

Who is an Arab?

Any person who adopts the Arabic language is typically called an Arab. To be an Arab, is not to come from a particular race or lineage, but rather a cultural trait.

Where do Arabs come from?



The Arab World map

The Arab world, formally the Arab homeland, also known as the Arab nation, consists of the 22 Arab countries which are members of the Arab League. A majority of these countries are located in Western Asia, Northern Africa, Western Africa, and Eastern Africa

The Arab world stretches from Morocco across Northern Africa to the Persian Gulf. The Arab world is more or less equal to the area known as the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Although this excludes Somalia, Djibouti, and the Comoros Islands which are part of the Arab world. It can also be defined as those countries where Arabic is the dominant language. Arab countries are religiously and ethnically diverse with Islam being the dominant religion in most countries.

The Arab World consists of 22 countries in the Middle East and North Africa: Algeria, Bahrain, the Comoros Islands, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

Population: 423,000,000

Area: 13,132,327 km² (5,070,420 sq mi)

Fascinating Facts About Arab Culture

- Arab is not a race
- Not all Arabs are Muslims
- Family is the key social unit to an Arab
- Honor is important
- Relationships first, business second
- Personal hygiene is extremely important to Arabs for both spiritual and practical reasons.
- Hospitality and generosity to strangers is an expression of sacred duties

Common Misconceptions About Arabs

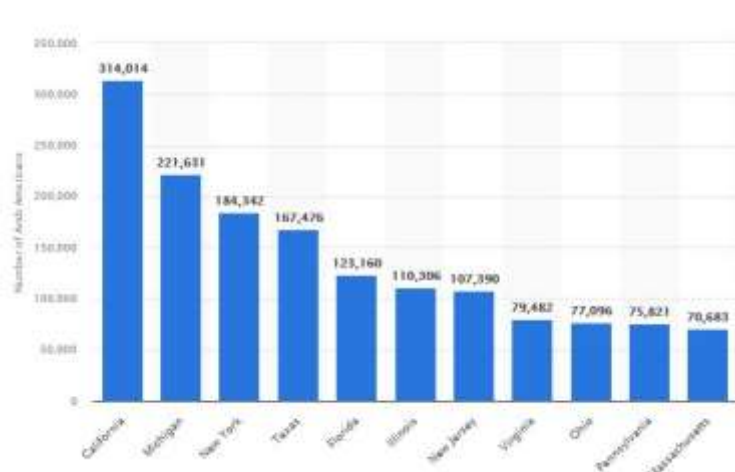
- **All Arabs are Muslims, and all Muslims are Arab.** Arabs are religiously diverse group – significant numbers of Arab Christians in Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Jordan, and Iraq. Arabs make up between 15-18% of the Muslim world.
- **The Arab world is backwards and uncivilized.** Actually represents a highly developed culture and civilization where modern cities mingle with ancient ones.
- **The Arab world is one big desert.** Truly geographically complex and diverse.
- **Stereotypes of Arab males:** All are “oil-rich Sheiks”. As in the rest of the world, there are economically diverse segments of the population. Mad dictators. Various types of political systems in Arab world. Terrorists. Overwhelming majority are law abiding citizens with families and a wide variety of occupations.
- **Stereotypes of Arab women:** All are oppressed by men. Not true. All are veiled. According to Islam women are supposed to wear veils. In some countries, like Lebanon, Syria and Egypt, it is no imposed upon them and women are free to choose whether to wear veils. However, in other places, all women, even non-Muslims, wear veils out of fear of mistreatment by fanatics or those who pretend to be guardians of Islam.

Arab Immigration to the United States

In the late 1800s, Arab immigration to the United States began, according to the Migration Policy Institute, with Arab Christians fleeing the Ottoman Empire—what's now Syria, Lebanon and Israel—from religious persecution and conscription, as well as economic reasons. The U.S. Department of State reports that the immigrants mostly landed in the Northeast and Midwest, finding work there in sales and as grocers.

The Johnson-Reed Immigration Act of 1924, which used origin quotas to limit immigration, halted the influx of Arab immigrants until 1948 to 1966, when a new wave of Middle Eastern immigration began due to the Arab-Israeli War and other regional conflicts. Many of those immigrants came to Detroit during the auto industry boom. A third Arab immigration wave occurred in the U.S. following the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which ended quotas favoring those from northern and western Europe.

Today, Arab Americans live in all U.S. states, with two-thirds residing in 10 states: California, Florida, Illinois, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas and Virginia. One-third live in the greater Los Angeles area, Detroit and New York, the Arab American Institute reports. The largest group, comprising nearly one-third of the Arab American population, are Lebanese Americans, and, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, Dearborn, Michigan, outside of Detroit, boasts the country's largest percentage of Arab Americans.



U.S. states with the highest Arab American population in 2019