

# DESERT SANDS & MONUMENTS OF SAUDI ARABIA

The little-known landscapes of Saudi Arabia are ours to explore. Only recently opening itself up to tourism, this enigmatic land abounds with desert charm, modern metropolises and geological wonders. A group of just 18 guests will enjoy an immersion into fascinating realms, from the beguiling Red Sea coast to the staggering rock-cut monuments of AlUla.



## A JOURNEY OVERVIEW

Jeddah - Medina - AlUla - Riyadh

10 Days

Departing 11 October 2026

### **Day 1 Jeddah (Saudi Arabia)**

Saudi Arabia's second-largest city, Jeddah, welcomes us at the beginning of our remarkable journey. This historic port city lies at the midpoint of Saudi Arabia's Red Sea coastline. The country's wealth has allowed the city to experience rapid modernisation, though it retains its long-held prestige as the gateway to Mecca. We check into the Shangri-La Jeddah, where we also dine this evening. Afterwards, you may choose to explore the city at leisure.

Please note that, throughout Saudi Arabia, consumption and possession of alcohol is prohibited.

### **Day 2 Jeddah**

To begin our discovery of the city, we head to the Al-Tayebat Museum, featuring a privately owned collection spread across four floors. Here we see antiquities from Saudi Arabia, Persia, Morocco and China, as well as tribal costumes, coins and ancient pottery. There's even a city in miniature proudly displayed within one of the courtyards. We then proceed to Al-Balad, Jeddah's Old Town. Al-Balad's architecture is vast and varied in its style. The UNESCO World Heritage site transports us back in time, such is the degree to which its exquisite and historic buildings have been preserved. We wander narrow laneways, gazing skyward to admire the succession of colourful, geometric roshan window coverings adorning many of the city's buildings.

At the House of Islamic Arts, we see the scope of artistic expression and applications – from pottery and coins to textiles and calligraphy – developed over centuries as the Islamic civilisation spread across the globe. We then look upon Al Rahmah Mosque, also known as the 'floating mosque', owing to its construction over the waters of the Red Sea. Also, along Jeddah's waterfront, we see King Fahd's Fountain, whose water gushes skyward to a height of around 300 metres. Following lunch at Karam Beirut restaurant, we take the afternoon at leisure. This evening, our Welcome Dinner takes place at Marina Social restaurant, enabling us to take in views of Jeddah Yacht Club.

### **Day 3 Jeddah, Medina**

This morning, we board a high-speed train for our journey to Medina. On arrival, we check into the Le Meridien hotel. Enjoy some time to relax at the hotel this afternoon, before we are taken to see Al Masjid an-Nabawi mosque, the city's centre of devotion and an architectural marvel. The vast complex can accommodate up to a million worshippers. We dine this evening at Dar Al Taqwa hotel, before returning to our accommodation.

### **Day 4 AlUla**

Our journey continues north to AlUla. A sense of awe pervades as we are welcomed to Habitas AlUla. Our luxurious residence is encircled by titanic mountains and built upon a vast carpet of sand. Absorb incomparable vistas from your villa, relax on your private patio, or swim before a backdrop of sheer cliffs. We enjoy lunch and take the rest of the afternoon to make the most of the facilities here. Our accommodation's restaurant, Tama, also hosts us for dinner, with its locally sourced, seasonal dishes.

### **Day 5 AlUla**

We begin our day at Dedan, where we find the hollow tombs of this ancient kingdom's rulers, carved into a mountain of rock. At nearby Jabal Ikmah, we see a vast collection of ancient inscriptions made directly upon the face of the great rock. These writings are considered an 'open library'. We then marvel at the abandoned locomotives of the Hejaz Railway, whose construction came to a halt with the commencement of World War I. The desert oasis, Daimumah Restaurant, ensures we are sufficiently refuelled for our afternoon adventures.

During a visit to AlUla's Old Town, we discover ancient alleyways, markets and mosques. We also admire some of the works coming out of the area's thriving art scene at Al Jadida. Known as 'Art Town', Al Jadida features five different themed squares and offers a vibrant atmosphere at night. A leisurely stroll along the Oasis Heritage Trail then takes us along paths shaded by palm trees, past mudbrick houses and ancient city walls. Later this afternoon, we adjourn to the spectacular natural phenomenon of Elephant Rock and propose a toast to our awe-inspiring surroundings. Perhaps return to Al Jadida to dine at your choice of restaurant this evening.

### **Day 6 Hegra, AlUla**

Rise early for a unique look at this awe-inspiring region. Glide across AlUla's skies aboard a hot air balloon. Take in the expansive landscapes below, as you drift over remarkable rock formations bathed in the orange glow of a rising sun.

Following breakfast at our resort, we visit the world's largest mirrored building, the Maraya Concert Hall, gleaming spectacularly in the desert. From here, head to the archaeological site known as Hegra, one of the region's greatest treasures. Hegra displays all the mysterious beauty and grandeur of Petra. Its extraordinary Nabataean ruins feature an array of tombs, most famous of which is Qasr al-Farid, 'the lonely castle'. Taking shape in the first century AD, the soaring monument was meticulously cut into a single face of the rock which supports it. Its isolation amid a boundless desert lends it an even greater sense of mystique. Reflect on the incredible sights we have seen during lunch at a local restaurant.

Further aerial perspectives are available this afternoon. Enjoy AlUla's grand landmarks from the air during an optional helicopter flight. Soar over Hegra's monuments, before hovering over the abandoned locomotives of the Hejaz Railway. Your pilot then turns in a westerly direction, and you will soon be presented with the surreal sight of the Maraya Concert Hall from above. Pass back over Jabal Ikmah and Dedan Lion Tomb before touching down in the charming village of Al Fursan. Please note this experience is subject to confirmation.

Lap up more of the lavish amenities and unmatched panoramas back at our unique resort. This evening, we return to the Maraya Concert Hall for dinner at its rooftop restaurant, Maraya Social.

### **Day 7 Riyadh**

Board a commercial flight at AlUla's airport for the capital, Riyadh. The city comprises burgeoning commercial districts and soaring skyscrapers, with traditional mudbrick villages along its outskirts. Within its thriving metropolis, we check into the Four Seasons Hotel Riyadh, which occupies several floors of the towering Kingdom Centre. Choose to dine at our hotel or one of the city's nearby restaurants.

### Day 8 Riyadh

We begin our day with a visit to Riyadh's old quarter. Here we find Masmak Fort standing proud. Constructed of clay and mudbrick, the elaborate structure today houses a vast collection of artefacts detailing the city's history. At nearby Dirah Souk, wander the many aisles of this vast complex, where antiques, clothes and carpets can be found in abundance. We then make our way to one of Riyadh's most celebrated sites, Al-Rajhi Grand Mosque, the city's largest mosque. At Najd Village, we enjoy the traditional tastes of Saudi cuisine during lunch.

After lunch, we take a drive to the Edge of the World, a spectacular viewing point atop a soaring rock formation and part of the greater Tuwaiq escarpment. Narrow pathways lead us along a sheer ridge before we reach an abrupt end, with desert below and sky above. Following this thrilling experience, we return to our hotel for dinner.

### Day 9 Riyadh

Enjoy a leisurely morning at our hotel, before we ascend to the apex of the Kingdom Centre. A central observation deck, known as the Sky Bridge, allows us to traverse the breadth of the tower, absorbing sweeping views of the city. We then immerse ourselves in the sensory wonder that is Boulevard City. The entertainment district buzzes with colourfully lit facades, themed cultural precincts, cinemas, restaurants, and sound and light shows. Our day concludes in the country's cultural capital, Diriyah. Here, various mudbrick structures, of elegant and contrasting design, coalesce to form one exquisite whole within this historic district. Our Farewell Dinner takes place at Takya restaurant, which serves a range of traditional Saudi cuisine.

### Day 10 Riyadh

Following breakfast at our hotel, we farewell our fellow guests and Tour Host Team and transfer to the airport.