



Arab American and Chaldean Council (ACC)
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Arab Culture Summary

The Culture:

Arabs are a large heterogeneous ethnic group who have origins in the Middle East and North Africa; therefore, it is essential to consider an individual's national origin when identifying him/her as an Arab. Among the factors that you should consider are:

- ❖ Country of Origin
- ❖ Urban or rural inhabitant
- ❖ Socio-economic background
- ❖ Educational level of the individual and/or family
- ❖ Religious Background
- ❖ Family upbringing
- ❖ Number of years/generations in the United States
- ❖ Level of English proficiency/home language proficiency

Common/Shared Cultural Traits:

- ❖ Patriarchal family unit (father figure is highly respected)
- ❖ Close-knit family system
- ❖ Extended family structure
- ❖ Hospitality (highly admired virtue)
- ❖ Conservative
- ❖ Shame-based culture (reputation is highly guarded and regarded)

Fast Facts

Religion:

The three monolithic (major) religions originated in the Middle East:

- ❖ Islam (majority)
(Not all Arabs are Muslims and not all Muslims are Arabs.)
- ❖ Christianity (minority)
(The Christian faith is practiced in Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, Egypt, and Syria.)
- ❖ Judaism (minority)
(Arab Jews who practice the Jewish faith.)

Languages:

The major language spoken in the Arab world is Arabic with numerous dialects throughout the region. There are however secondary languages such as English and French which are taught as a school requirement; speaking two or more languages is very common especially in Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Tunisia, and Morocco.

- ❖ Arabic (primary)
- ❖ French (secondary) and/or
- ❖ English (secondary)

Although located in the Middle East, the following are neither considered Arab countries nor is Arabic an official language spoken.

- ❖ Iran (language, Farsi)
- ❖ Israel (language, Hebrew)
- ❖ Turkey (language, Turkish)