

20 DAYS THE ULTIMATE SAUDI ARABIAN EXPERIENCE (SELF-DRIVE)



Day 1. Riyadh – National Museum & Diriyah

Arrive in Riyadh. National Museum, Masmak Fortress, Souk Al Zal, Kingdom Tower. Overnight in Riyadh.

Day 2. Riyadh – Murabba Palace & Diriyah UNESCO

Murabba Historical Palace. Faisaliyah Tower. Diriyah UNESCO site. Overnight in Riyadh.

Day 3. Riyadh to Wadi ad-Dawassir

Self-drive south through the Najd plateau to Wadi ad-Dawassir — the great wadi valley crossing the Rub al-Khali approaches. Oroug Bani M'aradh Wildlife Sanctuary for rare species including the Arabian Sand Gazelle and Houbara Bustard. Overnight in Wadi ad-Dawassir.

Day 4. Wadi ad-Dawassir to Najran

Drive southeast to Najran — the ancient oasis city on the Yemen border. Museum Al Akhdood — an extraordinary pre-Islamic archaeological site where Christian martyrs were burned in 523 CE. Al Aan Palace. Emara Palace. Dagger Souq. Al Akhdood ruins. Overnight in Najran.

Day 5. Najran to Jizan via Archaeological Sites

Drive southwest via Bir Hima rock art site (UNESCO) and Al Fau archaeological city — a remarkably well-preserved pre-Islamic Nabataean trading city. Continue to Jizan, Saudi Arabia's tropical coastal city. Overnight in Jizan.

Day 6. Jizan to Abha via Khamis Mushayat

Drive through the Asir highlands via Khamis Mushayat — the largest city in the Asir region. Arrive in Abha — the cool mountain capital at 2,200 metres. Overnight in Abha.

Day 7. Abha – Jabal Sawda & Rijal Almaa

Jabal Sawda — Saudi Arabia's highest peak. Rijal Almaa UNESCO-nominated heritage village. Overnight in Abha.

Day 8. Abha – Asir Villages & Fatimah Museum

El Sahab cable car. Al Muftaha Village. Souq Mahayel. Fatimah Museum of Asiri tribal heritage. Shada Castle handicrafts museum. Overnight in Abha.

Day 9. Abha to Al Bahah

Drive northwest through the dramatic Asir mountain scenery to Al Bahah — the terraced mountain region famous for its ancient stone tower villages. Sawawat Mountain range viewpoints. Balijureshi market town. Zee Ayn heritage village. Overnight in Al Bahah.

Day 10. Al Bahah to Taif

Drive to Taif — the 'City of Roses' at 1,800 metres. Rose farm and distillery visit.

Mountains of Taif and Hada Mountains scenic drive. Sharif Museum. Overnight in Taif.

Day 11. Taif to Jeddah via Rose Farms

Morning at Taif's famous souqs — honey, rose water, silver jewellery. Eastern slopes of Al Sarawat. Drive to Jeddah. Evening in Al Balad UNESCO district. Overnight in Jeddah.

Day 12. Jeddah – Al Balad & Corniche

Full Jeddah exploration: Al Rahma Mosque, Red Sea Museum, guided Old Jeddah tour, Souk Al Alawi. Overnight in Jeddah.

Day 13. Jeddah – Day at Leisure or Corniche

Day at leisure in Jeddah. Optional Red Sea snorkelling trip. Tayyabat Museum. Overnight in Jeddah.

Day 14. Jeddah to Medina

Desert drive north to Medina. Al Waba Crater — one of the world's largest volcanic craters. Tour of Medina: exterior of Al Masjid An Nabawi, Masjid Al Qiblatain, Mount Uhud. Overnight in Medina.

Day 15. Medina to Al Ula

Drive northwest through the Hejaz mountains to Al Ula. Abandoned Buwayr and Muduraj train stations on the historic Hejaz Railway. Evening at Elephant Rock. Overnight in Al Ula.

Day 16. Al Ula – Hegra & Dadan

Full day at Hegra UNESCO site and Dadan Lihyanite archaeological site. Overnight in Al Ula.

Day 17. Al Ula – Jebel Ikma, Oasis Trail & Sharaan

Jebel Ikma open-air inscription library. Oasis Heritage Trail. Sharaan Nature Reserve. Harra Viewpoint. Monolith of Mada'in Saleh. Overnight in Al Ula.

Day 18. Al Ula to Hail – Jubbah Petroglyphs

Drive northeast through the Nefud desert to Jubbah rock art. Continue to Hail: A'arif Fort, Hail Regional Museum. Overnight in Hail.

Day 19. Hail to Buraydah

Drive southeast to Buraydah. World's largest camel market. Dates market. Villages of Mithnab and Al Ghat. Ushaiger heritage village. Overnight in Buraydah.

Day 20. Buraydah to Riyadh & Departure

Drive back to Riyadh. Final visit to any remaining city sights. Transfer to King Khalid International Airport.

Must see ATTRACTIONS



Faisaliyah Tower, Riyadh



Wadi ad-Dawassir



The Oroug Bani M'aradh
Wildlife Sanctuary



Museum Al Akhdood, Najran



Souq Mahayel, Abha



Al Bahah



Al Balad



Tayyabat Museum, Jeddah



Al Waba Crater

ACCOMMODATION

Options

Riyadh

- ★★★★★ Four Seasons Hotel Riyadh at Kingdom Centre
The Ritz-Carlton Riyadh
Waldorf Astoria Riyadh Ithra
- ★★★★★ JW Marriott Hotel Riyadh
Crowne Plaza Riyadh Palace
Sheraton Riyadh Hotel & Towers
- ★★★ Novotel Riyadh Al Anoud
ibis Riyadh Olaya
Citymax Hotel Riyadh

Abha

- ★★★★★ InterContinental Abha
Abha Palace Hotel
Aseer Mountains Hotel Abha
- ★★★★★ Coral Hotel Abha
Ramada by Wyndham Abha
Ayiana Hotel Abha
- ★★★ Abha Hotel
Sarat Hotel
Al-Qahtan Hotel Abha

Taif

- ★★★★★ InterContinental Taif
Mövenpick Hotel Taif
Al-Hada Sheraton Hotel Taif
- ★★★★★ Golden Palace Hotel Taif
Ramada by Wyndham Taif
Le Méridien Taif
- ★★★ Holiday Inn Taif
ibis Taif
Taif Grand Hotel

Jeddah

- ★★★★★ Rosewood Jeddah
Park Hyatt Jeddah – Marina, Club & Spa
InterContinental Jeddah
- ★★★★★ Radisson Blu Hotel Jeddah Al Hamra
Hilton Jeddah
Marriott Jeddah
- ★★★ Holiday Inn Jeddah Al Salam
ibis Jeddah City Center
Premier Inn Jeddah Al Murjan

Medina

- ★★★★★ Anwar Al-Madinah Mövenpick Hotel
Dar Al-Taqwa Hotel Madinah
Madinah Marriott Hotel
- ★★★★★ Al-Salam Hotel Madinah
Pullman ZamZam Madinah
Hilton Madinah
- ★★★ Al-Haram Hotel Madinah
Taibah Hotel Madinah
Al-Nour Hotel Madinah

Al Ula

- ★★★★★ Habitas AlUla
Banyan Tree AlUla
Shaden Resort AlUla by Accor
- ★★★★★ Caravan by Habitas AlUla
Dar Tantora The House Hotel AlUla
Maraya Hotel AlUla
- ★★★ AlUla Lodge
Rose Governate Hotel AlUla
Dadan Hotel AlUla

Hail

- ★★★★★ Hail Rotana Hotel
Hail Palace Hotel
Golden Tulip Hail
- ★★★★★ Hail International Hotel
Al-Wasim Hotel Hail
Crown Prince Hotel Hail
- ★★★ Al-Fanar Hotel Hail
Al-Rashid Hotel Hail
Hail City Hotel

Buraydah

- ★★★★★ Buraydah Park Hotel
Al-Qassim Palace Hotel Buraydah
Grand Hotel Buraydah
- ★★★★★ Crown Prince Hotel Buraydah
Al-Wadi Hotel Buraydah
Orchid Hotel Buraydah
- ★★★ Buraydah City Hotel
Al-Nakheel Hotel Buraydah
Al-Qasr Hotel Buraydah

Must try FOOD



Haneeth

A slow-roasted lamb dish originally from Yemen; it is cooked in a tannour oven with a spice rub at a low temperature to ensure the meat is succulent and tender; the dish is usually served on a plate of rice.



Kabsa

Regarded as Saudi Arabia's national dish, Kabsa is an aromatic one-pot chicken and rice mix similar to an Indian biryani; the chicken and fluffy, fragrant rice is cooked in a chicken and tomato-based broth with a rich blend of spices and garnished with almonds, raisins and chopped parsley.



Mohalla

Comprises dates that are soaked in water for about six to eight hours and then strained through a sieve, placed in a pot to be cooked on medium heat and mixed with whole wheat flour; butter or pure ghee is added until the dates and flour blend smoothly; usually served hot.

RESTAURANT

Options

Halal Certified

Riyadh

1. Najd Village – Traditional Saudi Najdi cuisine served in a heritage setting, authentic experience
2. Al-Orjowan at The Ritz-Carlton – Arabic fine dining, rooftop terrace, panoramic city views
3. Bab Al-Yemen – Traditional Yemeni and Arabic food, highly popular local institution
4. Gaucho Riyadh – Premium Argentinian steakhouse with Saudi-certified halal meats
5. Nusret Riyadh – International steakhouse (Salt Bae brand), extravagant presentation, prime cuts

Abha

1. Al-Mudeer Restaurant – Local Asiri cuisine, mountain views, traditional clay pots
2. Al-Maqam Abha – Traditional Saudi food in heritage Asiri setting, grilled meats
3. Qahwa Café Abha – Saudi coffee and pastries, popular with locals and tourists alike
4. Turkish Nights Abha – Turkish restaurant, good for families visiting the mountains
5. Al-Baik Abha – Popular Saudi fast food, convenient for Asir National Park visitors

Taif

1. Al-Shifa Restaurant – Traditional Hijazi food in the rose city of Taif, honey and lamb
2. Rose Valley Café – Saudi café with rose-themed décor, local specialties and rose honey
3. Al-Baik Taif – Saudi fast food chain, popular stop for families and pilgrims
4. Turkish Grill Taif – Turkish restaurant with grills and meze, cable car district
5. Kabsa Palace Taif – Traditional Saudi rice and lamb dishes, generous mountain portions

Jeddah

1. Al-Nafourah – Lebanese fine dining with panoramic Red Sea views, Corniche location
2. Fakieh Aquarium Restaurant – Seafood restaurant with live aquarium backdrop, Al Hamra district
3. Bab El-Yemen Jeddah – Traditional Yemeni cuisine, famous for slow-cooked lamb
4. The Globe Restaurant – International cuisine at Park Hyatt, floor-to-ceiling ocean views
5. Kaia Jeddah – Modern Japanese halal restaurant, sushi and teppanyaki, Corniche Road

Medina

1. Al-Baik Medina – Saudi Arabia's beloved fried chicken chain, iconic for pilgrims
2. Nawab Restaurant Medina – Authentic Indian-Pakistani cuisine, biryani a specialty
3. Turkish House Medina – Turkish restaurant, grills and meze, near the Prophet's Mosque
4. Kabsa Kingdom Medina – Traditional Saudi Kabsa rice dishes with slow-cooked lamb
5. Al-Safa Restaurant Medina – Local Hijazi cuisine, generous portions near the Haram district

Al Ula

1. Ashar Restaurant – Modern Saudi cuisine with views over the ancient Hegra archaeological site
2. Maraya Concert Hall Café – Fine dining inside the mirror-cube Maraya venue, extraordinary setting
3. Al-Nakheel Restaurant AlUla – Traditional oasis cuisine, dates, meats and Saudi rice
4. Turkish House AlUla – Turkish restaurant, popular with tour groups and adventure travellers
5. Al-Wadi Restaurant AlUla – Saudi and Levantine mixed menu, good value, near Old Town

Hail

1. Al-Reem Restaurant – Traditional Najdi cuisine, desert ambiance, local favourites
2. Al-Baik Hail – Saudi fast food franchise, fried chicken and rice, family favourite
3. Kabsa House Hail – Local rice and meat specialty, slow-cooked lamb and rice
4. Turkish Delight Hail – Turkish restaurant, grills and pide bread
5. Al-Andalus Hail – Middle Eastern mixed grill, generous portions and fresh bread

Buraydah

1. Al-Baik Buraydah – Saudi fried chicken chain, always a local favourite in Qassim region
2. Kabsa Kingdom Buraydah – Traditional Qassimi rice dishes, slow-cooked camel and lamb
3. Al-Khaleej Restaurant – Arabian cuisine in the heart of Buraydah's commercial district
4. Turkish Café Buraydah – Turkish restaurant, grills and meze, popular with business travellers
5. Al-Andalus Buraydah – Middle Eastern mixed grill, fresh bread, generous portions