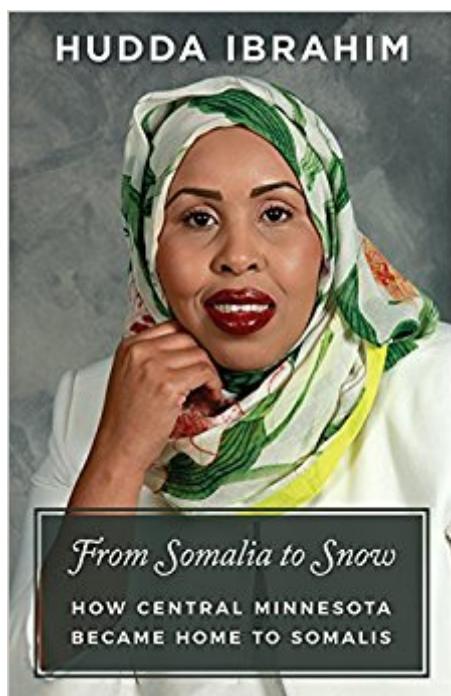


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# From Somalia To Snow: How Central Minnesota Became Home To Somalis



## **Synopsis**

From Somalia to Snow: How Central Minnesota Became Home to Somalis gives readers an invaluable insider's look into the lives and culture of our Somali neighbors and the important challenges they face. Designed with a diverse audience in mind, this book is a must-read for students, health-care professionals, business owners, social service agencies, and anyone who wants to better understand the Somali people. In providing a great understanding of Somali culture, tradition, religion, and issues of integration and assimilation, this book also focuses on why thousands of Somali refugees came to live in this cold, snowy area with people of predominantly European descent.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

"From Somalia to Snow: How Central Minnesota Became Home to Somalis provides a great understanding of Somali culture, tradition, religion, and issues of integration and assimilation. In addition, it enhances awareness of the challenges and barriers that the Somali community faces. The book sheds light on the hopes, dreams, and aspirations of the Somali people. The Somali experience is similar to the experiences of other immigrant and refugee groups. They, too, want to live the American Dream. "I highly recommend this book to educational institutions, the business community, health-care departments, and anyone who works and continues to build for community."

Â Dave Kleis, mayor of Saint Cloud, Minnesota "From Somalia to Snow: How Central Minnesota Became Home to Somalis is a scholarly written manuscript which is equal parts information, inspiration, and instruction. The author helps to reset a community's immigration narrative from

ignorance to understanding, deficits to assets, scarcity to abundance, and fear to acceptance. "In timely and important ways, this book is the collective story of all immigrant families who, throughout our nation's history, have shown unyielding resolve and resilience in pursuing the American Dream! A great educational tool, this book should be on the collection shelves in all school and community libraries." Bruce Mohs, school board member, Saint Cloud Area Schools, Saint Cloud, Minnesota "Hudda Ibrahim has long served as an economic adviser to our greater Saint Cloud community, to Somali and greater Saint Cloud area businesses, and to our foreign-born residents. And now, this talented, passionate young woman has gifted our community with her much-needed and long-awaited publication filled with personal and professional insights on the journey and challenges faced by Somali immigrants and refugees that have joined our community. "Thank you, Hudda, for pouring your heart and soul into writing this book, From Somalia to Snow: How Central Minnesota Became Home to Somalis, and for being a trailblazer, a role model, and a community leader. But most of all, thank you for being a very dear friend." Patti Gartland, president, Greater Saint Cloud Development Corporation "Hudda Ibrahim's book is a must-read because it is well researched, informative, holistic, and one of the best introductions to Somali culture for people of central Minnesota and beyond. Hudda writes with clarity, honesty, and integrity. Her very timely book is a valuable resource for the local community, for it strikes a wonderful balance between personal and professional narratives that capture critical information of her native cultural heritage." Sangeeta Jhai, PhD, faculty and diversity coordinator, St. Cloud Technical and Community College "Hudda Ibrahim has the gift of being able to communicate across ethnic, racial, gender, economic, generational, and political barriers with a level of intimacy that requires years of cross-cultural experience. This gift illuminates the experience of the Somali community in central Minnesota and is a must-read for anyone who seeks to understand Somali American challenges as well as the challenges faced by many of our most vulnerable neighbors." --Lee Morgan, president, Morgan Family Foundation "Ibrahim's book fills a void between the scholarly literature on immigration to the United States and the practical, everyday lives of newcomers to the area as they integrate into their new communities--and as the more long-standing community members integrate to their new neighbors. If you are seeking to learn more about Somali Americans in central Minnesota, this book is an outstanding resource for learning about the history and cultural practices of Somali people. Ibrahim provides a clear pathway between Somali and central Minnesotan cultures as a knowledgeable interpreter of both groups. Her book is an excellent example of cultural translation and will be highly useful for many readers." --Jessica O'Reilly, assistant professor of international studies, Indiana University, Bloomington "This book fills an important need for Saint Cloud and the

surrounding area. Working from numerous personal interviews and her own life experience, Ms. Ibrahim tells the story of one of the largest communities of Somali people in the United States. It should be required reading for anyone doing any form of community work in the area and belongs on the shelves of local school and public libraries. Its value, however, is not limited to the Saint Cloud region. Anyone interested in the Somali diaspora or in refugee and immigrant populations in general will benefit from reading this account of members of one community speaking in their own voices.” --Mark Jaede, assistant professor, St. Cloud State University”Ibrahim’s work provides a needed examination of the complexities of Somali choices and experiences in central Minnesota. Based on numerous interviews as well as personal experiences, she clearly shows how Somali immigrant experiences are parallel and distinct from prior European immigrants to central Minnesota. Given her portrayal on individuals and locations in Saint Cloud and central Minnesota, this work is accessible for a broad audience of readers interested in humanizing the experiences of Somalis in the region and thereby debunking many problematic generalizations promoted in some segments of the media.” --Professor Robert W. Galler, St. Cloud State University ”This interesting and informative book explains about Somali culture, with stories of Somali resettlement and business. The writer provides a thoughtful and relevant understanding into Somali people’s contemporary challenges and opportunities in central Minnesota. This book will become the key go-to resource for everyone in Minnesota or anywhere else in the United States.” --Abdi Mahad, research analyst ”Hudda’s book encapsulates the cultural and religious practices of the Somali people living in central Minnesota. It also brings to the fore their unique ways of doing business as they seek to cater to the needs of their people in the growing diverse cities. It is a comprehensive, analytical, and informative book.” --Sylvester Amara Lamin, MSW, PhD, LISW, assistant professor, social work, St. Cloud State University ”This important book clearly illustrates the experiences of Somalis in central Minnesota. It will be helpful and a much-needed resource for the people there. This book also offers concrete suggestions for ways by which the host community and the recently arrived Somalis can understand each other’s cultures, obstacles, and achievements; foster a healthy dialogue; and build a relationship that is based on mutual respect.” --Ahmed Sheikh, Somali community elder

Hudda Ibrahim is a faculty member at St. Cloud Technical and Community College, where she teaches diversity and social justice. Hudda specializes in international peace studies, conflict resolution, policy analysis, and political change. She has published numerous articles on reconciliation, mediation, the role of Somali traditional elders, and the use of customary law in

Somalia. She has contributed articles to the Huffington Post and other news sources, both local and international. Hudda holds a master's degree in peace studies from the University of Notre Dame and a bachelor's degree in peace and conflict studies and English literature from the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University in Minnesota.

I really enjoyed Hudda's book, "From Somalia to Snow." The author provides valuable information on the immigration history of Somalis to Minnesota and highlights whether or not they are willing to integrate into the American mainstream. The book is well researched and superbly written - full of riveting stories of immigration, integration, culture, religion, business and health. History of the Somali Settlements in the United States is worth mentioning in its scope. The book helps readers understand some of the challenges that the Somali refugees faced. The author also answers questions like, what are their lives and struggles like? Are they contributing to the Saint Cloud economy or draining resources from the community? Are they assimilating or trying to impose their culture and religion on American mainstream society? What is the American Dream for Somalis in the United States? - And many other questions. It's definitely an eye opener. I enjoyed it and will use it for future reference. It is hard to put down. I highly recommend it to anyone interested in understanding Somali work ethics, adherence to their faith and culture, why the new Somali refugees choose to live in concentrated communities where a large percent of the residents were born in their native land. I am glad I purchased this book.

I am so impressed by this book, which tells the story of how refugee fleeing civil war in Somalia, ended up in Central Minnesota. The story of struggling to preserve beloved culture, tradition, and language, while becoming an important part of the community, reminded me of the stories told of my ancestors from Germany. This is a must read for all. You will see that our new neighbors love their new country, just as they seek to understand and be understood.

This is a must read for anyone that is curious about the Somali diaspora community. Hudda explains Somali culture, assimilation issues, and concerns. I have had many teachers, community workers, politicians, neighbors, and even Somali diaspora teens who all have asked me why do Somalis do this. This book answers every single one of those questions in a friendly way.

I ordered Hudda's book because I am trying to educate myself about some of the struggles encountered by Somali refugees. I grew up in the greater St. Cloud, MN area where these issues

have been receiving a lot of press of late. I feel that this book is a must read for everyone, particularly those living in an area where there has been significant settlement of refugees. Ms.Ibrahim does a stellar job of explaining not only why the Somali people left Somalia but why they ended up in the US and MN in particular. Through many interviews she answers frequently asked questions about the cultural and religious traditions of the Somali people. One of the most important chapters in the book deals with the difference between integration and assimilation. After finishing this book I feel compelled to recommend it to everyone. It will open your eyes to our shared needs and desires for ourselves and our families.

Well written, clear and informational. I would highly recommend this book to everyone who wants to learn specifically about the Somali culture and the plight of refugees in general. Many questions are answered about how to interact successfully with unfamiliar cultures. I learned more from this book than I had in 10 years living in Central Minnesota with Somali neighbors.

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I read this book to get a better understanding of my neighbors, their journey, and their challenges as they integrate into life in the USA.The book is very informative, and the narrative is greatly enhanced by the interviews. Some of my misconceptions and misinformation have been corrected, and I am grateful that Ms. Ibrahim took the time to write this book and inform me and others. Definitely worth reading.

Ibrahim's book is essential for understanding the experiences of Somali people in Minnesota. It combines personal stories of Somali's lives before and after moving to Minnesota, historical and demographic information about Somalia and Somali populations in the U.S., and detailed discussion of cultural differences between Somali and non-Somali Minnesotans. From Somali to Snow is clearly written and vivid in its depictions of the people and places it describes.

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