In general, information available as of 1 January 2003 was used in the preparation of The World Factbook 2003.

This page was last updated on 18 December, 2003.
on a 30-year campaign to unify the Arabian Peninsula. In the 1930s, the discovery of oil transformed the country. Following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, Saudi Arabia accepted the Kuwaiti royal family and 400,000 refugees while allowing Western and Arab troops to deploy on its soil for the liberation of Kuwait the following year. A burgeoning population, aquifer depletion, and an economy largely dependent on petroleum output and prices are all major governmental concerns.

**Geography**

**Saudi Arabia**

**Location:**

Middle East, bordering the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea, north of Yemen

**Geographic coordinates:**

25 00 N, 45 00 E

**Map references:**

Middle East

**Area:**

total: 1,960,582 sq km
water: 0 sq km
land: 1,960,582 sq km

**Area - comparative:**

slightly more than one-fifth the size of the US

**Land boundaries:**

total: 4,431 km
border countries: Iraq 814 km, Jordan 744 km, Kuwait 222 km, Oman 676 km, Qatar 60 km, UAE 457 km, Yemen 1,458 km

**Coastline:**

2,640 km

**Maritime claims:**

contiguous zone: 18 NM
continental shelf: not specified
territorial sea: 12 NM

**Climate:**

harsh, dry desert with great temperature extremes

**Terrain:**

mostly uninhabited, sandy desert

**Elevation extremes:**

lowest point: Persian Gulf 0 m
highest point: Jabal Sawda’ 3,133 m

**Natural resources:**

petroleum, natural gas, iron ore, gold, copper

**Land use:**

arable land: 1.72%
permanent crops: 0.06%
other: 98.22% (1998 est.)

**Irrigated land:**

16,200 sq km (1998 est.)

**Natural hazards:**

frequent sand and dust storms
Environment - current issues:
desertification; depletion of underground water resources; the lack of perennial rivers or permanent water bodies has prompted the development of extensive seawater desalination facilities; coastal pollution from oil spills

Environment - international agreements:
*party to:* Biodiversity, Climate Change, Desertification, Endangered Species, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Ozone Layer Protection
*signed, but not ratified:* none of the selected agreements

Geography - note:
extensive coastlines on Persian Gulf and Red Sea provide great leverage on shipping (especially crude oil) through Persian Gulf and Suez Canal

People

**Saudi Arabia**

Population:
24,293,844

*note:* includes 5,576,076 non-nationals (July 2003 est.)

Age structure:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-14 years</td>
<td>5,245,413</td>
<td>5,028,595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-64 years</td>
<td>7,700,121</td>
<td>5,622,099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 years and over</td>
<td>393,173</td>
<td>304,443</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(2003 est.)*

Median age:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18.8 years</td>
<td>20.9 years</td>
<td>16.8 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(2002)*

Population growth rate: 3.27% *(2003 est.)*

Birth rate: 37.2 births/1,000 population *(2003 est.)*

Death rate: 5.79 deaths/1,000 population *(2003 est.)*

Net migration rate: 1.23 migrant(s)/1,000 population *(2003 est.)*

Sex ratio:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At birth</th>
<th>Under 15 years</th>
<th>15-64 years</th>
<th>65 years and over</th>
<th>Total population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(male(s)/female)* *(2003 est.)*

Infant mortality rate:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>47.94 deaths/1,000 live births</td>
<td>45.67 deaths/1,000 live births <em>(2003 est.)</em></td>
<td>50.1 deaths/1,000 live births</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Life expectancy at birth:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total population</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>68.73 years</td>
<td>66.99 years</td>
<td>70.55 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(2003 est.)*

Total fertility rate: 6.15 children born/woman *(2003 est.)*

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate: 0.01% (2001 est.)
HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS: NA
HIV/AIDS - deaths: NA
Nationality: noun: Saudi(s) adjective: Saudi or Saudi Arabian
Ethnic groups: Arab 90%, Afro-Asian 10%
Religions: Muslim 100%
Languages: Arabic
Literacy: definition: age 15 and over can read and write
total population: 78.8%
    male: 84.7%
    female: 70.8% (2003 est.)

Government
Country name: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
conventional long form: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
conventional short form: Saudi Arabia
local long form: Al Mamlakah al Arabiyah as Suudiyah
local short form: Al Arabiyah as Suudiyah
Government type: monarchy
Capital: Riyadh
Administrative divisions: 13 provinces (mintaqat, singular - mintaqah); Al Bahah, Al Hudud ash Shamaliyah, Al Jawf, Al Madinah, Al Qasim, Ar Riyad, Ash Sharqiyah (Eastern Province), 'Asir, Ha'il, Jizan, Makkah, Najran, Tabuk
Independence: 23 September 1932 (Unification of the Kingdom)
National holiday: Unification of the Kingdom, 23 September (1932)
Constitution: governed according to Shari'a (Islamic law); the Basic Law that articulates the government's rights and responsibilities was introduced in 1993
Legal system: based on Islamic law, several secular codes have been introduced; commercial disputes handled by special committees; has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction
Suffrage:
Executive branch:

- **chief of state**: King and Prime Minister FAHD bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud (since 13 June 1982); Crown Prince and First Deputy Prime Minister ABDALLAH bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud (half-brother to the monarch, heir to the throne since 13 June 1982, regent from 1 January to 22 February 1996); note - the monarch is both the chief of state and head of government
- **elections**: none; the monarch is hereditary
- **head of government**: King and Prime Minister FAHD bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud (since 13 June 1982); Crown Prince and First Deputy Prime Minister ABDALLAH bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud (half-brother to the monarch, heir to the throne since 13 June 1982, regent from 1 January to 22 February 1996); note - the monarch is both the chief of state and head of government
- **cabinet**: Council of Ministers is appointed by the monarch and includes many royal family members

Legislative branch:

- **Consultative Council or Majlis al-Shura** (120 members and a chairman appointed by the monarch for four-year terms)

Judicial branch:

- **Supreme Council of Justice**

Political parties and leaders:

- none allowed

Political pressure groups and leaders:

- none

International organization participation:

- ABEDA, AfDB, AFESD, AL, AMF, BIS, ESCWA, FAO, G-19, G-77, GCC, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICC, ICRM, IDA, IDB, IFAD, IFC, IFRCS, ILO, IMF, IMO, Interpol, IOC, ISO, ITU, NAM, OAPEC, OAS (observer), OIC, OPCW, OPEC, PCA, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UPU, WCO, WFTU, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO, WTrO (observer)

Diplomatic representation in the US:

- **chief of mission**: Ambassador BANDAR bin Sultan bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud
- **chancery**: 601 New Hampshire Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20037
- **consulate(s) general**: Houston, Los Angeles, and New York
- **telephone**: [1] (202) 342-3800

Diplomatic representation from the US:

- **chief of mission**: Ambassador Robert W. JORDAN
- **embassy**: Collector Road M, Diplomatic Quarter, Riyadh
- **mailing address**: American Embassy Riyadh, Unit 61307, APO AE 09803-1307; International Mail: P. O. Box 94309, Riyadh 11693
- **telephone**: [966] (1) 488-3800
- **FAX**: [966] (1) 488-7360
- **consulate(s) general**: Dhahran, Jiddah (Jeddah)

Flag description:

- green with large white Arabic script (that may be translated as There is no God but God; Muhammad is the Messenger of God) above a white horizontal saber (the tip points to the hoist side); green is the traditional color of Islam

Economy

- **Saudi Arabia**
Economy - overview: This is an oil-based economy with strong government controls over major economic activities. Saudi Arabia has the largest reserves of petroleum in the world (26% of the proved reserves), ranks as the largest exporter of petroleum, and plays a leading role in OPEC. The petroleum sector accounts for roughly 75% of budget revenues, 45% of GDP, and 90% of export earnings. About 25% of GDP comes from the private sector. Roughly 4 million foreign workers play an important role in the Saudi economy, for example, in the oil and service sectors. The government in 1999 announced plans to begin privatizing the electricity companies, which follows the ongoing privatization of the telecommunications company. The government is supporting private sector growth to lessen the kingdom's dependence on oil and increase employment opportunities for the swelling Saudi population. Priorities for government spending in the short term include additional funds for the water and sewage systems and for education. Water shortages and rapid population growth constrain the government's efforts to increase self-sufficiency in agricultural products.

GDP: purchasing power parity - $268.9 billion (2002 est.)

GDP - real growth rate: 1% (2002 est.)

GDP - per capita: purchasing power parity - $11,400 (2002 est.)

GDP - composition by sector:
- agriculture: 5.2%
- industry: 51.2%
- services: 43.6% (2001 est.)

Population below poverty line: NA%

Household income or consumption by percentage share:
- lowest 10%: NA%
- highest 10%: NA%

Inflation rate (consumer prices): 1% (2002 est.)

Labor force: 7 million

Labor force - by occupation:
- agriculture 12%, industry 25%, services 63% (1999 est.)

Unemployment rate: 25% (2002)

Budget:
- revenues: $46 billion
- expenditures: $56.5 billion, including capital expenditures of $NA (2003 est.)

Industries: crude oil production, petroleum refining, basic petrochemicals, cement, construction, fertilizer, plastics

Industrial production 1% (1997 est.)
growth rate:
Electricity - production: 122.4 billion kWh (2001)

Electricity - production by source:
fossil fuel: 100%
hydro: 0%
other: 0% (2001)
nuclear: 0%

Electricity - consumption: 113.8 billion kWh (2001)

Electricity - exports: 0 kWh (2001)

Electricity - imports: 0 kWh (2001)

Oil - production: 8.711 million bbl/day (2001 est.)

Oil - consumption: 1.452 million bbl/day (2001 est.)

Oil - exports: NA (2001)

Oil - imports: NA (2001)

Oil - proved reserves: 261.7 billion bbl (37257)

Natural gas - production: 53.69 billion cu m (2001 est.)

Natural gas - consumption: 53.69 billion cu m (2001 est.)

Natural gas - exports: 0 cu m (2001 est.)

Natural gas - imports: 0 cu m (2001 est.)

Natural gas - proved reserves: 6.339 trillion cu m (37257)

Agriculture - products: wheat, barley, tomatoes, melons, dates, citrus; mutton, chickens, eggs, milk

Exports: $71 billion f.o.b. (2001)

Exports - commodities: petroleum and petroleum products 90%

Exports - partners: US 18.6%, Japan 15.6%, South Korea 10.1%, Singapore 5.1%, China 4.6% (2002)

Imports: $39.5 billion f.o.b. (2001)
Imports - commodities: machinery and equipment, foodstuffs, chemicals, motor vehicles, textiles

Imports - partners: US 11.2%, Japan 8.8%, Germany 7.6%, UK 4.9%, France 4.9%, Italy 4.1% (2002)

Debt - external: $25.9 billion (2003 est.)

Economic aid - donor: pledged $100 million in 1993 to fund reconstruction of Lebanon; since 2000, Saudi Arabia has committed $307 million for assistance to the Palestinians; pledged $240 million to development in Afghanistan

Currency: Saudi riyal (SAR)

Currency code: SAR


Fiscal year: calendar year

Communications  Saudi Arabia

Telephones - main lines in use: 3.9 million (2002 est.)

Telephones - mobile cellular: 2.9 million (2002 est.)

Telephone system: general assessment: modern system
domestic: extensive microwave radio relay, coaxial cable, and fiber-optic cable systems
ternational: microwave radio relay to Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar, UAE, Yemen, and Sudan; coaxial cable to Kuwait and Jordan; submarine cable to Djibouti, Egypt and Bahrain; satellite earth stations - 5 Intelsat (3 Atlantic Ocean and 2 Indian Ocean), 1 Arabsat, and 1 Inmarsat (Indian Ocean region)


Television broadcast stations: 117 (1997)

Internet country code: .sa

Internet Service Providers (ISPs): 22 (2003)

Internet users: 1.453 million (2002)

Transportation  Saudi Arabia

Railways:
total: 1,392 km
standard gauge: 1,392 km 1.435-m gauge (with branch lines and sidings) (2002)

Highways:  total: 151,470 km
paved: 45,592 km
unpaved: 105,878 km (1999)

Waterways: none

Pipelines: condensate 212 km; gas 837 km; liquid petroleum gas 1,187 km; oil 5,062 km; refined products 69 km (2003)

Ports and harbors: Ad Dammam, Al Jubayl, Duba, Jiddah, Jizan, Rabigh, Ra's al Khafji, Mishab, Ras Tanura, Yanbu' al Bahr, Madinat Yanbu' al Sinaiyah

Merchant marine: total: 71 ships (1,000 GRT or over) 1,461,964 GRT/2,301,258 DWT
ships by type: cargo 9, chemical tanker 11, container 4, livestock carrier 2, passenger 1, petroleum tanker 23, refrigerated cargo 4, roll on/roll off 9, short-sea passenger 8
note: includes some foreign-owned ships registered here as a flag of convenience: Egypt 3, Finland 1, Greece 3, Kuwait 1, Sudan 1, UAE 1, UK 3 (2002 est.)


Airports - with paved runways: total: 71
over 3,047 m: 31
2,438 to 3,047 m: 12
914 to 1,523 m: 2
under 914 m: 2 (2002)
1,524 to 2,437 m: 24

Airports - with unpaved runways: total: 138
under 914 m: 13 (2002)
over 3,047 m: 1
2,438 to 3,047 m: 6
914 to 1,523 m: 39
1,524 to 2,437 m: 79

Heliports: 5 (2002)

Military

Saudi Arabia


Military manpower - military age: 17 years of age (2003 est.)

Military manpower - availability: males age 15-49: 6,123,784 (2003 est.)
Military manpower - fit for military service:

*males age 15-49:* 3,431,281 (2003 est.)

Military manpower - reaching military age annually:

*males:* 253,685 (2003 est.)

Military expenditures - dollar figure:

$18.3 billion (FY00)

Military expenditures - percent of GDP:

13% (FY00)

Transnational Issues

Disputes - international:

Nomadic groups on border region with Yemen resist demarcation of boundary; Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have been negotiating a long-contested maritime boundary with Iran; because the treaties have not been made public, the exact alignment of the boundary with the UAE is still unknown and labeled approximate.

Illicit drugs:

Death penalty for traffickers; increasing consumption of heroin, cocaine, and hashish.

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