



HIGHLIGHTS OF SAUDI ARABIA

Be one of the first to discover a land veiled in secrecy on this extraordinary Saudi Arabian odyssey.

Tailor-Made Journeys, Suggested Itineraries



North Africa & Middle East, Saudi
Arabia



8 days from AU\$19,855 pp



Private

Journey Overview

Saudi Arabia beckons with its stunning coastal line of Red Sea riches, and a showstopping host of ancient icons. On this unmatched luxury journey, be one of the first to travel back through time at the active archaeology site AlUla, which is quickly establishing itself as Petra's emerging rival. The extraordinary open-air museum of ancient tombs, pre-Islamic dwellings and dramatic sandstone outcrops hold over 1,300 years of unexplored human history. You'll also discover the glamorous contrast of modern Riyadh, one of the richest cities in the world, before exploring the last undeveloped rim of the Red Sea coast at bustling pilgrim port Jeddah. Along the way savour aromatic Saudi coffee, delicious dates, sensational cuisine, and warm and welcoming Saudi hospitality. This journey will take you through the highlights of the unknown Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Journey Highlights

- Discover fascinating Riyadh, a contemporary powerhouse and a showpiece for modern Saudi Arabia
- Visit UNESCO-designated Diriyyah, to see the mud-brick walls and ruins that once hid a prosperous desert city
- Wander through the National Museum exploring the whole of Arabian history from creation to modernity with your expert historian
- Be one of the first to explore mind-blowing AlUla, an active archaeology site with 200,000 years of mostly unexplored human history
- Spend three spectacular nights staying at AlUla's award-winning desert oasis Habitas Resort
- Admire the captivating port city of Jeddah, with its World Heritage coral architecture, bustling souqs and laid-back coastline



Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Arrive in Saudi Arabia's buzzing capital to a warm A&K welcome from your tour coordinator and transfer by private vehicle to your luxury hotel. Once a walled, mud-brick waystation along desert trading routes, Riyadh is now one of the wealthiest capitals in the world, a powerhouse that is embracing modernity at a rapid pace.

After settling in, discover the contemporary King Abdullah Financial District which has been architecturally designed with state-of-the-art sustainable infrastructure purpose-built to resist the heat. See modern Riyadh with a visit to the Kingdom Tower Observation deck to look out upon the vast skyline as the sunsets and the lights take over.

Mandarin Oriental Al Faisaliah, Riyadh

Day 2: Riyadh

Today you'll explore the outskirts of Riyadh where the capital once lay. Visit UNESCO World Heritage-listed Diriyyah set in a wadi valley. The mud-brick walls once hid a prosperous desert city that was the heart of Saudi Arabia's culture and commerce. Follow your guide through the At-Turaif district, the ruins of which have been the subject of a painstaking restoration process. Wander through the old town to admire its once-splendid palace, houses and marketplace, before continuing to Musmak Fort, built during the reign of Abdullah bin Rashid in 1895 AD. Next stop, Dirah Souq, an interesting market famed for colourful textiles.

Take a pause for your first delicious taste of authentic Saudi fare at Najd Village.

This afternoon, discover the National Museum with your expert guide, a UNESCO World Heritage site composed of eight galleries exploring Arabian history from creation to modernity. Continue to Murabba Palace, built by King Abdul Aziz in 1937. A family dwelling, the palace was constructed from local materials and is composed of several smaller palaces, and the Royal Diwan.

This evening is at leisure.

Mandarin Oriental Al Faisaliah, Riyadh | Meals: BL

Day 3: Riyadh - AlUla

Transfer to Riyadh Airport for your domestic flight to AlUla.

Discover spectacular AlUla, the jewel in Saudi Arabia's crown. AlUla is an active archaeology site of extraordinary human and natural heritage — quickly rising to fame as the 'second Petra'. Historically located on the Incense Route, this vast land of desert cliff formations is now an open-air museum of tombs, outcrops, dwellings and monuments that hold 200,000 years of unexplored human history. As this area has only recently opened to tourists, you'll be one of the first to discover it.

This afternoon begins your visit to AlUla by visiting Elephant Rock one of AlUla's many geological marvels. The 'trunk' and 'body' of this monolithic red sandstone beast were shaped by natural forces over millions of years of wind & water erosion. Relax and watch the colour of the rock change as the sun sets with a snack and delicious mocktail.

This evening, sit back and enjoy the award-winning desert oasis at your leisure.

Habitas Resort, AlUla | Meals: B

Day 4: AIUla

Spend the day exploring the wonders of UNESCO World Heritage-listed Hegra, Dadan and Jabal Ikamah.

Hegra is Saudi Arabia's first UNESCO World Heritage site with 110 remarkably well-preserved tombs. The southernmost settlement of the Nabataean Kingdom, the city was known as 'Al Hijr' during ancient times and was once a stopover on the incense trade route. The site spreads over 2000 square metres, with an abundance of relics and rock-cut tombs. Discover the Nabatean Well, Qasr Al Bint, Diwan Tomb and Al Farid Palace, as well as the preserved railway station.

Stop at a local restaurant for a delicious fresh lunch.

Visit the city of Dadan which was built meticulously from stone and sits astride the valley's oasis, before witnessing the sun reflect off the 9,740 mirrored panels at Maraya. This beautiful piece of art is set in the desert canyon of Ashar Valley and is designed to blend into the surrounding landscape like a mirage. It has been the setting for spectacular concerts of international acclaim.

This afternoon you may choose from a range of options. Embark on an exhilarating helicopter ride over the surrounding landscape taking in breath-taking aerial views of AIUla (Additional Cost). Visit Harrat to enjoy a memorable view at the edge of the earth with panoramic views. Visit the Old Town with nearly 900 houses, 400 shops and five town squares. The old town of AIUla still contains remnants of some of the original stone and mudbricks constructed thousands of years ago.

This evening is yours to enjoy your resort at leisure or have dinner whilst visiting Old Town (Additional Cost).

Habitas AIUla | Meals: BL

Day 5: AIUla

Spend a whole day at leisure enjoying your Habitas resort. The grounds were inspired by contemporary 'desert art' and there are several installations sprinkled through the surrounding rock formations ripe for exploration.

Enjoy time to relax and reflect by the pool looking out onto the incredible surrounds. You may also like to indulge in the wellness centre with numerous ayurvedic treatments. Thuraya Wellness offers a peaceful lounge space with an alchemy bar, spa treatment rooms, a fitness centre, an outdoor wellness agora, and a yoga studio (additional cost).

Habitas AIUla | Meals: B

Day 6: AlUla - Jeddah

Today you'll fly to the captivating port city of Jeddah. Over the coming days you'll admire the city's World Heritage architecture, bustling souq and laid-back coastline, and savour world-class cuisine.

Settle into your luxury accommodation on the shores of the Red Sea; expect floor-to-ceiling windows looking over the ocean.

The evening is yours to enjoy at leisure.

Shangri-La, Jeddah/ Meals: B

Day 7: Jeddah

Wander along Jeddah's beautiful coastal Corniche where you can admire an extraordinary array of modern sculptures ranging from traditional Arabic designs to the abstract and monumental. Afterwards, gaze upon the 'floating mosque' which appears to drift on the water's surface shimmering in the sunlight. Pause to take in the spectacular views over the Red Sea, before discover King Fahd's Fountain — the tallest in the world, shooting saltwater from the Red Sea 300 metres into the air.

This afternoon, explore and discover the Abdul Raouf Khalil Museum and then follow your guide on a tour of Jeddah's UNESCO-listed traditional architecture. Visit some of the old Ottoman houses, constructed from coral and reinforced with wooden beams, including Nasif House, which was built in the 1850's by the distinguished Nasif Family, influential traders.

Shangri-La, Jeddah/ Meals: B

Day 8: Depart Jeddah

Today your Saudi Arabian adventure comes to an end. Transfer to the airport for your departure flight.

Meals: B

Map



Accommodation

Habitas AlUla Resort



All 96 luxurious villas boast a private, outdoor decking area where you can relax on floor-sofas or traditional rugs. From the romantic tented terraces soak up the colossal view of the glowing, terracotta rocks at sunset.

Afterwards enjoy an authentic Saudi meal at Tama restaurant, meaning 'here and now' in Arabic, or watch a culturally stimulating documentary at the open-air cinema.

Cool off in the infinity pool at this eco-retreat which has stunning views of the canyon. Habitas AlUla Resort is built with minimal-impact resources and all amenities are ethically sourced and organic.

Thuraya Wellness - named after a star constellation used by Bedouins to navigate the desert - offers a peaceful space with an alchemy bar, treatment rooms, a fitness centre, outdoor wellness agora, and yoga studio. You can work with an Ayurvedic doctor to detoxify, cleanse, and unwind during your stay.

With sustainability, wellness, and culture at the forefront of the resort's values, this is why Habitas AlUla Resort is a new A&K favourite in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Why we like it

- Set in the Ashar Valley canyons near Hegra, Saudi Arabia's first UNESCO World Heritage Site
- Desert hideaway offering privacy from the outside world
- Everything is sustainable, ethically sourced, and organic
- Well-equipped Thuraya fitness and wellness centre
- Restaurant serving authentic Middle Eastern cuisine

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