

طقوس
RITUALS

A LOOK AT PERSONAL
CARE & HAIR CARE
RITUALS IN SAUDI ARABIA

JUNE | 2026

THE FUTURE OF SAUDI BEAUTY IS ROOTED IN ITS PAST

*Saudi personal care is shifting from periodic preparation to everyday self-maintenance — **heritage intact, expression modern.***



For generations, personal and hair care rituals in Saudi Arabia have been **rooted in purification, natural ingredients, fragrance, and communal bonding.**

The rituals were **collective, ingredient-led, and occasion-based**, passed down through families as preparation for spiritual, celebratory, and social moments.

Today, these rituals are being redefined. **Urbanisation, digital connectivity, and global influence** are shifting personal care from **periodic preparation to continuous self-maintenance.** Hammams evolve into spa experiences, hair oiling into scalp therapy, halawa into clean beauty, oud into refined fragrance layering.

Yet the core essence remains. Saudi beauty rituals are being **premiumised, personalised, and woven into modern life** — a distinctly Saudi model **blending heritage with innovation, ritual with performance, cultural authenticity with contemporary aspiration.**

A LOOK AT PERSONAL & HAIR CARE RITUALS AMONG WOMEN

WHEN RITUAL MEETS REINVENTION

Same pursuit of beauty, redefined — from purity and grooming to global standards and everlasting youth.

Then



- Purity
- Cleanliness
- Well-groomed

Now



- Beauty-standards driven
- Forever young
- Global-ready

FACE CARE

From kitchen remedies to clinic-grade routines

HOME MADE | COMMUNAL | NATURE-BASED

CLINIC ERA | GLOBAL INFLUENCE | TECH-ENABLED

CLEANSING



THEN

- Milk, oat-water, rosewater — kitchen staples paired with mainstream brands

NOW

- K-beauty-inspired multi-step routines
- Specialist Pharmacy brands like Bioderma, Cetaphil & multitude of products like micellar water, oil cleansers, toners, etc.
- Rosewater persists, now as a finishing mist

BRIGHTENING & ANTI-AGING



THEN

- Saffron in rosewater/ honey; turmeric with yogurt — for brightening, tightening, dark spots

NOW

- Vitamin C, retinol, hyaluronic acid, niacinamide — dermatologist-backed, social-media-driven.
- 1.5M+ cosmetic procedures performed annually in KSA with laser and chemical peels gaining popularity

CLINIC ERA | GLOBAL INFLUENCE | TECH-ENABLED

- Kohl persists, now paired with eyeliner, shadow, lash extensions.
- Microblading and brow lamination are mainstream.
- Under-eye patches, peptide creams, Botox common among urban women

- Layered serums, humidity-barrier creams for the heat, daily SPF non-negotiable.
- La Mer, SkinCeuticals compete with local brands while AI skin-analysis apps personalize routines

طَقْوَسْ
RITUALS

HAMMAM

The steam tent moved to the spa — communal ritual repackaged as personal indulgence.

COMMUNAL | FEMALE BONDING

INDIVIDUAL | CURATED

SETTING



THEN

- Home steam tents — as much social gathering as cleansing ritual

NOW

- Revived as spa offerings at hotels and wellness centres; a premium booking for special occasions or wellness tourism

PROCESS & INGREDIENTS



THEN

- Steam opens pores → full-body scrub with kessa mitt → ghassoul clay or black olive-oil soap (savon beldi) → sidr leaf water for spiritual and physical purification

NOW

- Core ritual preserved — steam, kessa scrub, soap foam
- Modern venues add massages, hydrotherapy jets, and aromatherapy.
- Premium Moroccan savon beldi used alongside locally inspired ingredients like Madina rose water and black seed oil.

OCCASION & FREQUENCY



THEN

- Weekly, tied to ghusl (ritual purification); essential before Eid, Hajj, Ramadan

NOW

- Occasional — a treat, not a necessity.
- GCC wellness-tourism visitors book hammam experiences at Saudi luxury resorts

From mother's kitchen to salon menu — natural still wins on trust, laser is winning on permanence.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES | INDIVIDUAL | CURATED

A close-up photograph of a hand pulling a thick, stretchy, orange-colored gel from a jar. The gel is being pulled upwards, forming a long, thin strand that stretches between the hand and the jar. The gel has a glossy, translucent appearance with some internal texture. The background is a solid, bright pink color. The jar is partially visible at the bottom, showing more of the gel inside.

NOW

- Ready-made paste sold in pharmacies, beauty stores, online.
- TikTok DIY videos have revived home-cooking interest — though laser is increasingly preferred for permanence

A pink bath bomb is shown in a white bathtub filled with pink beads. A wooden stick is placed vertically in the bathtub. A pink bottle is also present. The background is a pink wall with a white grid pattern. The bathtub is on a pink surface, and several pink beads are scattered on the surface.

NOW

- Performed by trained technicians in salons; full-body halawa or sugaring sits alongside waxing and laser.
- Halawa now competes directly with laser hair removal — valued for natural ingredients, losing ground on permanence

Oil, henna, and smoke gave way to serums and salons — the ritual survives, the format doesn't.

BLEND OF OLD & NEW | INDIVIDUALISTIC

A collection of hair care products and a hair extension. A long, dark brown hair extension with a braid is the central focus. To its left is a wooden comb with a wide-toothed top and a fine-toothed bottom. Below the comb is a small, amber-colored glass dropper bottle with a black cap and a gold-colored band. To the right of the hair extension is a small, round, open jar of light-colored cream or balm. The items are arranged on a light beige background.

NOW

- Global "pre-shampoo" revival — argan, black seed, rosemary oils trending on social media.
- Local brands (e.g. Gaudia Beauty) blend traditional oils with actives like biotin.
- Leave-in time shortened to 30–60 minutes

A close-up photograph of three bottles of organic liquid soap. The central bottle is a vibrant green, rectangular in shape, and features a dark brown pump dispenser. It is filled with a clear, light green liquid. To its left, the back of another green bottle is visible, showing a black cap. To its right, an amber-colored bottle with a black cap is partially visible. The bottles are set against a warm, solid-colored background, and the lighting creates soft highlights on the glass surfaces.

NOW

- Commercial shampoos dominate, with a clear shift towards sulfate-free, paraben-free formulas.
- Saudi brands now bottle Sidr in modern formats.
- K-beauty scalp care like scrubs, exfoliating shampoos gaining traction

HAIR CARE

POST-WASH: BAKHOUR PERFUMING



THEN

- Damp hair held over a mabkhara burning bukhoor (oud-based incense) — smoke infused hair with fragrance for days.
- Clean, perfumed hair was a mark of dignity

NOW

- Bukhoor still used for home perfuming though less often
- Hair mists and perfumed oils (oud or rose-scented) replace the smoke ritual for many
- Serums, heat protectants, and leave-in conditioners round up the post-wash routine
- Blow-dry bars and keratin treatments popular in cities

HENNA FOR HAIR COLOR



THEN

- Pure henna (*Lawsonia inermis*) for deep conditioning and reddish-brown color, mixed with black seed oil, egg, or tea, left for hours under cloth wrap — the primary grey-coverage method, passed through generations

NOW

- Henna shares space with ammonia-free color, balayage, keratin treatments.
- The traditional "sidr wash after henna" persists among natural-henna users; salon color dominates for most urban women

FRAGRANCE & BODY RITUALS

Oud remains non-negotiable — everything around it just got more options.

SETTING



THEN

- Daily household ritual — bukhoor burned in a mabkhara, perfuming hair, clothes, skin.
- Oud oil dabbed on pulse points; frankincense (luban) burned for purifying fragrance — a spiritual and social duty

NOW

- Bukhoor still deeply ingrained as KSA remains one of the world's largest oud markets
- It coexists with designer perfumes, concentrated attars, oud-inspired Western fragrances
- Electric USB mabkharas becoming popular

PERFUME APPLICATION



THEN

- One sprayer for house, hair, and skin, paired with Vaseline/ointment (dilhan) on pulse points — ointment plus perfume created a stable, distinct, enduring scent

NOW

- Seasonal fragrance layering — heavier scents in winter, lighter in summer, as heat amplifies scent

BODY CARE



THEN

- Black seed oil applied daily as moisturizer and healing treatment; sea salt as body scrub; olive oil massaged into joints; camel milk soap for full-body washing — kitchen staples repurposed for beauty

NOW

- Body lotions, butters, scrubs from global & regional brands.
- Black seed oil commercialized into capsules, face oils, hair products.
- Body contouring is booming; self-tanning & whitening have large markets; professional waxing is now routine.

BRIDAL BEAUTY RITUALS

One night became a season — the bride's ritual is now a month long agenda.

LAYLAT AL-HENNA



THEN

- Deeply communal female gathering; traditional singers performed at some weddings.
- Intricate henna on hands and feet symbolized good luck, fertility, and the bride's transition — a sacred last night in her father's home

NOW

- Larger, more elaborate events, often at rented venues with professional entertainers. Indian-style mehndi and Sudanese/black henna (doge) fashionable alongside traditional Gulf designs.
- Henna artists booked months in advance; the occasion extensively photographed for social media

PRE-WEDDING GROOMING



THEN

- Bride anointed with traditional oils and perfumes over several days; sugared head to toe as purification and readiness.
- Mandatory hammam — a rite of passage attended by female relatives before married life. All done at home, by family or a mushitta

NOW

- Months-long pre-wedding beauty "journey" — facials, laser sessions, teeth whitening.
- Glam packages at hotel spas (hammam, massage, halawa, facial) sold as bridal bundles.
- Makeup artist booked for the day, often collaborating with a photographer for cohesive looks.
- Bridal skincare prep is now its own industry

NATURE MEETS SCIENCE

Heritage beauty isn't fading — it's being re-validated by lab results and TikTok, all at once.



A quiet revival of heritage beauty is underway across Saudi Arabia — driven by clean-beauty preferences, skepticism toward chemical-heavy formulations, and the viral spread of traditional remedies on TikTok and Snapchat. Halawa recipes, sidr hair masks, and **grandmother-inspired treatments are being rediscovered** and shared at scale.

What's accelerating the resurgence is **convergence of tradition and science**. Black seed oil — long trusted in regional beauty rituals — is now backed by clinical research. Henna carries renewed cultural authority through UNESCO recognition.

As consumers seek natural, sulfate-free, ingredient-led solutions, **heritage practices are being reframed as modern clean beauty**: simpler, more intentional, more aligned with how Gulf women want to live.

The tension is real, though. Natural has become expensive — a cost paradox where ingredient-led beauty now commands a premium over the synthetic formulations it was meant to replace.

A LOOK AT PERSONAL & HAIR CARE RITUALS AMONG MEN

FROM CLEAN TO CURATED

Grooming search queries in the UAE and Saudi Arabia are climbing fast — Arab male creators' skincare routines now reach millions of Saudi viewers on YouTube.

Then



- Cleanliness
- Well-groomed

Now



- Sculpted
- Youthful
- Global-ready

The barber shop turns into the salon — masculinity rituals, now styled rather than just maintained.

A close-up photograph of sliced ginger root. The slices are light brown and fibrous, showing the characteristic texture of ginger. They are arranged in a slightly overlapping manner, with some pieces showing the inner structure and others showing the outer skin. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light color.

NOW

- Chewed and brushed with a natural twig multiple times daily, especially before prayers
- Still used occasionally and during Ramadan; modern oral care routines preferred for convenience

NOW

- Oud oil (Dehn Al Oud) applied at home, bakhoor burned, clothes and hair scented — especially on Fridays
- Shifted from home ritual to luxury grooming category; fragrance layering common among men, becoming a signature-identity tool

A close-up portrait of a man's face, focusing on his mouth, lips, and beard. He has a well-groomed, dark brown beard and mustache. His lips are full and have a natural pinkish hue. He is wearing a white collared shirt. The background is a solid, light gray.

NOW

- Regular trimming, oiling, combing at the neighbourhood barber, who also gave head massages and hot towel treatments — beard as a marker of masculinity and religious identity
- Styled, curated appearance shaped by global grooming trends

Facial masks, cleansers, moisturizer, lip balm, and sunscreen — once borrowed from female family members — are growing quietly, intensifying before Eid and special occasions. Nail care, Moroccan baths, and laser hair removal are gaining ground pre-wedding, alongside barber visits for hair, nose, and nail grooming.

SO – WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR BRANDS?

THE NEW RULES OF PERSONAL CARE

Rewriting the ritual — premiumization, personalization, and a blurring line between genders.

AMONG WOMEN

- Multi-step skincare routines — K-beauty influence, actives like retinol and niacinamide
- Makeup as self-expression — global trends fused with local aesthetics
- Haircare sophistication — salon rituals, keratin, scalp care
- Wellness rituals — self-care days, spa culture, mindfulness

AMONG MEN

- Luxury grooming routines — barber culture, beard sculpting, facials
- Skincare adoption (serums, SPF, anti-aging) — still nascent, rarely acknowledged openly
- Niche perfumery obsession — custom oud blends, layering as art
- Fitness and wellness as grooming — body image, supplements, biohacking

EMERGING "RITUAL SHIFTS"

- **Gender convergence** — men adopting skincare; women embracing "skin-first" beauty
- **Social-media-driven rituals** — TikTok and Instagram shaping habits faster than tradition
- **Tradition meets modernity** — oud in global luxury brands; miswak-infused toothpaste
- **Premium experiences** — from basic bakhoor to curated scent journeys
- **Hyper-personalization** — custom perfumes, tailored skincare routines

HOW THESE RITUALS HAVE EVOLVED

Functional & religious	→	experiential & lifestyle driven
Natural ingredients	→	science-backed & hybrid
Private/home rituals	→	social & visible rituals
Uniform norms	→	individual expression

WHAT'S DRIVING THE INGREDIENT LIST

Nature, science, and sustainability are pulling in different directions — and consumers want all three at once.

"CLEAN + NATURAL" IS NOW BASELINE

- Strong shift toward plant-based, organic, "free-from" formulations (no parabens, sulfates, silicones)
- Gaining traction: botanical extracts (aloe, green tea, chamomile), natural oils (argan, jojoba, black seed), butters (shea, cocoa)
- Nuance: natural ≠ always better — some synthetics are more stable and less irritating

RISE OF HIGH-PERFORMANCE ACTIVES

- Consumers want visible results, not just natural claims
- Trending: niacinamide, peptides, antioxidants (resveratrol) for barrier and aging; retinol alternatives and brightening agents; PDRN, exosomes, NAD for cellular repair
- Shift: "anti-aging" → "well-aging" and skin-health longevity

SUSTAINABILITY-DRIVEN INGREDIENTS

- Bio-based, biodegradable, upcycled ingredients rising fast
- Ingredient transparency and ethical sourcing now expected

"SKINIFICATION" OF EVERYTHING

- Haircare and body care now carry skincare-grade actives
- Example: hyaluronic acid in shampoos, niacinamide in body lotions

MULTI-FUNCTIONAL & MINIMALIST FORMULATIONS

- Fewer products, more powerful ingredients per product
- Ingredients designed to hydrate, repair, and protect simultaneously



MEN V. WOMEN: INGREDIENT TRENDS

Men want efficiency. Women want ritual. The ingredients follow.

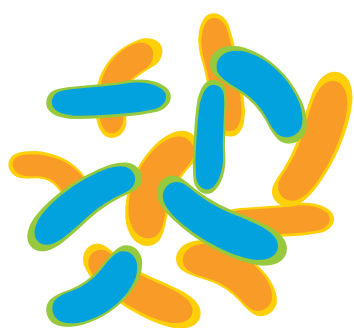
	Men: Functional, Targeted, Low-Friction	Women: Layered, Expressive, Ingredient-Aware
Ingredient Priorities	- Lightweight, fast-absorbing actives - Multi-use ingredients — efficiency over layering	- Natural + clinical actives combined - Willingness to experiment and layer
Key Trends	- Anti-aging actives (retinol, peptides) - Oil-control and acne actives (salicylic acid, niacinamide) - Beard care oils (argan, castor, vitamin E) - SPF + hydration hybrids	- Hydration + barrier repair (ceramides, hyaluronic acid) - Brightening + tone-evening (vitamin C, niacinamide) - Anti-aging / longevity (peptides, antioxidants) - Botanical actives + adaptogens (ginseng, ashwagandha) - Scalp + hair health (caffeine, keratin, biotin)
The Why	Men are entering skincare later — they want quick results and minimal steps, plus formulations tailored for thicker, oilier skin	Higher ingredient literacy — label-reading, actives awareness — and skincare seen as both functional and self-care
Net Effect	Performance-first, simplified science	Hybrid beauty — nature × science × ritual

WHAT'S EMERGING NEXT? 2026 & BEYOND...



BIO-ENGINEERED INGREDIENTS

- Lab-grown actives that mimic natural compounds
- Higher efficacy + sustainability



MICROBIOME-FRIENDLY FORMULATIONS

- Prebiotics, probiotics for skin balance



PERSONALIZED INGREDIENT STACKS

- AI-led skincare routines based on skin data



CLIMATE ADAPTIVE INGREDIENTS

- Pollution protection, UV resilience (especially relevant in GCC markets)

The opportunity isn't to replace tradition—it's to elevate and reinterpret it:

- Turn rituals into premium, sensorial experiences
- Blend heritage ingredients with modern science
- Enable personalization at scale
- Anchor products in cultural authenticity + modern aspiration

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"



GEN Z

BORN 1997 - 2012

PERFORMERS OF IDENTITY

"Rituals are identity and cultural pride"



MILLENNIALS (Y)

BORN 1981 - 1996

CURATORS OF EXPERIENCE

"Rituals are meaningful — and must be expressed"



GEN X

BORN 1965 - 1980

BALANCING TRADITION & MODERNITY

"Rituals are important, but adaptable"



BABY BOOMERS

BORN PRE-1965

GUARDIANS OF TRADITION

"Rituals are sacred and non-negotiable"

Context & Mindset

Digital-first, early exposure to beauty content, hyper-personalized consumption

Defining Shift

Grooming becomes an early-life lifestyle + algorithm-influenced behavior

Context & Mindset

Social media-native, influencer-driven, self-expression focused

Defining Shift

Care becomes visible, shareable, and trend-driven identity
Men are adapting more rigorous routines but not openly acknowledging the same

Context & Mindset

Globalization, mall culture, rising beauty awareness, early internet influence

Defining Shift

Shift to routine-based grooming + brand-driven beauty culture & outsourcing to salons

Context & Mindset

Early urbanization, rising incomes, first exposure to global brands

Defining Shift

Transition from home remedies → packaged personal care

Context & Mindset

Traditional, community-led, religiously anchored, limited product availability

Defining Shift

Care = function + tradition, home remedies passed on through generations

BRAND TAKEAWAY

ACROSS ALL GENERATIONS FRIDAY REMAINS THE COMMON RITUAL ANCHOR ACROSS BABY BOOMERS (MANDATORY CLEANLINESS FOR PRAYER) THROUGH TO GEN Z (INTENSIVE WEEKLY CARE SESSION).

JUNE | 2026

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- Generative Feedback (NCPI Framework)
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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)

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

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in insight.

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

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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

**A look at Personal
Care & Hair Care
RITUALS in Saudi
Arabia**

JULY

Coming Soon...

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER