchasing power parity)
Corruption	According to Transparency International's 2017 Corruption Perception Index," the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was the 57th "cleanest" (i.e., least corrupt) country out of the 180 countries surveyed.
Additional resources	Saudi Arabia tourism <i>Bedouin Weaving of Saudi Arabia and Its Neighbors</i> , a book that describes the weaving techniques of the Bedouin as they adapt from their centuries-old nomadic existence to being both semi- and fully settled

"*Ahlan wa Sahlan*," which translates to "Family and Ease," may be the first words you hear when visiting Saudi Arabia. And hopefully what guests will find!

Saudi Arabia has a rich history as the birthplace of Islam and the center of the Old World, making the country a strategic trading hub situated between three continents. Saudi Arabia also has a promising future as it embarks on its *Vision 2030*, which has led to significant reforms and aims to capitalize on the country's young energetic populace and the largest oil reserves in the world. In fact, by the time you read this article, Saudi women will have begun to drive, cinemas may be open, and the country may have issued its first tourist visas.

Riyadh, the capital, is where most business takes place. Prepare for a desert climate with hot

summer days and cold winter nights. You may prefer to visit in February to catch Aljanadriya, Saudi Arabia's main cultural festival. Jeddah, the second largest city and its main port, is humid most of the year. The country is one of the safest in the world. Driving habits, however, have room for improvement. Consider hiring a car rather than driving yourself.

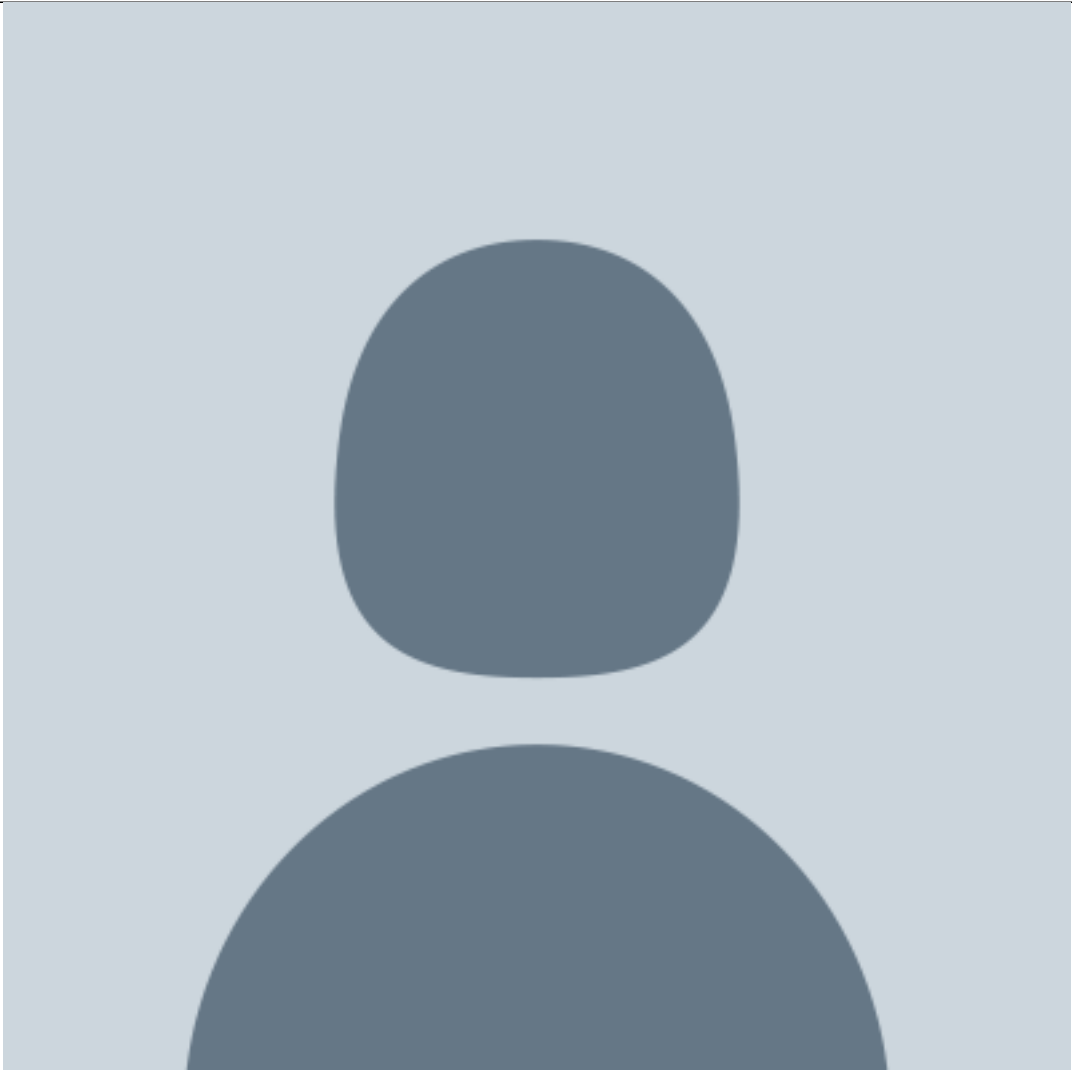
When first meeting a person from the opposite sex, Saudis will vary in their cultural preferences. Wait for the person to extend their hand before you do to avoid awkwardness.

Some business meetings may start strictly on time while others may be less punctual. Meetings usually start with light conversation but may move rapidly to the manner at hand. When coming to agreements with counterparts, you want to ensure that the deal's elements are clear. While contracts are important, Saudis will look into the broader context and equity may weigh heavily into consideration.

In terms of food, you will not be disappointed. *Kabsa*, a mixed rice dish, is a traditional meal that can be found across the country. You should also not miss *Najel* and *Sayadiya* rice if you visit the Western or Eastern coastal provinces. You may be offered Arabic coffee and dates. The coffee is an acquired taste. If it is offered, you should take the small cup and place it in front of you, even if you don't intend to drink it.

Ultimately, Saudi Arabia is a place unlike any other. You are bound to make new friends and experience a gush of hospitality. So, "*Ahlan wa Sahlan!*"

[Khalid Alaseeri](#)



General Counsel

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