



Photo from http://www.english.globalarabnetwork.com/images/stories/2009/Sep/saudi_arabia_food.jpg

Meals:

- **Breakfast:** or فطار (eftar) is a small meal eaten early in the morning centered around Arabic coffee and Tea. Popular breakfast items include dates, olives, cheeses, honey, preserves, eggs and hot bread.
- **Lunch:** or غداء (ghada) is a mid-day meal that is typically eaten in the home. Common lunch items in Saudi Arabia include rice, some kind of meat (usually chicken), and tea. Soups and bread are also common lunch items.
- **Dinner:** or عشاء ('sha') is a lighter meal that is very similar to lunch. Meat dishes served with rice is extremely common, but soups and stews are also popular items.
- **Snacks:** or خفيفة وجبات, are common in Saudi Arabia and are eaten throughout the day. Snacks are usually small and include dates, cashews, milk, pita bread, shortbread, coffee, and tea.
- Click [here](#) for some easy food translations.

Frequently Used Foods:

- **Fruits and Vegetables:** Dates, Apricots, figs, peaches, grapes, citrus, watermelon, eggplant, potato, cucumber, onion, tomato, garlic, squash, pumpkin, olive, cauliflower, okra
- **Protein:** Chicken, lamb, goat, cashews, peanuts, pistachio, eggs, beef, fish
- **Spices:** Cumin, saffron, basil, thyme, turmeric, black lemon, salt, mint, cilantro, pepper, parsley, cloves, anise, ginger, cardamom, cinnamon
- **Oils/Misc.:** Sunflower oil, rice, cheese, tea, coffee, olive oil

Ten Regional Favorite Dishes With Links to Recipes:

- **Tabbouleh:** [[recipe](#)] [[images](#)]
- **Al Kabsa:** [[recipe](#)] [[images](#)]
- **Saudi Rice With Lamb and Potato:** [[recipe](#)] [[images](#)]
- **Bahraini Chicken:** [[recipe](#)] [[images](#)]
- **Lamb Kabob:** [[recipe](#)] [[images](#)]
- **Kunafa:** [[recipe](#)] [[images](#)]
- **Okra Stew:** [[recipe](#)] [[images](#)]
- **Finjan Erfeh:** [[recipe](#)] [[images](#)]
- **Saleeg:** [[recipe](#)] [[images](#)]
- **Mafruka:** [[recipe](#)] [[images](#)]

Religion: The religious composition of Saudi Arabia is almost entirely Muslim. Between 85-90% of the country is Sunni, while 10-15% are Shiites.

National Holidays and Dietary Requirements:

- Because Saudi Arabia is predominately Muslim, alcohol and pork are not found or used throughout the country.
- **Mawlid** is a religious holiday that commemorates the birth of Muhammad, which occurs during the third month of the Islamic calendar, Rabi' al-awwal. This holiday is celebrated with carnivals, street processions, and mosque decorations. [[more](#)]

- **Ramadan-** The ninth month of the Islamic calendar is a month of fasting for Muslims. Iranians who observe this holiday are prohibited from eating, drinking, and smoking between dawn and sunset.
- **Saudi National Day:** A holiday that is celebrated annually on September 23rd, Saudi National Day recognizes the unification of the country in 1932. Both private and public institutions hold this day as a national holiday, and many people throughout the country gather with family and close friends to celebrate.

Etiquette: Very similar to other Middle Eastern, Muslim Nations, Saudi Arabian etiquette advises the sexes to be entertained separately in restaurants and group gatherings. Conservative dress for both males and females is recommended when eating outside of the home.

Most food is either eaten with the right hand, or with a spoon and fork. Knives are extremely rare when eating, and eating with one's left hand is very inappropriate. Finally, while eating as a guest in a Saudi Arabian home, it is respectful to leave some food on your plate after you have finished eating. This is a sign of respect and shows the host of the meal that enough food has been provided to the guests.

Food History: The history of cuisine in Saudi Arabia is very similar to the rest of the Arab world. Also, although sometimes it may be difficult to make the distinction between foods that have originated in Saudi Arabia from those originating in Iraq, Syria, Egypt, or Kuwait, Saudi Arabia has developed a modern cuisine that is both unique and enjoyable.

Additional Information and Acknowledgements:

http://www.hoteltravel.com/saudi_arabia/guides/overview.htm

<http://www.everyculture.com/Sa-Th/Saudi-Arabia.html>

http://recipes.wikia.com/wiki/Saudi_Arabian_Cuisine