



Expatriate Life in Saudi Arabia



While some destinations aren't a big adjustment for Westerners. Saudi Arabia is not one of those destinations.

With significant differences stemming from the strong influence of Islam, many Westerners often face [culture shock when moving abroad](#) to Saudi Arabia.

However, expat life in Saudi Arabia doesn't have to be such a surprise. By taking the time to [research and plan ahead](#), you can ensure a smooth transition to your new environment.

Here are 3 things you can do before you arrive to make your transition into expat life easier.

1. *Become Familiar with Islam*



- First, it is absolutely necessary that you become familiar with Islam, the state religion of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
- This connection is uniquely strong in Saudi Arabia because it is the only Islamic country to claim the holy text, The Quran, as its constitution. Therefore, religion is more than just a cultural influence: it is a way of life in Saudi society.
- Muslims are called to prayer five times a day, and these prayers last about thirty minutes. **Shops are required to close and sales stop during prayer time**, and as an expat you'll constantly be checking your watch to make sure you aren't interrupting their prayer time.

2. *Special Considerations for Women*

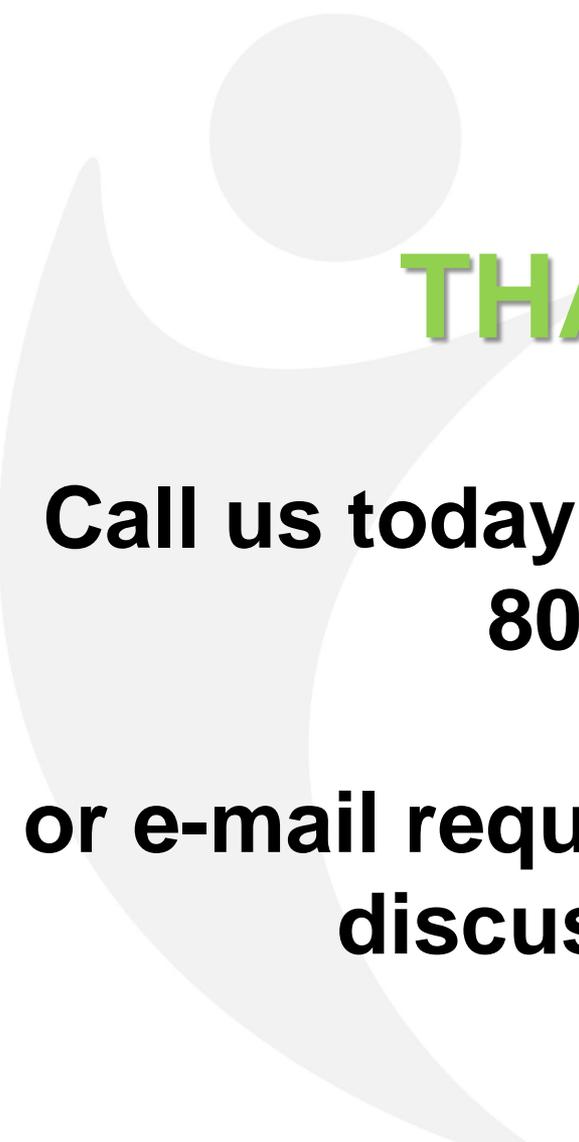


- If you're a woman moving to Saudi Arabia, preparations must be made to wear the abaya at all times outside of your private home. This long, loose-fitting cloak is worn over the entire body with a headscarf.
- This cloak should cover all of your body, including your ankles. Some expats recommend wearing leggings or pants under the *abaya* to ensure your ankles are covered.
- In Saudi Arabia, men and women are kept very separate from each other in restaurants, walking down the street, even in cars (women must be seated in the backseat away from the man, who must be related to the women to travel together)

3. Find Western-Style Housing



- Finally, to make the transition to Saudi life easier, try to live in a Western Style compound. Compound life can be similar to living an “international country club” lifestyle within a gated community.
- The amenities will vary from compound to compound but most will include swimming pools, restaurants, laundry services, hair salons, playgrounds, and bus services.
- In addition, Western-style housing communities may feature Arabic classes, grocery stores, and golf courses. For many expatriates who have come from a western country to Saudi Arabia, the compound brings a comfortable feeling of home.



THANK YOU

**Call us today at +1.202.872.0060 or
800.872.0067**

**or e-mail request@clements.com to
discuss your needs.**