

Must-See attractions in Saudi Arabia

Posted on January 19, 2023 by Travel Editor



Where Should You Travel in Saudi Arabia?,

Planning a journey to Saudi Arabia can feel overwhelming, particularly if you have never visited before. There are so many destinations and sites to choose from within the Kingdom, many of which are located away from major Saudi travel hubs like Riyadh and Jeddah. There are also five unique UNESCO World Heritage sites to choose from, each playing its own part in the history of this unique region of the world.

That said, travel to Saudi Arabia doesn't have to be complicated. You can plan out your own itinerary that takes you exactly where you want to go, but there are also guided tours of the Kingdom worth considering if you need some help. Major urban centers in Saudi Arabia even have Uber and taxis readily available to take you where you want to go, and the Kingdom has more than its share of brand-name luxury hotels and resorts.

But, where should you travel in Saudi Arabia? And, what should you see? That really depends on your personal interests and the cultural aspects of the Kingdom you hope to explore. Read on to learn which essential Saudi attractions to add to your travel plans this year.

King Fahd's Fountain: Jeddah

With the capacity to climb up to 312 meters into the clear Saudi skies, King Fahd's Fountain in Jeddah is the tallest water fountain in the world. While it's nearly impossible to spend time in the city without seeing the fountain work its magic, visitors to Jeddah often travel close to King Fahd's Fountain to see its operation up close.

While in the area, take some time to sample some of Saudi Arabia's favorite foods and enjoy a relaxing stroll along the Alhamra Corniche. For a stay that's within walking distance of the famous Saudi site, consider booking a room at the Ritz-Carlton Jeddah just down the street.

Kingdom Centre Tower: Riyadh

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia is the Kingdom's capital city, thus it's the most common Saudi attraction seen on the daily news. With that in mind, the city's Kingdom Centre Tower is the most recognized building in all of Saudi Arabia, and it's easy to see why. The towering building features a unique design that makes it unmistakable among the Riyadh skyline.

If you're lucky enough to visit Riyadh, you should book a journey to the top of the tower for a walk across its Sky Bridge. This bridge offers panoramic views of the entire region, and it's easy to access via elevators from the ground floor.

Al-Balad: Jeddah

Al-Balad makes up the historical center of ancient Jeddah, and it is one of the most authentic and scenic regions in all of Saudi Arabia. Made up of old buildings, small shops and eateries and tiny alleyways, the Al-Balad site gives you a glimpse into the ancient heritage of the region and how the locals lived their lives hundreds of years ago.

Al-Balad is known for its glorious beauty as well as its historic doors, which were once closed at night in order to protect the neighborhoods and inhabitants inside. Several ancient houses are also worth visiting when in Al-Balad, including Bait Nassif, Bait Nour Wali and Zainal House.

The Edge of the World: Jebel Fihrayn

The Edge of the World is a natural wonder that's truly a sight to behold, and it should be on your list whether you want to view it from its base or hike to its peak for spectacular cliffside views. Part of the Tuwaiq Mountain range, the Edge of the World reaches more than 300 meters high. Its dramatic drops and virtually flat surroundings also make it unique among other hiking and exploration destinations throughout the Middle East.

While you can hike to the Edge of the World on your own, it's also possible to hire a local guide who can get you there safely and explain the unique history of the area along the way.

Mada'In Saleh: Al Hijr

Also commonly referred to as Hegra, the Mada'In Saleh archaeological site is a must-see attraction when you're visiting Saudi Arabia. Also a UNESCO World Heritage Site, this historic attraction features a range of intricately carved and designed tombs that date back to the Nabataean civilization. With an appearance that reminds travelers of Jordan's Petra, this region of Saudi Arabia captivates and inspires while educating travelers on how locals lived in the Kingdom nearly 2,000 years ago.

Visitors to Mada'In Saleh can not only see but also enter and explore many of the monumental tombs built into the local landscape.

Deerah Souq: Riyadh

Many cities in the Middle East are known for their famous souq markets, and Riyadh's Deerah Souq is the local favorite among visitors to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This outdoor market is located near Riyadh's Al Masmak Fort, and it offers a glimpse back in time as well as the chance to shop for souvenirs and try local dishes.

Many shop owners in Deerah Souq speak English, so you can easily ask questions or haggle for a deal on carpets, gold or traditional clothing.

Prophet's Mosque: Medina

The Prophet's Mosque in Medina (also called al-Masjid an-Nabawi) is a famous and cherished mosque in Saudi Arabia that was designed and originally built by the Prophet Muhammad himself. While the original structure dates back to the first year of the Hijrah (c. 622 CE), the mosque has been rebuilt over time and the bulk of the current building originates from the 1990s.

The mosque is the final resting place of the Prophet Muhammad, and it's one of the most visited sites in all of Saudi Arabia.

Mall of Arabia: Jeddah

While the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is absolutely brimming with natural wonders and historical sites, no trip would be complete without a stop in the Mall of Arabia. This mall has over 400 shops and stores, which means it offers one of the broadest, most diverse shopping experiences in the Middle East.

Stores found in the Mall of Arabia range from popular and common to local and unique. Shoppers who visit will also find a range of unique cafes and restaurants, a large indoor children's entertainment area and a cinema theater.

Red Sea Project

Saudi Arabia's Red Sea Project is a development in the making that will offer a range of hotels and resorts, leisure facilities and entertainment venues all in one place. Its location is along the Western coast of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, between the cities of Umluj and Al Wajh.

While the first phase of the project isn't quite open, some of the most anticipated resorts are planning to open their doors to guests in May of 2023. For example, the coming year will see the grand opening of the Six Senses Southern Dunes, The St. Regis Red Sea Resort and The Ritz-Carlton Reserve, with the latter properties located on Ummahat Island.

