

Arab Americans

Arab American: Arab Americans are Americans of Arab ancestry and constitute an ethnicity made up of several waves of immigrants from twenty-two Arab countries, stretching from Morocco in the west to Oman in the south east to Iraq in the north. Arab Americans are also Middle Eastern and North African Americans i.e. terms that do not equate ethnic heritage with nationality, but rather a geographic area. Although a highly diverse ethnic group, Arab Americans descend from a heritage that represents common linguistic, cultural, and political traditions. The Arab American National Museum celebrates the history of Arab Americans.

Population: The majority of Arab Americans, around 62%, originate from the region of the Levant, comprising Lebanon, Syria, Palestine and Jordan. The remainder are made up of those from Iraq, and other Arab nations, which, although small in numbers, are present nonetheless. There are 3,500,000 Arab-Americans in the United States according to The Arab American Institute. Arab-Americans live in all 50 states and Washington, DC--and more than 90% reside in the metropolitan areas of major cities. According to the 2000 US Census, 48% of the Arab-American population--576,000--reside in California, Michigan, New York, Florida and New Jersey, respectively; these 5 states collectively have 31% of the net US population. Five other states--Illinois, Texas, Ohio, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania--report Arab-American populations of more than 40,000 each. Also, the counties which contained the greatest proportions of Arab-Americans were in California, Michigan, New York, Florida, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia. According to the 2000 US Census, the city with the largest percentage of Arab Americans is Dearborn, Michigan (southwestern suburb of Detroit) at nearly 30%. Other major communities are in Paterson, New Jersey/Clifton, New Jersey and Brooklyn, New York (New York City metro-area); Miami, Florida; Silicon Valley (San Francisco metro-area); ; Los Angeles County, California, Orange County, California (Los Angeles metro-area); the San Diego metro-area; Chicago and Bridgeview, Illinois (Chicago metro-area); Houston; Boston; Jersey City, New Jersey; and Jacksonville, Florida. The cities with the highest percentages of Arabs are Sterling Heights, Michigan; Jersey City; Warren, Michigan; Allentown, Pennsylvania; Burbank, California and Glendale, California; Livonia, Michigan; Arlington, Virginia; Paterson; and Daly City, California. Many agricultural regions in California, like the San Joaquin Valley, Salinas Valley, Coachella Valley and Imperial Valley have a history of immigrants from Arab countries involved in the area's rich farming industry. Oklahoma had a sizable Arab-American population, mainly are immigrants in the oil business came in the 1980s and developed noticeable communities in Tulsa and Oklahoma City.

Religious background: While the overwhelming majority of the population of the Middle Eastern region, and, in particular, the countries of the Arab world, are identified as adherents of Islam, the majority of Arab Americans are Christian, not Muslim. According to the Arab American Institute, Christians account for 63% of the Arab American population, while Muslims account for 25%, and the rest of the 12% identify as other religion, or no affiliation. The percentage of Arab-American Christians are: Catholics (Roman Catholics, Eastern Rite Catholics - Maronites and Melkites) 35%, Orthodox Christians who are at 18%, and Protestant Christians are 10%.

Racial status: Arab Americans in the United States had been categorized as Caucasian American along with other Middle Eastern Americans by all government agencies and for statistical compiling by the United States census, until their official racial category changed to "White." According to one social scientist, fewer people have been using the term Caucasian American, and more people have been using the terms White American and European American. Despite their official classification, Arab Americans, with the exception of most Lebanese and Syrian people, are not generally considered white in American society. In addition, many people of Arab descent object to the government's classification and the refusal of the US census committee to create a separate category.

Politics: Arab Americans tend to split fairly evenly between the Republican and Democratic parties. Historically, they have tended to vote for Democratic Presidential candidates. However, prominent Arab American politicians tend to be Republican, including New Hampshire Senator John E. Sununu, and California Congressman Darrell Issa, who was the driving force behind the state's 2003 recall election that removed Democratic Governor Gray Davis from office. Most Arab Americans tend to be pro-life and to support the death penalty. They are also more in favor of gun control. Arab American Republicans often view the GOP as more in line with Arab culture, which tends to be more socially conservative and values entrepreneurship and free enterprise. Those who ally themselves with Democrats may be driven to do so by foreign policy concerns and, in recent years, the Iraq War and the War on Terror.

Famous Americans of Arab descent: Here are a few examples of famous Arab Americans. Arab Americans are very much involved in politics and are one of the wealthiest ethnic groups in the U.S., however it is hard to calculate their median income as they are classified white under the United States race census of 2005.

- Steve Jobs, co-founder of Apple Inc. (Syrian father)
- Danny Thomas, (Lebanese) actor and his daughter Marlo Thomas, actress
- Paul Anka, (Lebanese) vocal performer
- George J. Mitchell, (Lebanese) U.S. Senator from Maine, Senate Majority Leader
- John H. Sununu, (Lebanese) Governor of New Hampshire and White House Chief of Staff under George H. W. Bush
- John E. Sununu, (Lebanese) Senator from New Hampshire
- Spencer Abraham, (Lebanese) Senator from Michigan and Secretary of Energy
- Ralph Nader, (Lebanese) US politician
- Mitch Daniels, Governor of Indiana and Director of the Office of Management and Budget
- Joe Robbie, sports team owner
- John Jaha, sports athlete
- Tony Shalhoub, an executive producer and actor of Monk.
- Edward Said, (Palestinian) literary theorist and outspoken Palestinian activist.
- Sammy Hagar, (Lebanese), musician.

- John Abizaid, (Lebanese), retired General.(For Complete list you can visit:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Arab_Americans) Arab American Ancestries in the 2000 US
Census Ancestry1990 1990% of US population2000 2000% of US population Percent change from 1990 to
2000Iraqinegligible(nodata)negligible (no data)37,7140.01%negligible (no data)Lebanesenegligible(no data)negligible
(no data)440,2790.2%negligible (no data)Palestiniannegligible(no data)negligible (no data)72,1120.02%negligible (no
data)Other Arabsnegligible(no data)negligible(no data)582,7040.2%negligible (no
data)TOTAL716,3960.1% 1,275,641 0.42%increased 67.9%(For Arab Population Census 2000 Brief PDF
file Brief Special)(From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)For more information visit: <http://www.aaiusa.org/arab-americans/22/demographics>