

Somali of Ethiopia

Population: 5,665,000, known as the Western Somali

Language: Somali, the main dialect being the standard or common Somali and the Maay or af-Maay or Rahanween

Location: Southeast, Somali region

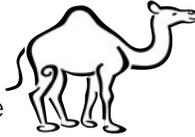
Religion: Islam;

% Christian: 0.14 %;

% Evangelical: 0.03 %

Bible available: yes, since 1979, online New Testament

The Somali people: There are four major Somali clan groups. The Somaal are primarily nomadic shepherds. A typical family owns a herd of sheep or goats and a few burden camels. Some may also own a herd of breeding and milking camels. Camels are the main form of transportation. The more camels a man has, the greater his prestige. The nomads live in portable huts made of branches covered with grass mats.



The Sab usually settle in communities and live as farmers or craftsmen. Their diet includes milk, meat, and wild fruits. The more settled Somali farmers have a more varied diet, which includes maize, beans, rice, eggs, poultry, bananas, dates, mangoes, and tea. Having an abundant supply of food is a status symbol among the clans. The more settled Somali farmers live in permanent, round huts that are six to nine feet high.

The Somali consider themselves warriors. They are a very individualistic people, sharply divided by clans. Fights often occur between the clans, resulting in many deaths.

Typically, the Somali wear brightly colored cloths draped over their bodies like togas. The men may also wear kilts.



Religious Beliefs: Although the Somali are nearly all Shafiite Muslims, numerous beliefs and traditions have been intermingled with their Islamic practices. They achieve "ecstasy" by chanting or taking narcotics. The standard Islamic prayers are usually observed; however, Somali women have never worn the required veils. Villagers and urban settlers frequently turn to the wadaad, a religious expert, for blessings, charms, and advice in worldly matters. They believe in spirit possession, and in spirits that live in trees, water sources, and on hilltops. Although they profess strong allegiance to Islam, they hold stronger primary loyalties to self, family and clan, in that order.

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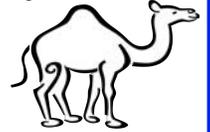
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What are their needs?

- Very few Somali children attend school, and over half of the adults are illiterate. This is not surprising since they did not have a written script until 1972.
- Access to modern health services is very limited in Ethiopia. Droughts, famines, and wars have created numerous problems. Malnutrition alone has accounted for the death of thousands of Somali since the 1970's.
- The activities of missionaries among the Somali have met with little success. There are only a few known believers among the Somali living in Ethiopia.

Prayer Points

- Ask the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers into Ethiopia.
- Pray that God will raise up prayer teams to go and break up the soil through worship and intercession.
- Ask God to grant favor and wisdom to the missions agencies that are focusing on the Somali.
- Pray for effectiveness of the Jesus film, radio & television among the Somali.
- Pray for the Ethiopian churches in the diaspora & in Ethiopia to mobilize their people & resources to reach the Somali for Christ.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to soften Somali hearts towards Christians so that they will be receptive to the Gospel.
- Ask the Lord to raise up strong local churches among the Somali.

Information from The Joshua Project at www.joshuaproject.net

"How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed?
And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?
And how are they to hear without someone preaching?
And how are they to preach unless they are sent?
As it is written 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!'"
Romans 10: 14 - 15



For information on adopting the Somali of Ethiopia

www.hornofafrica.org

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