

طقوس RITUALS



FESTIVALS, CELEBRATIONS & THEIR RITUALS IN SAUDI ARABIA

MAY | 2026

SAUDI FESTIVALS ARE MORE THAN JUST CELEBRATIONS.

They are powerful expressions of culture, faith, identity, and community.



From the spiritual rhythms of Ramadan and the joy of Eid to traditions of gathering, gifting and festive feasting — **rituals have long defined how Saudi Arabia connects and celebrates.**

Today, those rituals are evolving. A new generation is reinterpreting tradition through modern lifestyles, digital culture, and global influences — **making festivals more immersive, expressive, and experience-led.**

Heritage remains at the core. How it is celebrated is being reshaped.



As Saudi Arabia transforms, so does its festival calendar — **creating new commercial windows for communities, creators, and brands willing to show up in moments that matter.**

THE SACRED CALENDAR: RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS & THEIR RITUALS

Ramadan in Saudi Arabia is not just a religious observance — it's a highly structured ecosystem of rituals that shape daily life, social interaction, and consumption.

IFTAR - THE SACRED BREAK



THEN

- Abundant, communal table — multi-dish spreads centered around Kabsa, shared daily with extended family and neighbours
- All cooking fully homemade from scratch — samosas prepped, frozen pre-Ramadan
- Communal, scheduled TV — Ramadan shows watched together
- Hyper-local neighbourhood rituals — Jeddah's post-Tarawih street potato carts
- Centred on food and togetherness

NOW

- Smaller, intimate table — couples or nuclear families, visits rotating between parents and in-laws
- Convenience meets tradition — delivery dishes sit beside homemade food
- Flexible, personalized entertainment — broader content choices, second-screen viewing dominates
- Shift toward cafés, malls, and branded Ramadan destinations
- Now about ambience and aesthetics — curated tablescapes, themed décor, "Ramadan vibes"

THE SHIFT

Communal Collective → Intimate Collective

Homemade → Hybrid convenience

Functional → Aesthetic

Routine → Experience

Community-centred → Personally curated

THE SACRED CALENDAR: RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS & THEIR RITUALS

TARAWIH



THEN

- Non-negotiable family routine at the mosque
- Post-prayer halawa (sweets) shared at home
- Streets alive with spontaneous play — vendors and night snacks (street potatoes) part of the post-Tarawih rhythm

NOW

- Mosque Tarawih endures as the spiritual anchor
- Home sweets less central — replaced by varied, flexible routines
- Youth shift to structured settings — friends' houses, organized play, digital entertainment
- Informal street economies give way to commercial food and café experiences

GHABGHA



THEN

- Intimate, spontaneous home gatherings
- Neighbours and friends dropped in unannounced; women moved between homes (and even streets) until just before Suhoor

NOW

- Highly curated, experience-led events
- Formal digital invitations; curated venues over homes; guests dress to the theme

THE SACRED CALENDAR: RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS & THEIR RITUALS

GARGEE'AN



THEN

- A simple, one-night tradition of sweets & candy
- Children knocked door-to-door for sweets; adults played a passive role
- Belonged almost entirely to children, staged in neighbourhood streets

NOW

- A multi-evening celebration with activities, décor & entertainment
- Whole neighbourhoods stage it; mothers are the active organizers, hosts, participants
- Streets transformed with lights, red carpets, themed setups; baskets hold toys, cakes, snacks, gifts, premium treats

SUHOOR – THE RISING SOCIAL MOMENT



THEN

- Musaharati woke households with a drum and religious poetry
- Intimate family affair eaten quietly at home — kitchen the only stage, quick and purposeful

NOW

- Peak social occasion — restaurants serve till dawn, cafés draw steady post-midnight crowds
- Younger Saudis favour suhoor with friends — documented on TikTok, Snapchat, Instagram; "suhoor vlogs" and reviews go viral; women plan it as an outing

THE SACRED CALENDAR: RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS & THEIR RITUALS

ZAKAT & CHARITY



THEN

- Deeply personal, tangible, visible giving within communities
- Mainly cash, food, or clothing given directly to those in need

NOW

- Scalable digital giving: broader reach, but more abstract
- Primarily digital monetary contributions via platforms and apps; impact feels wider yet less emotionally felt

CHILD'S FIRST FAST



THEN

- A quiet but meaningful family milestone, rooted in faith and discipline
- Encouragement via praise, emotional support, and spiritual teaching

NOW

- A curated milestone blending faith, family, and memorable experience
- Personalized around the child's comfort and motivation — reinforced with gifts, money, outings, favourite foods, and "First Fast" rewards

THE SACRED CALENDAR: RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS & THEIR RITUALS

EIDIYA & GIFTING



THEN

- Small cash sums from adults to children
- Child-centric, focused on the act of giving; mothers made homemade surprise bags of toys and sweets from local markets

NOW

- Larger in value — cash, gifts, or experiences
- Spans all age groups, particularly women
- Commercial gifting expanded — curated boxes, beauty, accessories, perfumes, luxury items. Personalization and thoughtfulness are the focus

SOUKS & SHOPPING



THEN

- Pre-Ramadan trips with the whole family to stock up on essentials
- Post-Tarawih outings split by gender — women for Eid outfits, men for sweets and treats
- Markets a seasonal spectacle — festive lights and atmosphere, Eid décor
- Concentrated, planned, tied to a clear Ramadan rhythm

NOW

- Online is the default — outfits and essentials bought from home, often skipping markets entirely
- Higher volume and frequency, driven by frictionless access and deals
- Physical markets still visited — but for ambience and nostalgia, not actual shopping

THE EVOLUTION OF RELIGIOUS CELEBRATIONS

EID AL-FITR



	Then	Now
Family structure & gathering	Extended family gathered at grandparents' house all day, staying from morning till midnight	Morning gathering ends by late morning & rest of day split across nuclear family units and spouses
Day Rhythm	Single-location, all-day shared experience with no movement between venues	Fragmented day: morning family visit → afternoon split activities → late-night reunion (10pm–2am)
Food Traditions	Fixed traditional meals	Meals still present but less ritualised; more variety and often ordered in
Clothing & Shopping	Parents bought Eid clothes; children had little choice; collective cousin shopping trips	Multi-day, individualised shopping (often online), multiple outfits per Eid (morning + evening + second day)
Dress-up Ritual	New clothes worn after Maghrib for visiting extended/less familiar relatives	Styling is continuous and occasion-based (morning looks, evening looks, multiple days, social media-ready)
Eidiya & Gifting	Small cash (5–10 SAR); handmade gift packs from mothers for children	100+ SAR typical; includes curated gifts (perfume, accessories); personalised and gender-inclusive gifting
Social Experience	Entire day spent together in one household with minimal external movement	Highly segmented social calendar: cafés, restaurants, separate spouse-based plans
Core Meaning of Eid	Collective, rooted family anchoring around grandparents' home	Hybrid: strong morning family ritual + expanded individual/social freedom later in the day

THE EVOLUTION OF RELIGIOUS CELEBRATIONS

EID AL-ADHA



	Then	Now
Slaughter Ritual	Done in front of grandfather’s house; whole family participates; highly ceremonial and communal	Moved to farms outside city; more logistical and decentralised; grandfather no longer central witness
Family Roles	Uncles led slaughter; full-family coordination on-site	Shift to sons-led participation; younger men perform slaughter, older men observe/pray
Immediate Food Ritual	Liver cooked immediately on-site and eaten during slaughter process	Immediate cooking ritual largely gone; food is now delivered, ordered, or prepared later
Cooking System	Fully home-cooked meals from fresh slaughtered meat	Hybrid system: catering, takeaway, home cooking; less spontaneous communal cooking
Meal Distribution	Door-to-door sharing with neighbours and strangers	More limited, less neighbourhood-based distribution
Midday Rhythm	Long continuous family sitting; informal film watching at grandfather’s house	Split day: slaughter → rest → reconvene for lunch (~4pm) → cafés/bowling/chalets
Post-Eid Movement	Entire Eid centered within home/neighbourhood	Post-day 3 travel culture (Abha, Taif, AlUla) with friends, cousins, couples
Gift (Eidiya)	Simple cash focus	Expanded gifting system (cash + perfume + accessories + curated bags), not limited to children
Cultural Feel	Highly ritualized, communal, slow-paced, home-centered	Mobile, experience-driven, fragmented but socially expanded

HOW RAMADAN RITUALS HAVE EVOLVED

Six shifts rewriting the most ritually dense month in the Saudi calendar

From Iftar-centric → Suhoor-centric social life

Iftar was the main social gathering. Now Suhoor too is becoming a social ritual — late-night cafés, outings, and shared experiences after Tarawih.

Obligation → Choice-driven socializing

From home → Hybrid spaces

Ramadan was lived at home and in the mosque. Now it also spans restaurants, Ramadan tents, hotel activations, and pop-ups.

Private → Experiential & public

From simple → Curated & premium

Traditional, simple meals have given way to styled tables, themed iftars, and premium experiences.

Functional → Aesthetic & aspirational

From fixed → Flexible schedules

Strict routines around prayer and meals have given way to late nights, shifted work hours, and a fully nocturnal lifestyle.

Structured → Fluid lifestyle rhythm

From offline → Phygital rituals

Ramadan was lived quietly. Now it's performed and amplified — iftar tables, outfits, and gatherings shared across social media in real time.

Private → Performed & amplified

From tradition → Identity expression

Practiced once as duty, Ramadan rituals are now practiced as cultural pride and personal expression.

Inherited → Curated identity

THE NEW RAMADAN REALITY

Ramadan today operates across three layers simultaneously.

Spiritual: Prayer, fasting, reflection

LAYER 1

Social: Gatherings, hosting, suhoor outings

LAYER 2

Lifestyle: Dining, shopping, content creation

LAYER 3

BEYOND THE SACRED CALENDAR – A KINGDOM OF OCCASIONS

Today, religious festivals sit alongside a growing roster of national, heritage, and entertainment moments — each with its own rituals, audiences, and commercial energy.



National Festivals

Saudi National Day
Founding Day

Heritage & Cultural Festivals

Al-Janadriyah
Souk Okaz
King AbdulAziz Camel Festival



Entertainment Seasons

Riyadh Season
Jeddah Season
MDLBeast Sound Storm
Winter at Tantora

NATIONAL IDENTITY HAS BECOME A SEASON

Saudi National Day has evolved from a single date on the calendar into a nationwide movement — blending tradition with modernity, celebration with commerce, and culture with creativity across the entire month of September.



Founding Day (22 February), introduced in 2022, is rapidly growing into a second national identity moment — anchored by Diriyah and rooted in heritage storytelling.



Dimension	Then	Now
Overall Scale	Modest, low-key observance; limited visibility in public life	Full-scale national celebrations across streets, schools, cafés, and private spaces
Public Expression	Simple flags or small informal gatherings	Street-wide celebrations: cars waving flags, loud music, fireworks, public participation
Dress & Styling	No thematic dressing; everyday clothing	Coordinated national colours (green/white) and themed outfits; regional traditional dress on Founding Day
Social Format	Small home or street gatherings, informal and unstructured	Highly organised experiences: family celebrations, chalet parties, street festivals, school events
Food & Consumption	Limited or incidental	Highly commercialised: cafés/restaurants offer deep discounts; themed cakes and branded food experiences
Youth & School Involvement	Limited institutional role	Strong school programming (especially Founding Day): regional heritage showcases, costumes, performances
Experiential Layer	No structured entertainment or events	High experiential density: fireworks, street vendors, exhibitions
Emotional Tone	Mild recognition of national occasion	Strong emotional pride and identity expression, including among expatriates
Core Meaning	A public holiday with low ritual depth	A cultural identity moment combining pride, heritage, consumption

THE BLUE OCEAN – HERITAGE FESTIVALS ARE UNDEREXPLOITED

Al-Janadriyah, Souk Okaz, and the King Abdulaziz Camel Festival are among the oldest and most authentic cultural moments in the Kingdom. Al-Janadriyah, running since 1985, brings together folkloric performances, handicraft exhibitions, and regional pavilions from across Saudi Arabia.

These festivals remain deeply underexploited by mainstream brands — making them the highest authenticity, lowest-competition opportunity in the Saudi calendar.

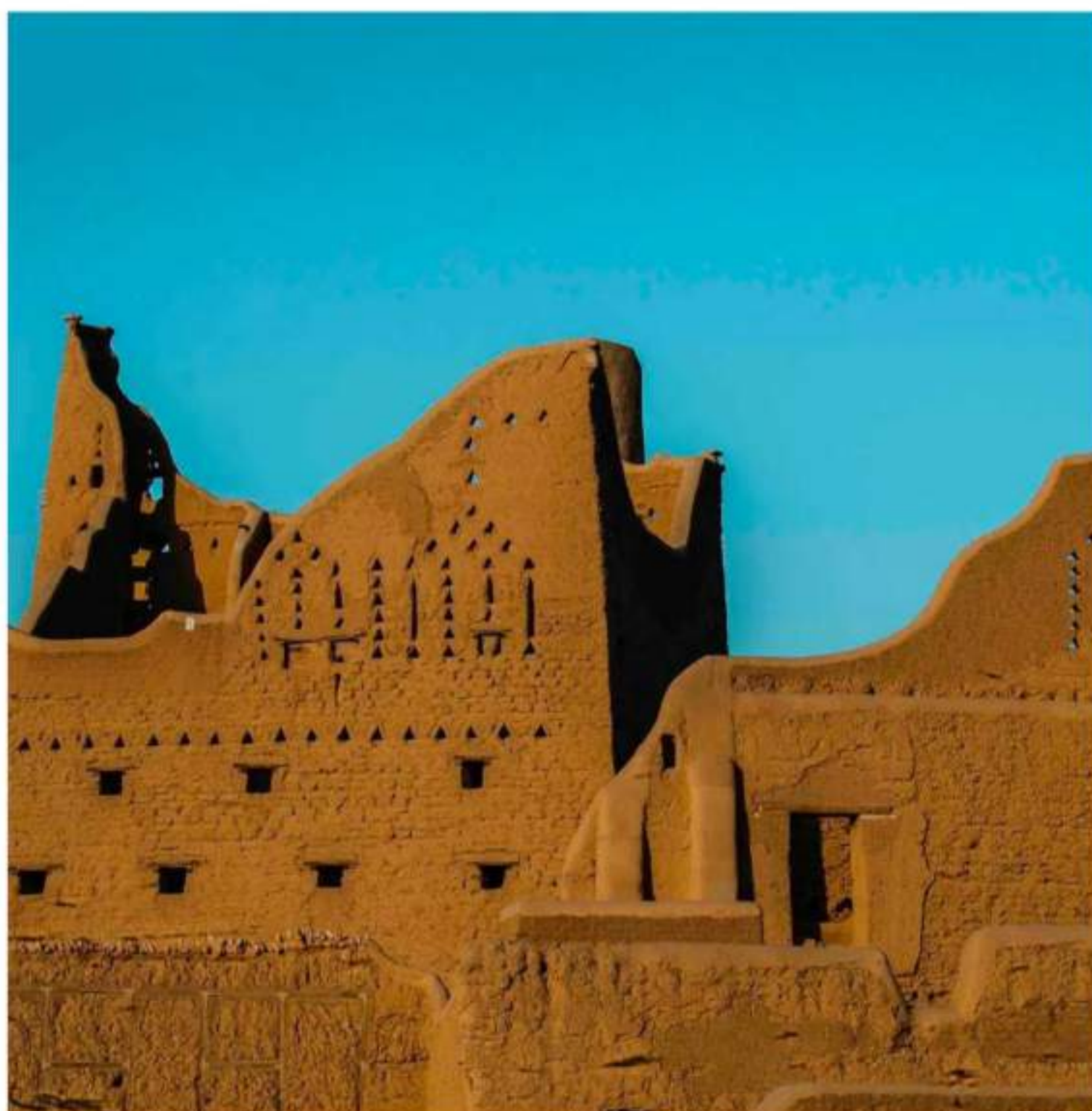


THE SEASONS ARE THE NEW MEDIA BUY

Entertainment seasons are Saudi Arabia's most dramatic post-2017 creation.

The Saudi Seasons initiative was launched in 2019 with plans to host 11 seasons across different regions, including Riyadh Season, Jeddah Season, Diriyah Season, AlUla Season, and Ramadan Season.

Riyadh Season, starting October 12 in 2024, attracted more than 10 million visitors within two months of launch.



MUSIC CONCERTS & MDLBEAST HAVE BECOME AN IMPORTANT & INTEGRAL PART OF THE SAUDI CALENDAR

In addition to Music concerts, Sports wins and global celebrations are emerging as new “festival triggers” in Saudi culture, expanding the definition of what is worth celebrating. Football victories—like Al-Hilal’s King’s Cup win—now act as spontaneous street festivals, with cafés filling up, flags waving, and families flooding public spaces in collective, emotionally charged celebration that cuts across club loyalties.

Global occasions are being rapidly localised: Halloween parties, Valentine’s Day, and New Year countdowns are becoming normalised among younger generations through themed events, costumes, and social gatherings. There is a growing appetite and infrastructure for celebration across both traditional and imported occasions, signalling a shift toward a more event-rich, experience-led social calendar.



ENTERTAINMENT AT A GLANCE

Dimension	Then	Now
Scale of entertainment seasons	No structured “seasonal entertainment economy”; limited large-scale public leisure programming	Major national entertainment calendars (Riyadh Season, Jeddah Season) drawing local and international audiences
Riyadh Season	No equivalent mass urban entertainment platform	Flagship destination event, themed zones attracting nationwide and international visitors; seen as the “center of gravity”
Jeddah Season	Informal city-based leisure tied to lifestyle (sea, outdoors)	Branded seasonal identity built around Jeddah’s coastal character; strong local pride and distinct experience
Music concerts & MDLBeast	Not part of mainstream public leisure culture	Large-scale, high-demand events (often selling out within an hour); MDLBeast-style festivals signal global-standard entertainment in Saudi
Audience behaviour	Small, private, or restricted social gatherings for entertainment	Mass attendance events; group-based participation (friends/family attending concerts together, not alone)
Motivation for attendance	Entertainment not a central planned “destination reason”	Destination-driven travel (people fly between cities specifically for concerts and events)
Cultural perception	Entertainment seen as occasional or secondary	Entertainment as a core national identity experience tied to pride

EMERGING THEMES

THE THREE MACRO SHIFTS DRIVING EVERYTHING



From days to seasons

Almost every occasion has expanded from a single public holiday into a multi-week commercial and cultural window. Brands that plan only for the date itself are already behind.



From restriction to spectacle

In 2017, the King Fahd International Stadium opened its doors to families — including women and children — for the first time.

The General Entertainment Authority oversaw what became an open celebration on Tahlia Street. The speed of this cultural shift has been without precedent in the region.



From local to global stage

Saudi Arabia is not just hosting events — it is curating history. Blending tradition with modernity, desert serenity with urban energy, it is a living showcase of Vision 2030.

International brands that treat KSA as a niche market are misreading a country building toward the 2034 FIFA World Cup across 15 stadiums.

THE BRAND PLAYBOOK

4 Four Principles for brands that want to win in The Saudi Festival Economy

Nostalgia is a proven formula

Toyota showcased the evolution of its vehicles across different eras of Saudi National Day — highlighting decades of presence in the Kingdom. Almarai shared stories of generations growing up with their products, emphasizing the brand's role in Saudi family traditions.
Heritage + emotion = enduring brand equity.

Heritage moments are the blue ocean

Souk Okaz, the Camel Festival, Al-Janadriyah, and Founding Day remain largely uncluttered by major brand activation. For brands willing to invest in genuine heritage storytelling — Arabic poetry, craft, regional food, desert culture — these occasions offer outsized authenticity and share-of-voice at a fraction of the cost of Riyadh Season.

1

Authenticity is the non-negotiable entry ticket

Saudi audiences are savvy — they value brands that respect traditions, language, and symbolism. Cultural immersion, not surface-level symbolism, creates campaigns that audiences embrace and share. Turning a logo green for National Day and adding "National Day Sale" to a banner is seen as superficial & not genuine.

2

The Seasons are the new media buy-in

Riyadh, Jeddah, Diriyah, and AlUla Seasons collectively offer brand presence across sports, music, F&B, and culture in a single commercial structure. They are the highest-density brand-building environments in the Kingdom — and they are only growing.

3

4

Don't market to rituals.
Become part of them.

DECODING RITUALS: A FRAMEWORK FOR BRANDS

A framework to explore how Cultural Rituals Turn brands into Meaningful Moments

CONSUMER RITUALS FRAMEWORK

A Guide to Ritual Marketing



MIND THE GAP

A snapshot of generational mindsets — decoded.



GEN ALPHA

BORN 2013 +

NATIVE TO HYBRID RITUALS

"Rituals are inherited but evolving naturally"

Growing up phygital — online and offline simultaneously

Exposed to heritage and global culture at once

Early normalization of experiential, branded rituals

Role

Shape Future Hybrid Rituals

Rituals are fluid and evolving



GEN Z

BORN 1997 - 2012

PERFORMERS OF IDENTITY

"Rituals are identity and cultural pride"

Tradition blended with global influences

Highly digital — captured, shared, amplified

Smaller, more intimate, but more expressive

Role

Reinterpret & Showcase

Rituals are how I express who I am



MILLENNIALS (Y)

BORN 1981 - 1996

CURATORS OF EXPERIENCE

"Rituals are meaningful — and must be expressed"

Personalization — how they host, what they serve

Rise of café culture, dining out, curated gatherings

Aesthetic-led — presentation and styling matter

Role

Redefine as Lifestyle

Rituals should reflect who I am



GEN X

BORN 1965 - 1980

BALANCING TRADITION & MODERNITY

"Rituals are important, but adaptable"

Core traditions maintained, practically adjusted

Shift from home-only to some public settings

More convenience-led — work-life balance shapes the ritual

Role

Bridge Old and New

Rituals must fit modern life



BABY BOOMERS

BORN PRE-1965

GUARDIANS OF TRADITION

"Rituals are sacred and non-negotiable"

Highly structured, formal, protocol-driven

Rooted in family, tribe, and religion

Private and home-centric — majlis, hosting, gatherings

Role

Preserve & Transfer

Rituals define who we are

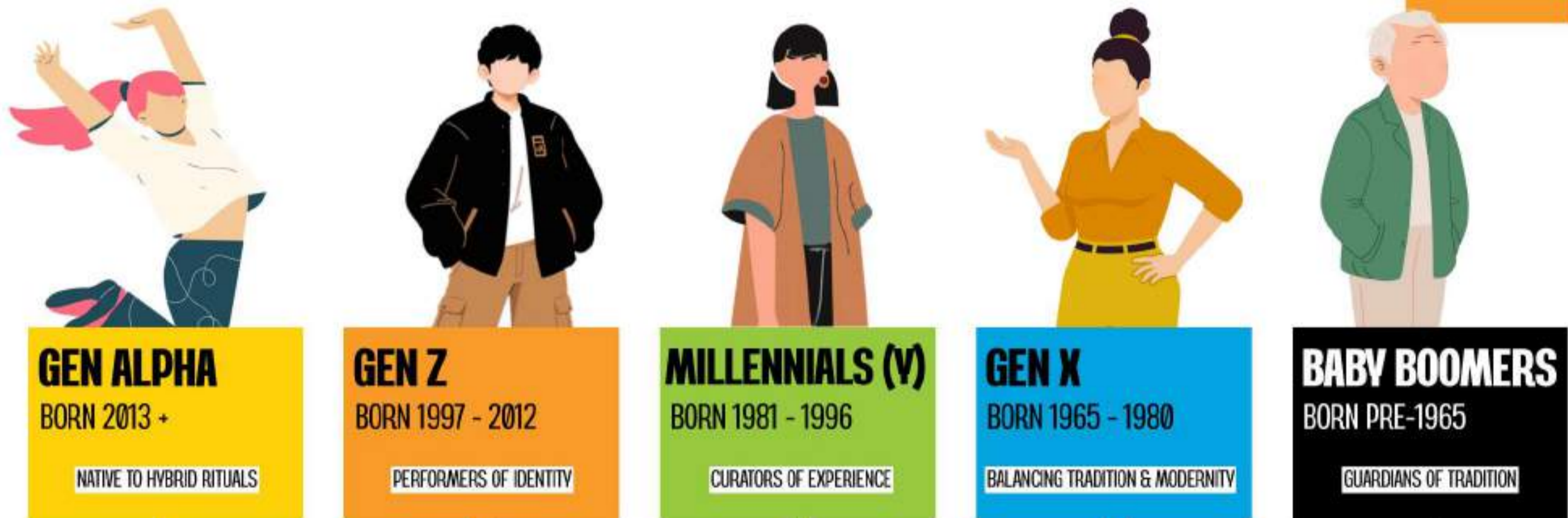
BRAND TAKEAWAY

EACH GENERATION DOESN'T REPLACE THE PREVIOUS – THEY LAYER ON TOP OF IT.

Boomers protect it. Gen X adapts it. Millennials curate it. Gen Z expresses it. Gen Alpha reinvents it.

In Saudi Arabia, rituals aren't fading — they're becoming more visible, more personal, and more powerful than ever.

FESTIVALS ACROSS GENERATIONS



Gen Alpha: Fully eventised, digital-native celebration culture

- **Religious festivals:** Still family-anchored, but heavily augmented by gifting, experiences, travel, and commercial layers
- **National festivals:** Highly immersive from childhood (school activations, costumes, themed learning, public events)
- **Entertainment:** Entertainment seasons are "default calendar"—kids grow up inside Riyadh Season / Jeddah Season ecosystem
- **Cultural/global festivals:** Fully normalised themed celebrations (Halloween, birthdays, school events, influencer-driven trends)

Gen Z: Experience-led, social-media shaped, hyper-diversified celebrations

- **Religious festivals:** Still important but more fragmented across nuclear families, travel, cafés, and leisure spaces
- **National festivals:** Fully experiential (National Day parades, themed outfits, street activations, chalet gatherings)
- **Entertainment festivals:** Explosion of Riyadh Season, MDLBeast, concerts, Formula 1; event attendance becomes a lifestyle
- **Cultural/global festivals:** Rapid normalisation of Halloween, Valentine's, birthdays as themed social events

Millennials: Transition generation — from private to hybrid celebration

- **Religious festivals:** Still central, but beginning to fragment (travel, restaurants, nuclear family formats)
- **National festivals:** Saudi National Day becomes more visible, especially in cities (flags, school events, early public activation)
- **Entertainment:** Rapid expansion of malls, cinemas (pre/post bans), concerts emerging in the later phase
- **Cultural festivals:** Early exposure to global holidays (Valentine's, Halloween in limited form)

Gen X: Structured tradition + early public expression

- **Religious festivals:** Still dominant; Eid is deeply family-centric with strong intergenerational gatherings
- **National festivals:** Growing visibility but still modest and informal
- **Entertainment:** Early mall culture, private gatherings, and occasional public events begin to emerge
- **Cultural festivals:** Limited but increasing exposure to organised school/community events

Boomers: Tradition-first, community-contained, highly ritualised

- **Religious festivals:** Core cultural anchor — family-centred, home-based, built around extended gatherings, mosque, and food.
- **National festivals:** Minimal formal celebration; Saudi National Day observed quietly, often symbolic (flags, small gatherings)
- **Entertainment:** Limited formal entertainment infrastructure; social life centred on home, poetry, TV, and community visits
- **Cultural festivals:** Rooted in local customs and neighbourhood traditions rather than organised public events

THE 4SIGHT TOOLKIT

CURATE THE RIGHT EXPERIENCE WITH 4SiGHT UXPLORE™

Explore Behavior. Discover Opportunity. Design What Matters.

4SiGHT's signature UX research framework for next-gen digital products.

4SiGHT UXplore™ is a deep-dive, end-to-end UX engine — built to decode behavior, optimize journeys, and design high-performing digital experiences.

It combines **qualitative research depth** with **design precision** across every stage of product development.

Our UXplore™ Journey

Understand Users

- Mental Models & Motivations
- Generative Feedback (NCPI Framework)
- Uncover Unmet Needs, Beliefs & Pain Points

Test Before You Build Big

- Prototype testing
- Moderated usability testing
- Real-time beta feedback

Benchmark & Refine

- Competitor Experience Benchmarking
- UX Gaps, Fixes & Final Recommendations

Design That Resonates

- GUI & Aesthetic Evaluation
- Preference Testing (A/B, Multivariate)
- Wireframe Testing (Low to High Fidelity)

Architect with Purpose

- Open/Closed Card Sorting
- Information Design & Journey Structuring
- Content Grouping Based on Real User Logic

Why UXplore™?

- Strategic UX, start to scale
- Behavioral insight into action
- Business, design, human aligned
- Culturally tuned, market-specific

Don't just launch.
UXplore.™

Your best ideas deserve decisions grounded in insight.

FROM ACCESS TO ACTIVATION

OUR 4SIGHT LIVE SUITE

4SiGHT Live — Always-On Consumer Access

Real-time access to consumers across markets.

4SiGHT Live PANEL UAE | KSA

Our pre-recruited ahead-of-the-curve panel for quick, cost-efficient research needs, offering a window into live data.

4SiGHT Live COMMUNITIES

Designed to build an agile system to conduct research while keeping the customer at the heart of the business. Enables clients to make consumer relevant decisions by testing on the go.

4SiGHT Live CONSUMER CONNECTS

4SiGHT’s solution to curate and build a customized calendar of immersive interviews for client teams to get the pulse of the consumer. Available as ad-hoc & annual programs.

OUR RESEARCH TOOLS

4SiGHT Research Tools

From testing to execution — tools built for real-world decisions.

INSIGHT EXPRESS

Enables swift, efficient innovation testing — minimizing the risks of full-scale launches and allowing you to explore, experiment, and fail fast.

AASMA | CHATBOT

Facilitates interactive conversations with consumers, streamlining the process of filling consumption/usage diaries. Leading to improved efficiency and quality of data collection.

SPRINT+

Provides an innovative boost to your iterative process by making it more AGILE through co-creation workshops, giving wings to potential ideas and improvements.

UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOR IS NOT ENOUGH. WINNING BRANDS ACT ON IT.

For more information, contact info@4sight-global.com

THE RITUALS CALENDAR 2026

JANUARY

**4SiGHT for Growth
2025 Yearbook**

FEBRUARY

MARCH

**Tapping into the
Power of Rituals**

APRIL

**Everyday Rituals
in KSA**

MAY

**Festivals,
Celebrations and
Their Rituals in Saudi
Arabia**

JUNE

Coming Soon

JULY

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER