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sstkMENA

A Shutterstock Content Brief





Overview

Culturally respectful MENA visuals

In stock content, there is a significant opportunity for authentic, culturally respectful, and commercially safe representations of Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) life. Brands in retail, consumer goods, publishing, healthcare, and more seek MENA-region content that reflects real families, everyday lifestyle, cultural traditions, and celebrations, while remaining MENA-safe.

This brief outlines the visual storytelling opportunities and production guidance needed to create content that is both relevant and licensable in the region.



Scenarios

Natural family life

Depict everyday, unstaged moments that reflect warmth, connection, and daily life of families. Avoid generic studio shots and overtly staged environments.

- Family members cooking together, especially during Ramadan or Eid. Make sure all dishes and ingredients are distinct to the country.
- Families sharing meals at home or coming together for coffee/tea. Incorporate local foods, beverages and customs around eating and drinking. Include people eating with their right hand, especially bread-based dishes.
- Families supporting each other. For example, parents having study time with their children.
- Candid moments of siblings playing together outside. Include local games or activities that are popular in the country.
- Daily routine at home, getting ready in the morning, tidying up the home, cleaning, using tech devices at home, tending to a garden, grocery shopping, nighttime routines, watching movies, etc.
- Family outings like a walk in parks or city neighborhoods.

Challenge stereotypes and traditional roles, especially gender-normative roles. Refer to your locally sourced talent and creators to suggest appropriate ways to progressively depict family life.



Scenarios

Multigenerational bonds

Visuals that show how valuable and respected grandparent relationships are in Middle Eastern and North African families.

- Grandparents teaching the next generation. This can be passing on stories, recipes or special heirlooms to grandchildren.
- Children or grandchildren showing respect to grandparents.
- Elderly care with dignity, from family or healthcare professionals.
- Elderly woman baking or preparing tea with a younger family member (include metal teapots, bread ovens, local dishes).
- Grandparent and child holding hands during a walk in a park or quiet street.
- Family photo moment where everyone gathers around a seated elder (include interactions, not just posing).



Scenarios

Everyday life

Contemporary “day in the life” style images and videos are always in demand and have versatile applications for customers. Portray simple moments that individuals go through every day. For example:

- Businessmen and women at work. Professionals in a corporate setting such as an office or a meeting room with other colleagues. You can also depict social culture in these environments.
- Small businesses. Depict local shopkeepers at work doing their tasks, organizing the shop and interacting with customers.
- Young people studying. Depict both women and men getting an education. Taking an exam, reading and writing, in the classroom or at home, and incorporating technology into their studies.
- People in transit. Show local transportation and include a full narrative of an individual using it (buying a ticket, waiting, boarding, riding, and exiting through the station).
- Consider both traditional and modern clothing, representing contemporary everyday life in the country you’re depicting rather than reinforcing stereotypes.



Scenarios

Life milestones

Humanizing small milestones and transitions with regional flair.

- Motherhood. Newborn care and postpartum moments (natural, non-glamorized). Pregnancy stages, preparing the baby's room, gentle activities like reading or relaxing.
- Celebrating new babies
- Birthday celebrations at home for people of all ages, especially children.
- Children learning to ride bikes, painting, reading.
- Finishing university.
- Young people beginning their careers.
- Weddings and wedding anniversaries.



Scenarios

Cultural and religious observances, especially Eid

Common scenarios that Shutterstock customers search for include:

- Family and friends coming together to celebrate Eid. Eid is an especially important holiday for children who enjoy wearing new clothes and getting new toys. Show children trying on new Eid clothing in the mirror with a parent assisting them. Or show parents wrapping gifts for their children.
- Cooking, sharing, and enjoying traditional Eid cuisine. Different cuisines are prepared for each Eid. People commonly eat sweets and biscuits for Eid al-Fitr and meat-based meals for Eid al-Adha. Please include detailed information about the cuisine in your metadata.
- Visuals that depict traditional Eid activities such as bathing, giving to charity, getting fresh, clean clothes, and joining special morning prayers.
- Unique decorations at home representing Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha.

Our [sstkEidMubarak brief](#) has more information as well.



Cultural Sensitivities

Licensing & MENA-safe guidelines

Occasionally, customers ask for “MENA-safe” content. To make content eligible for licensing across the MENA region, consider these guidelines for *some* of your work:

- No visible alcohol, pork, or references to them (even empty wine glasses)
- No religious symbols or references (e.g., visible Qur’ans, crosses, or prayers)
- No bare shoulders, short skirts, or low necklines
- No food fights or provocative food scenes
- No political maps

To maximize your shoots, consider doing two versions: one MENA-safe and one without MENA-safe guidelines. For example, scenes of a family dinner, some shots with alcoholic beverages, some without.

Models and Styling



Casting community

A key component of this brief is casting local talent from the Middle East and North Africa. It's important to include a range of ages, not limited to people in their twenties. Include demographic information in your model-releases and metadata.



Highly localized

Ensure the content depicts the specific city and country you're shooting in. Include visual elements, especially clothing, and nuances that are indicators of the environment. Content should feel contemporary while nodding to the region's rich cultural heritage.



Natural and active

Emphasize action and interactions in your visual work. Overall we recommend less portraiture and more candid style shots. Model expressions should be natural and express genuine emotion without exaggeration and artificiality.

Shooting video?
Keep these
specs in mind.

Video Specs

Frame Rate:	23.98p
Resolution:	Horizontal (Cinema 4k) 4096x2160 (UHD) 3840x2160 (HD) 1920x1080 Vertical HD - 1080x1920 4K - 2160x3840, 2160x4096, 2304 x 4096
Shutter Speed:	180 (1/48th)
Gamma:	Rec 709 Wide Dynamic Range (Cinema Style) Log-C
Compression:	Pro-Res 422 (HQ) H.264 (max bit rate and depth)

Customers want commercial-use content.

Legal Requirements

What is commercial-use content?

As the name suggests, commercial content can be used to commercialize, monetize, sell, promote, and advertise a product, business or service. Content that is licensed for commercial use has many more restrictions than content that is licensed for editorial use because commercial content is used for advertising and promotional purposes.

Please make sure the content you submit to this brief does not have any visible trademarks, intellectual property, and personally identifiable information. All content featuring recognizable people must be submitted with a valid model release.



Make sure customers find your content.

Metadata

Providing relevant and robust metadata is the best way to guide customers to your content.

You can include up to 50 keywords and a 200 character description for each image or clip. Include information about location, occasions, actions, people, clothing, and concept into your metadata. The more descriptive metadata you provide, the more likely a customer can find and license your content.

Include the keyword **sstkMENA** when submitting content for this request!



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Thanks!

**We can't wait to see
what you create.**

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