



Kuwait



Country Overview:

Location: Middle East, bordering the Persian Gulf, between Iraq and Saudi Arabia

Size: 17,818 sq km

Population: 2,695,316 (July 2013 est.)

Capital: Kuwait City

Exports-commodities: oil and refined products, fertilizers

Imports-commodities: food, construction materials, vehicles and parts, clothing

Currency: Kuwait Dinars (KD)

Ethnic groups: Kuwaiti 45%, other Arab 35%, South Asian 9%, Iranian 4%

Religion: Muslim 85% (Sunni 70%, Shia 30%), other (includes Christian, Hindu, Parsi) 15%

Government type: constitutional emirate

Chief of State: Amir SABAH al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah (since 29 January 2006)

Head of Government: Prime Minister JABIR AL-MUBARAK al-Hamad al-Sabah (since 30 November 2011)

Language: Arabic (official), English widely spoken

State of Kuwait / Dawlat al Kuwait

Meetings and Negotiations

-Greetings between members of the same sex consist of a handshake. In all cases they are given with a sense of enthusiasm and general pleasure at meeting or seeing the person again.

- Between members of the opposite sex, **wait** to see if a woman extends her hand.

- Kuwaitis take time during the greeting process to converse about their health, family, mutual friends and acquaintances, and other general matters of interest.

- Kuwaitis have a unique system of last names. The third and fourth names are the grandfather's personal name and a name that denotes the family lineage. Both names generally start with the prefix "al". So the name Suleyman Al-Ahmed Al- Mustafa Al-Sabah means Suleyman, son of

Ahmed, grandson of Mustafa of the Sabah family/tribe.

-Many businessmen prefer to have meetings in the early evening.

-Show respect for the elders by greeting them first.

Business Attire

-Kuwaitis judge on appearances so dress and present yourself well.

-Men wear lightweight, good quality, conservative suits, at least to the initial meeting.

-Women should be aware of offending and refrain from wearing revealing or tight fitting clothing.

Behavior

-Kuwaitis are event rather than time-driven. The event of getting together is more important than the timeliness of the meeting or the outcome.

-Kuwait is a hierarchical society. Many companies are structured around the family. Decisions usually come from the top after determining a consensus of the various stakeholders.

-Remember that Muslims pray five times a day. Be sensitive and allow meetings to be interrupted if they coincide with prayer time.

Gift Giving

-Gifts are **not** opened when received.

-If a man must give a gift to a woman, he should say that it is from his wife, mother, sister, or some other female relative.

Appropriate Gifts:

imported chocolates and pastries; a small gift or book from your home country.

Gifts to Avoid:

alcohol, items containing pork products

Business Tips continued

Conversation

-Business will **only** be discussed once an atmosphere of trust and friendship has been established.

-Kuwaitis are shrewd negotiators who are especially interested in price.

-Repeating your main points indicates you are telling the

truth.

-Problems should be discussed outside the meeting in a one-on-one situation rather than in the group meeting room.

-They respect education, so carefully mention if you have an advanced degree, especially if it is from a prestigious university.

- You must be patient since impatience is viewed as criticism of the culture.

Topics to Discuss: Sports, leisure activities, Kuwaiti culture and cuisine

Topics to Avoid: Asking about a Kuwaiti's wife or female relative, the gulf war, religion, politics, criticizing the government



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