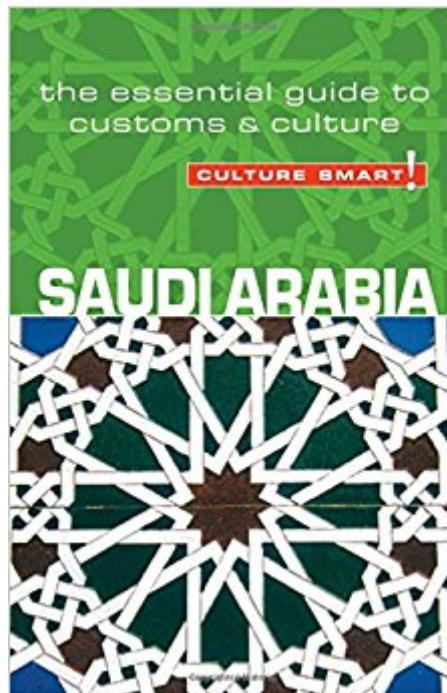




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Saudi Arabia - Culture Smart!: The Essential Guide To Customs & Culture



Synopsis

Culture Smart! provides essential information on attitudes, beliefs and behavior in different countries, ensuring that you arrive at your destination aware of basic manners, common courtesies, and sensitive issues. These concise guides tell you what to expect, how to behave, and how to establish a rapport with your hosts. This inside knowledge will enable you to steer clear of embarrassing gaffes and mistakes, feel confident in unfamiliar situations, and develop trust, friendships, and successful business relationships. Culture Smart! offers illuminating insights into the culture and society of a particular country. It will help you to turn your visit-whether on business or for pleasure-into a memorable and enriching experience. Contents include: * customs, values, and traditions * historical, religious, and political background * life at home * leisure, social, and cultural life * eating and drinking * do's, don'ts, and taboos * business practices * communication, spoken and unspoken

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Culture Smart has come to the rescue of hapless travellers." - Sunday Times Travel

Nicolas Buchele grew up in Hamburg and was educated at University College London, where he graduated with first-class honors in English Language and Literature. He left Europe in 1997 to work as a journalist in Asia. In 2003-04, he was chief sub-editor at Arab News in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. He has published articles on subjects ranging from Henry James's late novels to car launches in

Lebanon. He now lives in Bangkok, Thailand, where he works for Korea's largest-circulation newspaper, the Chosun Ilbo.

Much of the information the author shares is useful, but almost all of his observations seem to come from a culturally biased perspective (and doesn't that fly in the face of the purpose of the "Cutlure Smart!" series?), a view that seems unable to see beyond the obvious. Although the author apparently lived in Saudi for a time, I was shocked, repeatedly, by how many things he gets wrong. Just two simple examples: he talks about camera phones being banned in KSA. Not true, and according to my inquiries, has never been true. He says that Saudis are generous tippers. What?!! Tipping is not customary here, anywhere I've traveled (and I've traveled extensively around the country), and is viewed with bemused skepticism. Saudis rarely tip, and if they do, it is verrrrry grudgingly... even when they're in western countries where it's expected. These are minor things, but they are indicative of a pattern of statements that runs throughout the book. Because many readers may know nothing about KSA, they will accept the author's statements as facts. But he is frequently wrong. Giving him the benefit of the doubt, maybe these things were misunderstandings, or he heard them from unreliable sources; perhaps they were quirks of the neighborhoods where he lived (in Jeddah, a city on the western coast)... but that seems doubtful. Regardless, if you're presenting materials as accurate truths, especially about a place as distant, misunderstood, and politically sensitive as Saudi Arabia, shouldn't we expect better? This is my first review, but I feel compelled to set the record straight, or at least, straight-er, in response. I'm a westerner, currently living and working in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia; I've been here for 2 years. I can't in any way call myself an expert about this cutlure, but I have worked very hard to meet and befriend Saudis, venture far beyond the boundaries of western haunts, and open my mind to as untainted a view of the place as one can manage. I'm not always successful, and sometimes I hate it here -- but I try to see the world around me as clearly and honestly as I can. The creators of this book do not seem to be feel the same responsibility.

This was a quick read for me prior to my second trip to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It helped fill in some of the cultural basics that were not readily apparent from business interactions. I felt more confident this time around and thought that perhaps I understood a little more about my hosts. The book doesn't cover anything in depth, but I recommend it for anyone who has to go there on business.

very happy

This was a great intro book that gives a newcomer a very good general understanding of what to expect when getting into the kingdom and being subject to Saudi culture.

I read this book before and during my visit, it seemed to help a lot with what to expect and what I experienced. I finished reading it the day before my departure, so in summary, I would recommend it to a person visiting Saudi Arabia. Since I did not come on business, I really couldn't rate that part of the book.

Very practical. Good introduction to Saudi Arabian culture, history and useful information you need to know on daily basis.

This is an interesting guide, however, once you get to Saudi and live here, you realise what you read and what actually happens are two very different things. I really love this place. So interesting and full of contradictions.

Well structured and interesting to understand the basics but not so useful for business purpose.

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