For Mauritanians, the tea ceremony is an important sign of hospitality offered to guests. It often lasts for hours, as friends chat and three rounds of foamy, expertly poured, mint tea is served.

**Official Language:** Arabic

- **Hello:** السلام (salaam)
- **Good-bye:** السلام مع (ma’salama)
- **Please:** فضلك من (min fadlik)
- **Thank you:** شكرا شكرًا (shukran jazilan)

Nomadic tribes live in tents in the eastern and northern desert regions.

Traditional clothing worn by Abdel Nasser Ould Ethmane, one of Mauritania's leading abolitionists. It is estimated that 10-20% of the population are slaves, most of them living with nomadic tribes.

**Mauritania**

### Quick Facts

- **Humphrey Fellow:** Ousmane Ba
- **Capital:** Nouakchott
- **President:** Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz
- **Population:** 3.8 million
- **Country Size:** 1.5 times the size of Texas
- **Major Religions:** Islam
- **Population Below Poverty Line ($1.25/day):** 23.4%
- **Life Expectancy at Birth:** 61.4 years

**Education**

- **Adult literacy rate:** 58.6%
- **Compulsory schooling:** age 6 – 15
- **Academic year:** October – June

**Nomadic tribes** live in tents in the eastern and northern desert regions.