



The Women's Travel Group presents
The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
November 30-December 9, 2023
DRAFT ITINERARY

This special exploration of the Kingdom is designed to introduce you to the best of what Saudi Arabia has to offer. Start in the modern capital, Riyadh, where gleaming skyscrapers

exist mere miles from ancient villages like the UNESCO-listed Al Turaif District and the classic Najdi architecture of Ushaiger. Fly to UNESCO-listed Al Ula, where you'll tour the remains of a 2,000-year-old Nabataean city. Follow in the footsteps of countless pilgrims to the holy city of Medina. Then travel by high-speed train to the Red Sea port of Jeddah—a city of contrasts with centuries-old markets and atmospheric neighborhoods existing alongside a modern promenade. We arrange air and visas.

It's an exciting time to visit the Kingdom!

Organized tourism is extremely new in Saudi Arabia, having only opened to foreign travel September 2019 for a mere six months, and reopened again only in the fall of 2021. **Travelers venturing here now need to come with modest expectations and will need to be highly flexible**, especially on schedules and timing of visits (particularly at Al Ula where touring is under the control of the Royal Commission of Al Ula), and always be up for an adventure. Visitors need to be aware of a wide variety of rules and abide by them – including that alcohol is still banned, modest clothing is required (**though *abaya* and head covering for women are not required**), photographing people without their consent is a no no, and some cities, like Mecca, remain

For general information from this draft itinerary: Call MIR at 206-696-7052

dmitry@mircorp.com For The Women's Travel Group: 646 309 5607

Phyllis@thewomenstravelgroup.com



Program Highlights

- Wander the ruins of the Al Turaif District in Diriyah located north-west of Riyadh, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the original seat of the power of the Al Saud dynasty.
- Learn about traditional Najdi architecture in Ushaiger, considered by many to be Saudi Arabia's most beautiful village.

- Enjoy a homestyle lunch at a multi-generation Saudi family villa, and learn about daily life of a Saudi family.
- Discover the remarkable Nabatean tombs of Hegra, which share many characteristics with, but are largely better preserved than, the famous tombs of Hegra's sister city, Petra.
- Study the ancient graffiti, rock carvings and petroglyphs in myriad extinct and obscure languages, that cover the rock walls at Al Ula's Jebel Ikmah.
- Get an overview of the holy city of Medina from Mount Uhud, itself an important Islamic site.
- Stroll the streets and explore the souqs of Al Balad, Jeddah's UNESCO World Heritage-listed historic city center.
- Meet with a local entrepreneur and learn about running a women-owned business in Saudi. *(subject to guest availability).*



Overview Itinerary

- Day 1, Thu, Nov 30 Depart U.S.
- Day 2, Fri, Dec 1 Arrive Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
- Day 3, Sat, Dec 2 Riyadh
- Day 4, Sun, Dec 3 Riyadh • day trip to Ushaiger
- Day 5, Mon, Dec 4 Riyadh • Al Ula
- Day 6, Tue, Dec 5 Al Ula
- Day 7, Wed, Dec 6 Al Ula • Khaybar • Medina
- Day 8, Thu, Dec 7 Medina • Jeddah
- Day 9, Fri, Dec 8 Jeddah
- Day 10, Sat, Dec 9 Depart Jeddah

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Saudi Arabia – Day by Day Itinerary

Days 1-2 Arrive Riyadh

Travel to Riyadh and transfer to the hotel. *Centro Olaya or similar. (Meals in flight, D on Day 2)*

Days 3-4 Riyadh • day trip to Ushaiger Village

Tour the highlights of the modern capital, Riyadh. Here gleaming skyscrapers and modern museums exist mere miles from ancient villages like the UNESCO-listed Al Turaif District and the classic Najdi architecture of Ushaiger, both of which we'll explore. In-city highlights include the impressive collection at the National Museum of Saudi Arabia, the Masmak Fortress, Dira Souq, and a visit to a multi-generation Saudi family villa, where we will have lunch and learn about daily life of a Saudi family. *Centro Olaya or similar. (Meals Day 3: B, L, D; Day 4: B, D)*

Day 5 Riyadh • Al Ula

Fly on to Al Ula, the gem of Saudi Arabia. Belying its small size of 5,500 residents, this oasis town is an intriguing, multifaceted destination, nestled among date palm groves and surrounded by exceptional historic and natural attractions. Explore Hegra, the southernmost city of the Nabataean Kingdom, the same civilization of the famous Petra in neighboring Jordan. Enjoy gorgeous desert landscapes and rock formations including the Elephant Rock. *Centro Olaya or similar. Shaden Desert Resort or similar (Meals: B, D)*

Day 6 Al Ula

Continue to explore Al Ula's treasures including the Dadan Tombs, built nearly three thousand years ago, serving as the capital of the successive Dadan and Lihyan kingdoms. Explore Al Ula's very charming mud-brick Old Town, which once thrived as a stop on the pilgrimage route from Damascus to Mecca. Enjoy time for an independent lunch and the best souvenir shopping opportunity of the trip. Another highlight is Jebel Ikmah, used by locals for thousands of years as a sort of outdoor library or bulletin board. Inscriptions in a range of languages are carved from the stone or etched as petroglyphs. *Centro Olaya or similar. Shaden Desert Resort or similar (Meals: B, D)*

Day 7 Al Ala • Khaybar • Medina

Today we head overland following the footsteps of countless pilgrims to the holy city of Medina. En route stop briefly at the oasis of Khaybar to see mud rick ruins and forts. *Le Meridien or similar (Meals: B, D)*

Day 8 Medina • Jeddah

Today we'll explore the parts of Medina which are open to foreign non-Muslim visitors before taking the two-hour, fast evening train to Jeddah. The holy city of Medina is a major Islamic pilgrimage site, visited alongside Mecca on the hajj pilgrimage that all Muslims aspire to make. See the Prophet's Mosque (exterior only, from a distance) with its ten towering minarets. Stroll through Medina's beautiful pedestrian streets and enjoy a view from Mount Uhud on the outskirts of town, site of the Battle of Uhud, a critical event in Islamic history. Travel to Jeddah for overnight. *Radisson Blu Jeddah Plaza or similar (Meals: B, L, D)*

Day 9 Jeddah

Spend the day exploring Jeddah, Saudi Arabia's second-largest city and largest port on the Red Sea. Highlights include the Abdul Raouf Khalil Museum with its striking architecture, Jeddah's historic center, UNESCO-listed Al Balad, the traditional Beit Nassif museum, Gabel Street Souq, the Jeddah Corniche and King Fahd's Fountain, reportedly the tallest fountain in the world. If possible, the group will meet with a local entrepreneur and learn about running a women-owned business in Saudi. *(subject to guest availability). Radisson Blu Jeddah Plaza or similar (Meals: B, L, D)*

Day 10

Depart Jeddah

Following breakfast, the tour concludes with a transfer to the airport. (*Meals: B*)

\$6,645 per person, double occupancy

\$1,595 single supplement

Plus, one internal flight one-way, from Riyadh to Al Ula, in economy class – currently \$175 per person, subject to change until ticketed. Not included in the package price above.

Reservations will be confirmed upon receipt of a \$500 per person, non-refundable deposit. Full booking conditions will be included in the reservation form.

Included

- All accommodations based on double/twin occupancy, hotel taxes
- Meals per itinerary
- Group arrival / departure transfers for passengers arriving to Riyadh on Dec 2 and departing from Jeddah on Dec 9
- All internal land transportation train (economy class); and by private coach per itinerary
- Special cultural events and extensive sightseeing, including entrance fees
- Welcome and farewell dinners
- Services of a national escorting guide who will travel with the group throughout the entire program
- Comprehensive pre-departure information

Not Included

- Gratuities to national escorting guide and drivers
- Travel insurance
- Roundtrip airfare from / to your home city. MIR can assist you with reservations
- Passport and visa fees
- Personal items such as telephone calls, alcohol, laundry, excess baggage fees
- Single supplement
- Items not expressly listed as included

Photos courtesy: Saudi Arabia Tourism Authority