

Geography

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia occupies approximately 80% of the Arabian Peninsula. With an area of 2.15 million square km, it is one-fifth the size of Canada. Only 25% of the country's land area is inhabited. Saudi Arabia is divided into five provinces:

- (a) Al Hasa, the Eastern Province bordering the Gulf, contains the Kingdom's onshore oilfields;
- (b) Najd, the largest province, covers the central plateau, which includes the world's largest desert, known as the Rub Al Khali or Empty Quarter;
- (c) Hejaz, the Western Province where the trading centre, Jeddah, is located on the Red Sea;
- (d) Asir, the Southwestern Province of the Red Sea coastal plain and inland mountains; and
- (e) Medina, the Northern Province also bordering the Red Sea.

The Red Sea coast is bordered by a narrow plain of marshlands and lava fields, separated from the central region by a range of rugged mountains. The plain is made fertile by silt-bearing waters from the nearby mountains.

In the vast barren areas in the south and southeast, the boundaries with Yemen, Oman and the United Arab Emirates are poorly defined. Saudi Arabia extends eastward to the Gulf and borders on the north with Kuwait, Iraq and Jordan.

Climate

Summer temperatures often reach 50 degrees and these high temperatures are accompanied in central