

BIBLIOGRAPHY



Saudi Arabia

Darlow, Michael. Ibn Saud: The Desert Warrior Who Created the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Skyhorse Publishing, 2015.

The true and fascinating origin story of Saudi Arabia. Ibn Saud grew to manhood living the harsh traditional life of the desert nomad, a life that had changed little since the days of Abraham. He transformed himself from a minor sheikh into a revered king and elder statesman, courted by world leaders such as Churchill and Roosevelt.

Ghattas, Kim. Black Wave: Saudi Arabia, Iran and the Rivalry That Unraveled the Middle East. Wildfire, 2021.

For decades, the question has haunted the Arab and Muslim world, heard across Iran and Syria, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, and in the author's home country of Lebanon. Was it always so? When did the extremism, intolerance and bloodletting of today displace the region's cultural promise and diversity? In *Black Wave*, award-winning journalist and author Kim Ghattas argues that the turning point in the modern history of the Middle East can be located in the toxic confluence of three major events in 1979: the Iranian revolution; the siege of the Holy Mosque in Mecca; and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Before this year, Saudi Arabia and Iran had been working allies and twin pillars of US strategy in the region – but the radical legacy of these events made them mortal enemies, unleashing a process that transformed culture, society, religion and geopolitics across the region for decades to come.

Hubbard, Ben. MBS: The Rise to Power of Mohammed bin Salman. Crown 2021. A riveting, eye-opening account of how the young prince has wielded vast powers to reshape his kingdom and the world around him. Since his father, King Salman, ascended to the throne in 2015, Mohammed bin Salman has leveraged his influence to restructure the kingdom's economy, loosen its strict Islamic social codes, and confront its enemies around the region, especially Iran. Over time, the sheen of the visionary young reformer has become tarnished, leaving many struggling to determine whether MBS is in fact a rising dictator whose inexperience and rash decisions are destabilizing the world's most volatile region.

MBS reveals the machinations behind the kingdom's catastrophic military intervention in Yemen, the bizarre detention of princes and businessmen in the Riyadh Ritz-Carlton, and the shifting Saudi relationships with Israel and the United States. And finally, it sheds new light on the greatest scandal of the young autocrat's rise: the brutal killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi by Saudi agents in Istanbul, a crime that shook Saudi Arabia's relationship with Washington and left the world wondering whether MBS could get away with murder.

Koehl, Susanne. Behind the Kingdom's Veil: Inside the New Saudi Arabia Under Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. Mango, 2020.

Understand Saudi culture, politics, history, human rights, and women's rights as seen through the intimate and insightful experiences of an award-winning journalist. Few Westerners have been allowed a closer look at the inner workings of Saudi Arabia. Susanne Koehl, prize-winning journalist for the German news magazine *Der Spiegel*, strips away the veil covering many secrets of this mysterious kingdom. For years she traveled the Middle East, and recently lived in Riyadh during the most dramatic changes since the country's founding. Peek inside the black box that is Saudi Arabia. Koehl has cultivated relationships on every level of Saudi society and is equally at ease with ultra-conservative Salafi preachers, oppositionists, and women from all walks of life.

Lacey, Robert. Inside the Kingdom: Kings, Clerics, Modernists, Terrorists, and the Struggle for Saudi Arabia. Viking Adult, October 2009.

Though Saudi Arabia sits on one of the richest oil deposits in the world, it also produced fifteen of the nineteen 9/11 hijackers. In this book, journalist Robert Lacey draws on years of access to every circle of Saudi society giving readers the fullest portrait yet of a land straddling the worlds of medievalism and modernity. Moving from the bloody seizure of Mecca's Grand Mosque in 1979, through the Persian Gulf War, to the delicate U.S.-Saudi relations in a post 9/11 world, *Inside the Kingdom* brings recent history to vivid life and offers a power The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Paperback – Illustrated, September 26, 2010

Long, David E. and Maisel, Sebastian. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. University Press of Florida, second edition 2010.

If you are interested in a more historical and readable account of Saudi geography and people, history and politics, oil and development, foreign and security politics, and a particularly fine essay on the hajj, Long's book is remarkably successful in providing a feel for this country of startling contrasts and anomalies.

Lonely Planet. Oman, UAE and the Arabian Peninsula Lonely Planet, 2019

Only recent guidebook on Saudi Arabia. Don't be fooled into buying some that show up on Amazon – they are terrible! This is the best one.

Rundell, David. Vision or Mirage: Saudi Arabia at the Crossroads. I.B. Tauris, 2021.

Something extraordinary is happening in Saudi Arabia. A traditional, tribal society once known for its lack of tolerance is rapidly implementing significant economic and social reforms. An army of foreign consultants is rewriting the social contract, King Salman has cracked down hard on corruption, and his dynamic though inexperienced son, the Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman, is promoting a more tolerant Islam. But is all this a new vision for Saudi Arabia or merely a mirage likely to dissolve into Iranian-style revolution? David Rundell – one of America's foremost experts on Saudi Arabia – explains how the country has been stable for so long, why it is less so today, and what is most likely to happen in the future. The book is based on the author's close contacts and intimate knowledge of the country where he spent 15 years living and working as a diplomat.

Articles

<https://www.nytimes.com/series/secrets-of-the-kingdom>

This is a link to a whole series of articles in this NY Times series above examine the society, politics, religion and global influence of Saudi Arabia, a close ally of the United States that remains one of the world's most secretive countries.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2022/04/mohammed-bin-salman-saudi-arabia-palace-interview/622822/>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/03/06/mbs-the-atlantic-saudi-arabia-lies-disdain/>

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/05/05/saudi-arabia-film-industry-growth-entertainment-movies-culture/>

Films

In 2018, Saudi Arabia ended the country's 35-year ban on public screenings prompted by an ultraconservative Islamic wave that started in the 1980s.

A Perfect Candidate

Film-maker, Haifaa al-Mansour (Wadjda) returned to a transformed Saudi Arabia in 2019 with The Perfect Candidate. The film tackles the story of a young woman doctor who runs for office in her city's municipal elections, examining the difficulties that women must overcome to achieve success with an unflinching eye and an empathetic heart, a rallying cry for empowerment and a biting satire of local politics.

Barakah Meets Barakah

A laid-back civil servant and wealthy video blogger struggle to make it as a modern couple amid strict Saudi social conventions.

Scales

Set in a dystopian world, Scales, the debut of Jeddah-born filmmaker Shahad Ameen, is a fable about a small fishing village and the mermaids that live in its surrounding waters, and a young girl who defies tradition to set her own path forward. With the film, Ameen herself forges an equally singular path, forging one of the most visually stunning films of the last decade, a poetic dream that at times becomes something of a nightmare.

Wadjda

Released in 2012, Wadjda is a film about a young girl who aspires to buy her own bicycle in a society that condemns girls who ride bikes. This feature film was the first one to be entirely shot in Saudi Arabia and also the first to be directed by a female director. It was a small miracle when it was first released, a film that showed the world that a country in which cinemas did not yet exist had a filmic voice all its own, one deeply in touch with the history of film across the globe. In the story of a 10 year old girl living in Riyadh, the spirit of Saudi Arabia is present, both in its joys and its struggles. There are flashes of Truffaut's The 400 Blows, nods to Vittorio De Sica's The Bicycle Thieves and echoes of Jafar Manahi's Offside, but ultimately this film's voice is all Haifaa al-Mansour's, who brought to life a story that was both intimate, deeply personal, but profoundly universal, showing the world that the Saudi heart beats like their own. Don't miss it

