



Culture and Customs of Saudi Arabia (Culture and Customs of the Middle East)

David E. Long

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Saudi Arabia is a young nation with an ancient history. It is one of the most conservative traditional societies in the world grappling with the impact of modernization wrought by the influx of great oil wealth beginning only in the mid twentieth century. Saudi culture is in constant flux, and the culture gap between the West and Saudi Islamic culture is wide. *Culture and Customs of Saudi Arabia* is the first cultural overview of country and provides timely, authoritative insight into a major Middle Eastern power.

The Saudis are a proud people with a closed society, but circumstances have caused them to play an important role in current world affairs. The author has lived and worked in Saudi Arabia and has extensively used his contacts there to provide up-to-date material. Saudi culture developed through age-old interactions between the Arabian peoples and their harsh desert environment. Saudi Arabia is the birthplace of Islam, and the basic Islamic values of Saudi culture have remained to this day. The themes of an ancient desert society infused with Islam values on a collision course with modernity are interplayed throughout chapters on the land, people, and history, traditional Islamic culture and modernization, the extended family and gender roles, cuisine and dress, social customs, rites of passage, and holidays, communication and mass media, and artistic expression. Color photos and a map, chronology, and glossary round out the narrative.

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