

Saudi arabia and islam

[Religion](#), [Islam](#)



Religion and Folklore Religion is extremely important in Saudi Arabia. We have to have a basic understanding of it if we wish to conduct business there. Brief Information on Islam In order to understand Saudi Arabia, one must understand Islam. Saudi Arabia is the cradle of Islam, the second most populous religion on earth. It is the birth place of the Prophet Muhammad, the founder of Islam. People who follow his teachings are called Muslims. Their holy book is called the Quran and their place of worship is called a Mosque. Saudi Arabia also contains the two holiest sites in Islam, Mecca and Medina. Mecca contains the most important mosque and all praying Muslims must face towards it no matter where they are. Medina is where the Tomb of Muhammad is located. There are no planes allowed to fly over these two major cities. Also no railroads travel there. Non-Muslims are forbidden from entering these two holy cities. Photography of any type inside the Mosques is also prohibited. One of the pillars of Islam is for all able-bodied Muslims to travel to Mecca at least once in their life. This pilgrimage is called the Hajj. The other 4 pillars are The Testimony of Faith (Shahadah) declaring the supremacy of Allah as the one and only god, Daily Prayer (Salat) at least 5 times a day, almsgiving (Zakat) where the rich give around 2.5% of their wealth to the poor, and Fasting (Sawm). Each of these is essential and enforced rigorously by the religious police. http://www.cqpress.com/context/articles/epr_saudi.html Islam in Saudi Arabia In modern day Saudi Arabia, Islam permeates all facets of life. It is the official religion of the country and all other religions are banned. The laws of the country are based on Sharia, or Islamic Law. Due to the harsh sentences imposed by Sharia, crime is kept to a minimal. It is seen more as a way of living ones life instead

of a spiritual component. Most of Saudi Arabia is comprised of the Sunni sects of Islam. About 15% of the population is Shias. They are mostly concentrated in the Eastern Province. The two sects differ on the succession to Muhammad. Sunni's followed Abu Bakr, Muhammad's father-in-law, while Shias believed Muhammad divinely ordained his cousin and son-in-law, Ali ibn Abi Talib. This is important because there have been violent conflicts between the sects, and is especially important today because of the Iraq war and the sectarian violence happening there. Most of the Sunni's practice an extreme form of Islam called Wahabbism. This form takes a literal view of the Quran, the holy book of Islam. These fundamentalist teaching are used by some extremists to try and topple the government. They believe the government is complacent to Western powers and should not be Stewards of the two Holiest sites of Islam. Due to their violent tactics, foreign nationals, especially westerners are discouraged from leaving the major cities. Beside government and military buildings, western businesses and corporations are seen as valid targets as well. Therefore, security is a top priority for all western firms. <http://www.time.com/time/covers/1101030915/wwahhabism.html> Islam's Impact on Businesses Businesses in Saudi Arabia must conform to Islamic values and teachings. Compared to Western companies, Saudi companies are very different. Non-Muslims cannot show their religious beliefs. Generally it is not a good idea to talk about religion or politics with the hosts. Another frowned about subject is inquiring about the host's wife or other female family members. It is important for guests to be punctual, but the hosts are sometimes late. All Muslims are required to pray 5 times a day. This means that three times a day shops are closed during hours of business.

It generally takes 15 minutes to pray. Due to the increase in violence against Westerners, most employees are discouraged from leaving the city limits and to travel in groups. Any crosses or other religious symbols must be kept out of view at all times. Finally, non-Muslims should not dress in the traditional Saudi clothes. It is seen as condescending and disrespectful. Suits are the normal dress accepted. Women should wear suit professionally with a skirt. [http://www. communicaid. com/saudi-business-culture. asp](http://www.communicaid.com/saudi-business-culture.asp)