

How to tell your friends from An Arab

by Kayhan Irani and Maryum Saifee

Warning: reading the following article may cause you to be irrationally scared of your friends and neighbors.



Of the four faces above, the two to the left are Arab and the two on the right are South Asian. There is no infallible way of telling them apart because the same racial strains and fashion sense are mixed in both. Even an anthropologist with calipers and plenty of time to measure heads, noses, veils and turbans is sometimes stumped.

A few rules of thumb - not always reliable:

- * Arabs tend to have lighter, more olive-toned complexion, whereas most South Asians are generally darker. Arabs also tend to have lighter eyes - though many South Asian youth are wearing colored contacts making it even harder to distinguish the two groups.
- * While both Arabs and South Asians are noted for their hospitality, Arabs will always serve dark coffee w/o sugar for their guests and South Asians serve milky tea with sugar, cardamom and spices.
- * Arab women typically wear veils pinned at the chin while South Asian women let the veil drape loosely and freely over their heads. This distinction is of symbolic importance because it shows Arab women are more oppressed than South Asian women, with their loose-fitting veils. Of course, the least oppressed are Western women with no veil.
- * South Asian men wear pointy turbans whereas Arab turbans are flat and circular often with loose fabric that can be pulled down to cover their faces during sand storms, or when committing acts of terrorism.
- * When distinguishing handwriting, Hindi usually will have a line running across the top of the characters. Arabic tends to be confusing with lots of little dots, lines, and slashes as letters. We believe this is the reason many Arabs only read the Koran, reading too much can be hard.
- * Arab noses tend to be larger and sharper than South Asian ones. While some South Asians may have big noses, they tend to be more full and bulbous, rather than the severe and pointy Arab noses.
- * Those who know them best rely on facial expressions to tell them

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apart: the South Asian expression is likely to be more friendly, open, with a broad big smile. Their fuller faces show the contours of a happy smile, while the Arabs tend to not smile as much. When they do smile, it looks sinister and forced because of the lines straining their facial muscles.

* Arabs tend to have harsher, more severe personalities. This can be attributed to the nomadic desert lifestyle that they and their ancestors have endured. The consumption of dry, tasteless food, dried fruits and nuts leads to a dry and unhappy personality, fostering suicide bombers and extremism. South Asians on the other hand eat warm spicy foods like curry with coconut, and live in tropical climates which make them warm, friendly, and less likely to incinerate their own Seven Eleven gas stations.

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