

# The Arab Community in London

Presented by

JOHN HOWARD SOCIETY OF LONDON AND DISTRICT

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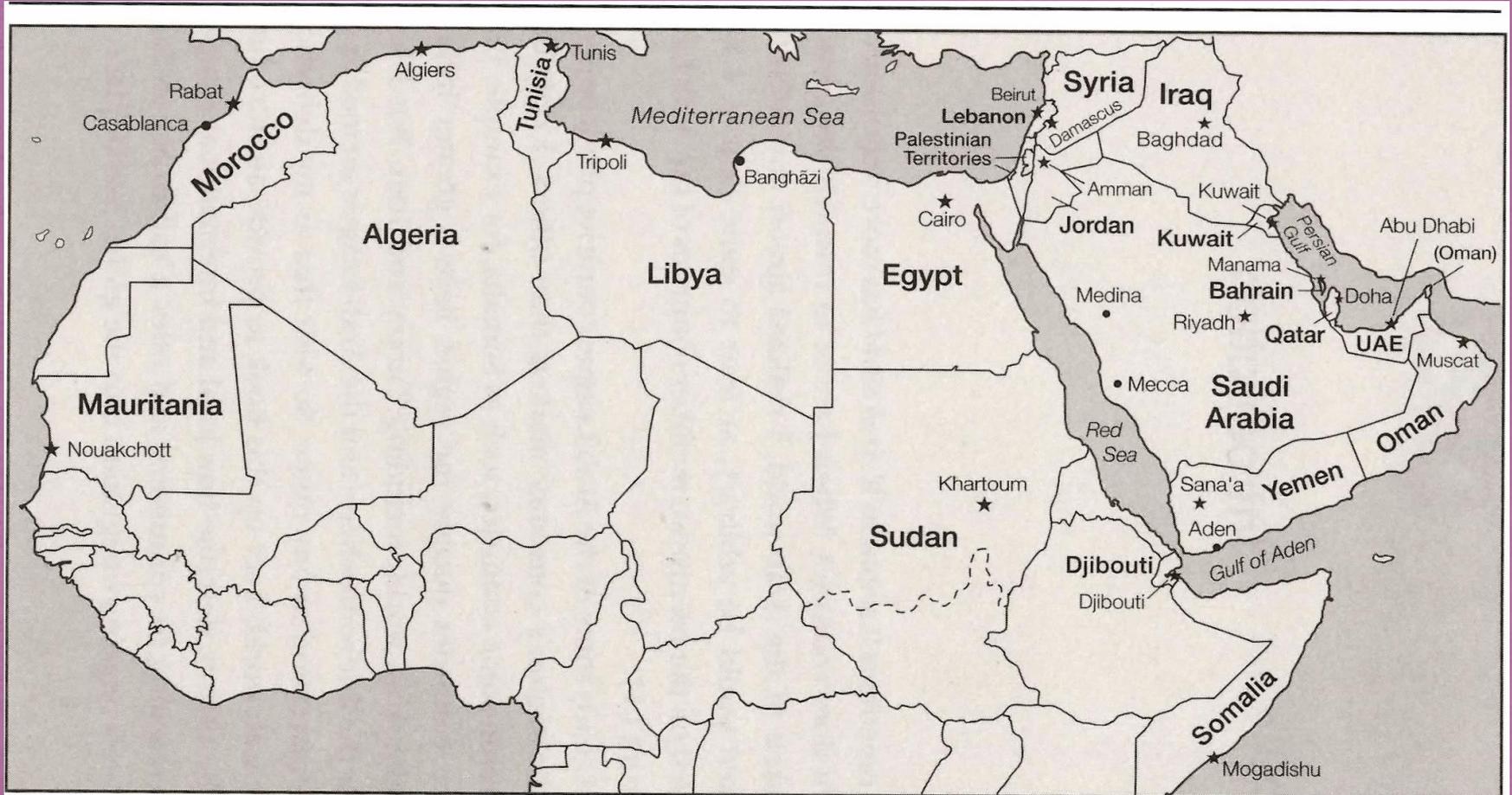
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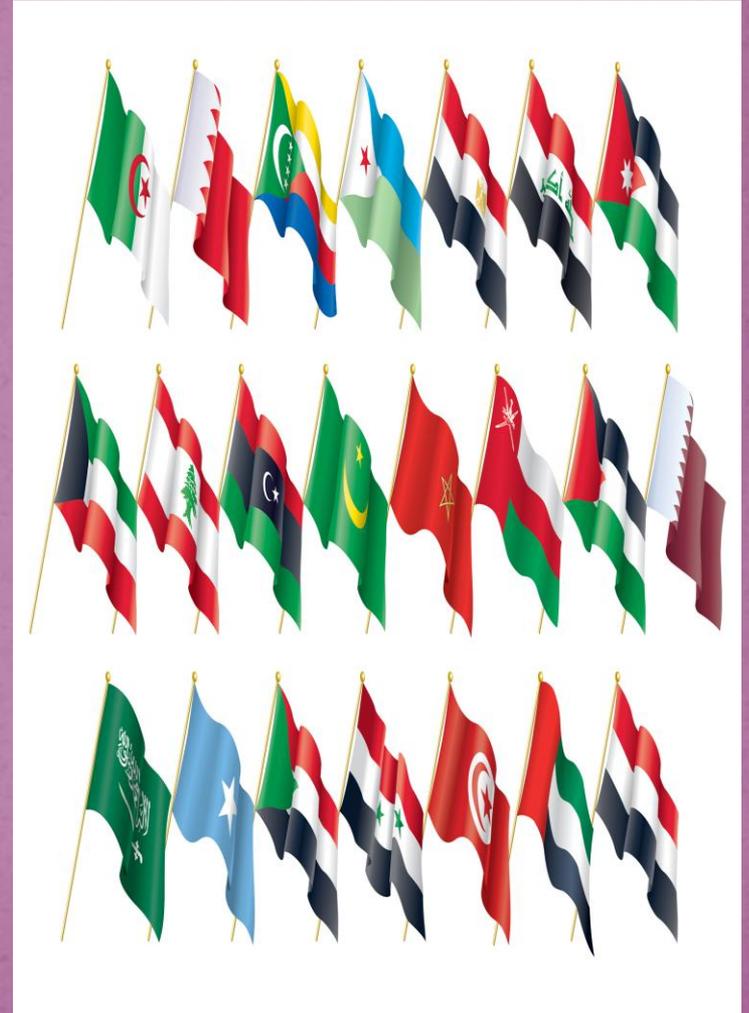
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# Arab Countries



# Arab Countries

- There are 22 Arab countries which are referred to as the “Arab World”
- The Arab population is 400,652,486
- The majority speaks the Arabic language and there are many local dialects



# Arab Countries

## Asia

- Palestine
- Jordan
- Lebanon
- Syria
- Iraq
- Saudi Arabia
- Kuwait
- Qatar
- Bahrain
- United Arab Emirates
- Yemen
- Oman

## Africa

- Egypt
- Sudan
- Algeria
- Morocco
- Tunisia
- Somalia
- Libya
- Mauritania
- Djibouti
- Comoros



Palestine



Lebanon



Iraq



Egypt



Syria



Algeria



United Arab Emirates



Tunisia

# Middle East

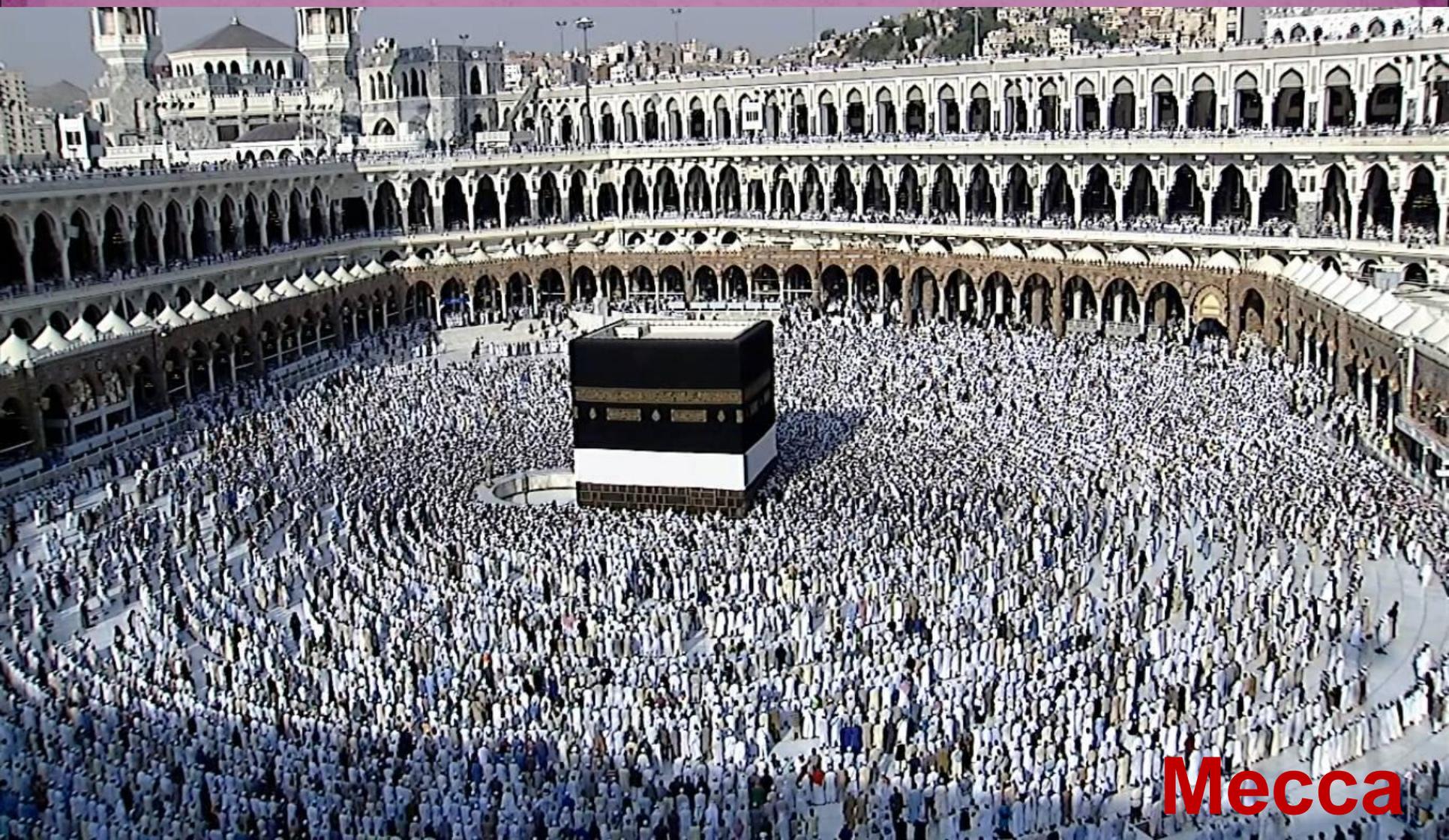
- The land of birth of the three Abrahamic religions
- Old countries with very rich history and Culture
- Contributions to human development in all fields
- Middle East also includes non-Arab countries such as Turkey, Iran, Cyprus and Israel



# Arab & Religion

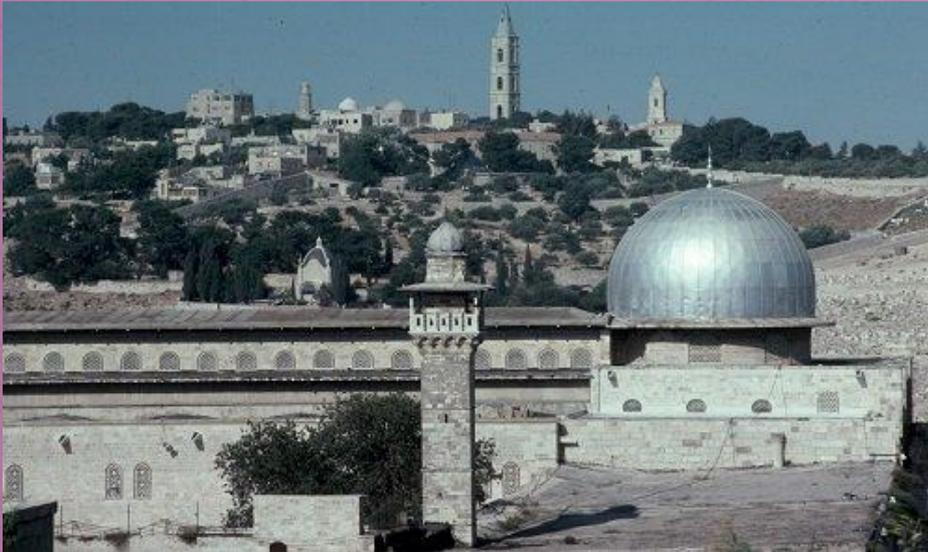
- The dominant religion is Islam. There are other religions : Christianity, Druze, Baha`I, Jewish, ....
- Arab Muslims are mostly Sunni with a minority of Shi'a
- About 20-30 percent of Muslims worldwide are Arabs. There are more Muslims in Indonesia, for example, than in all Arab countries combined
- Large populations of Muslims also live in India, Iran, other parts of East Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa
- Islam has strong Arab roots, though, as the religion's holiest places are in the Middle East, the prophet Muhammad was an Arab, and the Quran was originally revealed and written in the Arabic Language
- In Canada, Muslim children attend Islamic schools to learn the Quran

# The most Important Religious place for Muslims

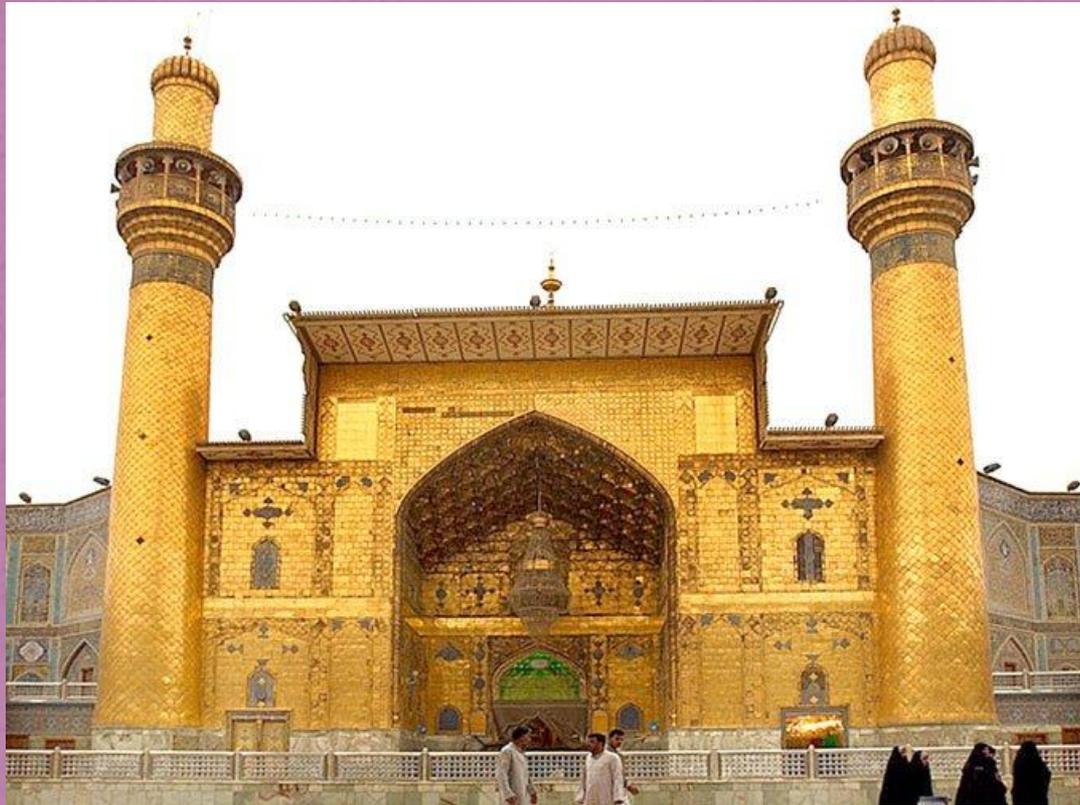


**Mecca**

# Al-Aqsa is located in the Old City of Jerusalem



Imam Ali is located in Najaf, Iraq and is the third holiest place for the Shi'a branch of Muslims



# Culture

- Each country in the Arab world has its own traditions , costumes, food, music and ceremonies
- Hijab: is a religious practice, not a cultural practice. It is rooted in Islamic teachings about modesty. Yet the choice belongs to the individual woman
- Some Muslims feel it is inappropriate for unrelated men and women to shake hands. The best way is to wait until the other person extends his or her hand before you extend your own





# Culture

- As a way of respect, younger individuals are taught to refer to older people, relatives, neighbours, etc.. as “aunt and uncle”
- Greeting is very important and is considered a form of respect
- Muslim people use “Al-salamu Alaikum” which means “May be peace upon you”
- Arab countries have different costumes





# Arab Family



- Family is one of the most important aspects of Arab society. While self-reliance, individuality and responsibility are taught by Arabic parents to their children, family loyalty is the greatest lesson taught in Arab families
- People draw much of their identity from their role in the family
- The man is responsible for providing for his family financially and has the main leadership role in the family
- Generally, women are in charge of keeping the family unit and raising the children. That doesn't mean only cooking and cleaning. Islam does not forbid a woman from working outside the home, and actually encourages certain careers, such as teaching, medicine, etc.
- Parents have a significant role in their children's lives even after the children become adults and have their own families

# Arab Family

- Children leave their parents house after marriage. In some cultures and according to the economic situation some live with their families after they get married
- Arabic culture is male dominated (they work, they fight, they keep the family name); however, women also play an important role in Society
- Ceremonies are an important part in collective societies: marriage, birth, death, holidays. Involvement and support are an essential act.



# Arab Family

- Families' secrets stay at home and reaching out for professional help is not acceptable/common
- Parents have to support their children in their studies and marriage and even after marriage
- Family is the main unit in community and the need to keep the family as a unit is more important than the need of the individual
- Divorce is not acceptable. From the Islamic point of view it is Halal (okay) but still it is a very bad decision for all sides. From the social perspective it has a bad impact, especially on the woman's status and reputation in the community

# Discipline of Children

- Financial , social and emotional support in the Arab family has religious value. In a crisis, family plays the main role in helping and supporting
- Assertiveness in educating children is essential, as discipline is an important value in Arab family. They believe that hitting your own child in order to teach him what is right and what is wrong is not an acceptable way; however, many families use this light tapping as a way of disciplining children. (Hitting strongly is not accepted, as well as using any kind of tool is not accepted)
- There are no Child Protection organizations and no law related to domestic violence

# Holidays and Ceremonies

- There are a number of holidays and traditions throughout the Arabic world that have a history going back many centuries. Different countries may have different ways to celebrate these occasions, but the meaning and purpose is generally the same
- Two of the major holidays (Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha) follow some of the most important traditions in the year. The celebrations are a time to reflect and develop spiritually, and take the time to be close to loved ones
- Month of Ramadan: the fasting during Ramadan is about more than just going without food and water, though; it is about purifying both body and soul. This is also a great chance to do charitable acts for others, and help people in need
- Hajj takes place in the 12th month of the year, and it is the time for the pilgrimage to Mecca. This is one of the more famous traditions in the Arabic world. Millions of Muslims make the journey to Mecca every year

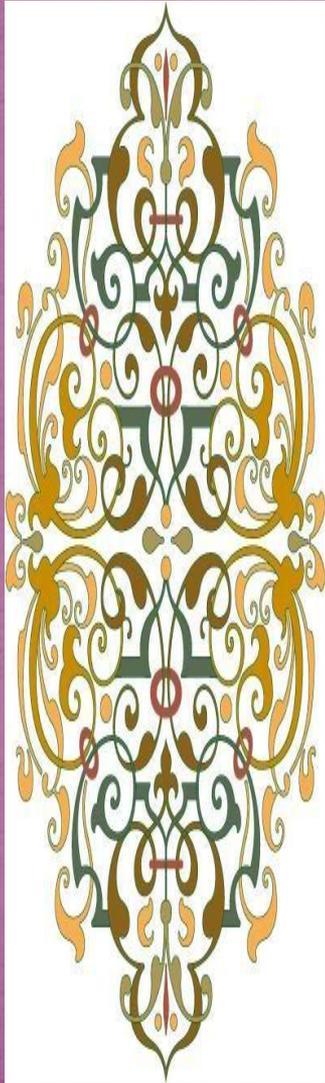


# Sports

- There are a wide variety of sports played and followed in all Arabic countries
- Football (Soccer) is the most popular sport. Football is a considerable uniting factor, following years of war and unrest
- Basketball, Swimming, Weightlifting, Boxing, Horse Racing and Tennis are also popular sports



# Values in Arab community



Respect

Caring

Modesty

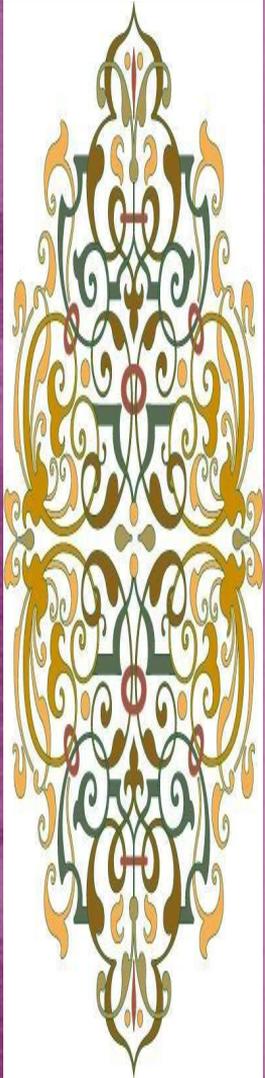
Generosity

Hospitality

Sharing

Support

# Music



- Arabic Music is extremely popular and widely listened to by people living all over the world
- Many Arab countries like UAE, Lebanon, Iraq and Egypt have well-established music industries where the artists can reach out to the people around the world
- It is so popular due to its distinct sound and common ground shared with the music of other regions
- Although Arab music has undergone many changes over the centuries, it has retained certain distinctive traits.

# Music



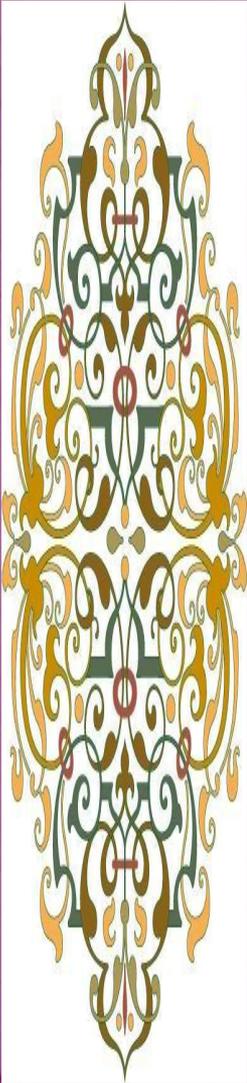
# Dabkah: Folklore Dance



# Belly Dance



# Food



- Tasty and authentic
- It is varied, but has some staples
- Wheat is used in bread, pastries, salads and main dishes
- Rice is often cooked with vegetables, lamb, chicken or beef
- Lamb and mutton are more common than other meats
- Arab recipes use many beans and vegetables, including eggplant, zucchini, cauliflower, spinach, onions, parsley and chickpeas
- Pork and pork products as well as alcohol should not be served when you are with Arab Muslims

# Mosakhen, Humos & Grape leaves



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# Arabic food and sweets



# Islam and Terrorism: The Misconception

- In recent decades, incidents of terrorist attacks have occurred on a global scale, occurring not only in Muslim-majority states in Africa and Asia, but also abroad in Europe, Russia, and the United States, and such attacks have targeted Muslims and non-Muslims
- Islam, a religion of peace, mercy and forgiveness, does not permit terrorism and the vast majority have nothing to do with the violent events some have associated with Muslims
- Terrorist attacks are committed by extremely violent religious extremists who represent a minority view
- These terrorist attacks are in fact driven by a vile, totalitarian, hallucinatory ideology that has its own dynamic, and that is not based on any logical or rational grievances
- The negative impact of this misconception has been huge on the Muslim people worldwide



# Forms of Governments

- Different forms of government are represented in the Arab World: Some of the countries are monarchies: Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The other Arab countries are all republics. With the exception of Lebanon, Tunisia, Palestine, and recently Mauritania
- Democratic elections throughout the Arab World are generally viewed as compromised, due to outright vote rigging, intimidation of opposition parties, and severe restraints on civil liberties and political dissent

# Revolutions in some of the Arab countries

- Arab Spring refers to the democratic uprisings that arose independently and spread across the Arab world in 2011
- The movement originated in Tunisia in December 2010 and quickly took hold in Egypt, Libya, Syria and Yemen
- The Arab Spring was caused by a multitude of factors (economic, political, social, cultural and religious), but its origins also lay in belief. Not a singular belief, but a collective, multifaceted belief that liberation is not only needed, but also possible.

## Revolutions in some of the Arab Countries

- In an attempt to understand these surges of change and the mobilization of opposition to existing regimes, a range of factors have been proposed, including calls for economic and social injustice and the desire for political and civil liberties. The high rates of unemployment, especially among youth, the widening gap between the rich and the poor, rising food prices, restrictions on movement, freedom of speech and association (among other civil and political liberties) created an acute level of tension in the region.

# Canadian Arab in London

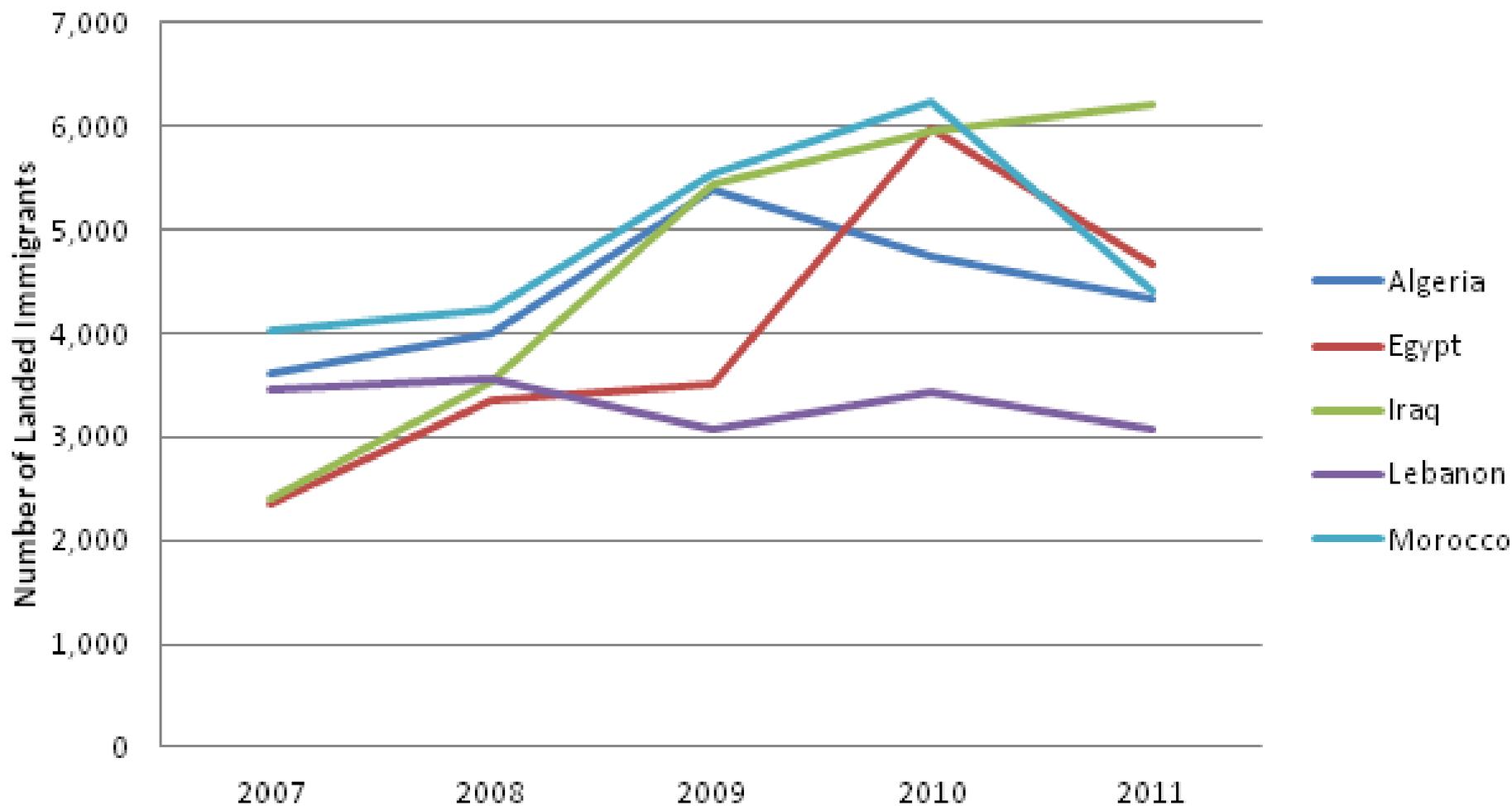
- The biggest minority in London after the arrival of hundreds of refugees in the last year. Arabs are about 10% of the population in London (City of London)
- The London Muslim Mosque on Oxford St. West was the first purpose-built mosque in Ontario, the second in Canada, and third in North America
- Built over half a century ago, the LMM carries a rich history. Behind the attractive building lies a story of a group of dedicated individuals who sought to make London their home

# More refugees in London

- Many refugee families from Syria and Iraq arrived in the last months and more are expected to come
- Coming with Trauma of the war, carrying their sorrow and anger after losing family members, leaving their homes and relatives, facing a horrible journey on their way to Canada is really a tragic transition. The adaptation to a new culture will take time
- Demonstrating support, respect and understanding of their difficulties and challenges is an essential step to help them integrate into Canadian Society

# Statistics

Top Source Countries 2007-2011



# Motivation of migration

- Better life for children
- Safe Country/Peaceful place
- Freedom
- Human rights
- New opportunities

# Challenges

- Language Barriers
- Employment especially for highly skilled and over qualified individuals
- Fear of the new regulations and rules
- Fear of police, CAS and of being different
- Difficulties adapting to a new culture: More open, free, individualistic and secular
- Difficulties in engagement
- Different values
- Climate

# Needs

- Respect
- Guidance
- Support
- Understanding
- Opportunities

# Culture Sensitivity

- Different religion: most are Muslims
- Different culture: different approach in interaction with people
- Different traditions: No drinks, modesty
- Different costume: visible minority, head cover
- Different Values: modest and conservative (no Alcohol, no drugs, no bars and no sexual relations before marriage)

# Thank you/Questions

