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Saudi Arabia

The Kingdom of Amazement

9-Day Itinerary



Majestic Wonders
AL-'Ula

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Though people of various cultures have lived on the Arabian Peninsula for more than 5,000 years, the harsh climate historically prevented settlement, except in major oases. Most of the great empires of the ancient world traded with the Arabian Kingdoms that commanded the important spice trade routes on the peninsula. The country's main attraction and its hidden treasure is the UNESCO World Heritage site of Madain Saleh. It is considered second only to the famous site of Petra in Jordan, in terms of Nabatean architectural remains.

There are colourful markets, desert landscapes, coral reefs, rock engravings and ancient monuments; the country has so much to offer to those who choose to venture in it and explore a nation that is seldom exposed to the eyes of the outsider.

Day 1 – Arrive Jeddah

Arrive in Jeddah, where you will be met, assisted and transferred to your hotel for overnight.

Day 2 – Jeddah – Full Day Touring

Visit the old Ottoman houses, mostly constructed from coral and reinforced with wood so that the beams criss-cross the interior walls. The most beautiful and well known is Nassif House, which was built during the 1850's by the well known Nassif Family, one of the most influential trading families in the history of Jeddah. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, the house was one of the most important buildings in the city. It was here that King Abdul Aziz spent his first night in Jeddah as the guest of Mohammed Nassif after he led his victorious army into the capital of the Western Province. Later, we drive to the corniche of Jeddah (the sea-side promenade), a major attraction that acts as an open air museum displaying an array of modern sculptures.

In the afternoon there will be a visit to Al Tayebat International City for Sciences and Knowledge, also known as Abdul Rauf Khalil Art Museum, which displays significant as well as unusual collections.

Return to your hotel for dinner and overnight.

Day 3 – Abha – Afternoon Touring

Transfer to the airport this morning and take a flight to Abha; arrive at your hotel and check in. Continue this afternoon with a visit to the basket market and Muftaha Village Art Gallery and then continue to the Shada Palace.

Return to your hotel for dinner and overnight.

Day 4 – Abha – Full Day Touring

Today, enjoy a full day excursion to Mount Souda, Khamis Mushayt, Habala Village and Hamsan Village. Asir, with its capital at Abha, is mainly a highland province and includes the entire area of southwest Saudi Arabia up to the border with Yemen. Perched at the highest point accessible by road, the cable car takes visitors on its 7 km ride at an altitude of 2,500 meters. One of the most interesting aspects of the area is its distinctive local people - not least of which are the colourful Flower Men of Tihama. Khamis Mushayt, an industrial city about 5km east of Abha is famous for its antique silver market – this is its chief draw. An imaginative development, Bin Hamsan Traditional Village on the outskirts of the town consists of a stone tower and buildings, including a museum that is a replica of an Asir home from two decades ago. There is an auditorium, a traditional restaurant and a gift shop. (Please note that Rejal Alma will only be visited during weekends, if the cable care is operational).

Return to your hotel for dinner and overnight.

Day 5 – Abha to Riyadh

Check out of your hotel and transfer to the airport for your flight to Riyadh. Arrive and drive to Diriyah, the UNESCO World Heritage site and one of the most important sites from where the history of Al Saud Dynasty began. It is situated in the eastern part of the Najd area in the valley known as Wadi Hanifa. After visiting Diriyah, drive to your hotel, the Holiday Inn, Maydan for dinner and overnight.

Day 6 – Riyadh – Al-'Ula

There is a morning visit to Masmak Fort and the National Museum. Masmak Fort is one of the most important monuments and a historic landmark in the city of Riyadh. This palace was built during the reign of Abdullah bin Rashid in 1895. This historic palace served as a military garrison for his army. Ibn Saud captured the fort on the 15th January 1902.

Visit the National Museum, a place of learning and discovery, meant to kindle pride in the Arab heritage and reverence for Islam. This national landmark is composed of eight galleries telling the complete story of Arabian history from the creation of the universe to our modern era.

The Murabba Palace, viewed from the outside only, is among the most important of palaces built by the king and his family who moved here. The palace was built in the local traditional Najid style by using local building materials only.

In the afternoon, visit the Kingdom Tower and then drive to the airport for your flight to Al-'Ula. Drive to your hotel or tented camp for dinner and overnight.

Day 7 – Al-'Ula

A full day visit to the archaeological site of Madain Saleh, taking in such sites as the Hejaz Railway Station, the Nabatean Well, Qasr Al Bing, Diwan and Al Farid Palace. Wadi Al-'Ula is the gateway to Madain Saleh and is known for its Lion of the Lihyanites – the predecessor of the Nabateans (100 to 500 BC). Madain Saleh was known as 'Al Hijr' in ancient times and served as a stopover on a very prosperous trade route. The city lies on 9 square km of land in an area of isolation about 845 km from Jeddah in the north-western part of Saudi Arabia between Tabour and Madinah.

Return to your hotel for dinner and overnight.

Day 8 – Al-'Ula – Jeddah

This morning visit the old city of Al-'Ula and its mud village, Al Khuraiba Didan and Lehean, then drive to the airport for your return flight to Jeddah (non-stop or direct via Madinah). Transfer to your hotel for overnight.

Day 9 – Jeddah

Transfer from your hotel to the airport for your onward destination.

End of services.

Note:

Saudi Arabia is a dry country; alcohol is absolutely forbidden (as are narcotics and pornographic materials). Dress is modest and women do not need to cover their heads but must wear long gowns, called abayas at all times (these will be provided by your local hosts in Saudi Arabia). Please be advised that upon arrival in the country, the immigration process includes having fingerprints taken, along with a retinal scan.

Also be aware that everything in the kingdom closes down between noon and 3pm each day as well as for prayers. During such occasions, you will return to your hotel for free time. In addition, occasionally sites may be closed for unforeseen reasons. Local authorities can also deny visits to certain places without prior notice. We are not responsible for any such events.