

Middle East

Travel 'n' Shop

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Cruise Saudi

welcomes record numbers of travelers

Rulers of the U.A.E.



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President of the U.A.E and Ruler of Abu Dhabi**



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Travel 'n' Shop

MIDDLE EAST

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Photo credit: Madhyamam

Cruise Saudi

For the first time, on Saudi Founding Day 2023, Cruise Saudi welcomed over 9,000 visitors who were traveling to important Saudi locations through three cruise ships that made port calls in two ports.

The MSC Splendida and Residences at Sea's ultra-luxury private residential ship The World, both carrying more than three thousand passengers, arrived at Jeddah Islamic Port on the same day. At the same time, MSC World Europa arrived at Dammam's King Abdulaziz Port carrying more than 5,600 passengers.

The visitors, who came from a variety of countries—the top five being English, Spanish, Italians, and French—saw the vivid Saudi Founding Day celebrations while on their various adventures in Jeddah and the Eastern Province via Dammam Port.

The well-planned excursions in Jeddah included a flight to

AlUla, the first UNESCO World Heritage site in Saudi Arabia, a relaxing stroll along the waterfront (Corniche), and a trip through centuries of culture and tradition at the UNESCO World Heritage site of Jeddah Historical District. (Al Balad). Muslim passengers and staff had a special experience since Cruise Saudi organized the excursion to Makkah and their Umrah.

Cruise From November 2022 to May 2023, Saudi Arabia will be host to more than 75 scheduled visits by ships from various international cruise lines sailing the Red Sea and Arabian Gulf.



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Photo Credit: White desert Oasis

Want To Swim

Even If You Don't Know How To?

In Egypt, there is a place called the Siwa Oasis that is surrounded by desert, natural springs, and palm trees. It's a popular tourist destination located around 562 km from Cairo. The lakes in the Siwa Oasis are high in salt concentration, which allows visitors to float on them without the fear of drowning, even if they don't know how to swim. This makes the oasis a unique and exciting experience for those who visit.



The best time to visit the Siwa Oasis is between October and March when temperatures are mild. The oasis has more than 220 springs, and Cleopatra's Pool is the most famous among them. Egypt is known for its popular tourist attractions like the Pyramids of Giza, temples of Aswan and Luxor, and the Valley of the Kings, but the Siwa Oasis is a hidden gem that many visitors may not know about.

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EASY AND AFFORDABLE TRAVELLING IN SAUDI ARABIA

If you are searching for cost-effective ways to travel across Saudi Arabia, consider the passenger trains as they offer a viable option for cross-country travel. While taking a flight to another city within the country may take around one or two hours, choosing rail transportation provides an opportunity to enjoy the picturesque scenery and explore the unique landscape of the country.



Saudi Arabia's state-owned train company, Saudi Arabia Railways (SAR), operates daily trains that link the capital city of Riyadh with significant cities in the Northern and Eastern regions. While the country's railway network

has been used for transporting cargo goods and oil tankers since the 1950s, SAR introduced passenger rail services in 2016. The trains are equipped with air conditioning, free Wi-Fi, food options, as well as a lounge and prayer area. If you are interested in learning more about this railway service, the below information may be useful.

SAUDI ARABIA RAILWAYS (SAR) RUNS TRAINS ON TWO MAIN ROUTES: EAST TRAIN AND NORTH TRAIN.



East Train:

This route connects Riyadh to the Eastern Region in Saudi Arabia. It passes through the following cities:

- Riyadh
- Hufuf
- Abqaiq
- Dammam

North Train:

This route connects Riyadh to the north of Saudi Arabia and serves the following cities:

- Riyadh
- Al Majmaah
- Ha'il
- Qassim
- Al Jauf
- Al Qurayyat

How to Find the Train Schedule:

- Visit this link: <https://www.sar.com.sa/travel-information/trainschedule/>
- Select the departure and arrival destination.
- Enter the date.
- Enter the date.
- Click on 'Get Schedule'

Where do you buy the tickets?

You can book the tickets through the following platforms:

1. The SAR call centre – 8001262000
2. The 'SAR' mobile application
3. The website
3. SAR ticket counters.

Important to Note:

- Book tickets online, two hours before departure.
- Buy tickets at the station 30 minutes before departure.



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AlUla Skies Festival

is Making a Comeback to Saudi Arabia this Month

Visitors traveling to AlUla this month can witness numerous vibrant hot-air balloons soar above the Arabian Desert. The AlUla Skies Festival is making a comeback for its second year at the historical location in Saudi Arabia, tracing back to the Lihyan and Nabataean kingdoms. The festival spans 18 days, commencing on April 26, and features daily hot-air balloon experiences at sunrise and sunset, helicopter tours, and stargazing sessions, all of which bring the ancient site of AlUla to life. Taking inspiration from the night sky, which has aided travelers in navigating through the region for centuries, the festival is sure to be a breathtaking and an unforgettable experience.

Every day, tourists can enjoy peaceful hot-air balloon rides above the historic town of North Hegra, once the primary southern city of the Nabataean Kingdom. This offers a serene and tranquil experience for travelers seeking a unique and awe-inspiring adventure.

In addition, visitors can opt for helicopter tours, soaring high above the desert and providing passengers with stunning 360-degree views of the ancient landmarks of AlUla, including up-close glimpses of the intricate facades carved into the sandstone cliffs. This is a fantastic way to experience the beauty and grandeur of the historical site from a unique perspective. For those who prefer to keep their feet on the ground, the Harrat Viewpoint is a must-see destination located at the peak of an ancient volcanic mountain, offering breathtaking panoramic views of the surrounding landscape.



AlUla is a great destination for stargazers due to its low levels of light pollution and clear night skies, providing opportunities for guests to witness celestial events. Experts will lead workshops, educating visitors about stars and constellations, while astrophotographers will be available to offer tips on how to capture stunning images of the night sky.

For those seeking a more thrilling experience, the Giant Swing is a must-try activity, where daredevil visitors can leap off a mountain edge and speed through towering canyon walls. Adventurous travelers can enjoy their own airborne adventures on this adrenaline-inducing ride. Additionally, the AlUla Stairway, which is open daily, offers visitors the opportunity to climb a suspended ladder that stretches 45 meters, followed by a 150-meter-long zipline ride back down.

There is also outdoor cinema which offers a unique experience where visitors can enjoy daily film screenings under a starry sky.

Additionally, a nightly drone show will create mesmerizing patterns and shapes in the night sky. This year's festival will also feature the first-ever AlUla Jazz Nights, a two-day open-air event starting on May 5th, showcasing live performances by jazz, blues, and soul artists. It promises to be a one-of-a-kind experience for music lovers.

The first AlUla Skies festival, held last year, was a tremendous success and set a Guinness World Record for the largest hot-air balloon glow show, with more than 140 brilliantly illuminated balloons taking off into the skies above the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Hegra.





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QATAR TOURISM OFFERS UPDATED INFORMATION ON SHOP QATAR AND LIVE QATAR

The “Feel Winter in Qatar” promotion, a thrilling and ongoing season of family-friendly events, performances, and exhibitions taking place all across the nation, received updated data yesterday from Qatar Tourism (QT). The new activations are part of Shop Qatar and Qatar Live, one of the campaign’s “hero” events, and were organized collaboratively by QT and Qatar Airways. The most recent news includes the largest reward in Shop Qatar history, concerts by the biggest acts in the area under Qatar Live, and the return of a performance of international caliber.

Sheikha Hessa Al Thani, Head of Marketing and Planning for Qatar Tourism, offered the following statement about the new events: “We are delighted to unveil details for Shop Qatar and Qatar Live, strategic pillars to our seasonal campaign and ones that offer entertainment suitable to all ages. With events taking place across the country, in diverse settings and scenes, we look forward to seeing families enjoying the latest activations, and we welcome visitors from around the region to experience Qatar’s dynamic calendar of events this season.”

The largest shopping event in Qatar, Shop Qatar, returned this month and will continue through March 18. It began on February 23. This month-long commemoration of Qatar’s retail and recreation industries will feature participation from ten of the nation’s most well-known shopping centers, including Doha Festival City, Place Vendôme, and Lagoona Mall. The entire month will be filled with thrilling activities; Sephora will hold “Sephora Saturdays” with public workshops at Place Vendôme and “Sephora Ladies Night” on Wednesdays with exclusive masterclasses and delectable giveaways. On March 4, there will be a gathering exclusively for men, so they don’t have to feel left out.



The grand fashion show starring the top local designers will take place at Harvey Nichols in Doha Festival City on March 14 and is another eagerly anticipated event during this iteration of Shop Qatar.

During the month-long shopping event, consumers will also have access to spectacular roaming shows, which will alternate between participating malls.

The performances vary from scintillating aerial acts in the heliosphere and winter circus to an enchanting journey through the children's enchanted fairy woodland.



Additionally, shoppers can take part in a variety of contests and promotions, like the “Shop and Sweep” event at Virgin Megastore locations across the nation. Shoppers have the chance to join a drawing for mega rewards worth more than QR 2 million for every QR 200 they spend. The opportunity to win a brand-new studio apartment in The Pearl Qatar is this year’s main prize—the largest in Shop Qatar’s lengthy history.

The Paw Patrol Festival is taking place at Place Vendôme from March 2 to March 18 as a component of Shop Qatar. The best of the widely popular Paw Patrol series will be featured in this completely immersive event, including live performances, meet-and-greets with the show’s most well-known characters, and much more.



Doha Festival City, Place Vendôme, and Lagoona Mall are silver supporters of Shop Qatar, as are Landmark Mall, Al Khor Mall, City Center Mall, Hyatt Plaza, Mall of Qatar, Gulf Mall, and Al Hazm.

Meanwhile, Qatar Live will continue until March 18. Following recent triumphs like John Legend and Disney Princess - The Concert, Qatar Live presents more well-known performers and thrilling shows, with forthcoming acts like: Angham, the “voice of Egypt,” which took place yesterday Assala Nasri, one of the most well-known acts in the Arab world, will perform on March 2 to large crowds at Al Shaqab; Kuwaiti national treasure, Nawal Al Kuwaitia, will perform a medley of her hits live on March 3 at Al Shaqab as well. Angham enchanted local crowds with a live and captivating set.



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Photo Credit: GulfNews

Oman permits

citizenship to 300 foreigners, this year
being the first batch

Foreigners numbering 300 now have Omani citizenship owing to a Royal Decree that Oman's Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik provided. This is the year's first batch of recipients. The Omani Nationality Law describes the requirements for acquiring citizenship as well as the circumstances under which it may be eliminated. According to the legislation, people born in Oman or outside the country to Omani parents, people born in Oman to unidentified parents, and people born in Oman to fathers who have lost their Omani nationality may all be awarded citizenship.

Foreigners who fulfill certain requirements, such as being an adult with reading and writing proficiency in Arabic, having lived constantly in Oman for at least 20 years (or 10 years if married to an Omani woman), acting ethically, and having a legal source of income, may submit a naturalization application. After receiving citizenship, the person is required to swear a pledge in front of the legal system. A unique Royal Decree may make exceptions while still abiding by the requirements for naturalization.

Following five years of marriage and residency in Oman, foreign women who are married to Omani males are eligible to file for citizenship. Omanis are not permitted to hold dual citizenship unless specifically authorized by a Royal Decree.

If someone acquires a foreign nationality illegally or takes actions that are detrimental to Oman's interests, they may forfeit their Omani citizenship. A Royal Decree may revoke an Omani's nationality if certain conditions are met, such as obtaining citizenship fraudulently, working abroad, or serving a hostile state's interests.