

SOMALIA:

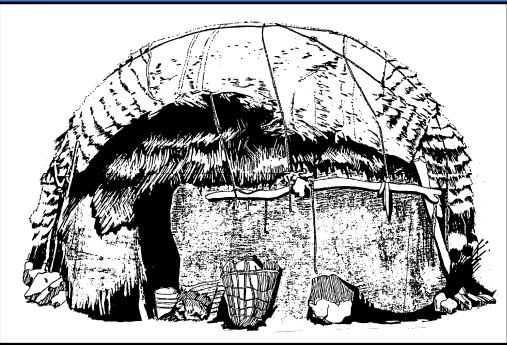
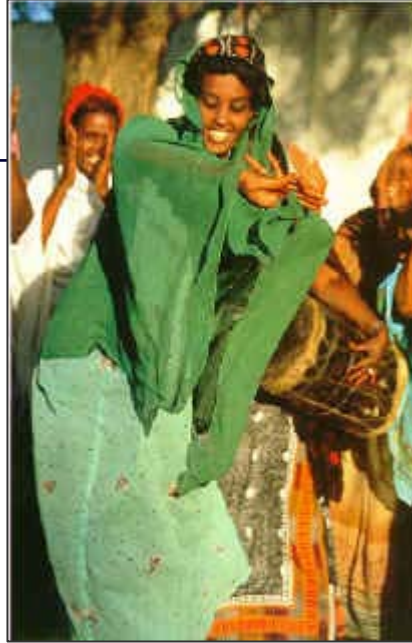
History, Culture & Health

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Somalia



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Geography

- **Location:** east coast of Africa--Horn of Africa. The coast line extends 2,720 kilometers (1,700 miles)
- **Area:** 637,657 sq. km.; slightly smaller than Texas
- **Capital city**—Mogadishu.
- **Terrain:** Mostly flat to undulating plateau rising to hills in the north
- **Climate:** Principally desert—hot & humid in the south; cool & dry in the north



Somali History

1880s
Colonial rule
and occupation



1900

1960
Independence Day



1969

Revolutionary
Central Gov't



1991
Collapse of
Central Gov't
and civil war



October 2004
New Somali
President elected in
Nairobi



People



- ❑ **Nationality:** Somali
- ❑ **Population*:** 9.5 million (The UN Human Development Report for 2004)
 - **Population annual growth rate 1970 - 1990:** 3.1%
- ❑ **Ethnic groups:** 85% Somali, 15% non-Somali (Bantu & Arabs)
- ❑ **Religion:** 99.9% Sunni Muslim
- ❑ **Languages:** Somali (official), Arabic, Italian, English
- ❑ **Work force** (3.7 million; very few are skilled workers):
Pastoral nomad—60%. Agriculture, government, trading, fishing, industry, handicrafts, and other—40%
- ❑ **Currency:** Somali Shilling & US dollar

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* Source: 2005 World Population Data Sheet – Population Reference Bureau



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Somali Diaspora



Somali diaspora worldwide spread out due to the civil war



Culture and Religion

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Names/Naming

- ❑ Somali names have three parts.
- ❑ The first name is the given name. The second name is the name of the child's father, and the third name is the name of the child's paternal grandfather.
- ❑ Women, when they marry, do not change their names. By keeping the name of their father and grandfather, they are, in effect, maintaining their affiliation with their clan of birth.



Gender Roles

- ❑ As in many Islamic cultures, adult men and women are separated in most spheres of life
- ❑ Women can seek employment, but the preferred role is for the man to work and the women to stay at home
- ❑ Equal access to Education



Religious Beliefs and Practices

- 99% of Somalis are Sunni Muslim
- Attitudes, social customs and gender roles are primarily based on the Islamic tradition
- Therefore, culture and religion are hard to distinguish



Five Pillars of Islam

1. Faith or belief in the Oneness of God and the finality of the prophet hood of Muhammad;
2. Establishment of the daily prayers;
3. Concern for and almsgiving to the needy;
4. Self-purification through fasting; and
5. The pilgrimage to Makkah for those who are able



Religious HOLIDAYS

□ EIDAL- FITR

- This is the holiday celebrating the End of Ramadan

□ EID AL-ADHA

- also called the big holiday, falls approximately 70 days after Eid AL-Fitr and is celebrated in honor of the prophet Abraham when he intended to sacrifice his son Ishmael as a proof of his loyalty to God. Eid AL-Adha is translated into English as "The Feast of Sacrifice", when Muslims all over the world present an animal (usually a cow or a sheep) sacrifice as a gratitude action for God saving the Prophet Ismail's life.





Traditional Somali Clothes

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TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

- **Fire-burning**
 - Usually used to treat Hepatitis, and
Pneumonia
- **herbal remedies**
- **casting**
- **prayer.**



Food/Nutrition

- ❑ Somali diet is high in carbohydrates
- ❑ Low consumption of fruits and vegetables
- ❑ The traditional staples of the Somali diet are rice, bananas, and the meat of sheep, goats, cattle, and camels.
- ❑ Corn and beans also are grown and eaten



Somali Food



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Don't Forget the Banana



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Dietary Restrictions

- **"Haram"** are forbidden foods or drinks, including;
- Pork
- Alcohol
- foods containing ingredients obtained from other "haram" food
- All meat must be ritually slaughtered according to Islamic law



Somalis in MN



- Somalis began arriving in the early 1990s due to collapse of central government and civil war
- MN has the largest Somali refugee population in U.S.
 - Official estimate: 30,000
 - Community estimate: 60,000+
- Despite a shared culture and religion, Somalis are not a homogenous group

Somali Demographics

- **Education:** Until 1991 modern public education offered free at all levels;
 - **Net primary school enrollment/ attendance*:** 11%
- **Literacy:** UN estimate shows 24 percent literacy rate in 1990 (male 36%, female 14%)
- **Infant Mortality Rate § :**
 - **120/1000** live births
- **Under 5 Mortality Rate*:**
 - **225/1000**
- **Life expectancy § :** 46 male/ 49 female



Somali Culture



- Somalis-- rich cultural heritage from their country
 - Islam and Poetry--twin pillars of Somali culture
 - Ancient poetic tradition spans all spheres of life; Somali elders recite poems; tradition is being lost as the new generations of Somali young people grow up in other countries
 - Based on a nomadic culture, Somali people have long musical and art tradition
- Emergence of a Somali culture bound by common traditions, a single language, and the Islamic faith
 - Language--rich oral tradition; written 1972
- Somali people were mostly nomadic
 - 60% nomadic/semi-nomadic pastoralists, raise cattle, camels, sheep, and goats.
 - 25% settled farmers
 - 15% urban

Government

- ❑ Somali national government--the Transitional Federal Assembly
- ❑ Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed--Transitional Federal President of Somalia in 10/04; & Ali Mohamed Gedi was appointed Prime Minister 11/04; cabinet officials
- ❑ The self-declared--Republic of Somaliland
- ❑ Somalia is divided into 18 regions



Somalia Health Care System--Before 1991

- ❑ Ministry of Health played major role
- ❑ Health Insurance non-existent
- ❑ Greater number of Somali physicians
- ❑ More facilities in Mogadishu
- ❑ Distribution of health care remained unsatisfactory
- ❑ Health care services & health professionals concentrated in Mogadishu



Somali Health Care System-Current

- ❑ Lack of adequate health care
- ❑ 78% have no access to health services
- ❑ Country has less than 15 qualified doctors per million people
- ❑ Nurse training facilities are in Bosasso and Hargeisa
- ❑ Few health care workers in other urban centres
- ❑ Trained medical personnel attend to just 2% of births.
- ❑ Only public or free health care is available via few NGOs in the country
 - UNICEF
 - MSF
 - Save the Children



Major Prevalent Diseases - Somalia

- **Pulmonary tuberculosis**
 - Somalia has the highest prevalence in the world (*MSF, 2006*)
- **Hepatitis A, B & C**
- **Malaria**
- **Infectious & parasitic diseases**
- **Diarrhoeal diseases**
- **Low immunization rate for children & women**
- **FGM (Female Genital Mutilation)**
- **Malnutrition**
 - % of under fives (96 – 04) suffering from wasting: 17%
- **Human immunovirus (HIV)**
 - < 1% in early 1992 and > 3% now
 - Knowledge/ behavior indicators are low (*UNICEF, 2004*)



Major Health Concerns - US

- **Diabetes**
- **CVD**
- **Depression/ mental health**
- **Asthma**
- **Violence**
 - **Domestic violence**
 - **Youth gang involvement**



Contrasting Health Care Systems

Somalia

- ❑ Government owned and controlled
- ❑ Services are on a walk-in basis
- ❑ Services are free
- ❑ Focus on curative medicine
- ❑ Prescriptions are free during in-patient care
- ❑ Western and traditional medicine used

United States

- ❑ Mixture of government and privately owned facilities
- ❑ Must schedule appointments to see doctor
- ❑ Health insurance and out of pocket costs
- ❑ Curative, but also emphasize prevention
- ❑ Supplement physician advice with traditional therapies

More information...

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Resources

- ❑ Somali Decisions About Child Spacing booklet and video
- ❑ Human Reproductive Anatomy booklet
- ❑ CycleBeads pamphlet and video
- ❑ Healthy Moms, Healthy Babies video
- ❑ Our Health video series

