

## WEATHER, DRESS AND SOCIAL CUSTOMS

Temperatures in Riyadh will be 20-30°C. during the day but somewhat cooler, possibly even chilly, in the evenings.

European men wear lightweight business suits. For women, garments should be long with hemlines at mid-calf or below and loose-fitting with long sleeves and high necklines. A headscarf may be desirable on occasion. Saudi males wear the traditional thobe and females long black dresses with veils and headscarves in public. The élite may however turn to the latest European fashions in the privacy of their homes.

English is very widely spoken among well-educated Saudis and the large foreign community.

Saudi social customs are a reflection of their very rigorous Islamic faith. Alcohol and pork are forbidden and foreigners do not openly wear crosses or other jewelry with non-Islamic connotations.

The five daily calls to prayer are an important feature of Saudi life. All shops close at these times. Although most offices do not, Moslem employees will quietly perform their religious duties. Saudis take great pride in the law-abiding nature of their society. Crime is extremely rare.

At meetings with Saudis, cardamom flavoured coffee in small cups is invariably offered by a server. It is polite to accept one cup and optionally a second or third, but not more. The cup should be shaken sideways by the guest to indicate no more is desired. Small cups of very sweet black tea may follow the coffee.