

regions by dry winds and cloudless skies, while coastal areas experience high humidity levels.

Winter temperatures in the coastal areas (Jeddah and Dhahran) tend to be somewhat milder than in the south, receiving heavy winter rainstorms and even experiencing frost and snow at higher elevations. Rainfall ranges from zero in the desert region to about 100 mm annually in the extreme north and south. The western and eastern coastal regions experience cooler but more humid summer conditions but warmer winters than in the central Najd region (Riyadh).

Population and Cities

Total population is estimated to be 11 million including approximately 4 to 5 million foreign workers. Half of the people live in urban centres, 25% are settled farmers and the remainder are basically nomadic.

Riyadh, the capital and administrative centre, has a population of approximately 1.5 million. Jeddah, a city of similar size, is the largest port on the Red Sea coast and the commercial and banking centre of the Western Province.

The Western Province contains the two sacred cities of Mecca and Medina; access to these two cities is restricted to people of the Moslem faith. These cities and other holy sites in the area attract over 2 million pilgrims annually.

The principal cities in Saudi Arabia's oil-rich Eastern Province are located within a few miles of each other: Dammam, the commercial centre, provincial capital and major Saudi seaport on the Arabian Gulf;