

Crossroads of Time: Saudi Arabia's Cultural Landmarks

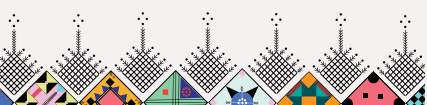
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Introduction:



Introduction:

Saudi Arabia's Living Heritage

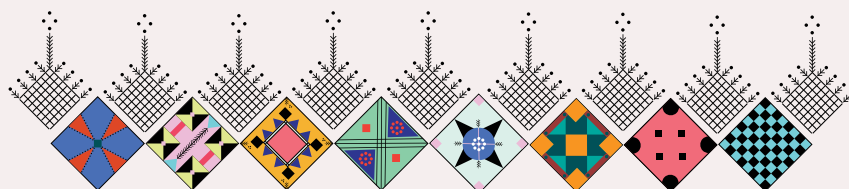


From the wind-carred canyons at the Edge of the World down to the sacred precincts of the Kaaba, from the ancient Nabataean cities to modern cultural festivals, Saudi Arabia is rightly considered a country where history whistles through stone and tradition fills the everyday life. This volume invites the reader to a journey through five regions of the Kingdom while exploring twenty-six remarkable sites that manifest the rich tapestry of Saudi Arabian heritage.

These places tell stories of love that knew no tribal differences, engineering feats that had sustained civilizations, poets whose words still echoed through time, and a people whose hospitality became legendary. Each is representative of one particular type of thread within the Saudi tapestry, be it the mathematical perfection of Al-Qatt Al-Asiri's geometric patterns painted by the women of Asir or ingenious water management in ancient Nabataean wells that stand in awe even today.

Come through the pages and learn how the World Heritage sites in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia connect past and present, joining ancient wisdom to modern preservations. From the very first drops of oil to have been discovered at Dammam Well No. V, to Khawlani coffee cultivation, each story uncovers the continuous evolution in Saudi Arabia's cultural landscape while remaining deeply rooted in traditions.

A tour of the historic sites in Saudi Arabia becomes a journey through heritage, and an invitation to understand how geography, faith, commerce, and culture have intertwined over millennia into one of the most fascinating destinations in the world. Whether it is a traveler readying for a first visit, a student of history, or one with simple curiosity about Saudi culture, these stories offer insight into the heart of Saudi Arabia that few others do.







” Riyadh Region





01

The Eternal Love of Tawbad Mountain

AL-AFLAJ REGION



“

From the ancient sands of Al-Aflaj rises Tawbad Mountain, a reminder of one of the most famous love stories in Saudi Arabia: the weathered peaks and silent valleys still whisper the tale of Qais and Layla, a romance so mighty it has transcended time to become a cornerstone in Arabic literary heritage.



➤ The Legend

In times of the Bedouin tribes, a young poet named Qais ibn Al-Mulawwah fell deeply in love with a very beautiful woman, Layla bint Sa'd. From studying together as children, their relationship blossomed into a love that would make them immortal in Arabic literature. Given exceptional poetic talent, Qais was able to pen such passionately devotional verses to Layla that they spread over the Arabian Peninsula like wind-blown sand.

Fate, however, had something else in store. Rejected by Layla's father and given out to another bridegroom, Qais retreated to Tawbad Mountain for consolation. Here, in the wild and remote elevation of that mountain, the grief-stricken poet spent day and night uttering the name of his Layla to the wind, which wafted through the sand of the deserts. His behavior became so eccentric that people started calling him "Majnun Layla"-Layla's Madman-since he lived among the wild animals, transforming his pain into some of the most touching poems in Arabic literature.

➤ Visiting Tawbad Mountain Today

The landscape of Tawbad Mountain greets the modern visitor with a seeming freeze in time, its raw beauty perfectly suited to the passionate tale it harbors. Its dramatic silhouette, visible for miles across the Al-Aflaj landscape, serves as a natural monument to enduring love.

What to See

- Ancient cave inscriptions, which the local tradition ascribes to Qais's poetry.
- Panoramic views across the Al-Aflaj region from the mountain summit
- The legendary echo points where Qais was said to have called for Layla, the call reverberating through valleys.





➤ Planning Your Visit

- Best visited during the cooler months (October to March)
- Bring plenty of water and sun protection
- Local guides can enhance your experience with detailed storytelling
- Photography is particularly stunning during sunrise and sunset
- Comfortable hiking shoes are essential for exploring the terrain

➤ Cultural Impact

The story of Qais and Layla, from the classical Arabic poem, has found its way to modern literature and music several times over the centuries. It is an example of love that crossed social barriers, much like Romeo and Juliet, and both stories are often repeated over time as a universal truth.

It attracts lovers of nature, literature, and romance as well as those seeking connections with Saudi Arabia's rich cultural heritage, making Tawbad Mountain very worthy today. It would almost seem that standing on the mountain of the ancient rocks, one might feel the presence of Qais's eternal love: now no less powerful than it must have been centuries ago.



02

Souq Al-Zal
Where Riyadh's Heart
Beats with History

RIYADH





Enter Souq Al-Zal and step right into the living, breathing pages of Riyadh's history. This historic marketplace, which was set up in 1901, is much more than just a place of shopping. Rather, it is a dynamic tapestry where threads of Saudi Arabia's past and present intercept in amazing ways.



➤ The Story Behind the Name

The name "Al-Zal" is derived from "Zawlia," the local word for carpets, but today the market offers much more than its name would suggest. Measuring 38,580 square meters, this bazaar has grown from a simple carpet market into one of Riyadh's most captivating cultural landmarks.

What to Discover

- **Traditional Treasures**
- **Traditional Wear for Men:** The souq is noted for its assemblage of fine mishlahs.
- **Hand-embroidered Ghutras:** see the handicrafts that go into traditional headware.
- **Carpets and Textiles:** Observe a breathtaking range of classic and modern designs.
- **Antiques Section:** Browse through the second-hand goods for items that are part of history.
- **Perfumes and Incense:** Get into the world of aromatic traditional Arabian scents.

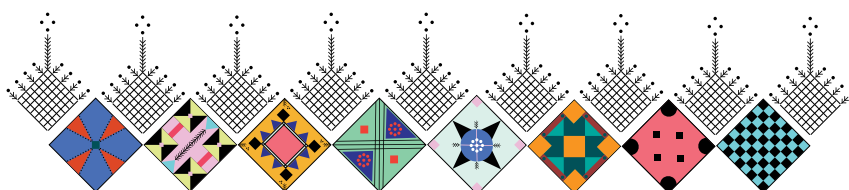
➤ Architectural Highlights

- **Mohammad Al-Sheikh Mosque:** A spiritual anchor, accommodating 1,800 men and 180 women.
- **Dukhna Square:** A place so magnificently designed that traditional architecture and modern amenities merge into one.
- **Historic Facades:** Observe the building facades now newly renovated yet retaining their character.

➤ Location and Context

Souq Al-Zal is situated in the heart of historic Riyadh, enjoying a privileged location around several iconic landmarks like:

- 1 Al-Masmak Fortress
- 2 Al-Thumairy Street
- 3 Imam Turki bin-Abdullah Mosque





➤ Recent Transformations

Thanks to the Royal Commission for the Riyadh City improvement project, the souq has been renovated very considerably improving the shopping without losing its historical feel. To the traditional architecture, modern amenities have been added:

- ➊ Improved infrastructure
- ➋ Shaded walkways
- ➌ Enhanced lighting
- ➍ Paved streets
- ➎ Preserved historical elements

Visitor Tips

➤ Best Times to Visit

- ➔ Early morning for a quieter experience
- ➔ Late afternoon for the bustling atmosphere
- ➔ Weekends for cultural events and performances

➤ Cultural Experiences

- ➔ Watch for folkloric events that bring traditional Saudi culture to life
- ➔ Visit the local cafes and restaurants for authentic Saudi cuisine
- ➔ Engage with local merchants who often share stories about the market's history

➤ Shopping Advice

- ➔ Bargaining is expected and part of the experience
- ➔ Morning hours are best for serious shopping
- ➔ Bring cash, though many larger shops now accept cards
- ➔ Consider hiring a local guide for the antiques section



➔ Modern Comfort Meets Traditional Charm

While the souq has embraced modern conveniences, it maintains its role as a living museum of Saudi culture. The careful balance between preservation and progress makes it an essential stop for anyone wanting to understand Riyadh's journey from a traditional trading post to a modern metropolis.

➤ Travel Tip:



Visit during the winter months for the most comfortable outdoor shopping experience. The renovated shading structures make afternoon browsing possible even during warmer seasons.

Whether you're a history enthusiast, a shopping aficionado, or simply curious about Saudi culture, Souq Al-Zal offers an authentic glimpse into the heart of Riyadh's heritage. It's not just a market – it's a living, breathing testament to the city's ability to honor its past while embracing its future.



A photograph of the Al Masmak Fortress in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, at dusk. The fortress is a large, cylindrical mudbrick structure with a crenellated top, illuminated by warm orange lights. It is surrounded by a wall and another similar tower is visible in the background. The sky is a deep blue.

03

Al Masmak: The Fortress That Birthed a Nation

RIYADH



“

Rising from the heart of old Riyadh, Al Masmak Fortress stands as a magnificent testament to Saudi Arabia's journey from scattered emirates to unified kingdom. This clay and mudbrick stronghold, with its imposing walls and watchful towers, isn't just a building – it's the very cornerstone of modern Saudi Arabia.



➤ A Fortress with a Destiny

Built between 1865 and 1895 under the direction of Abdullah bin Faisal, Emir of Najd, Al Masmak (meaning “the fortified”) would become far more than its creators envisioned. While its thick walls were designed to protect against raiders, they would ultimately witness the birth of a nation. In 1902, the fortress became the stage for the historic Battle of Riyadh, a pivotal moment that set in motion the events leading to Saudi Arabia’s unification.

➤ Architectural Marvels

The fortress reveals the ingenuity of traditional Saudi Arabian architecture through six distinct sections:

⇒ The Gate |→

- ➔ An imposing wooden door reinforced with metal bands
- ➔ Small wicket door within the main gate for daily use
- ➔ Intricate palm-frond decorations symbolizing prosperity



⇒ The Mosque |→

- ➔ Traditional prayer space integrated into the fortress
- ➔ Beautiful examples of period Islamic architectural elements



⇒ The Majlis |→

- ➔ The traditional council chamber where leaders gathered
- ➔ Historic meeting place for political and social affairs



⇒ The Well and Courtyard |→

- ➔ Essential water source that sustained the fortress
- ➔ Open courtyard designed for both defense and daily life



⇒ The Towers |→

- ➔ Four strategic watchtowers offering panoramic views
- ➔ Crucial defensive positions that protected the fortress





➤ From Fortress to Museum

In 1995, after careful restoration by the Municipality of Riyadh, Al Masmak began its second life as a museum. Today, visitors can explore:

- ➊ Ancient weapons collection
- ➋ Traditional costumes and textiles
- ➌ Agricultural implements from the period
- ➍ Historical photographs and documents
- ➎ Interactive displays about the fortress's role in Saudi history

Visitor Information

➤ Best Times to Visit

- ➔ Open daily
- ➔ Morning visits offer the best natural light for photography
- ➔ Weekday mornings tend to be less crowded

➤ What to See

- ➔ Don't miss the spear mark on the wooden door, a reminder of the 1902 battle
- ➔ Climb to the towers for panoramic views of old Riyadh
- ➔ Examine the traditional building techniques in the exposed walls
- ➔ Study the historical artifacts in the museum collection

➤ Tips for Visitors

- ➔ Photography is permitted in most areas
- ➔ Guided tours are available in multiple languages
- ➔ Plan for at least 12- hours to fully explore the site
- ➔ Visit during winter months for more comfortable temperatures



➔ Cultural Significance

As part of the King Abdulaziz Historical Centre, Al Masmak serves as a bridge between Saudi Arabia's past and present. Its centennial celebration in 1999 highlighted its enduring importance to the nation's identity. The fortress stands as a reminder of how a single building can embody the spirit of an entire nation's journey.

➤ Travel Tip:



Consider combining your visit with tours of nearby historic sites in the al-Hukm Palace District, as Al Masmak is perfectly positioned for exploring old Riyadh on foot.

➔ Legacy

Nowadays, Al Masmak is something more than a museum; it's a sign of Saudi resilience and vision. As one of the few surviving historic buildings in the kingdom, it offers the visitor a rare look into the architectural and cultural heritage of pre-modern Arabia. Be you a history enthusiast, an amateur of architecture, or just interested in Saudi Arabia, Al Masmak Fortress takes you on an unforgettable journey through time.



04

Diriyah: Cradle of the Saudi State

DIRIYAH



The Birthplace of Modern Saudi Arabia

Standing on the banks of Wadi Hanifa, Diriyah whispers tales of the birth of an empire. This remarkable city, founded in 850 AH on land that once received life-giving floods in the desert, grew from a humble settlement to the capital of the First Saudi State- a transformation that would forever change the Arabian Peninsula.



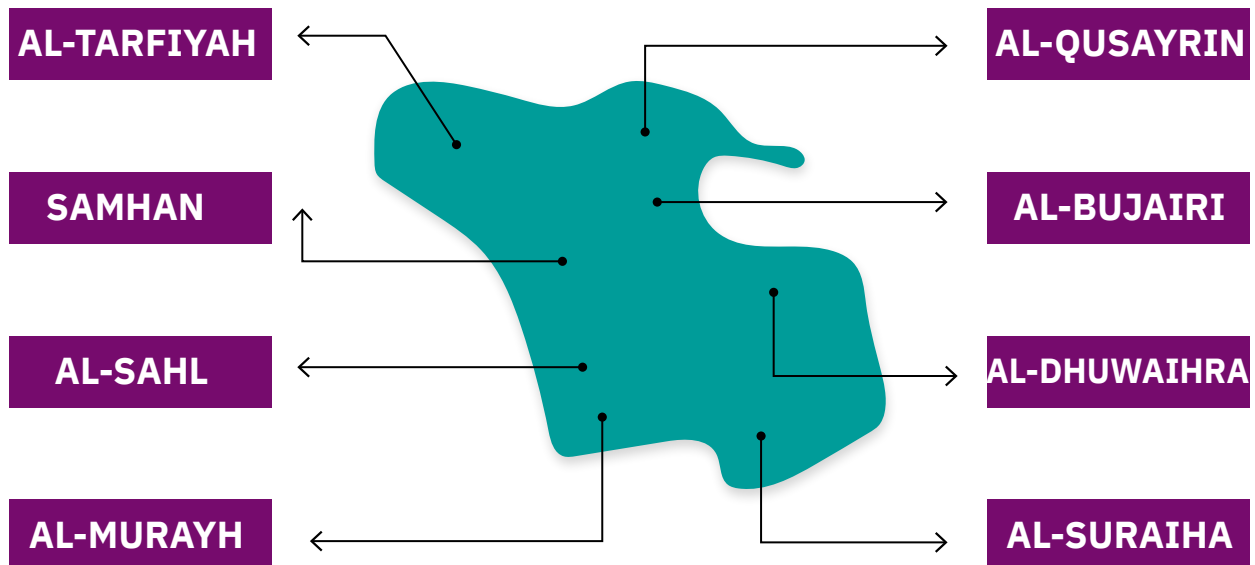
➔ A Journey Through Time

➤ The Foundation (1727 CE)

When in 1727 Imam Muhammed bin Saud founded the First Saudi State, he envisaged something significantly more than a political unit. Under the his leadership, this garrison city-state blossomed at Diriyah into an extremely powerful center of knowledge cultivation, culture, and trade to relieve a millennium of regional vagaries.

➤ The Growth of a Capital

Diriyah emerged from that simple start in the Ghusaybah district into all its vivid quarters:



Architectural Marvels

➤ The Turaif District

Later in 1735, during the reign of Imam Abdul Aziz bin Muhammad, the capital shifted to Turaif, where visitors can still find the following:

➤ Salwa Palace

- ➔ A marvel of architectural ingenuity that stands tall at 2223- meters high
- ➔ Massive walls that have endured centuries
- ➔ Unmatched blend of defensive strength and royal grandeur.



➤ Traditional Architectural Elements

- ➔ **Hiqaf:** Decorative cornices, protecting walls from rain
- ➔ **Zaraniq:** Distinctive upper corner designs
- ➔ **Sharaf:** Elaborate ornamentations of roofs
- ➔ **Lahooj:** Triangular ventilation holes typical of Najdi architecture



➔ Cultural Heritage

➤ Education and Knowledge

The Al-Bujairi district bears witness to Diriyah's respect for learning:

- ➔ 30 schools in one neighborhood
- ➔ A 200-student educational complex offering full accommodations
- ➔ Mosque study circles attracting scholars from across the Peninsula

➤ Arts and Entertainment

- ➔ **The Rawi or Storyteller:** Keeping the oral traditions going
- ➔ **Nakhwat Al-Awja:** Pride and belonging; through traditional calls.
- ➔ **Traditional musical** heritage with the use of Al-Takhmeer and Al-Tathlith drums Traditional dances include Al-Ardah and Al-Samri.

➤ Calligraphy and Literature

- ➔ A well-known school of calligraphy and transcription
- ➔ Women's educational circles and the women calligraphers
- ➔ Rich tradition of copying Quranic manuscripts.

Visitor Information

➤ What to See

- ➔ Turaif UNESCO World Heritage site, restored
- ➔ Traditional architecture featuring Najdi building styles
- ➔ Historical mosques and educational centers
- ➔ Cultural performances and demonstrations

➤ Best Times to Visit

- ➔ Winter months (November to February) offer pleasant temperatures
- ➔ Early morning or late afternoon for the best photography light
- ➔ Check for special cultural events and festivals

➤ Tips for Visitors

- ➔ Book guided tours for deeper historical insights
- ➔ Allow at least half a day to explore the main sites
- ➔ Bring sun protection
- ➔ Consider combining with visits to nearby historic sites

➡ Modern Significance

Today's Diriyah stands as a bridge between past and present, where careful preservation meets modern development. The 13-kilometer historical wall that once protected the city now embraces visitors from around the world, inviting them to explore Saudi Arabia's cultural roots.



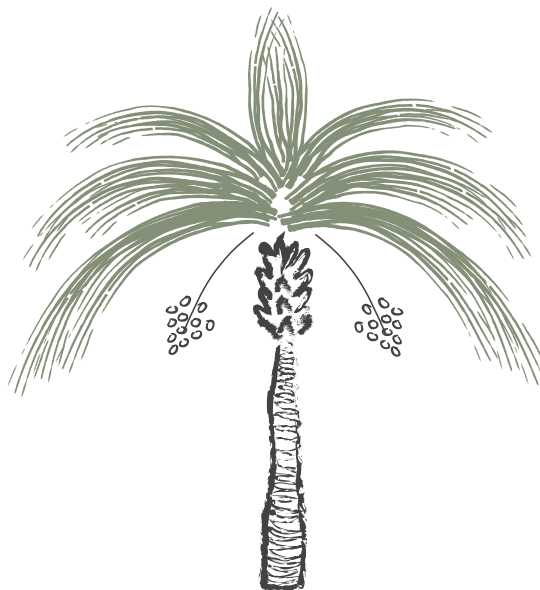
**➤ Travel Tip:**

Visit Al-Bujairi district at sunset to see the traditional architecture illuminated in golden light, then enjoy dinner at one of the area's restaurants offering traditional Najdi cuisine.

➤ Legacy

Diriyah's transformation from a modest settlement to the cradle of the Saudi state mirrors the kingdom's broader journey. Each stone in its ancient walls, every preserved manuscript, and all the continuing traditions tell the story of a civilization that grew from desert roots to global significance.

As you walk through its restored streets today, you're not just visiting a historical site – you're experiencing the foundation upon which modern Saudi Arabia was built. From the educational legacy of its 30 schools to the architectural innovations that influenced the entire region, Diriyah remains a living testament to the vision of its founders and the enduring spirit of Saudi culture.





05

Zarqa Al-Yamama: The Eagle-Eyed Guardian of Ancient Arabia

A Legend from Ancient Najd



“

The Legend That Lives On

In the sweeping deserts of ancient Najd, where the modern city of Riyadh now stands, lived a woman whose name would become legendary throughout Arabia. Zarqa Al-Yamama, the blue-eyed seer of the Jadis tribe, possessed vision so keen she could spot approaching armies from three days' walking distance – a gift that would ultimately lead to both her tribe's salvation and its tragic downfall.



➤ The Woman Behind the Legend

Her name is originally derived from a subject of captivating debate among historians: some hold the view that “Yamama” came from her tribe, while others are of the view that her tribe adopted the name after fame spread in Arabia. Certain is the fact that a reputation for extraordinary vision became so renown that to this day, Arabs refer to anyone who has great eyesight as “More sharp-sighted than Zarqa Al-Yamama.”

➤ The Secret of Her Sight

The legendary vision of Zarqa historically was not altogether natural; she ascribed her gift to the habitual use of Ithmid stone as kohl -an ancient beauty practice that modern science has also verified to be good for the health of the eyes. The same stone later was recommended in prophetic medicine by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), thereby giving this traditional practice a kind of religious hue.

➤ Cultural Legacy

➤ Traditional Medicine

- ➔ Ithmid stone is still used in traditional Arabian medicine.
- ➔ This natural kohl is still sold at local markets; tourists, however, are advised to buy only from reputable sellers.
- ➔ It is a practice that bridges ancient wisdom with modern scientific validation.

➤ Linguistic Impact

- ➔ The Arabic language has kept her memory alive in proverbs.
- ➔ Her story features in classical Arabic literature and form.
- ➔ Modern Saudi authors continue to refer to her story in modern works.



➤ The Tragic Tale

The story of Zarqa Al-Yamama celebrates human capability and yet stands as a warning to those trusting in the watchfulness of others. She would go up to the top of heights and survey the horizon, warning her people of oncoming threats.

For years, her warnings kept her people from raiders and invading armies. But fate had a twist in store: her final and most important sighting would turn out to be ignored-as indeed had happened with countless previous prophetic warnings-including what turned out to be its own fulfillment, a result of which its time soon came to an inglorious end. When Zarqa beheld an ‘advancing forest’, indeed the attacking army camouflaging themselves under tree branches, her countrymen mocked her, guffawing at impossibility; the incredulous became beaten, and the victorious army commander ordered, in the aftermath of merciless revenge, that Zarqa’s eyes be torn from their sockets to bring closure to this epoch of the life and times of the famous Arabic soothsayer.

➤ Modern Relevance

The heritage of Zarqa Al-Yamama is represented nowadays in several ways:

- 1 Her story is also taught in Saudi schools as part of cultural heritage education.
- 2 Local beauty products mention that she used Ithmid.
- 3 Her story has been an inspiration for many a piece of modern literature and art.
- 4 The theme of “**vision beyond sight**” is in Saudi cultural production today.

➤ For the Modern Traveler

Although there is no historic site designated for Zarqa’s story, her legacy can be sought during a visit to Riyadh in the following manner:

- 1 **The National Museum of Saudi Arabia:** ancient Arabian legends exhibit
- 2 Souqs selling traditional Ithmid kohl
- 3 **Cultural center events in the form of local storytelling Literary tours:** Arabian folklore.





➤ Travel Tip:



The real Ithmid kohl can be found in old Riyadh traditional markets; just make sure to buy from certified vendors who can assure you of the authenticity and safety of the product.

➤ Cultural Impact

The tale of Zarqa Al-Yamama echoes beyond its historic framing to touch on the universality of themes such as:

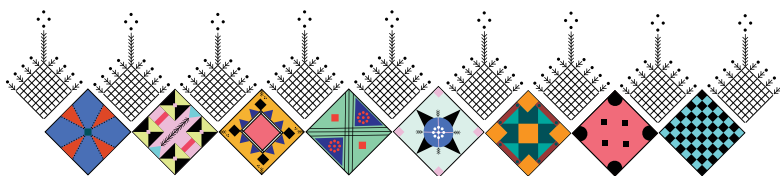
- 1 The power of foresight and wisdom
- 2 The tragedy of unheeded warnings
- 3 The price of disbelief in extraordinary abilities
- 4 The intersection of beauty practices and practical benefits

For visitors to Saudi Arabia, understanding this legend provides deeper insight into the cultural values and historical heritage that have shaped the modern kingdom. Her story represents the rich oral tradition of Arabia, where historical facts and legendary elements combine to create powerful narratives that continue to influence culture today.

➤ Historical Note:



While the exact location of the ancient land of Jadis is lost to time, the story of Zarqa Al-Yamama remains a vital part of the region's cultural landscape, particularly in the areas around modern-day Riyadh.





06

The Edge of the World: Saudi Arabia's Grand Canyon

Tuwaiq Mountains, Riyadh Region



“

Nature's Masterpiece

Rising dramatically from the desert floor, the Tuwaiq Mountains stretch like a great stone collar (*tawq* in Arabic) around the Najd region, culminating in one of Saudi Arabia's most spectacular natural wonders – the Edge of the World. This breathtaking escarpment, reminiscent of Arizona's Grand Canyon, offers visitors a chance to stand at the brink of a 100-meter cliff face and gaze across an ancient ocean bed that stretches to the horizon.



➔ The Living Mountain

➤ Geological Marvel

- ➔ An 800-kilometer limestone arc from Zulfi to the Empty Quarter
- ➔ Cliffs rising 100-250 meters above the surrounding plains
- ➔ Rich fossil deposits including:
 - ➔ Petrified coral reefs
 - ➔ Ancient shells
 - ➔ Ammonites
 - ➔ Marine organisms from 160 million years ago

➤ Cultural Significance

The mountain range has become a symbol of Saudi resilience, immortalized in Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's words: **"The determination of Saudis is like Mount Tuwaiq, and will not break unless this mountain collapses and levels with the ground."**

Visitor's Guide

➤ Getting There

- ➔ Located 35km from Riyadh
- ➔ Near Al-Uyaynah village and Wadi Hanifa
- ➔ Accessible by 4x4 vehicles
- ➔ Multiple tour operators offer guided trips from Riyadh

➤ Best Times to Visit

- ➔ October to March for comfortable temperatures
- ➔ Early morning or late afternoon for best photography
- ➔ Weekdays for fewer crowds
- ➔ Sunset visits for spectacular views



Essential Equipment

- Sturdy hiking boots
- Sun protection (hat, sunscreen, sunglasses)
- Plenty of water
- Camera
- Light jacket (evenings can be cool)
- Basic first aid kit





➤ Activities

- ➔ Photography
- ➔ Hiking
- ➔ Rock climbing (with proper equipment and guidance)
- ➔ Sunset watching
- ➔ Geological exploration
- ➔ Desert camping

➤ Photography Tips

- ➔ Dawn and dusk offer the best lighting
- ➔ Bring a wide-angle lens for landscape shots
- ➔ Popular spots marked on trail maps

Safety First

➤ Important Precautions

- ➔ Stay at least 2 meters from cliff edges
- ➔ Follow marked trails
- ➔ Never hike alone
- ➔ Check weather forecasts (avoid during rain)
- ➔ Carry emergency contacts
- ➔ Register with local authorities if planning extended stays

➤ Trail Information

- ➔ Multiple difficulty levels available
- ➔ Marked paths for different experience levels
- ➔ Guide recommended for first-time visitors
- ➔ Allow 24- hours for typical visit

➤ Future Development

The area is undergoing significant development as part of Saudi Arabia's tourism initiatives:

- ① New visitor facilities under construction
- ② Luxury Accommodations Planned
- ③ Improved access roads
- ④ Improved safety features
- ⑤ Guided tour services expansion

➡ Natural Heritage

➤ Flora and Fauna

- ➔ Acacia trees (locally known as “desert diamonds”)
- ➔ Desert-adapted vegetation
- ➔ Native wildlife viewing opportunities
- ➔ Seasonal wildflower displays

➤ Conservation

- ➔ Protected geological site
- ➔ Leave-no-trace principles enforced
- ➔ Designated camping areas
- ➔ Wildlife protection measures

Travel Tips

➤ Planning Your Visit

- ➔ Book guided tours in advance
- ➔ Check seasonal access restrictions
- ➔ Coordinate with local tour operators
- ➔ Consider joining group expeditions for first visits





➤ What to Pack

- ➔ Comfortable, loose-fitting clothing
- ➔ Layers for temperature changes
- ➔ High-energy snacks
- ➔ Navigation tools
- ➔ Power banks for devices

➤ Travel Tip:



Many visitors combine their trip with a visit to nearby Wadi Hanifa for a full day of natural wonder exploration.

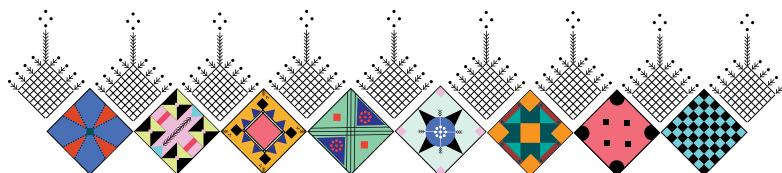
➔ Cultural Experience

- The Edge of the World has transformed from a local secret to an international destination, thanks partly to social media exposure. However, its majesty remains unchanged – a testament to the raw beauty of Saudi Arabia’s landscape and a symbol of the nation’s natural heritage.
- Whether you’re an adventure seeker, photography enthusiast, or nature lover, the Edge of the World offers an unforgettable experience that captures both the ancient history and modern spirit of Saudi Arabia.

➤ Safety Note:



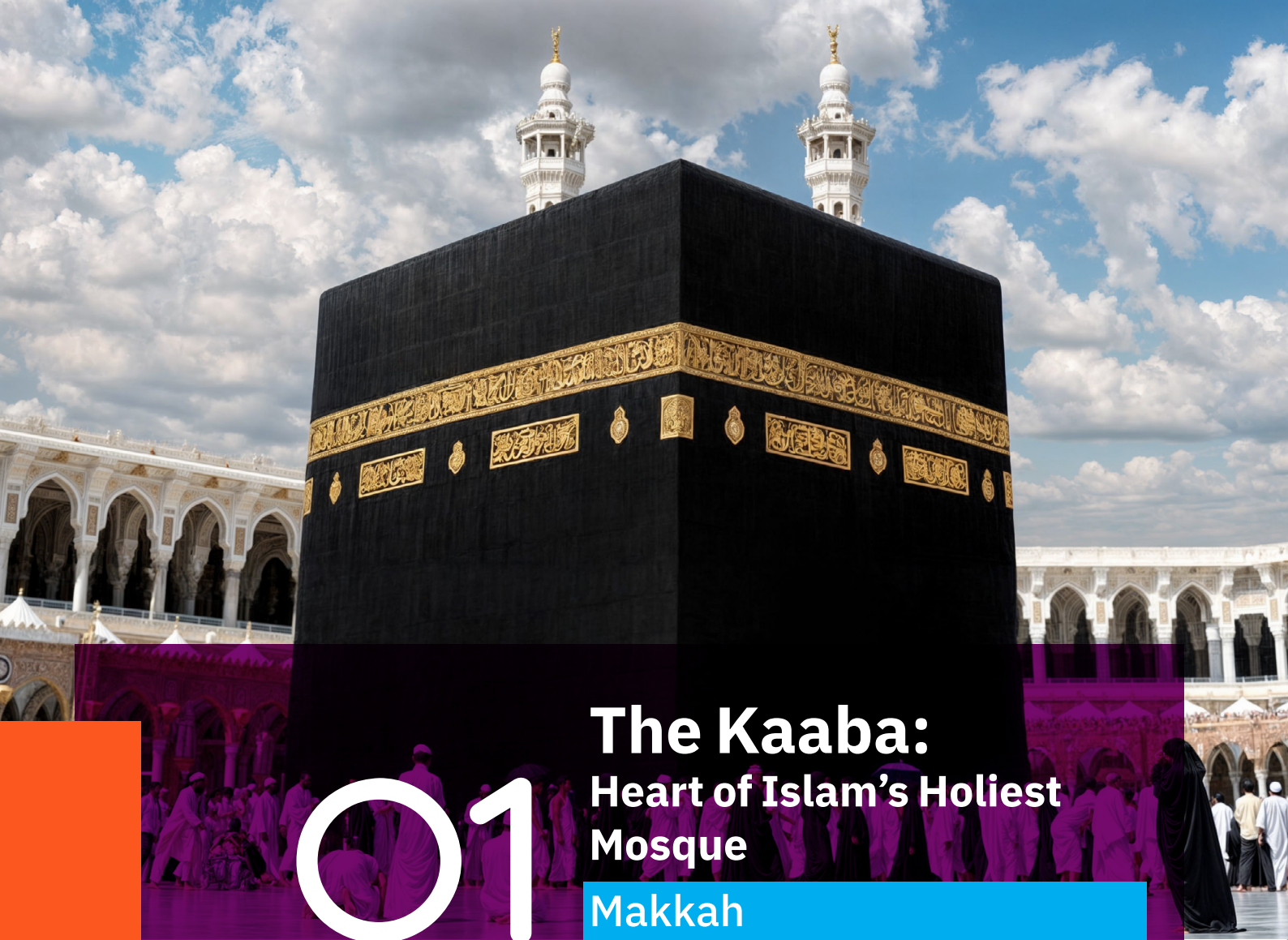
Always check current weather conditions and access requirements before planning your visit, as regulations and conditions can change seasonally.





” Western Region:





The Kaaba:

Heart of Islam's Holiest Mosque

Makkah



Sacred Heritage

At the center of Masjid al-Haram in Makkah stands the Kaaba (al-Ka'ba al-Musharrafa), Islam's most sacred site. This cubic structure, draped in black silk and gold calligraphy, serves as the qibla (direction of prayer) for nearly two billion Muslims worldwide. Known as Baytullah ('House of God'), its presence transforms Makkah into Islam's holiest city.



➤ Divine Origins

The Kaaba stands to this day, according to Islamic tradition, by the divine instruction of Allah, built, founded, and raised singly first by Prophet Ibrahim-what some people call Abraham-along with his son 'Ismail, known to others as Ishmael. There is a black stone that was brought by the angel Jibreel/Gabriel to be planted into its eastern corner- then placed there by Ibrahim upon an earlier foundation raising base prepared by them within this construction.

➤ Historical Journey

➤ Early History

- ➔ Originally constructed as a simple rectangular structure.
- ➔ It served as a spiritual hub for the tribes of the Arabian Peninsula.
- ➔ The Quraysh tribe rehabilitated it by wood and masonry in 608 CE.

➤ Islamic Era

- ➔ Was turned into the main shrine of Islam during the time of Prophet Muhammad
- ➔ the establishment of Muslim pilgrimage rights as specified by the Treaty of 628 CE
- ➔ Routine repairs and renovations throughout Islamic history

➤ Modern Care

The Saudi royal family has overseen the site's preservation and development since the kingdom's unification:

- ① Continuous maintenance and expansion projects
- ② Installation of modern amenities without losing spiritual authenticity.
- ③ Advanced technology integration for pilgrim comfort and safety

➤ Visitor Information

➤ Access

➤ Note:



Masjid al-Haram and Makkah are only accessible to Muslim visitors

➤ Documentation Required

- ➔ Valid passport
- ➔ Appropriate vis
- ➔ Health certificates as required

Best Times to Visit

- During the Non-Hajj periods when the conditions are not as crowded
- Ramadan for special spiritual atmosphere
- Early morning or late evening for cooler temperatures
- Check Islamic calendar for significant dates

➤ Preparation Essential

- ➔ Know etiquette and the right behavior
- ➔ Learn basic prayers and rituals
- ➔ Pack the right Islamic wear
- ➔ Bring comfortable footwear
- ➔ Physically prepare for crowds and walking

➤ Modern Facilities

The mosque complex has:

- ➊ Air conditioning throughout
- ➋ Escalators and elevators
- ➌ Advanced sound systems
- ➍ Wheelchair access
- ➎ Modern bathrooms
- ➏ Drinking water stations

➔ Spiritual Experience

➤ Tawaf: Circumambulation

- ➔ Seven counter-clockwise circuits around the Kaaba
- ➔ Starts and ends at the Black Stone corner
- ➔ Different levels available for convenience
- ➔ Special areas for wheel chair users

➤ Prayer Times

- ➔ Five daily prayers
- ➔ Additional voluntary prayers
- ➔ Special consideration at peak times
- ➔ Follow the instructions of mosque officials

➔ Practical Guidelines

➤ Etiquette

- ➔ Maintain respectful silence
- ➔ Follow dress code strictly
- ➔ Switch off or keep the mobile phones silent
- ➔ No photography during the prayers



➤ Safety and Comfort

- ➔ Stay hydrated
- ➔ Follow crowd flow
- ➔ Keep physical contact minimal
- ➔ Listen for security instructions
- ➔ Stay with your group if applicable

➤ Services Available

- ➔ Multi-language information desks
- ➔ Medical facilities
- ➔ Lost and found
- ➔ Prayer guidance
- ➔ Translation services

➔ Cultural Significance

The Kaaba represents the unity of the Muslim ummah, in which believers from every part of the world come with white robes, washing off worldly distinctions. It's one big equality symbol and the shared faith automatically generates this very aura that constitutes deep spiritual brotherhood.

➤ Technological Integration

Recent developments include:

- 1 Smart crowd management systems
- 2 Digital guidance services
- 3 Environmental control systems
- 4 Advanced security measures
- 5 Real-time Capacity Monitoring



➤ Travel Note:



Being the most sacred place in Islam, the approach to the visit and the preparation toward it are quite important. Firstcomers are recommended to take part in guided groups of people.

➤ Future Development

Ongoing projects continue to enhance the visitor experience while preserving the site's sacred character:

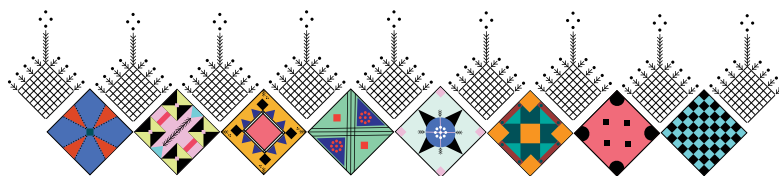
- 1 Sustainable infrastructure improvements
- 2 Expanded capacity initiatives
- 3 Enhanced pilgrim services
- 4 Environmental protection measures
- 5 Improved accessibility features

The Kaaba is no mere building; it's the spiritual heart of Islam, to which millions come together in union, year after year, with the purpose of being in touch with the very grassroots of their religion. This well-preserved and thoughtfully modernized structure will stand long into the future as a beacon of faith for all.

➤ Important:



Always check current visit requirements and regulations, which might change at any moment for various reasons, including religious occasions and global conditions.





02

The Black Stone: Heaven's Gift to the Kaaba

MAKKAH



Sacred Origins

The Black Stone, Al Hajar al-Aswad, was set into the eastern corner of the Kaaba and is one of the most venerated objects in Islam. According to the Islamic tradition, this meteorite originally shone whiter than milk but has turned black through its contact with humanity, having fallen from Paradise itself.



➤ Divine Heritage

➤ Origins in Paradise

- ➔ Given to Prophet Adam upon his descent from Paradise.
- ➔ Later entrusted to Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) by the Angel Jibreel (Gabriel)
- ➔ Placed in the eastern corner of the Kaaba during its construction

➤ Historical Significance

The placing of the stone held something very special in Islamic history:

- ① Prophet Ibrahim and his son Ismail completed the structure of the Kaaba with this Gift of Allah.
- ② It marks the beginning and the end of Tawaf or the circumambulation.
- ③ Countless prophets, companions, and millions of believers have honored it through the ages

➤ Physical Description

➤ Current State

- ➔ Divided into three main parts
- ➔ Fragments held together by a silver band
- ➔ Encased in a ring of a stone that protects it
- ➔ Situated at the perfect height for pilgrims to view

➤ Spiritual Significance

➤ Religious Importance

According to the Islamic traditions:

- ① Duas (supplications) made at the Black Stone are especially blessed
- ② The stone will testify on the Day of Judgment on behalf of those who respected it.
- ③ It is the symbol of the covenant between Allah and mankind.





➤ Prophetic Teachings

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

- ➊ The stone will come on the Day of Judgment
- ➋ It will testify to the faith of those who visited it
- ➌ It absorbs the sins of humanity, a reason for its change from white to black

Visitor Guidance

➤ Proper Etiquette

- ➔ Approach with awe and respect
- ➔ Follow the flow of crowds in peak periods
- ➔ Keep calm and composed
- ➔ Listen to mosque officials for further instructions

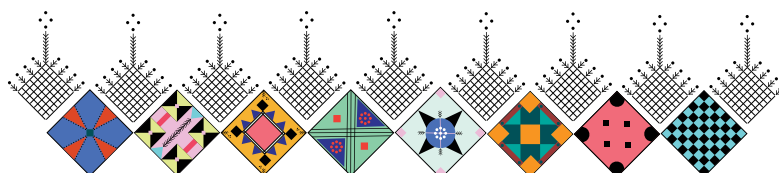
➤ Visiting Times

- ➔ Less crowded during non-peak prayer times
- ➔ Early morning or late night for easier access
- ➔ Patience during busy periods

➤ Cultural Impact

The Black Stone represents:

- ➊ The eternal bond between heaven and earth
- ➋ The Covenant of Humanity with Allah
- ➌ The unity of the believing Muslims through time.
- ➍ The cleansing of sins through divine mercy





➔ Contemporary Care

➤ Preservation Measures

- ➔ Protected by special encasement
- ➔ Regular maintenance and cleaning
- ➔ Climate-controlled environment
- ➔ Security monitoring
- ➔ Careful crowd management

➤ Access Management

- ➔ Organized queuing during peak times
- ➔ Special arrangements during Hajj
- ➔ Dedicated paths for elderly and disabled visitors
- ➔ Security personnel guidance

Practical Tips for Visitors

➤ When Approaching

- ➔ Be mindful of crowds
- ➔ Keep the focus on spiritual aspects
- ➔ Avoid forcing or pushing - Follow official guidance
- ➔ Keep ritual purity

➤ Best Practices

- ➔ Learn prayers relevant for the case in advance
- ➔ Be patient during busy hours
- ➔ Consider visiting at off-peak times
- ➔ Respect other pilgrims - Follow official instructions



➤ Important Note:



Given the great significance of the Black Stone in Islam, visits should be carried out with much respect and decorum. The pilgrims should seek spiritual contact rather than physical contact, especially during periods of congestion.

➤ Historical Legacy

The Black Stone is a physical link between :

- ➊ The realms of the divine and the earthly
- ➋ Ancient prophets and modern believers
- ➌ Individual faith and communal worship
- ➍ Paradise and our life on earth

Its presence in the Kaaba continues to inspire millions of believers annually with the reminder of human spirituality and divine connection.

➤ **Pilgrim Reminder:**



As much as the Black Stone is important, the intention should be that indeed the greatest acts of pilgrimage in themselves are the worship of Allah alone. The stone is an ascribed, blessed symbol, not to be worshipped.



03

Masjid Quba: The First Mosque of Islam

MADINAH



“

Historical Significance

Located in the outskirts of Madinah, approximately 6 kilometers from the city center, Masjid Quba holds the distinction of being one of Islam's oldest mosques. Its foundations were laid by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) himself, marking it as a site of profound spiritual significance. According to tradition, it was here that the Prophet's female camel knelt to drink from a well during his historic migration from Makkah to Madinah.

➡ Architectural Marvel

➤ Modern Structure (1986 Renovation)

- ➡ Rectangular prayer hall on the second floor
- ➡ Connected complex including:
 - ➡ Libraries
 - ➡ Offices
 - ➡ Shops
 - ➡ Community facilities

➤ Distinctive Features

- ➡ 7 main entrances
- ➡ 12 minor entrances
- ➡ 4 parallel minarets
- ➡ 56 mini domes forming the perimeter
- ➡ Elegant marble courtyard in black, red, and white
- ➡ White marble minbar and mihrab

➤ Prayer Spaces

- ➡ Central courtyard surrounded by 6 large domes
- ➡ Clustered columns supporting the domes
- ➡ Two-bay deep portico
- ➡ Separate prayer halls for men and women
- ➡ Dual-section women's prayer area

➡ Visitor Information

➤ Location & Access

- ➡ 6 kilometers away from central Madinah
- ➡ Accessible by taxi or organized transport
- ➡ Plenty of parking available
- ➡ Well-connected to main roads





Best Times to Visit

- Early morning for peace in the atmosphere
- Between prayer times for less crowds
- Weekdays for easier access
- During cooler months for comfort

➤ Essential Tips



- Dress appropriately and modestly
- Bring camera (photography usually was given permission in courtyards)

➤ Facilities

- ➔ Modern ablution areas
- ➔ Air conditioning throughout
- ➔ Clean restroom facilities
- ➔ Drinking water stations
- ➔ Shoe storage area
- ➔ Wheelchair accessibility

➤ Spiritual Experience

➤ Religious Significance

- ➔ First mosque ever built in the history of Islam
- ➔ Prophet Muhammad regularly used to visit
- ➔ Special rewards are mentioned for praying here.
- ➔ Important stop for pilgrims

➤ Prayer Opportunities

- ➔ Five daily prayers
- ➔ Quiet areas for personal devotion
- ➔ Chance to pray where the Prophet prayed
- ➔ Spiritual attachment to early Islamic history

Practical Guidelines

➤ Visit Duration

- ➔ Allow 12 hours for complete visit
- ➔ Additional time for prayers
- ➔ More time during peak seasons

➤ What to Bring

- ➔ Prayer clothes
- ➔ Camera (if applicable)
- ➔ Basic toiletries

➤ Etiquette

- ➔ Shoes must be removed before entering the prayer areas.
- ➔ Maintain quiet and respectful behavior
- ➔ Listen to mosque officials
- ➔ Switch off or keep mobile phones silent

➤ Historical Journey

The mosque has been transformed several times, though its spiritual nature has been retained:

- ① 7th century original construction
- ② Single major reconstruction
- ③ Various minor renovations
- ④ Major modernization: 1986
- ⑤ Continuous maintenance and improvements



➤ Cultural Impact

Masjid Quba serves as:

- ① A living link with Islamic history
- ② An architectural wonder
- ③ A center of community worship
- ④ A pilgrimage site of much importance
- ⑤ A symbol of Islamic heritage

Planning Your Visit

➤ Transportation Options

- ➔ Local taxis
- ➔ Organized tours
- ➔ Private Vehicles
- ➔ Hotel shuttle service where available

➤ Combining Visits

- ➔ Can be combined with other Madinah sites
- ➔ Part of standard pilgrimage routes
- ➔ Located near other historical places
- ➔ Available for day trips

➤ Travel Tip:



Off-peak hours may have a more contemplative mood. Early mornings are often a good time to pray and be in reflection.

➤ Special Considerations

- ➔ Peak Times
- ➔ Ramadan and Hajj season
- ➔ Friday prayers
- ➔ Islamic holidays

➤ Weather Considerations

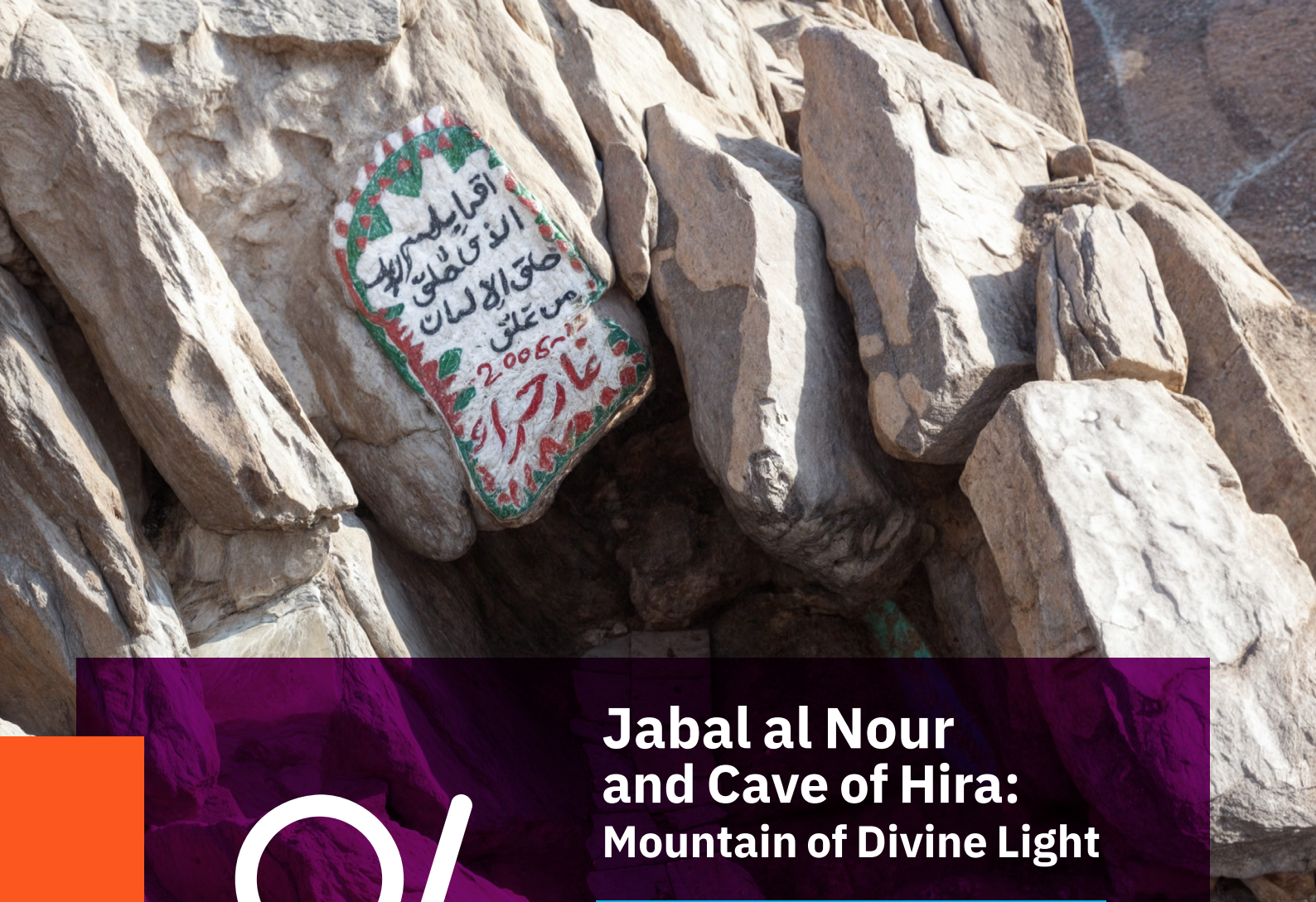
- ➔ Heat preparation is needed for summer visits.
- ➔ Winter is a more comfortable season
- ➔ Indoor area are climate controlled.
- ➔ The courtyard is hot during noontime

The Masjid Quba constitutes a historical monument, a living testimony of the Islamic faith and community. From this perspective, having continuous relevance in spiritual meaning, it must definitely form part of the tour program for the pilgrims and visitors going to Madinah.

➤ Note:



Always check the visiting condition and requirements in person since they can be changed at any time for many reasons, such as religious dates and renovation periods.



04

Jabal al Nour and Cave of Hira: Mountain of Divine Light

MAKKAH



“

Sacred Summit

Rising 640 meters above Makkah's landscape, Jabal al-Nour ("Mountain of Light") stands as a testament to one of Islam's most momentous events. It was here, in the Cave of Hira, that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) received his first divine revelation of the Quran - the initial five verses of Surah Al-Alaq from the Angel Jibra'il (Gabriel).

➡ Historical Significance

➤ The First Revelation

- ➡ Occurred during Laylat al-Qadr (Night of Fate)
- ➡ Estimated to be in August 610 CE
- ➡ Marked the beginning of Quranic revelation
- ➡ Changed the course of human history

➡ Distinctive Features

➤ Mountain Characteristics

- ➡ Unique double-peaked summit
- ➡ Appears as two mountains stacked
- ➡ Cave faces the direction of the Kaaba
- ➡ Stark, desert mountain environment
- ➡ Limited vegetation except for scattered thorns

➤ The Cave of Hira

- ➡ Natural grotto in the mountain
- ➡ Place of Prophet's meditation
- ➡ Faces the Kaaba's direction
- ➡ Offers solitude and spiritual atmosphere

➡ Climbing Guide

➤ The Ascent

- ➡ 1,750 steps to the summit
- ➡ Elevation: 640 meters (2,100 ft)
- ➡ Climbing time: 30 minutes to 3 hours
- ➡ Moderate to strenuous difficulty





Best Times to Climb

- Early morning for cooler temperatures
- Just after Fajr prayer
- Winter months for comfortable weather
- Avoid afternoon heat in summer

➤ Essential Preparation

➤ What to Bring

- ➔ Plenty of water (at least 2 liters per person)
- ➔ Comfortable, sturdy walking shoes
- ➔ Sun protection (hat, sunscreen, sunglasses)
- ➔ Light, modest clothing
- ➔ Basic first aid supplies
- ➔ Small towel
- ➔ Energy snacks

➤ Physical Preparation

- ➔ Moderate fitness level required
- ➔ Practice climbing stairs beforehand
- ➔ Consider altitude adjustment
- ➔ Rest as needed during ascent

➤ Safety Guidelines

➤ Climate Considerations

- ➔ Extreme heat possible
- ➔ No shade on most of the path
- ➔ Limited water sources
- ➔ Strong sun exposure

➤ Climbing Safety

- ➔ Use handrails where available
- ➔ Take regular rest breaks
- ➔ Stay on marked paths
- ➔ Avoid climbing in wet conditions
- ➔ Don't climb alone if possible

Visitor Tips

➤ Time Management

- ➔ Allow 3-4 hours for complete visit
- ➔ Start early to avoid crowds
- ➔ Consider prayer times
- ➔ Plan for rest stops

➤ Practical Advice

- ➔ Bring only essential items
- ➔ Wear non-slip shoes
- ➔ Carry minimal weight
- ➔ Use walking stick if needed
- ➔ Stay hydrated

➤ Spiritual Experience

➤ Preparation

- ➔ Learn the history of the place beforehand
- ➔ Know the prayers that are relevant
- ➔ Maintain respectful behavior



➤ At the Cave

- ➔ Space for quiet reflection
- ➔ Opportunity for personal prayer
- ➔ Limited time during busy periods
- ➔ Follow instructions provided by site officials

➤ Access Information

➤ Location

- ➔ Accessible from Makkah city
- ➔ Transportation provided
- ➔ Parking at mountain base
- ➔ Clear signage to starting point

➤ Facilities

- ➔ Basic facilities at base
- ➔ Limited amenities on climb
- ➔ Rest areas along path
- ➔ Emergency services

➤ Cultural Impact

The mountain stands as:

- ① A symbol of divine revelation
- ② Eyewitness to Islamic history
- ③ Place of spiritual contemplation
- ④ Monument to the Prophet's devotion

➤ Photography Guidelines

- ➔ Generally permitted in most areas
- ➔ Respect other visitors
- ➔ Avoid crowding viewpoints
- ➔ Best light in early morning

Special Considerations

➤ For Elderly Visitors

- ➔ Consider physical limitations
- ➔ Take regular breaks
- ➔ Make use of support facilities
- ➔ Choose cooler times

➤ Group Visits

- ➔ Stay together
- ➔ Monitor slower members
- ➔ Sharing of water resources
- ➔ Keep communicating

➤ Travel Tip:



Consider hiring a local guide who can explain the historical and spiritual significance of the site while ensuring you have a safe climb.

➤ Environmental Respect

- ➔ Take nothing but pictures
- ➔ Leave nothing but footprints
- ➔ Stay on marked paths
- ➔ Preserve the natural state
- ➔ Respect the sacred space

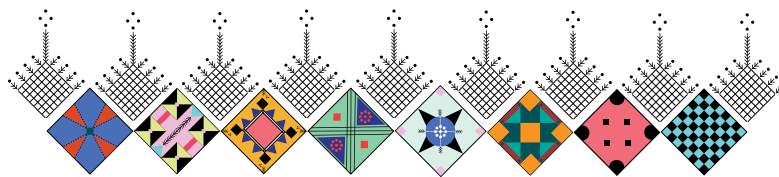


At Jabal al-Nour, one gets the utmost opportunity to relate himself with one of the most magnificent moments in Islam. Be it for a spiritual climb or an act of history, preparation and respect for the site's significance will assure a meaningful experience.

➤ Safety Note:



Always check current weather conditions and access requirements before attempting the climb, and follow all posted safety guidelines and official instructions.





05

Souk Okaz: Where Ancient Arabia's Spirit Lives On

TAIF



“

A Legacy Reborn

Sprawling across 14 million square meters in the hills of Taif, today's Souk Okaz brings to life the spirit of pre-Islamic Arabia's most renowned marketplace. Where once poets competed and tribes gathered to settle disputes, a vibrant cultural festival now celebrates Saudi Arabia's rich heritage.





➡ Historical Significance

➤ Ancient Origins (542-726 CE)

- ➔ Largest annual fair in pre-Islamic Arabia
- ➔ Operated for 21 days during Dhu al-Qa'dah
- ➔ Strategic location for Spice Route
- ➔ Flourished for Byzantine Persian wars
- ➔ Managed primarily for Banu Tamim

➤ Traditional Functions

- ➔ Commercial marketplace
- ➔ Tribal dispute resolutions
- ➔ Poetry competitions
- ➔ Sporting events
- ➔ Treaty announcements
- ➔ Religious gatherings
- ➔ Cultural exchange-hub

➡ The Modern Experience

➤ Festival Highlights

- ➔ Annual poet honoree
- ➔ Cultural performances
- ➔ Poetry recitations
- ➔ Art exhibitions
- ➔ Sporting competitions
- ➔ Traditional craft demonstration
- ➔ History of reenactment



➤ Shopping Experiences

200 specialized shop featuring:

- ➊ Traditional pottery
- ➋ Handcrafted silverware
- ➌ Artistic glassware
- ➍ Wall arts
- ➎ Historical manuscripts
- ➏ Local crafts
- ➐ Traditional goods

Visitor Information

➤ Best Times to Visit

- ➔ Check dates of festivals, usually in conjunction with local events.
- ➔ Early mornings or late afternoon for comfortable temperature
- ➔ Evening for cultural performances
- ➔ Special atmosphere during poetry competitions

➤ Essential Tips

- ➔ Wear comfortable walking shoes
- ➔ Bring sun protection
- ➔ Carry water
- ➔ Bring cash to spend
- ➔ Camera for special photo opportunities

➤ Facility

- ➔ Modern amenities
- ➔ Rest areas
- ➔ Prayer facilities
- ➔ Dining options
- ➔ Information centers
- ➔ Parking
- ➔ First aid stations



➔ Cultural Activities

➤ Regular Events

- ➔ Poetry readings
- ➔ Traditional music
- ➔ Dance performances
- ➔ Handicraft demonstrations
- ➔ Historical lectures
- ➔ Cultural workshops
- ➔ Storytelling sessions

➤ Interactive Experiences

- ➔ Traditional crafts workshops
- ➔ Poetry writing session
- ➔ Cultural demonstrations
- ➔ Historical reenactments
- ➔ Traditional games
- ➔ Arabian horse shows



➔ Shopping Guide

➤ What to Buy

➤ Traditional Crafts

1

- ➔ Handmade pottery
- ➔ Silver jewelry
- ➔ Glass artifacts
- ➔ Traditional textiles
- ➔ Local artwork



➤ Cultural Items

2

- Historical replicas
- Traditional clothing
- Arabic calligraphy
- Local spices
- Traditional perfumes

Shopping Tips

- **Immerse Before You Purchase:** Take time to explore the festival atmosphere before rushing into purchases. Often, the most meaningful items are found after engaging with the stories behind them.
- **Ask, Listen, Learn:** Engage vendors in conversation. Many crafts are made by artisans who hold generational knowledge—what you buy may come with a tale far older than it looks.
- **Beware the Beautiful Distraction:** With over 200 stalls and performances around, it's easy to forget what you came for. Make a loose plan—but allow for surprise discoveries.
- **Crafted, Not Manufactured:** Prioritize items made onsite or demonstrated during the festival. These are often the most authentic and meaningful keepsakes.
- **Evening Magic:** Cultural stalls and artisans often light their spaces beautifully after sunset—both for ambiance and display. It's an ideal time to shop and photograph.

➡ Practical Information

➤ Getting There

- ➔ Accessible for Taif city
- ➔ Parking available
- ➔ Tour buses welcome
- ➔ Taxi services available

➤ Duration of Visit

- ➔ Allow full day to complete experience
- ➔ Half-day for highlights
- ➔ Evening visits to performances
- ➔ Multiple days for festival period



➤ Cultural Significance

Today Souk Okaz serves as:

- ➊ Living museum for Arabian culture
- ➋ Platform of traditional arts
- ➌ Cultural educational center
- ➍ Community gather spaces
- ➎ Tourist attraction

➔ Special Features

➤ Educational Elements

- ➔ Historical exhibits
- ➔ Cultural demonstrations
- ➔ Tradition craft workshops
- ➔ Poetry masterclasses
- ➔ Historical lectures

➤ Entertainment

- ➔ Traditional music shows
- ➔ Poetry competitions
- ➔ Cultural performances
- ➔ Children's activities
- ➔ Traditional sports

Tips for Photographers

➤ Best Photo Opportunities

- ➔ Tradition craftsmen for work
- ➔ Cultural performances
- ➔ Historical reenactments
- ➔ Traditional architecture
- ➔ Festival celebrations



➤ Photography Guidelines

- ➔ Respect performers privacy
- ➔ Ask permissions to portraits
- ➔ Best light for early morning late afternoon
- ➔ Special permission from commercial photography

➔ Seasonal Considerations

➤ Weather

- ➔ Hot for summer days
- ➔ Pleasant evenings
- ➔ Mild winter climate
- ➔ Limit shade for some areas



➤ Peak Times

- ➔ Festival periods
- ➔ Cultural events
- ➔ Local holidays
- ➔ Weekend evenings

➤ Travel Tip:



Time yourself to catch one of the high-profile cultural events or traditional poetry competitions for the finest experience in the revival and celebration of Arabian tradition-named Souk Okaz.

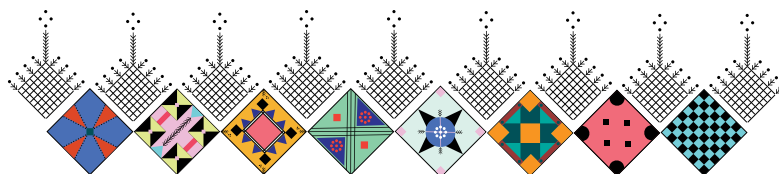
➤ Preserving Tradition

Souk Okaz acts like a connecting link between the rich past of Arabia and the brilliant present, enabling a visitor to experience specially all those cultural traditions that shape the region. Be they history buffs, culture lovers, or shoppers, this souk gives them the real taste of Arabian heritage.

➤ Note:



Some of the events and event times/schedules are subject to season and year. You need to check on any programs currently running when you actually visit.





06

Zamzam: The Sacred Waters of Makkah Grand Mosque, MAKKAH



“

Sacred Origins

Located 21 meters east of the Kaaba, the Zamzam Well bears witness to divine mercy in the very center of Islam's holiest mosque. It has given its blessed water from some 2000 BCE until today, just as it did when it was given first to Prophet Ismail and his mother Hajar.





➤ The Miracle of Zamzam

➤ The Divine Plan

The well-known story of Zamzam initiates the beginning with an act of faith profound and an act of belief in Allah. On Divine Command, at the command of Allah, Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) left his wife Hajar and infant son Ismail to themselves in the barren valley of Makkah. Prior to leaving them to their fates, he sincerely supplicated:

“My Lord, I have settled part of my descendants in an uncultivated valley near Your sacred House, our Lord, that they may establish prayer. So make hearts among the people incline toward them and provide for them from the fruits that they might be grateful.” (Quran 14:37)

➤ The Miracle Unfolds

What followed was one of Islam’s most moving displays of faith and divine mercy:

- ➊ Left with limited provisions, Hajar’s water soon ran out
- ➋ Desperate to find water for her crying infant
- ➌ She ran back and forth seven times between the hills of Safa and Marwa
- ➍ Her devotion and trust in Allah never wavered
- ➎ The Angel Gabriel appeared and struck the earth
- ➏ Water miraculously sprang forth at Ismail’s feet
- ➐ Hajar quickly contained the spring, crying “Zam Zam” (stop, stop)

➤ A Prayer Answered Through Time

Ibrahim’s prayer for this land’s safety and prosperity continues to be answered:

- ➊ The barren valley became the holiest city in Islam
- ➋ The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has emerged as one of the world’s safest countries
- ➌ Millions of pilgrims visit annually in complete security
- ➍ The spring continues to flow abundantly after thousands of years
- ➎ Modern Saudi Arabia stands as a beacon of stability in the region



➤ Physical Characteristics

- ➔ **Depth:** 30 meters
- ➔ Multiple ancient springs feed the well
- ➔ **Flow rate:** 1118.5- liters per second
- ➔ Continuous flow since its emergence

➔ Modern Distribution System

➤ Purification and Bottling Facility

Located 4.5 kilometers from the Grand Mosque, this state-of-the-art facility includes:

➤ Main Components

- ➔ Air compressor building
- ➔ Raw water bottle warehouse
- ➔ Production lines
- ➔ Finished product warehouse
- ➔ Backup power generators

➤ Capacity and Technology

- ➔ Daily storage: 200,000 bottles
- ➔ Total area: 13,405 square meters
- ➔ 10 megawatt power capacity
- ➔ SCADA system monitoring
- ➔ Advanced purification systems

➤ Automated Storage System

The central warehouse features:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 Climate control | 5 Automated conveyor systems |
| 2 Fire safety systems | 6 Computer-controlled inventory |
| 3 15 storage levels | 7 High-capacity vertical lifts |
| 4 1.5 million bottle capacity | |





➤ Visitor Access

➤ Within the Grand Mosque

- ➔ Multiple drinking stations
- ➔ Dedicated areas for filling bottles
- ➔ Clean cups provided
- ➔ Regular maintenance
- ➔ Trained staff assistance

➤ Distribution Points

- ➔ 42 automated stations
- ➔ Token-based system
- ➔ Affordable pricing (5 SAR per 10L)
- ➔ Modern dispensing machines
- ➔ Hygienic handling

➤ Extension to Madinah

➤ Transport System

- ➔ Special tanker fleet
- ➔ Daily capacity: 120250- tons
- ➔ Peak season adjustments
- ➔ Strict quality control

➤ Prophet's Mosque Distribution

- ➔ 7,000 sterilized containers
- ➔ Refrigerated storage
- ➔ Multiple access points
- ➔ Coverages for mosque
- ➔ Regular maintenance

➡ Spiritual Significance

➤ Religious Importance

- ➔ Blessed water for healing properties
- ➔ section of Hajj and Umrah ritual
- ➔ Mentioned for authentic hadiths
- ➔ Continuous for history significance

➤ Traditional Uses

- ➔ Drinking
- ➔ Blessing
- ➔ Healing
- ➔ Gift giving
- ➔ Special occasions

➡ Visitor Guidelines

➤ Collecting Zamzam

- ➔ Follow the guidelines provided by mosque officials
- ➔ Use appropriate containers
- ➔ Maintain cleanliness
- ➔ Respect a queuing system.
- ➔ Handle with reverence

➤ Transportation Rules

- ➔ Check airline regulations
- ➔ Use proper containers
- ➔ Declare at the customs
- ➔ Follow quantity limits
- ➔ Correct packaging





Modern Infrastructure

➤ Quality Control

- Regular testing
- Advanced filtration
- Continuous monitoring
- Safety certifications
- Professional management

➤ Sustainability Measures

- Water conservation
- Energy efficiency
- Waste reduction
- Environmental protection
- Resource management

➔ Cultural Impact

➤ Global Distribution

- Available worldwide
- Special packaging
- Export regulations
- Quality preservation
- Cultural significances

➤ Visitor Note:



While the well itself was enclosed in a special enclosure, the Zamzam water is readily available for all pilgrims through the numerous distribution points within the Grand Mosque complex.



➤ Practical Information

➤ Access Times

- ➔ 247/ availability
- ➔ Peak prayer times busy
- ➔ Quieter during off-hours
- ➔ Ramadan special arrangement
- ➔ Hajj season consideration

➤ Storage Tips

- ➔ Keep in cool place
- ➔ Use the clean containers
- ➔ Avoid for direct sunlight
- ➔ Consume within limits
- ➔ Handle with respect



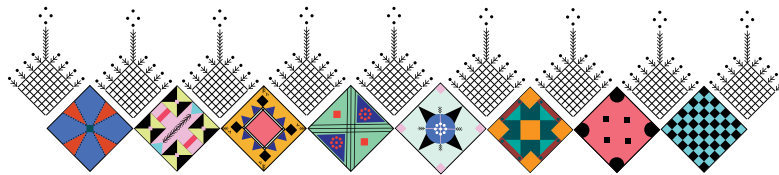


The Zamzam well is a symbol not only of the miraculous source of water but also, at the same time, how modern technology can stand in and distribute this blessing while keeping it sacred. From its humble beginning as a life-saving spring for Prophet Ismail and his mother to a sophisticated operation serving millions today, yet keeping its spiritual significance intact.

➤ Note:



The system of distribution and the points of access might vary per season and also due to renovation schedules. At all times, follow guidelines and instructions as may be laid down by the authorities in the mosque.





07

The Roses of Taif: Saudi Arabia's Liquid Gold

TAIF



“

A Heritage in Bloom

Centuries of love between man and flowers bloom in this mountain city located 88 km eastward from Mecca. During several centuries, these fabled roses have yielded part of the world's most precious perfumes and consequently created a legacy linking an artisanal tradition to the beauty of nature since the 9th century of Hijra.



➡ The Perfect Environment

➤ Location and Climate

- ➔ Al-Hada and Al-Shifa Mountains
- ➔ Optimal growing conditions
- ➔ Rain-watered roses finest
- ➔ Protected from extreme temperatures
- ➔ Traditional farming methods

➡ The Rose Season

➤ Harvest Time (Late March - Early April)

- ➔ Pre-dawn harvesting to capture the maximum amount of essence
- ➔ Daily rituals of collection
- ➔ Traditional gathering techniques
- ➔ Careful handling practices

➤ Production Numbers

- ➔ 8,000 roses for tree for season
- ➔ 200 roses in day average yield
- ➔ Multiple harvesting cycles
- ➔ Sustainable farming practices

➡ The Art of Extraction

➤ Traditional Process

- ➊ Collection before sunrise
- ➋ Processing in pure copper pots
- ➌ Boiling at 100°C for 12-14 hours
- ➍ Careful vaporization
- ➎ Precise condensation
- ➏ Multiple distillation stages

➤ Quality Markers

According to the experts:

- ➊ Slightly greenish-yellow color
- ➋ Subtle, authentic fragrance
- ➌ Non-staining properties
- ➍ Color stability
- ➎ Long-lasting scent
- ➏ Clean application

➔ Market and Economics

➤ Value

- ➔ Tola (11.7ml) costs: 1,600-2,000 SAR
- ➔ Annual industry value: 480 million SAR
- ➔ Production capacity: 300,000 tolas annually

➤ Distribution

- ➔ Pre-ordered by Gulf royalty
- ➔ Popular among prominent figures
- ➔ International demand
- ➔ Limited availability
- ➔ Exclusive market

Visitor Experience

➤ Best Times to Visit

- ➔ Rose season (March-April)
- ➔ Early morning tours
- ➔ Festival periods
- ➔ Special harvest events

➤ What to See

- ➔ Rose farms
- ➔ Traditional distilleries
- ➔ Production demonstrations
- ➔ Local markets
- ➔ Rose products

➔ Shopping Guide

➤ How to Buy Authentic Rose Oil

- ➔ Look for greenish-yellow color
- ➔ Test for non-staining properties
- ➔ Verify fragrance stability
- ➔ Purchase from reputable sellers
- ➔ Check certification if available

➤ Product Range

- ➔ Pure rose oil
- ➔ Rose water
- ➔ Perfume blends
- ➔ Beauty products
- ➔ Gift sets

➔ Cultural Significance

➤ Traditional Uses

- ➔ Special occasions
- ➔ Wedding ceremonies
- ➔ Personal fragrance
- ➔ Gift giving

➤ Heritage Value

- ➔ Seven generations of expertise
- ➔ Traditional production methods
- ➔ Cultural knowledge transfer
- ➔ Historical significance
- ➔ Regional pride

Visitor Tips

➤ Tours and Experiences

- ➔ Farm visits available
- ➔ Distillery demonstrations
- ➔ Product sampling
- ➔ Educational programs
- ➔ Photography opportunities

➤ Best Practices

- ➔ Book tours in advance
- ➔ Visit during harvest season
- ➔ Respect farm protocols
- ➔ Support local producers
- ➔ Learn about processes

➤ Future Preservation

➤ Sustainability Efforts

- ➔ Traditional farming methods
- ➔ Knowledge preservation
- ➔ Quality maintenance
- ➔ Environmental protection
- ➔ Cultural continuation



➔ Educational Aspects

➤ Learning Opportunities

- ➔ Production process tours
- ➔ Historical background
- ➔ Traditional techniques
- ➔ Quality assessment
- ➔ Cultural significance

Photography Tips

➤ Best Shots

- ➔ Early morning harvest
- ➔ Distillation process
- ➔ Mountain landscapes
- ➔ Traditional tools
- ➔ Worker portraits (with permission)

➔ Practical Information

➤ Getting There

- ➔ Located in Taif highlands
- ➔ Accessible by car
- ➔ Tour options available
- ➔ Clear signage
- ➔ Local guides recommended

➤ What to Bring

- ➔ Camera
- ➔ Sun protection
- ➔ Comfortable shoes
- ➔ Water bottle
- ➔ Local currency



➤ Travel Tip:



Visit during the early morning harvest for the most authentic experience and best photo opportunities. The scent of roses is strongest at dawn.

➤ Industry Protection

The traditional rose oil industry of Taif maintains its integrity through:

- 1 Quality standards
- 2 Traditional methods
- 3 Family expertise
- 4 Market relationships
- 5 Cultural preservation



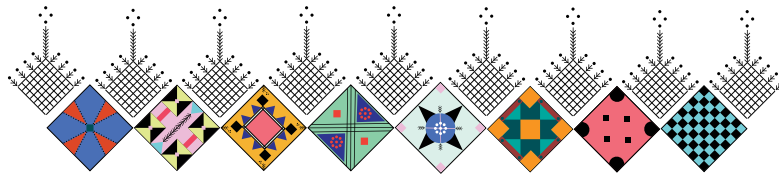


Despite international interest, including from French perfume companies, many farmers maintain their commitment to traditional customers and methods, ensuring the authenticity and quality of Taif rose oil for future generations.

➤ **Note:**



Availability and access may vary by season and production schedules. Always arrange visits through official channels and respect local traditions.





The Ancient Stone Structures of Saudi Arabia: A Window to the Past

ZABRAN, KHAYBAR



Ancient Mysteries in Stone

Scattered across Saudi Arabia's vast landscape lie 868 sites of mysterious stone structures, some dating back to the seventh millennium BCE. These ancient monuments, particularly concentrated in the volcanic harrats (lava fields) near Zabran village in Khaybar, stand as silent witnesses to the civilizations that once flourished in the Arabian Peninsula.



➡ Historical Significance

➤ Timeline and Origins

- ➡ Dating back 9,000+ years
- ➡ Spread the multiple historical periods
- ➡ Various the architectural styles
- ➡ Multiple the cultural influences
- ➡ Continuous the historical presence

➤ Theoretical Functions

Scholars proposed various purposes for the structures:

- 1 Burial tombs
- 2 Navigational markers
- 3 Caravan the route guides
- 4 Desert the hunting traps
- 5 Agricultural enclosures
- 6 Animal quarries
- 7 Residential compounds

➡ Geographical Distribution

➤ Key Locations

- ➡ Concentrated in the volcanic harrat areas
- ➡ Near ancient oases
- ➡ Around the historical urban centers
- ➡ Along the ancient trade routes
- ➡ Extending the tens of kilometers

➤ Zabran Village Structures

- ➡ Located in the Khaybar governorate
- ➡ Part from the Khaybar harrat
- ➡ Multiple the structure types
- ➡ Well-preserved examples
- ➡ Accessible the viewing points

Visitor Information

➤ Best Ways to View

- ➔ Aerial the perspective recommended
- ➔ Guided the tours available
- ➔ Photography permitted
- ➔ Dawn/dusk for the best lighting
- ➔ Multiple the viewpoints accessible

➤ The Access Tips

- ➔ 4x4 vehicles are recommended
- ➔ The Local guide necessary
- ➔ The Carry sufficient water
- ➔ The Sun protection essential
- ➔ The GPS coordinates helpful

➡ Archaeological Importance

➤ Research Value

- ➔ The Natural archaeological documents
- ➔ The Cultural behavior indicators
- ➔ The Economic pattern evidence
- ➔ The Social structure insights
- ➔ The Historical timeline markers

➤ Modern Documentation

- ➔ High-resolution aerial photography
- ➔ The Detailed site mapping
- ➔ Structure documentation
- ➔ Preservation initiatives
- ➔ Historical recording





➤ Photography Guide

➤ Best Shooting Conditions

- ➔ Early morning light
- ➔ The Late afternoon shadows
- ➔ The Clear weather preferred
- ➔ The Aerial perspectives ideal
- ➔ Ground-level details important

➤ Equipment Recommendations

- ➔ Wide-angle lenses
- ➔ The Drone equipment (with permits)
- ➔ The Tripod for stability
- ➔ The UV filters for harsh light
- ➔ Backup batteries

Practical Tips for Visitors

➤ Planning Your Visit

- ➔ The Check weather conditions
- ➔ The Arrange local guidance
- ➔ The Obtain necessary permits
- ➔ Plan for full day
- ➔ The Bring appropriate gear

➤ Essential Items

- ➔ Sturdy walking shoes
- ➔ Sun protection
- ➔ Water supplies
- ➔ Navigation tools
- ➔ First aid kit

➔ Conservation Efforts

➤ Current Initiatives

- ➔ Site documentation
- ➔ Preservation projects
- ➔ Academic research
- ➔ Public awareness
- ➔ Protected status

➤ Visitor Guidelines

- ➔ Stay for marked paths
- ➔ there is No climbing structures
- ➔ Leave no trace
- ➔ Report damage
- ➔ Respect boundaries

➔ Cultural Context

➤ Historical Significance

- ➔ Trade route markers
- ➔ Cultural boundaries
- ➔ Religious significance
- ➔ Social gatherings
- ➔ Economic indicators

➤ Modern Relevance

- ➔ Archaeological research
- ➔ Cultural heritage
- ➔ Tourism development
- ➔ Educational resource
- ➔ National identity





➔ Research Developments

➤ Recent Discoveries

- ➔ New site identifications
- ➔ Dating improvements
- ➔ Function theories
- ➔ Cultural connections
- ➔ Historical context

➤ Ongoing Studies

- ➔ Aerial mapping
- ➔ Ground surveys
- ➔ Material analysis
- ➔ Cultural research
- ➔ Environmental impact

Visitor Experience

➤ What to Expect

- ➔ Remote locations
- ➔ Natural environment
- ➔ Basic facilities
- ➔ Archaeological significance
- ➔ Cultural importance

➤ Best Times to Visit

- ➔ Spring months (March-April)
- ➔ Early morning visiting
- ➔ Clear weather days
- ➔ Guided tour times
- ➔ Festival periods



➤ Travel Tip:



Joining an organized archaeological tour will make the experience of site visits combined with expert interpretation even more enriching.

➤ Future Preservation

Continuations in documenting and studying those structures are important for:

- ① Understanding of life in ancient Arabia
- ① Preservation of historical evidence
- ① Responsible tourism development
- ① Preservation of cultural heritage
- ① Educating the generations to come

➤ Note:

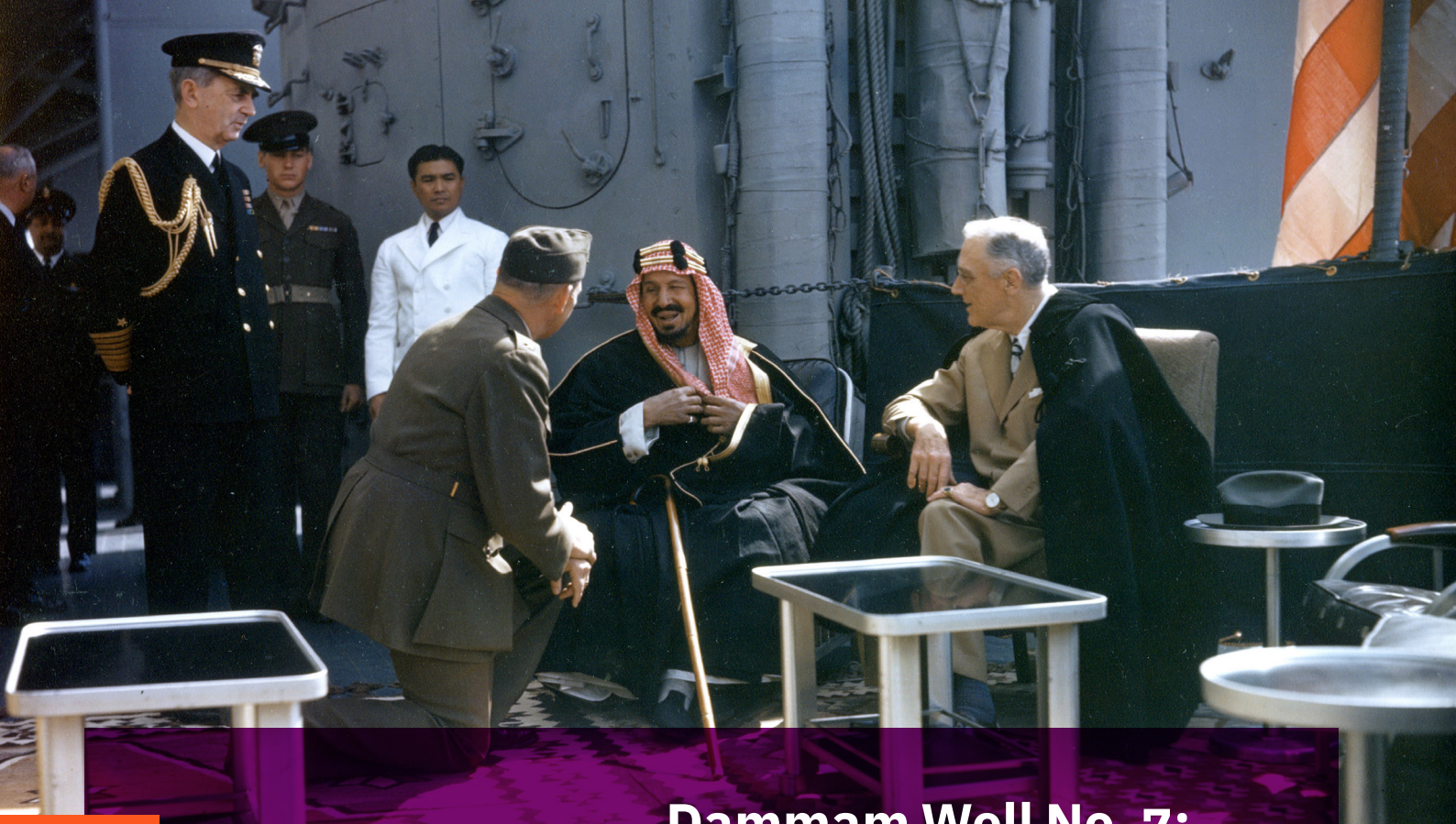


These are sensitive archaeological sites, and one should check on current access restrictions and obtain necessary permits before visiting. Respect site boundaries and follow local guidance for responsible tourism.





**”
Eastern
Region:**



01

Dammam Well No. 7: The Well That Changed Saudi Arabia

DAMMAM



The Birth of an Oil Nation

One fateful day in May 1933, King Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al Saud put Saudi Arabia on a course from which it would never return. He set the quest for Saudi oil into motion with the stroke of a pen on a concession agreement with Standard Oil of California.



➤ The Journey to Discovery

➤ Early Explorations (1933-1935)

- ➔ The First geologists has arrived September 23, 1933
- ➔ Initial base in Jubail
- ➔ Early surveys can be conducted by camel and car
- ➔ Examination of Jabal Al-Barri
- ➔ Geological studies for Dhahran hills

➤ The First Attempts

➤ Dammam Well No. 1 (April 1935) **1**

- ➔ Reached 700 meters
- ➔ Show promising gas bursts
- ➔ Equipment failures forced closures

➤ Dammam Well No. 2 (February 1936) **2**

- ➔ Initial for success at 633 meters
- ➔ Produced 335 barrels per day
- ➔ Increased to 3,840 barrels after treatment
- ➔ Later proved “wet” with excessive water

➤ The Path to Success

- ➔ Wells 3-6 proved disappointing
- ➔ Growing workforce of 1,076 Saudi workers
- ➔ 62 international specialists
- ➔ Continuous technological challenges
- ➔ Unwavering determination





➡ The Legendary Well No. 7

➤ The Breakthrough

- ➔ Drilling began December 1936
- ➔ First signs of oil October 16, 1937
- ➔ Major discovery March 4, 1938
- ➔ Initial production 1,585 barrels daily
- ➔ Increased to 3,810 barrels
- ➔ Depth of success: 1,440 meters

➤ Historical Impact

- ➔ Confirmed Saudi Arabia's oil wealth
- ➔ Led to deepening of other wells
- ➔ Established foundation for national prosperity
- ➔ Marked beginning of modern Saudi economy
- ➔ Created thousands of jobs

➡ Royal Recognition

➤ King Abdulaziz's Historic Visit (Spring 1939)

- ➔ Crossed Dahna desert to reach Dhahran
- ➔ 350-tent celebration camp
- ➔ Well inspections
- ➔ Regional delegations
- ➔ Gulf cruises
- ➔ First oil export ceremony

➡ First Exports

➤ Ras Tanura Milestone

- ➔ 69-kilometer pipeline completed
- ➔ King personally opened export valve
- ➔ **First shipment:** May 1, 1939
- ➔ Beginning of global oil trade
- ➔ Launch of Saudi oil industry



Visitor Information

➤ Site Access Today

- ➔ Historical marker at original location
- ➔ Museum displays
- ➔ Educational exhibits
- ➔ Guided tours available
- ➔ Photography permitted in designated areas

➤ What to See

- ➔ Original well location
- ➔ Historical equipment
- ➔ Documentary presentations
- ➔ Educational displays
- ➔ Commemorative monuments

➡ Historical Significance

➤ Economic Impact

- ➔ Foundation of modern Saudi economy
- ➔ Beginning of industrial development
- ➔ Creation of ARAMCO
- ➔ International partnerships
- ➔ National workforce development

➤ Cultural Heritage

- ➔ Symbol of national progress
- ➔ Testament to perseverance
- ➔ Monument to vision
- ➔ Educational resource
- ➔ Industrial heritage site





➡ Planning Your Visit

➤ Best Times to Visit

- ➔ Summer months (May-September)
- ➔ Weekday mornings
- ➔ Guided tour times
- ➔ Special anniversaries
- ➔ National celebrations

➤ Essential Information

- ➔ Prior arrangements required
- ➔ Security clearance needed
- ➔ Photography guidelines
- ➔ Safety regulations

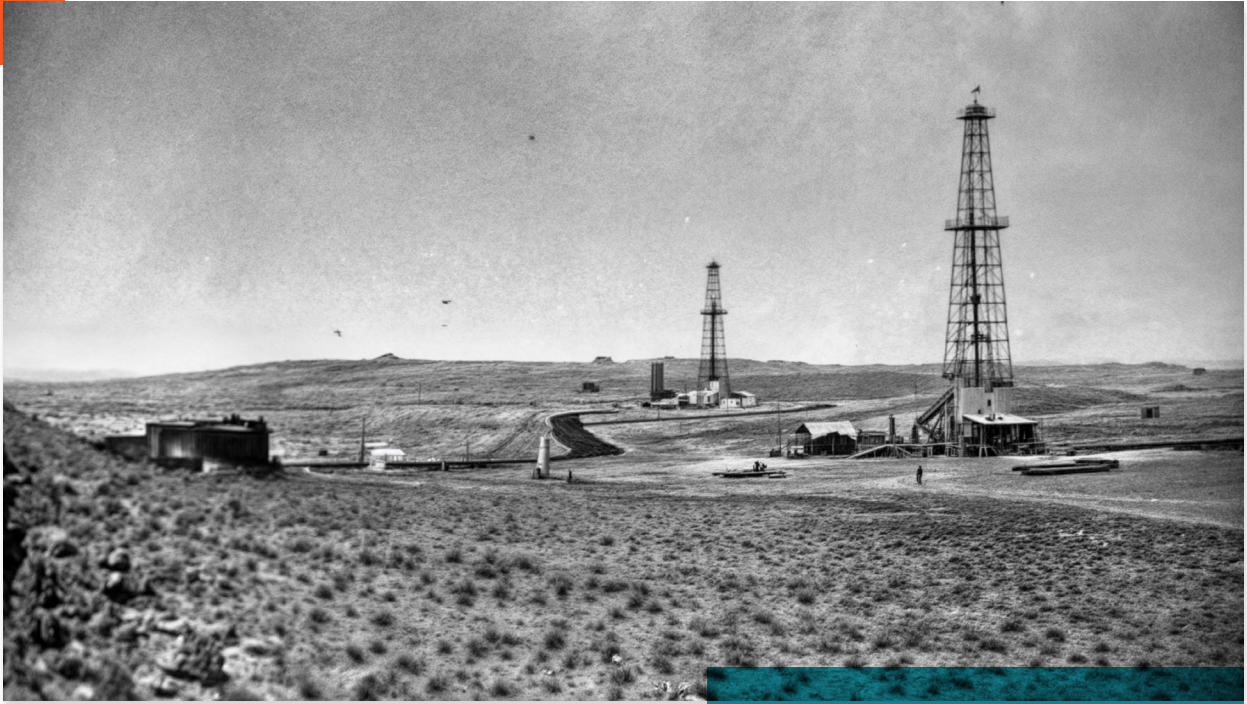
➡ Educational Value

➤ Learning Opportunities

- ➔ Industrial history
- ➔ Geological studies
- ➔ Technical development
- ➔ Economic transformation
- ➔ National heritage

➤ Available Resources

- ➔ Information center
- ➔ Documentary films
- ➔ Historical photographs
- ➔ Technical displays
- ➔ Educational programs



➤ Travel Tip:



Combine your visit with the nearby Oil Exhibition Center for a comprehensive understanding of Saudi Arabia's oil industry development.

➤ Legacy

Dammam Well No. 7 stands as more than just an industrial site; it represents the moment Saudi Arabia discovered its path to modern prosperity. The well's success validated King Abdulaziz's vision and laid the foundation for the kingdom's transformation into a global economic power.

➤ Historical Note:



The discovery of oil at Well No. 7 is celebrated as one of the most significant moments in Saudi Arabian history, marking the beginning of the kingdom's journey to becoming a global energy leader.



02

Pearl Diving: The Ancient Treasure of the Arabian Gulf

A LEGACY OF THE ARABIAN GULF COAST



An Ancient Maritime Heritage

For thousands of years before oil transformed the region, pearl diving was the lifeblood of the Arabian Gulf's coastal communities. Dating back to the first century CE, this dangerous but lucrative trade shaped the culture, economy, and social fabric of the entire region, finding mention even in ancient Assyrian manuscripts from four millennia ago.



➡ The Golden Age

➤ Scale of Operations

- ➡ 1,500 pearl diving boats in 1833
- ➡ Thousands of workers employed
- ➡ International trade networks
- ➡ Regional economic backbone
- ➡ Cultural cornerstone

➤ The Trade's Influence

- ➡ Defined purchasing power along Eastern coast
- ➡ Sparked international conflicts
- ➡ Shaped coastal settlements
- ➡ Influenced regional architecture
- ➡ Created unique maritime culture

➡ The Pearl Diving Crew

➤ The Nawkhuda (Captain)

The heart of every operation:

- ① Overall expedition leader
- ② Ship owner and manager
- ③ Expert navigator using stars
- ④ Pearl bank locator
- ⑤ Crew and sales manager
- ⑥ Experience repository

➤ Essential Crew Members

➤ «Muqaddami» (First Mate)

1

- Supply management
- Crew coordination
- Captain's assistant

➤ «Ghais» (Diver)

2

- Pearl oyster collection
- Deep diving expertise
- Physical endurance

➤ «Seeb» (Rope Handler)

3

- Diver safety
- Communication management
- Equipment maintenance

➤ «Jallas» (Oyster Opener)

4

- Careful extraction
- Pearl evaluation
- Initial sorting

➤ «Sukuni» (Helmsman)

5

- Ship navigation
- Position maintenance
- Weather monitoring

➤ «Nahham» (Singer)

6

- Morale maintenance
- Traditional songs
- Rhythm keeper

➔ Traditional Equipment

➤ Diving Gear

- ➔ «Bashtakhta»: Captain's pearl box
- ➔ «Fitam»: Nose clip
- ➔ «Hasat»: Stone weight
- ➔ «Shamshool»: Black diving suit
- ➔ «Khabt»: Protective gloves
- ➔ «Dayeen»: Oyster collection bag
- ➔ «Yada»: Safety rope
- ➔ «Mufallaqa»: Opening tool

The Diving Season

➤ Key Dates

- ➔ «Al-Rakba»: Departure ceremony
- ➔ «Al-Qaffal»: Return celebration
- ➔ Training periods for apprentices
- ➔ Weather-dependent scheduling
- ➔ Traditional observances

➤ The Vessels

- ➔ Called “Mahmal”
- ➔ Named after loved ones
- ➔ Specialized design
- ➔ Various sizes
- ➔ Purpose-built features



➔ Cultural Legacy

➤ Modern Influence

- ➔ Traditional songs preserved
- ➔ Maritime museums
- ➔ Cultural festivals
- ➔ Educational programs
- ➔ Heritage celebrations

➤ Preserved Traditions

- ➔ Diving demonstrations
- ➔ Traditional boat building
- ➔ Pearl evaluation methods
- ➔ Navigation techniques
- ➔ Maritime customs

➔ Historical Significance

➤ Economic Impact

- ➔ Regional trade development
- ➔ International commerce
- ➔ Community sustenance
- ➔ Skill development
- ➔ Cultural exchange

➤ Social Structure

- ➔ Professional hierarchies
- ➔ Community organization
- ➔ Maritime traditions
- ➔ Family roles
- ➔ Apprenticeship systems

➔ Visiting Pearl Diving Heritage

➤ Museums and Exhibitions

- ➔ Maritime museums
- ➔ Cultural centers
- ➔ Historical displays
- ➔ Interactive exhibits
- ➔ Traditional boat shows

➤ Cultural Experiences

- ➔ Pearl diving demonstrations
- ➔ Traditional music performances
- ➔ Boat building displays
- ➔ Equipment exhibitions
- ➔ Historical reenactments

➔ Educational Value

➤ Learning Opportunities

- ➔ Maritime history
- ➔ Traditional navigation
- ➔ Pearl evaluation
- ➔ Diving techniques
- ➔ Cultural preservation

➤ Available Resources

- ➔ Museum guides
- ➔ Historical documents
- ➔ Oral histories
- ➔ Documentary films
- ➔ Cultural programs

➔ The Industry's Transformation

➤ Factors in Decline

- ➔ Japanese cultured pearls
- ➔ Oil industry emergence
- ➔ Economic changes
- ➔ Technological advances
- ➔ Social transformation

➤ Modern Revival

- ➔ Heritage preservation
- ➔ Tourism integration
- ➔ Cultural education
- ➔ Museum collections
- ➔ Traditional crafts

➤ Historical Note:



The transition from pearl diving to oil production marks one of the most significant economic transformations in Gulf history, though the cultural impact of the pearl trade continues to influence regional identity.

➔ Legacy and Remembrance

➤ Today, the pearl diving heritage is celebrated through:

- 1 Annual festivals
- 2 Museum exhibitions
- 3 Cultural programs
- 4 Traditional crafts
- 5 Maritime education

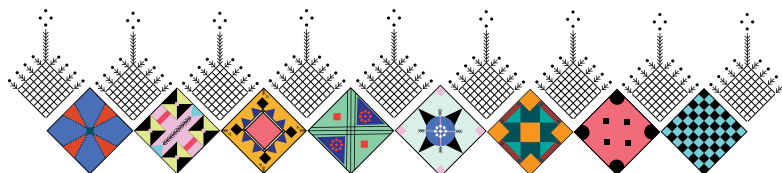


The legacy of pearl diving remains a powerful reminder of the Arabian Gulf's maritime heritage, representing an era when communities worked together in one of the world's most challenging and rewarding professions.

➤ Travel Tip:



Visit coastal museums during traditional festivals to experience reenactments and demonstrations of pearl diving techniques and traditions.



03

Al-Uqair: Saudi Arabia's Ancient Gateway to the World

AL-AHSA



A Port Through Time

Standing on the Arabian Gulf coast, Al-Uqair port tells a story that spans over five millennia of maritime history. As Saudi Arabia's first seaport, it served as the primary gateway for successive civilizations in Al-Ahsa, witnessing the ebb and flow of trade, politics, and cultural exchange that shaped the Arabian Peninsula.



➡ Historical Timeline

➤ Ancient Origins

- ➡ Stone Age trade evidence
- ➡ Canaanite settlement (3000 BCE)
- ➡ Phoenician and Chaldean periods
- ➡ Pre-Islamic foundations
- ➡ Early Islamic development

➤ Modern Era Milestones

- ➡ **1915:** Al-Uqair Treaty signing
- ➡ **1922:** Border Protocol negotiations
- ➡ Peak activity until 1945
- ➡ Transition after oil discovery
- ➡ Modern preservation efforts

Archaeological Treasures

➤ Key Discoveries

- ➡ Stone tools from distant regions
- ➡ Chinese pottery pre-dating Christianity
- ➡ Islamic residential structures (3rd-4th century AH)
- ➡ Ancient trade route evidence
- ➡ Maritime artifacts

➤ Material Evidence

- ➡ Volcanic rock imports
- ➡ Quartz trading goods
- ➡ Pottery collections
- ➡ Building foundations
- ➡ Trade route maps



➔ Historic Buildings

➤ The Port Complex

➤ «The Khan Building»

1

- ⇒ Traditional architecture
- ⇒ Commercial center
- ⇒ Recently restored

➤ «Emirate Building and Fortress»

2

- ⇒ Administrative center
- ⇒ Strategic defense
- ⇒ Historical significance

➤ «Additional Structures»

3

- ⇒ Historic mosque
- ⇒ Buzmoul tower
- ⇒ Water facilities
- ⇒ Customs house
- ⇒ Immigration center

➔ Political Significance

➤ Diplomatic History

- ➔ Meeting point for international negotiations
- ➔ Site of crucial border agreements
- ➔ Early Saudi state diplomatic center
- ➔ British-Saudi relations hub
- ➔ Regional trade governance

➔ Trade Legacy

➤ Ancient Commerce

- ➔ Indian trade routes
- ➔ Chinese maritime connections
- ➔ Regional exchange hub
- ➔ Stone Age commerce
- ➔ Medieval trade center

➤ Peak Trading Period

- ➔ Primary eastern gateway
- ➔ International shipping port
- ➔ Regional distribution center
- ➔ Cultural exchange point
- ➔ Economic powerhouse

Visitor Information

➤ Site Access

- ➔ Location on Gulf coast
- ➔ Accessibility from Al-Ahsa
- ➔ Guided tour availability
- ➔ Photography permitted
- ➔ Seasonal considerations

➤ What to See

- ➔ Historic port structures
- ➔ Archaeological exhibits
- ➔ Traditional architecture
- ➔ Maritime artifacts
- ➔ Cultural displays



➡ Modern Preservation

➤ Conservation Efforts

- ➡ National monument registration
- ➡ Building restoration
- ➡ Site protection
- ➡ Archaeological research
- ➡ Tourism development

➤ Recent Improvements

- ➡ Facility restoration
- ➡ Site maintenance
- ➡ Visitor amenities
- ➡ Educational displays
- ➡ Heritage protection

➡ Cultural Impact

➤ Historical Significance

- ➡ Maritime heritage
- ➡ Trade history
- ➡ Diplomatic legacy
- ➡ Archaeological importance
- ➡ Cultural exchange

➤ Educational Value

- ➡ Archaeological research
- ➡ Historical studies
- ➡ Maritime history
- ➡ Cultural preservation
- ➡ Traditional architecture

Planning Your Visit

➤ Best Times to Visit

- ➔ Summer months (May-September)
- ➔ Early morning or late afternoon
- ➔ Special events
- ➔ Archaeological seasons
- ➔ Cultural festivals

➤ Essential Information

- ➔ Bring water and supplies
- ➔ Sun protection needed
- ➔ Photography guidelines
- ➔ Local guides recommended

➡ Research Significance

➤ Academic Value

- ➔ Archaeological studies
- ➔ Maritime research
- ➔ Trade route analysis
- ➔ Cultural exchange studies
- ➔ Architectural history

➤ Ongoing Discoveries

- ➔ Continued excavations
- ➔ New artifact findings
- ➔ Research publications
- ➔ Historical documentation
- ➔ Cultural preservation





➤ Travel Tip:



Combine your visit with other historical sites in Al-Ahsa for a comprehensive understanding of the region's rich heritage.

➔ Legacy

Al-Uqair port stands as a testament to Saudi Arabia's rich maritime history and its role in global trade networks. From Stone Age commerce to modern preservation efforts, the site continues to reveal new insights into the kingdom's past while serving as an important cultural and educational resource for future generations.

➤ Historical Note:



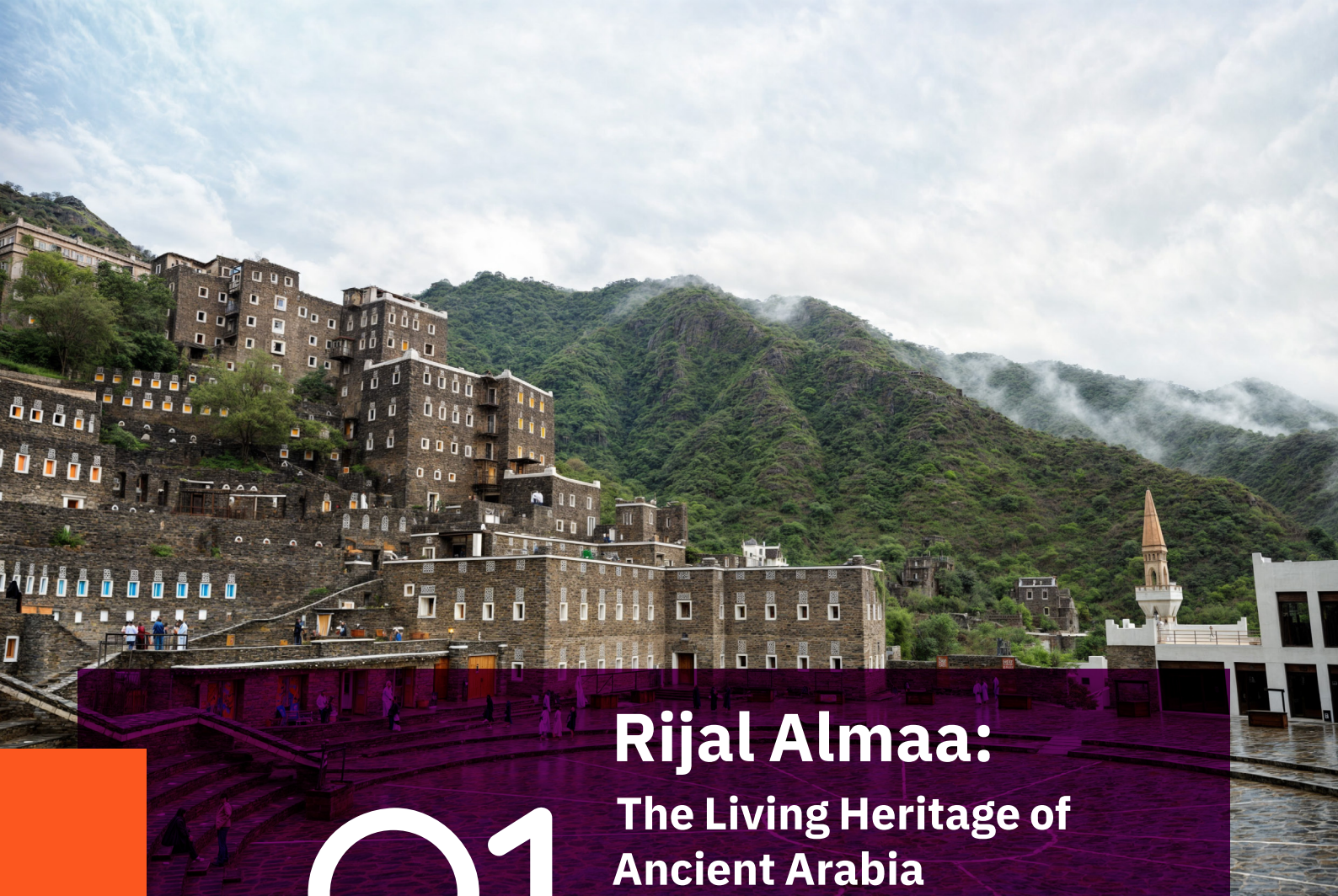
The transition of Al-Uqair from a bustling port to a historical site mirrors the broader economic transformation of Saudi Arabia, making it a unique window into the kingdom's development.



”

Southern Region:





01

Rijal Almaa: The Living Heritage of Ancient Arabia

ASIR REGION



“

A Mountain Treasure

Nestled in the dramatic Sarawat Mountains of Saudi Arabia's Asir region, Rijal Almaa stands as a testament to nine centuries of Arabian history. Located 52 kilometers west of Abha, this remarkable heritage village once served as a vital crossroads between Yemen and the Levant, welcoming pilgrims and merchants on their way to the holy cities of Makkah and Madinah.



➤ Historical Journey

➤ Ancient Origins

- ➔ Prehistoric settlement
- ➔ Sabaeen trade route station
- ➔ Roman trading post
- ➔ 12th-century tribal capital
- ➔ Cultural crossroads

➤ Strategic Location

- ➔ Between Red Sea coast and central plateau
- ➔ Connection point for north-south trade
- ➔ Cultural bridge between regions
- ➔ Mountain valley setting
- ➔ Ancient trade route hub

➤ Architectural Marvel

➤ Village Structure

- ➔ 60 historic buildings
- ➔ Multi-story construction (up to 8 floors)
- ➔ Natural stone foundations
- ➔ Traditional clay construction
- ➔ Local wood elements

➤ Distinctive Features

➤ «Exterior Elements»

1

- ➔ Colored wooden windows
- ➔ Decorated doorways
- ➔ Stone masonry
- ➔ Traditional balconies
- ➔ Mountain-adapted design





► «Interior Artistry»

2

- ⇒ Al-Qatt wall decorations
- ⇒ Traditional patterns
- ⇒ Women's artistic heritage
- ⇒ Color harmonies
- ⇒ Cultural symbolism

► «Outdoor Spaces»

3

- ⇒ Decorated wooden chairs
- ⇒ Traditional color schemes
- ⇒ Woven mat furnishings
- ⇒ Community gathering areas
- ⇒ Mountain views

➔ The Heritage Museum

► Al-Alwan Palace

- 400+ years of history
- Community-led restoration
- Multiple floor levels
- Traditional architecture
- Living museum concept

► Collections

- 2,000+ artifacts
- 19 specialized sections
- Historical manuscripts
- Traditional tools
- Ancient weapons
- Cultural artifacts

Visitor Experience

➤ Best Times to Visit

- Summer months (May-September)
- Early morning or late afternoon
- Festival periods
- Cultural events
- Local celebrations

➤ What to See

- Historic architecture
- Traditional art
- Museum collections
- Mountain views
- Cultural performances

➡ Practical Information

➤ Getting There

- 52km from Abha
- Accessible by car
- Tour options available
- Mountain road access
- Local transport

➤ Essential Tips

- Comfortable walking shoes
- Camera recommended
- Sun protection
- Local guide beneficial
- Respect local customs



➔ Cultural Significance

➤ Living Heritage

- ➔ Traditional architecture preservation
- ➔ Local artistic traditions
- ➔ Community involvement
- ➔ Cultural continuity
- ➔ Historical authenticity

➤ Artistic Traditions

- ➔ Al-Qatt wall art
- ➔ Women's artistic role
- ➔ Traditional crafts
- ➔ Color symbolism
- ➔ Pattern meanings

Photography Guide

➤ Best Shots

- ➔ Early morning light
- ➔ Architectural details
- ➔ Mountain backdrop
- ➔ Traditional interiors
- ➔ Cultural activities

➤ Photo Tips

- ➔ Golden hour timing
- ➔ Architectural perspectives
- ➔ Detail documentation
- ➔ People (with permission)
- ➔ Cultural sensitivity

➔ Educational Value

➤ Learning Opportunities

- ➔ Architectural history
- ➔ Trade route significance
- ➔ Cultural preservation
- ➔ Traditional arts
- ➔ Local customs

➤ Available Resources

- ➔ Museum guides
- ➔ Historical information
- ➔ Cultural programs
- ➔ Educational tours
- ➔ Local expertise

➔ Seasonal Considerations

➤ Weather

- ➔ Mountain climate
- ➔ Seasonal variations
- ➔ Morning fog possible
- ➔ Evening cool

➤ Events Calendar

- ➔ Local festivals
- ➔ Cultural celebrations
- ➔ Traditional performances
- ➔ Seasonal activities
- ➔ Special exhibitions



➔ Conservation Efforts

➤ Preservation

- ➔ Building restoration
- ➔ Traditional techniques
- ➔ Community involvement
- ➔ Cultural protection
- ➔ Heritage maintenance

➤ Future Plans

- ➔ Tourism development
- ➔ Heritage preservation
- ➔ Cultural programs
- ➔ Educational initiatives
- ➔ Community engagement

➤ Travel Tip:



Visit during the summer months when the weather is mild and clear, offering the best views of both the village and surrounding mountains.

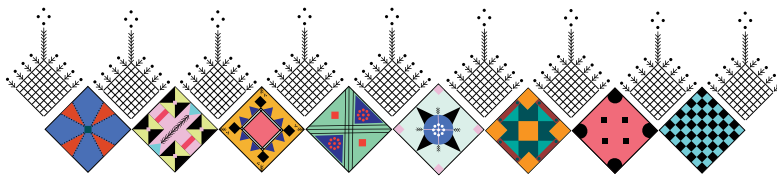
➤ Legacy

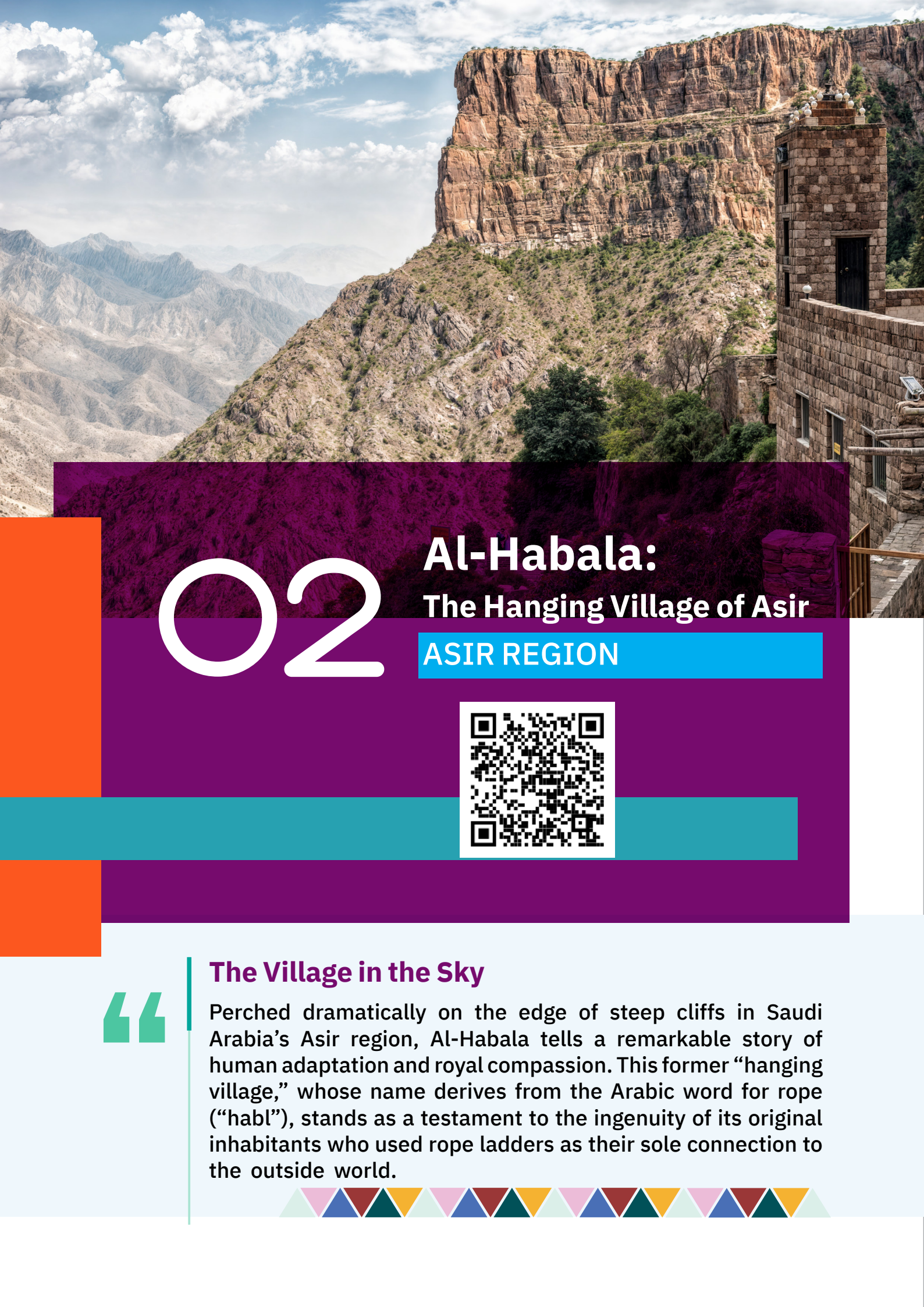
Rijal Almaa represents more than just historic buildings; it embodies the living heritage of the Asir region and its people. As a bridge between ancient trade routes and modern cultural tourism, it offers visitors a unique glimpse into Arabia's rich past while maintaining its vibrant present.

➤ Note:



As this is a living heritage site, visitors should respect local customs and traditions, particularly regarding photography and interaction with residents.





02

Al-Habala: The Hanging Village of Asir

ASIR REGION



The Village in the Sky

Perched dramatically on the edge of steep cliffs in Saudi Arabia's Asir region, Al-Habala tells a remarkable story of human adaptation and royal compassion. This former "hanging village," whose name derives from the Arabic word for rope ("habl"), stands as a testament to the ingenuity of its original inhabitants who used rope ladders as their sole connection to the outside world.



➡ Historical Legacy

➤ Life on the Edge

The original village residents demonstrated extraordinary resilience:

- ➊ Used rope systems for daily transportation
- ➋ Hauled supplies up sheer cliff faces
- ➌ Created self-sufficient communities
- ➍ Developed unique farming techniques
- ➎ Maintained isolated but thriving culture

➤ Royal Intervention

King Faisal's transformative vision led to:

- ➊ Creation of King Faisal Charitable Village
- ➋ Relocation for residents for safer ground
- ➌ Modern infrastructure development
- ➍ Improved living conditions
- ➎ Cultural preservation

➡ Modern Experience

➤ Access and Location

- ➡ 52 kilometers from Abha
- ➡ 40 kilometers from Khamis Mushait
- ➡ Cable car system for visitors
- ➡ Modern road access
- ➡ Parking facilities



➤ Tourist Facilities

➤ Main Attractions

- ➔ Cable car rides
- ➔ Observation platforms
- ➔ Traditional farms
- ➔ Historic village ruins
- ➔ Mountain viewpoints

➤ Modern Amenities

- ➔ Restaurant with cliff views
- ➔ Swimming facilities
- ➔ Entertainment areas
- ➔ Recreational zones
- ➔ Visitor services

Visitor Guide

➤ Best Times to Visit

- ➔ Summer months (May-September)
- ➔ Early morning for clear views
- ➔ Sunset for dramatic photos
- ➔ Festival periods
- ➔ Weekend activities

➤ Essential Tips

- ➔ Book cable car tickets early
- ➔ Wear comfortable shoes
- ➔ Bring camera
- ➔ Sun protection
- ➔ Light jacket for evening

➔ Cultural Experience

➤ Traditional Elements

- ➔ Preserved village structures
- ➔ Agricultural heritage
- ➔ Local customs
- ➔ Traditional foods
- ➔ Cultural demonstrations

➤ Modern Integration

- ➔ Converted farm visits
- ➔ Local cuisine restaurants
- ➔ Cultural performances
- ➔ Historical exhibits
- ➔ Interactive displays



➔ Photography Opportunities

➤ Best Viewpoints

- ➔ Cable car perspectives
- ➔ Cliff-edge platforms
- ➔ Village overlooks
- ➔ Mountain vistas
- ➔ Traditional farms

➤ Photography Tips

- ➔ Early morning light
- ➔ Sunset golden hour
- ➔ Panoramic settings
- ➔ Architectural details
- ➔ Cultural activities





➡ Practical Information

➤ Getting There

- ➔ Private car access
- ➔ Tour operators
- ➔ Local transport
- ➔ Clear signage
- ➔ GPS coordinates

➤ Facilities

- ➔ Modern restrooms
- ➔ Prayer rooms
- ➔ First aid
- ➔ Information center
- ➔ Gift shops

➡ Seasonal Considerations

➤ Weather

- ➔ Mountain climate
- ➔ Seasonal variations
- ➔ Morning fog possible
- ➔ Clear afternoon views
- ➔ Cool evenings

➤ Activities

- ➔ Cable car rides
- ➔ Farm visits
- ➔ Cultural shows
- ➔ Local dining
- ➔ Photography tours

➔ Safety Guidelines

➤ Cable Car

- ➔ Follow staff instructions
- ➔ Weather-dependent operation
- ➔ Booking requirements
- ➔ Group size limits
- ➔ Safety protocols

➤ General Safety

- ➔ Stay on marked paths
- ➔ Mind cliff edges
- ➔ Monitor children
- ➔ Follow signage
- ➔ Listen to guides

➔ Educational Value

➤ Historical Learning

- ➔ Traditional village life
- ➔ Agricultural methods
- ➔ Adaptation techniques
- ➔ Cultural preservation
- ➔ Modern development

➤ Cultural Insight

- ➔ Local traditions
- ➔ Community resilience
- ➔ Agricultural heritage
- ➔ Social transformation
- ➔ Royal development initiatives



➔ Future Development

➤ Ongoing Projects

- ➔ Facility improvements
- ➔ Heritage preservation
- ➔ Tourism expansion
- ➔ Cultural programs
- ➔ Environmental protection

➤ Travel Tip:



Consider visiting during summer months when clear skies offer spectacular views of both the village ruins and surrounding mountains. The cable car experience is particularly memorable during sunset.

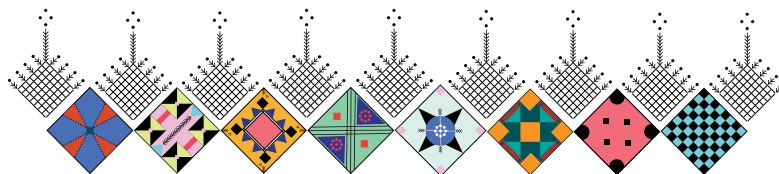
➤ Legacy

Al-Habala stands as a powerful symbol of Saudi Arabia's commitment to preserving its heritage while improving citizens' lives. The transformation from an isolated cliff village to a modern tourist destination showcases the kingdom's ability to honor its past while embracing the future.

➤ Note:



Cable car operations may be affected by weather conditions. Check operational status before planning your visit, especially during extreme weather seasons.





03

Khawlani Coffee: The Mountain Gold of Jazan

JAZAN REGION



“

A Living Heritage

High in the mountains of Jazan, at an elevation of 1,800 meters, grows one of Arabia's most precious treasures. The Khawlani coffee tree, passed down through generations of mountain farmers, produces some of the world's finest coffee beans, with quality ratings ranging from 83% to 90% in global laboratories.



➔ The Mountain Garden

➤ Natural Environment

- ➔ 1,800-meter elevation
- ➔ Rich mountain soil
- ➔ Ideal growing conditions
- ➔ Six mountainous governorates
- ➔ Traditional terrace farming

➤ Distinctive Features

- ➔ Premium bean quality
- ➔ Unique flavor profile
- ➔ Natural growing methods
- ➔ Traditional cultivation
- ➔ Sustainable practices

➔ Cultural Heritage

➤ Family Tradition

- ➔ Generational knowledge transfer
- ➔ Deep cultural connection
- ➔ Traditional farming methods
- ➔ Family-centered cultivation
- ➔ Community involvement

➤ Agricultural Legacy

- ➔ Ancient farming techniques
- ➔ Cultural preservation
- ➔ Traditional harvesting
- ➔ Processing methods
- ➔ Quality standards



➔ Modern Renaissance

➤ Revival Story

From decline for rebirth:

- ➊ 20,000 - 163,000 trees
- ➋ 330 ton annual productions
- ➌ Global recognition
- ➍ Continued growth
- ➎ Sustainable development

➤ Support Initiatives

- ➔ Government backing
- ➔ Cultural preservation
- ➔ Agricultural development
- ➔ Farmer education
- ➔ Market expansion

Visitor Experience

➤ Coffee Tours

- ➔ Farm visits
- ➔ Processing demonstrations
- ➔ Tasting sessions
- ➔ Cultural programs
- ➔ Agricultural education

➤ Best Times to Visit

- ➔ Harvest season
- ➔ Festival periods
- ➔ Summer months (May-September)
- ➔ Morning tours
- ➔ Cultural events

☛ Coffee Production

➤ Traditional Methods

- Hand-picking
- Natural processing
- Sun-drying
- Manual sorting
- Quality control

➤ Modern Integration

- Scientific testing
- Quality certification
- Marketing systems
- Distribution networks
- Global standards

☛ Agricultural Information

➤ Growing Conditions

- Mountain climate
- Natural irrigation
- Terrace farming
- Organic methods
- Shade cultivation

➤ Cultivation Practices

- Traditional techniques
- Sustainable methods
- Water conservation
- Soil management
- Natural fertilization



➔ Cultural Impact

➤ Local Significance

- ➔ Family heritage
- ➔ Community pride
- ➔ Economic importance
- ➔ Cultural identity
- ➔ Traditional knowledge

➤ Global Recognition

- ➔ International awards
- ➔ Quality certification
- ➔ Market presence
- ➔ Expert recognition
- ➔ Growing demand

➔ Educational Value

➤ Learning Opportunities

- ➔ Farming techniques
- ➔ Coffee processing
- ➔ Cultural heritage
- ➔ Sustainable agriculture
- ➔ Traditional methods

➤ Available Programs

- ➔ Farm tours
- ➔ Workshop sessions
- ➔ Cultural events
- ➔ Tasting programs
- ➔ Agricultural training



➔ Sustainability Efforts

➤ Environmental Protection

- ➔ Water conservation
- ➔ Soil preservation
- ➔ Natural farming
- ➔ Biodiversity protection
- ➔ Sustainable practices

➤ Community Support

- ➔ Farmer education
- ➔ Market access
- ➔ Technical support
- ➔ Financial assistance
- ➔ Cultural preservation

➔ Future Development

➤ Growth Plans

- ➔ Expansion projects
- ➔ Quality improvement
- ➔ Market development
- ➔ Tourism integration
- ➔ Cultural preservation

➤ Ongoing Initiatives

- ➔ Research programs
- ➔ Farmer training
- ➔ Market expansion
- ➔ Cultural events
- ➔ Tourism development



➤ Travel Tip:



The best time to visit is during harvest season; you get a more complete look at all the steps in the process of raising coffee beans, and you join traditional picking and processing.

➤ For Coffee Enthusiasts

➤ Tasting Notes

- ➔ Distinctive the flavor profile
- ➔ Natural processing
- ➔ Traditional roasting
- ➔ Fresh production
- ➔ Authentic experience

➤ Purchase Options

- ➔ Local markets
- ➔ Farm direct
- ➔ Certified sellers
- ➔ Traditional packaging
- ➔ Gift options

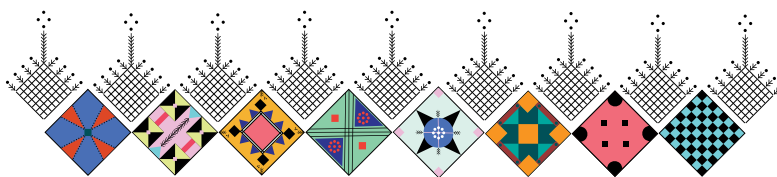
➔ Legacy Preservation

The story of Khawlani coffee is more than just that of an agricultural product, but of cultural conservation and sustainable development. As this mountain treasure gains greater recognition around the world, it shines as a model for how ancient farming practices can thrive in today's modern world while retaining the essence of their authentic heritage.

➤ Note:



Some farm visits need to be scheduled in advance. Inquire at local agricultural offices or tour operators for the best experience.





04

Al-Qatt Al-Asiri: The Living Art of Asir's Women

A UNESCO Intangible
Cultural Heritage



The Art of Geometric Beauty

These women of Asir, hailing from the mountainous southern part of Saudi Arabia, have carved out a tradition that transforms modest walls into amazing canvases. Recognized by UNESCO since 2017, Al-Qatt Al-Asiri is a symbol of generations of female artistic expression through the use of intricate geometric patterns and brilliant colors.



➤ Elements of Design

➤ Key Patterns

➤ «Banah»

1

- Symbolize feminine
- Appears for pattern top
- Traditional placement
- Symbolic meaning
- Cultural significance

➤ «Hidhya»

2

- Tree-like pattern
- Triangular base
- Mountain representation
- Linear arrangement
- Natural inspiration

➤ «Aryadh»

3

- Plant-form design
- Natural motifs
- Organic shapes
- Traditional symbolism
- Environmental connection

➤ «Shabaka»

4

- Interlocking geometrics
- Diamond patterns
- Square formations
- Single of color execution
- Mathematical precision





➤ «Maharib»

5

- Prayer niche motifs
- Sacred symbolism
- Traditional forms
- Spiritual connection
- Architectural inspiration

➤ Additional Elements

- ➔ «Rukun»: the Large triangular compositions
- ➔ «Balsana»: the Dotted circle formations
- ➔ «Amshaat»: the Comb-like parallel lines
- ➔ «Ta'dheeq»: the Corn tassel representations
- ➔ «Sankar Wali»: the Rightward-facing mihrabs

➤ Traditional Colors

➤ Natural Sources

- ➔ «Black»: the Charcoal mixed with wax
- ➔ «Red»: Al-Hassan powder
- ➔ «Green»: the Green arsenic and white talh
- ➔ «Blue»: the Blue arsenic with white talh
- ➔ «White»: Natural for talh base

➤ Modern Evolution

➤ Contemporary Applications

- ➔ Wall murals
- ➔ Collectible items
- ➔ Furniture decoration
- ➔ Fashion design
- ➔ Interior design

➤ Notable Achievements

- ➔ 18-meter UN building mural (2015)
- ➔ UNESCO recognition (2017)
- ➔ Hotel installations
- ➔ Museum exhibitions
- ➔ Cultural preservation

Visitor Experience

➤ Where to See Al-Qatt

- ➔ Abha Palace Hotel
- ➔ Traditional houses
- ➔ Cultural centers
- ➔ Museums
- ➔ Art galleries

➤ Learning Opportunities

- ➔ Cultural workshops
- ➔ Artist demonstrations
- ➔ Hands-on classes
- ➔ Gallery tours
- ➔ Historical exhibits

➤ Cultural Significance

➤ Social Impact

- ➔ Female for artistic expression
- ➔ Cultural preservation
- ➔ Community identity
- ➔ Generational knowledge
- ➔ Artistic innovation



➤ Global Recognition

- UNESCO status
- International exhibitions
- Cultural exchange
- Artistic influence
- Contemporary relevance

➡ Artistic Process

➤ Traditional Techniques

- Wall preparation
- Color mixing
- Pattern layout
- Geometric planning
- Final execution

➤ Modern Adaptations

- Contemporary materials
- New applications
- Color innovations
- Pattern evolution
- Technical advances

➡ Educational Value

➤ Learning Resources

- Cultural centers
- Artist workshops
- Documentation
- Pattern guides
- Color theory

➤ Skills Development

- ➔ Geometric design
- ➔ Color composition
- ➔ Traditional techniques
- ➔ Pattern creation
- ➔ Cultural understanding

➔ Preservation Efforts

➤ Current Initiatives

- ➔ Documentation projects
- ➔ Artist training
- ➔ Cultural programs
- ➔ Pattern preservation
- ➔ Technique recording

➤ Future Development

- ➔ Educational expansion
- ➔ Tourism integration
- ➔ Artist support
- ➔ Cultural exchange
- ➔ Innovation the encouragement

➤ Travel Tip:



Visits during cultural festivals allow one to see artists at work and join workshops.





➔ Modern Impact

From the traditional use in house decoration to becoming the stamp of Saudi cultural heritage, Al-Qatt Al-Asiri has grown. How this traditional domestic art evolves to an internationally recognized cultural treasure itself is testimony to women's artistic expression and their cultural preservational power.

➤ Contemporary Significance

- ➔ Cultural identity marker
- ➔ Female empowerment symbol
- ➔ Artistic innovation platform
- ➔ Tourism attraction
- ➔ Educational resource

➤ Note:



While the art form has expanded to new mediums, its most authentic expression remains in traditional wall paintings, particularly in historic buildings and cultural centers of the Asir region.

”

Northern Region:





01

Hatim Al-Tai: Saudi Arabia's Icon of Generosity

HAIL REGION



“

The Legend Lives On

In the heart of ancient Saudi Arabia, during the 6th century CE, lived a man whose name would become synonymous with generosity itself. Hatim Al-Tai, of the noble Tai' tribe, set such high standards of hospitality and selflessness that even today, nearly 1,500 years later, Arabs still say “more generous than Hatim” to describe the pinnacle of giving.



➔ Tales of Extraordinary Generosity

➤ The Legendary Horse

The most celebrated story of Hatim's generosity unfolds on a bitter winter night:

- 1 A hungry woman seeks food at his tent
- 2 All other provisions have been given away
- 3 Only his prized horse remains
- 4 Without hesitation, he sacrifices his beloved steed
- 5 Feeds the woman without revealing the sacrifice
- 6 She discovers the truth only the next morning

This tale, perhaps more than any other, captures the essence of true generosity - giving your most precious possession to help another in need.

➤ Daily Acts of Kindness

Hatim generosity manifested for countless ways:

- 1 Never eating alone
- 2 Lighting hilltop fires to guide travelers
- 3 Offering unlimited hospitality
- 4 Sharing everything he owned
- 5 Putting others before himself

➔ Cultural Impact

➤ Lasting Legacy

- ➔ Proverbial generosity in Arabic culture
- ➔ Inspiration for countless poems
- ➔ Subject of traditional stories
- ➔ Model of noble character
- ➔ Symbol of perfect hospitality





➤ Modern Relevance

- ➔ Teaching tool for generosity
- ➔ Cultural identity marker
- ➔ Moral exemplar
- ➔ Inspiration for charity
- ➔ Symbol of Arabian hospitality

➡ Life Lessons

➤ Principles of Giving

1. Give without hesitation
2. Share even when resources are scarce
3. Consider others' needs before your own
4. Make guests feel welcome
5. Light the way for others

➤ Character Traits

- ➔ Selflessness
- ➔ Compassion
- ➔ Nobility
- ➔ Hospitality
- ➔ Empathy

➡ Historical Context

➤ 6th Century Arabia

- ➔ Tribal society
- ➔ Honor-based culture
- ➔ Importance of hospitality
- ➔ Value of reputation
- ➔ Role of generosity

➤ The Tai' Tribe

- ➔ Noble lineage
- ➔ Cultural influence
- ➔ Traditional values
- ➔ Historical significance
- ➔ Regional importance

Visitor Experience

➤ Sites of Interest

- ➔ Historical Tai' tribal lands
- ➔ Traditional hospitality centers
- ➔ Cultural heritage sites
- ➔ Local museums
- ➔ Historical markers

➤ Cultural Activities

- ➔ Traditional storytelling sessions
- ➔ Bedouin hospitality experiences
- ➔ Cultural performances
- ➔ Historical reenactments
- ➔ Educational programs

➔ Educational Value

➤ Moral Teachings

- ➔ Importance of giving
- ➔ Value of sacrifice
- ➔ Power of kindness
- ➔ Strength of character
- ➔ Impact of generosity





➤ Cultural Understanding

- ➔ Arabian hospitality traditions
- ➔ Historical social values
- ➔ Tribal society norms
- ➔ Character development
- ➔ Moral education

➔ Modern Applications

➤ Contemporary Lessons

- ➔ Charitable giving
- ➔ Community service
- ➔ Hospitality practices
- ➔ Ethical behavior
- ➔ Social responsibility

➤ Practical Implementation

- ➔ Hospitality industry
- ➔ Tourism sector
- ➔ Cultural education
- ➔ Moral teaching
- ➔ Community building

For Visitors

- explore Hatim's house in Hail
- Experience Traditional Hospitality
 - ➔ Local guest houses
 - ➔ Bedouin camps
 - ➔ Cultural centers
 - ➔ Community gatherings
 - ➔ Traditional meals



➤ Learning Opportunities

- ➔ Cultural programs
- ➔ Historical tours
- ➔ Storytelling sessions
- ➔ Educational exhibits
- ➔ Interactive experiences

➤ Travel Tip:



Experience traditional Arabian hospitality by accepting invitations to share meals with local families, where the spirit of Hatim's generosity lives on.





➤ Legacy of Giving

Hatim al-Tai's story reminds us that true generosity knows no bounds. His legacy continues to inspire:

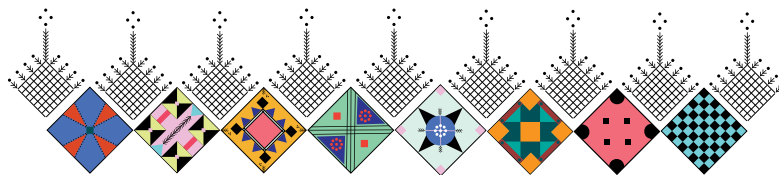
- 1 Charitable foundations
- 2 Community service
- 3 Hospitality traditions
- 4 Cultural preservation
- 5 Moral education

The tale of the man who would rather sacrifice his beloved horse than let a stranger go hungry continues to resonate, teaching us that genuine generosity often requires personal sacrifice.

➤ Note:



While visiting historical sites, remember that Hatim's true legacy lives on in the continuing tradition of Arabian hospitality and generosity.



A large, ancient stone fortress built into a sandstone plateau. The castle features a prominent central tower with a crenellated top and several smaller towers along the perimeter. The structure is made of light-colored stone, showing signs of age and weathering. The background is a clear blue sky.

02

Za'bal Castle: Guardian of Ancient Trade Routes

SAKAKA AL-JAWF



A Fortress Through Time

Rising 50 meters above the sandstone plateau of northwestern Sakaka, Za'bal Castle stands as one of the Arabian Peninsula's oldest and most formidable fortresses. For over 400 years, this military stronghold has watched over ancient trade routes between Syria and Iraq, its impressive architecture a testament to the ingenuity of early Arabian builders.





➤ Architectural Marvel

➤ Construction Details

- ➔ Built over 400 years ago
- ➔ Sandstone and clay materials
- ➔ 5,600 square meter footprint
- ➔ 50-meter elevated position
- ➔ Distinctive white stairway
- ➔ Last major renovation 200 years ago

➤ Defensive Features

➤ «Four Corner Towers»

1

- ➔ Conical design
- ➔ Surveillance platforms
- ➔ Military installations
- ➔ Strategic positioning
- ➔ Panoramic views

➤ «Protective Elements»

2

- ➔ Small observation windows
- ➔ Strategic wall openings
- ➔ Defensive positions
- ➔ High vantage points
- ➔ Limited access points

➤ Interior Spaces

- ➔ Meeting halls
- ➔ Two main rooms
- ➔ Circular water reservoir
- ➔ Surveillance posts
- ➔ Defensive positions



Strategic Significance

➤ Military Importance

- Trade routes protect
- Regional defense
- Surveillance capability
- Access control
- Territory monitoring

➤ Location Benefits

- Elevated position
- Natural defenses
- Strategic oversight
- Trade routes visibility
- Regional control

➤ Historical Context

➤ Timeline

- Initial constructions 400+ years
- Continuous using Through history
- Multiple reconstructions
- Recent preservations effort
- The Modern heritage sites

➤ Regional Significance

- Old human settlement area
- 1.3 million years from history
- Archaeological discoveries
- Cultural importance
- Heritage preservation



Visitor Experience

➤ What to See

- Ancient architecture
- Defensive systems
- Panoramic views
- Historical exhibits
- Archaeological sites

➤ Best Times to Visit

- Early morning light
- Sunset views
- Winter months
- Clear weather days
- Festival periods

📸 Photography Guide

➤ Best Shots

- Dawn fortress silhouettes
- Architectural details
- Panoramic landscapes
- Historic stairways
- Corner towers

➤ Photo Tips

- Morning light best
- Wide-angle recommended
- Tripod useful
- Multiple perspectives
- Weather consideration



➔ Practical Information

➤ Access

- ➔ Located in northwestern Sakaka
- ➔ Clear signage
- ➔ Parking available
- ➔ Guided tours possible
- ➔ Local transport options

➤ Essential Tips

- ➔ Wear comfortable shoes
- ➔ Bring water
- ➔ Sun protection needed
- ➔ Camera recommended
- ➔ Allow 23- hours

➔ Conservation Status

➤ Preservation Efforts

- ➔ Saudi era maintenance
- ➔ Structural reinforcement
- ➔ Historical documentation
- ➔ Site protection
- ➔ Cultural preservation

➤ Current Condition

- ➔ Well-maintained structure
- ➔ Protected status
- ➔ Regular upkeep
- ➔ Visitor facilities
- ➔ Information displays



➡ Educational Value

➤ Learning Opportunities

- ➔ Military architecture
- ➔ Trade route history
- ➔ Defensive strategies
- ➔ Cultural heritage
- ➔ Archaeological significance

➤ Available Resources

- ➔ Information panels
- ➔ Guide services
- ➔ Historical documents
- ➔ Cultural programs
- ➔ Educational tours

➡ Regional Context

➤ Nearby Sites

- ➔ Mared Castle
- ➔ Archaeological areas
- ➔ Historical landmarks
- ➔ Cultural centers
- ➔ Traditional markets

➤ Cultural Landscape

- ➔ Ancient trade routes
- ➔ Historical settlements
- ➔ Archaeological zones
- ➔ Traditional architecture
- ➔ Cultural heritage



➤ Travel Tip:



Visit during early morning or late afternoon for the best photography opportunities and comfortable temperatures. The castle's elevated position offers spectacular views of the surrounding landscape.

➤ Legacy

Za'bal Castle stands not only as a military fortress but as a symbol of Arabian architectural excellence and strategic thinking. Its continued preservation ensures that future generations can appreciate this remarkable testament to the region's rich history.

➤ Note:



As this is an active archaeological site, visitors should follow all posted guidelines and preserve the site's integrity for future generations.





03

Sisra Well: The Nabataean Water Marvel of Al-Jawf

SAKAKA



Ancient Engineering Wonder

Just 200 meters from the imposing Za'bal Castle in Sakaka lies a remarkable testament to Nabataean engineering prowess. The Sisra Well, carved into solid sandstone over two millennia ago, stands as one of the finest examples of ancient water management in the Arabian Peninsula.



➡ Technical Marvel

➤ Physical Dimensions

- ➡ Opening: 8m x 9m
- ➡ Depth: 15 meters
- ➡ Carved stone stairs
- ➡ Eastern water channel
- ➡ Underground tunnels

➤ Engineering Features

- ➡ Nabataean irrigation system
- ➡ Rock-carved water channels
- ➡ Strategic positioning
- ➡ Durable construction
- ➡ Efficient water distribution

➡ Historical Significance

➤ Nabataean Period

- ➡ Constructed 1st century BCE to 1st century CE
- ➡ Advanced water management
- ➡ Agricultural support
- ➡ Urban development
- ➡ Regional importance

➤ Archaeological Evidence

- ➡ Similar to Al-Jeeb well, Palestine
- ➡ Documented by Winnett and Reed (1962)
- ➡ Irrigation system remains
- ➡ Agricultural infrastructure
- ➡ Cultural connections





➡ Water Management

➤ Irrigation System

- ➡ Underground tunnels
- ➡ Eastern distribution channel
- ➡ Agricultural water supply
- ➡ Efficient distribution
- ➡ Sustainable design

➤ Area Coverage

- ➡ Eastern Sakaka
- ➡ Southern regions
- ➡ Agricultural lands
- ➡ Urban areas
- ➡ Connected settlements

➡ Modern Development

➤ Recent Improvements

- ➡ Site restoration
- ➡ Paved access road
- ➡ Stone-paved surroundings
- ➡ Tourist facilities
- ➡ Information panels

➤ Visitor Amenities

- ➡ Easy access
- ➡ Parking facilities
- ➡ Viewing areas
- ➡ Educational displays
- ➡ Guide services



Visitor Experience

➤ What to See

- Ancient well structure
- Stone stairways
- Water channels
- Engineering features
- Archaeological site

➤ Best Times to Visit

- Early morning
- Late afternoon
- Winter months
- Clear weather
- Guided tour times

➤ Photography Guide

➤ Best Shots

- Well opening
- Stone stairways
- Water channels
- Archaeological features
- Architectural details

➤ Photo Tips

- Morning light best
- Wide-angle recommended
- Scale references needed
- Safety considerations
- Multiple perspectives



➡ Practical Information

➤ Access

- ➔ Near Za'bal Castle
- ➔ Clear signage
- ➔ Paved roads
- ➔ Parking available
- ➔ Easy walking distance

➤ Essential Tips

- ➔ Wear sturdy shoes
- ➔ Bring water
- ➔ Sun protection
- ➔ Camera recommended
- ➔ Local guide beneficial

➡ Educational Value

➤ Learning Opportunities

- ➔ Ancient engineering
- ➔ Water management
- ➔ Nabataean civilization
- ➔ Agricultural history
- ➔ Archaeological methods

➤ Available Resources

- ➔ Information panels
- ➔ Guide services
- ➔ Historical documentation
- ➔ Archaeological reports
- ➔ Cultural context

➡ Conservation Status

➤ Preservation Efforts

- ➔ Site protection
- ➔ Regular maintenance
- ➔ Historical documentation
- ➔ Tourist management
- ➔ Environmental monitoring

➤ Current Condition

- ➔ Well-preserved structure
- ➔ Protected status
- ➔ Maintained access
- ➔ Clear signage
- ➔ Visitor facilities

➡ Cultural Context

➤ Regional Significance

- ➔ Water management history
- ➔ Agricultural development
- ➔ Urban planning
- ➔ Engineering achievement
- ➔ Cultural exchange

➤ Historical Impact

- ➔ Agricultural sustainability
- ➔ Urban development
- ➔ Technical innovation
- ➔ Cultural advancement
- ➔ Regional trade





➤ Travel Tip:



Combine your visit with Za'bal Castle for a comprehensive understanding of ancient life in Sakaka. The sites are within easy walking distance of each other.

➤ Legacy

The Sisra Well represents more than just a water source; it stands as a testament to the ingenuity of ancient civilizations in managing precious water resources in arid environments. Its continued preservation offers valuable insights into sustainable water management practices that remain relevant today.

➤ Note



While visiting, maintain appropriate distance from the well opening and follow all safety guidelines. The site's preservation depends on responsible tourism.



04

Madain Saleh: Saudi Arabia's First UNESCO World Heritage Site

AL-ULA



Ancient Crossroads

Rising from the desert sands of Al-Ula, Madain Saleh (Al-Hijr) stands as a testament to millennia of human civilization. From the Thamud people mentioned in the Quran to the sophisticated Nabataean civilization, this site has witnessed the rise and fall of numerous cultures since the third millennium BCE.



➡ Archaeological Treasures

➤ Rock Facades

- ➔ 153 ornate rock-cut facades
- ➔ Multi-lingual inscriptions
 - ➔ Arabic
 - ➔ Nabataean
 - ➔ Latin
 - ➔ Lihyanite
- ➔ Intricate architectural details
- ➔ Historical significance
- ➔ Cultural diversity

➤ Burial Sites

- ➔ 130+ tombs (1 BCE 75 CE)
- ➔ Sophisticated design
- ➔ Cultural significance
- ➔ Religious symbolism
- ➔ Architectural mastery

➡ The Kingdom of Dedan

➤ Archaeological Features

- ➔ Rock-cut tombs
- ➔ Geometric designs
- ➔ Protective statues
- ➔ Red cliff faces
- ➔ Royal artifacts



➤ Notable Discoveries

➤ «Mahlab Al-Naqa Temple»

1

- ⇒ Religious significance
- ⇒ Architectural excellence
- ⇒ Cultural importance
- ⇒ Historical context
- ⇒ Spiritual center

➤ «Royal Artifacts»

2

- ⇒ Golden jewelry
- ⇒ Royal mask
- ⇒ King's Tomb
- ⇒ Carved columns
- ⇒ Cultural treasures

➡ Commercial Heritage

➤ Trade Routes

- North-South connections
- Perfume trade
- Spice routes
- Regional commerce
- International exchange

➤ Agricultural Legacy

- Water sources
- Seasonal practices
- Religious rituals
- Farming traditions
- Resource management



Visitor Experience

➤ Essential Sights

- Rock facades
- Ancient tombs
- Hijr Castle
- Naqah Well
- Archaeological exhibits

➤ Best Times to Visit

- Winter months (October-March)
- Early morning
- Late afternoon
- Clear weather days
- Festival periods

➡ Practical Information

➤ Access

- Tour arrangements
- Transport options
- Site navigation
- Guided visits

➡ Visitor Tips

- Comfortable walking shoes
- Sun protection
- Water supplies
- Camera equipment
- Local guide recommended



➡ Photography Guide

➤ Prime Locations

- ➡ Rock facades
- ➡ Tomb entrances
- ➡ Mountain landscapes
- ➡ Archaeological features
- ➡ Architectural details

➤ Photo Tips

- ➡ Golden hour lighting
- ➡ Wide-angle shots
- ➡ Detail captures
- ➡ Scale references
- ➡ Shadow considerations

➡ Cultural Significance

➤ Historical Impact

- ➡ Trade route hub
- ➡ Cultural exchange
- ➡ Religious significance
- ➡ Architectural influence
- ➡ Agricultural development

➤ Modern Relevance

- ➡ UNESCO status
- ➡ Archaeological research
- ➡ Cultural tourism
- ➡ Educational value
- ➡ Heritage preservation





➔ Educational Value

➤ Learning Opportunities

- ➔ Ancient civilizations
- ➔ Archaeological methods
- ➔ Trade history
- ➔ Cultural exchange
- ➔ Religious studies

➤ Available Resources

- ➔ Guide services
- ➔ Information centers
- ➔ Educational programs
- ➔ Archaeological displays
- ➔ Cultural exhibits

➔ Conservation Status

➤ Protection Measures

- ➔ UNESCO guidelines
- ➔ Site preservation
- ➔ Access management
- ➔ Environmental monitoring
- ➔ Cultural protection

➤ Ongoing Research

- ➔ Archaeological studies
- ➔ Historical documentation
- ➔ Cultural analysis
- ➔ Conservation efforts
- ➔ Scientific investigation



➔ Seasonal Considerations

➤ Weather

- ➔ Hot summers
- ➔ Mild winters
- ➔ Desert climate
- ➔ Temperature variations
- ➔ Weather protection needed

➤ Visit Planning

- ➔ Morning explorations
- ➔ Evening photography
- ➔ Seasonal events
- ➔ Cultural festivals
- ➔ Archaeological activities





➤ Travel Tip:



Plan your visit during winter months for comfortable temperatures and optimal photography conditions. Early morning visits offer the best light for photographing the rock facades.

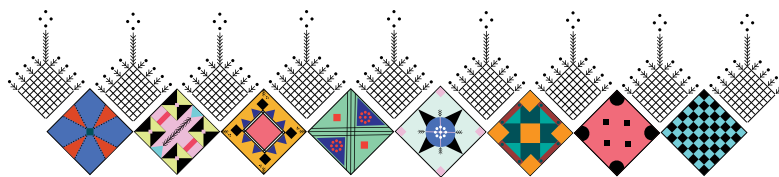
➤ Legacy

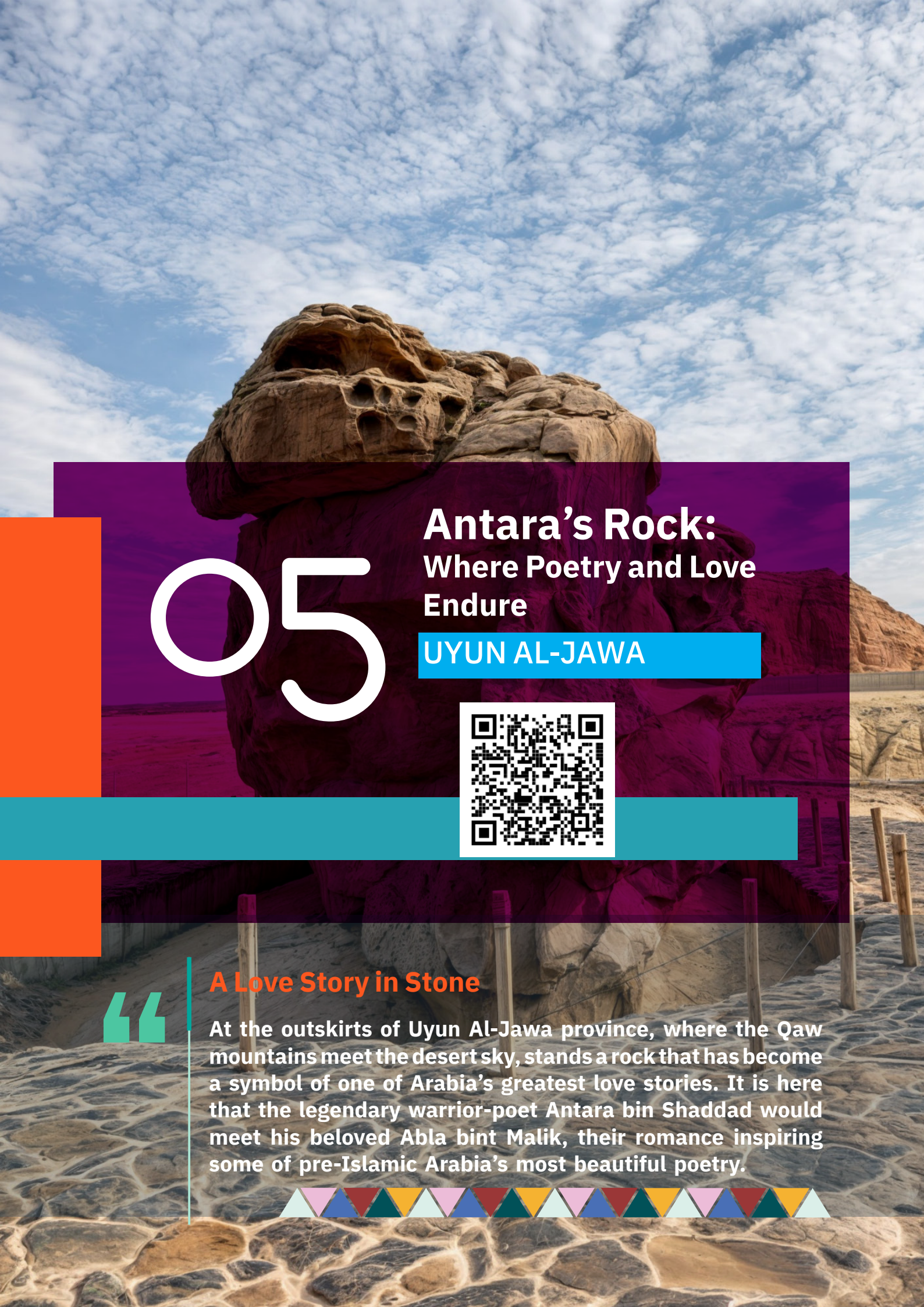
Madain Saleh stands as a remarkable testament to human civilization's ability to thrive in challenging environments. Its preservation offers modern visitors an unparalleled window into the sophisticated societies that once dominated ancient Arabian trade routes.

➤ Note:



As a UNESCO World Heritage site, visitors should follow all conservation guidelines and contribute to the preservation of this invaluable historical treasure.





05

Antara's Rock: Where Poetry and Love Endure

UYUN AL-JAWA



A Love Story in Stone

At the outskirts of Uyun Al-Jawa province, where the Qaw mountains meet the desert sky, stands a rock that has become a symbol of one of Arabia's greatest love stories. It is here that the legendary warrior-poet Antara bin Shaddad would meet his beloved Abla bint Malik, their romance inspiring some of pre-Islamic Arabia's most beautiful poetry.





➡ Historical Significance

➤ The Setting

- ➔ In the heart of the ancient Bani Abs territory
- ➔ Nestled in Qusayba foothills
- ➔ Seven natural springs in the vicinity
- ➔ Aín Abs Spring historic
- ➔ Historic caravan routes

➤ Antara's Legacy

- ➔ Pre-Islamic warrior-poet
- ➔ Hero of Dahis and Ghabra war
- ➔ Master of Arabic poetry
- ➔ Master of Arabic poetry
- ➔ Symbol of chivalry
- ➔ Cultural icon

➡ The Love Story

➤ Daily Devotion

- ➔ 50-kilometer daily journey
- ➔ Secret of meetings under the rock
- ➔ Poetic declarations for love
- ➔ Cousin forbidden romance
- ➔ Enduring dedication

➤ Cultural Impact

- ➔ Inspiration to poetry
- ➔ Name pass for through generations
- ➔ Symbol of true love
- ➔ Literary heritage
- ➔ the Modern romantic pilgrimages



➔ Archaeological Features

➤ Ancient Elements

- ➔ Thamudic inscriptions
- ➔ Antara castle ruins
- ➔ Guard towers
- ➔ Stone fortifications
- ➔ The Water spring systems

➤ Modern Additions

- ➔ Carved lover names
- ➔ Contemporary inscriptions
- ➔ Memorial markings
- ➔ Cultural symbols
- ➔ Visitor tributes

Visitor Experience

➤ What to See

- ➔ The Historic rock info
- ➔ Ancient inscriptions
- ➔ Mountain views
- ➔ Castle ruins
- ➔ Spring sites

➤ Best Times to Visit

- ➔ Early morning
- ➔ Late afternoon
- ➔ Cool season
- ➔ Poetry festivals
- ➔ Cultural events





➔ Cultural Celebrations

➤ Literary Heritage

- ➔ Poetry readings
- ➔ Cultural programs
- ➔ Literary tours
- ➔ Historical reenactments
- ➔ Storytelling sessions

➔ Practical Information

➤ Access

- ➔ at near of Qusayba
- ➔ Clear signage
- ➔ Accessible paths
- ➔ Parking available
- ➔ Guide services

➤ Essential Tips

- ➔ Comfortable walkd shoes
- ➔ Sun protection
- ➔ Water supplies
- ➔ Camera recommended
- ➔ Local guide benefit

➔ Photography Guide

➤ Best Shots

- ➔ Rock formations
- ➔ Ancient inscriptions
- ➔ Mountain landscapes
- ➔ Historical ruins
- ➔ Cultural activities

➤ Photo Tips

- ➔ Morning light best
- ➔ Golden hour magic
- ➔ Detail captures
- ➔ Wide landscapes
- ➔ Cultural sensitivity

➡ Educational Value

➤ Historical Context

- ➔ Pre-Islamic Arabia
- ➔ Tribal society
- ➔ Literary traditions
- ➔ Military history
- ➔ Cultural practices

➤ Available Resources

- ➔ Local historians
- ➔ Cultural guides
- ➔ Literary references
- ➔ Historical documents
- ➔ Archaeological studies

➡ Conservation Status

➤ Preservation Efforts

- ➔ Site protection
- ➔ Inscription preservation
- ➔ Cultural maintenance
- ➔ Environmental monitoring
- ➔ Heritage conservation





➤ Modern Impact

- ➔ Tourism development
- ➔ Cultural preservation
- ➔ Educational programs
- ➔ Literary inspiration
- ➔ Romantic symbolism

➤ Travel Tip:



Come for the poetry festivals, which happen in conjunction with poetry performances and a reading from Antara's works by local traditionals at that very inspiring site.

➤ Legacy

It is more than a geological formation; this rock symbolizes the perennial strength of love and poetry in Arabian culture. From ancient tribal conflicts to modern romantic pilgrimages, this site continues to capture imaginations and inspire new generations.

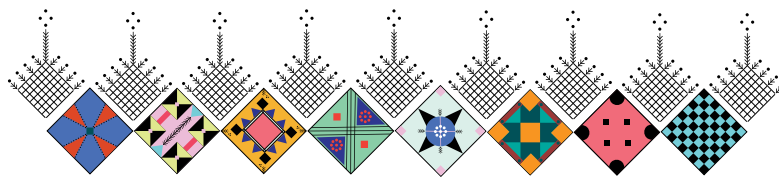
➤ Continuing Influence

- ➔ Modern poetry
- ➔ Cultural identity
- ➔ Romantic symbolism
- ➔ Literary inspiration
- ➔ Traditional values

➤ Note:



Adding to the carved tributes is not encouraged, so as to preserve the historical integrity of the site; visitors can, however, engage in organized cultural activities to respect the site's legacy of romance.





Conclusion:

A Living Legacy



These twenty-six sites that form the core of this book are more than points on a map; they are windows into the soul of Saudi Arabia. From the northern reaches, where Hatim Al-Tai's legendary generosity still inspires, to southern mountains where ancient coffee traditions thrive, these places will show how Saudi Arabia's heritage remains vibrantly alive in the present.

These stories give the emergence of a nation balancing preservation with progress in every respect. It is on this land that boasts the world's most sophisticated oil infrastructure, that it carefully preserves ancient wells once used to sustain desert caravans. The country that builds modern cities upholds centuries-old architectural traditions in villages like Rijal Almaa.

These sites remind us that heritage is not simply a question of the preservation of the past, but it is also one of upkeep of the living link between generations. From continued Al-Qatt Al-Asiri art practiced by women in Asir to modern revived ancient rose cultivation in Taif, Saudi Arabia's rich cultural traditions evolve but remain true to themselves.

Anchoring identity and bridging gaps in understanding, these heritage sites position Saudi Arabia confidently to make a movement into the future. They invite the rest of the world to come and explore the depth and diversity of Arabian culture, reminding Saudis of their rich inheritance. It is in this careful preservation and reflective presentation of such sites that one views Saudi Arabia's respect for its past while building its future.

These stories, collected here, are more than a record of events in history but an invitation to explore, understand, and appreciate what Saudi Arabia has given to the world through its cultural heritage. As the Kingdom continues to open up to visitors from across the globe, these sites stand ready to share their secrets with all comers.



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