

Heritage Discovery: Saudi Arabia

20 October 2027

12 Day Small Group Hosted Tour
From Your Front Door and Back Again





Heritage Discovery: Saudi Arabia

Tour Overview

Join us on a very special small-group tour to Saudi Arabia — a destination that still feels like a genuine discovery. Having opened to international travellers only in 2019, the Kingdom is rapidly emerging as one of the world's most fascinating places to visit, where deep history, visionary cities and vibrant cultural traditions come together.

The tour is designed and fully hosted by YOURTours co-owner Peter Roddam, who lived in the Kingdom for many years and has built long-standing friendships across the country. His experience and connections open doors to people and places you wouldn't typically encounter, and along the way, Peter shares personal stories and insights that provide rich context to everything you see.

- **Riyadh:** We begin in the capital, where restored heritage districts and historic fortifications stand in striking contrast to a skyline of gleaming glass towers and sculptural skyscrapers.
- **Tabuk:** From here we travel north-west to the dramatic desert landscapes of Tabuk, a region of awe-inspiring canyons, towering golden rock faces, and vast open wilderness.
- **AlUla:** We continue to AlUla, one of the country's most remarkable cultural landscapes and home to the UNESCO-listed rock-cut tombs of Hegra (Mada'in Salih), carved by the Nabataeans over 2,000 years ago. Nearby, ancient oasis settlements and sweeping sandstone formations create an extraordinary open-air setting for exploration.
- **Madinah:** In Madinah, one of the holiest cities in Islam, we see a city shaped by centuries as a centre of faith and pilgrimage.
- **Jeddah:** The tour concludes in Jeddah on the Red Sea, where the historic Al-Balad district's coral-stone merchant houses and winding lanes sit alongside a vibrant waterfront reflecting the city's modern coastal identity.

The YOURTours Experience

Throughout the journey, carefully selected premium hotels, private transport and expert guiding allow time to properly absorb each destination — sharing meals with local families in traditional homes, exploring cutting-edge cities and bustling souqs, wandering historic districts, and experiencing both iconic sites and everyday life.

Beyond Saudi Arabia

While you're in the region, you may wish to extend your journey to other destinations. Your travel consultant can tailor a personalised extension for you as an independent traveller — we've included some ideas to inspire your plans.



Heritage Discovery: Saudi Arabia

20 October to 31 October 2027

Trip Highlights

- **Edge of the World, Riyadh** – Stand above vast desert cliffs where the land falls away into a seemingly endless horizon of rock and sky.
- **Diriyah Heritage District** – Walk through the birthplace of the Saudi state, where restored mud-brick architecture reveals the origins of desert civilisation.
- **AlUla & Hegra (Mada'in Salih)** – Explore dramatic sandstone landscapes and Saudi Arabia's first UNESCO World Heritage Site, with monumental Nabataean tombs carved into rose-coloured rock.
- **Maraya Concert Hall & Elephant Rock** – Experience striking modern architecture mirrored into the desert, alongside natural rock formations shaped over millions of years.
- **Tabuk Fortress & Wadi Disah** – Discover a historic desert stronghold and a hidden canyon of cliffs, palm groves, and ancient geological formations.
- **Madinah (Exterior Experience)** – Gain insight into one of Islam's holiest cities through respectful external viewing and cultural context.
- **Al-Balad Historic District, Jeddah** – Wander coral-stone alleyways and merchant houses shaped by centuries of Red Sea trade.

WED 20 Home - Depart New Zealand



We depart New Zealand on our international flight to Saudi Arabia, with meals served onboard. Over the days ahead, we step into a journey shaped by ancient civilisations, striking landscapes, and living history across Saudi Arabia.

THU 21 Arrival in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia



أهلاً وسهلاً بكم في المملكة العربية السعودية
A warm welcome to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia!

On arrival in Riyadh, we are met by our local English-speaking guide and transferred to our hotel for early check-in. The morning offers time to rest and settle in before we gather for a light lunch—our first introduction to the flavours, spices, and shared style of Arabian cuisine.

In the afternoon, we journey into the desert to one of Saudi Arabia's most striking natural formations—the Edge of the World. Travelling by 4WD across open desert plains, the landscape gradually shifts from soft sand to rugged limestone as we reach the towering cliffs of the Tuwaik Escarpment.

From the edge, the view drops dramatically into a vast, ancient seabed that once lay beneath the ocean millions of years ago. Fossilised marine life can still be found embedded in the rock, a reminder that this seemingly silent desert was once underwater. The cliffs themselves stretch for hundreds of kilometres, forming part of one of the longest continuous escarpments in the region.

We arrive in time for sunset, when the desert light turns the rock face into deep gold and rust tones, and the horizon appears to dissolve into open space. We then return to our hotel for dinner.





FRI 22 Ancient Diriyah and modern Riyadh (B L D)

Enjoy a relaxed morning with free time before we head out to explore Riyadh's cultural heart and its layers of history.

We begin with a traditional Saudi lunch, followed by a visit to the King Abdullah Financial District— a striking contrast of glass towers and geometric design that reflects Saudi Arabia's rapid modern transformation. We'll take in its world class commercial offices, retail spaces, and contemporary residences, and gain a glimpse into the Kingdom's future vision.

Later in the afternoon, we continue to Diriyah, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the original capital of the First Saudi State, founded in the 15th century and still home to the royal family. Wander through restored mud-brick structures, narrow lanes, and ancient foundations that reveal the scale and atmosphere of a desert city more than 500 years old, and the origins of Saudi Arabia's national story.

In the evening, we experience the vibrant atmosphere of Riyadh Boulevard City, a modern entertainment district inspired by some of the world's most recognisable urban spaces. Within its lively precincts and dining areas, you'll find immersive design features such as the Square sub-zone, modelled on New York's Times Square with its bright screens and energy, the Takenda Centre, and the Trocadero area inspired by London's Coventry Street.

Tonight's dinner will be at one of the Boulevard's renowned restaurants before we return to the hotel.



SAT 23 Riyadh: Museum, markets & city views (B L D)

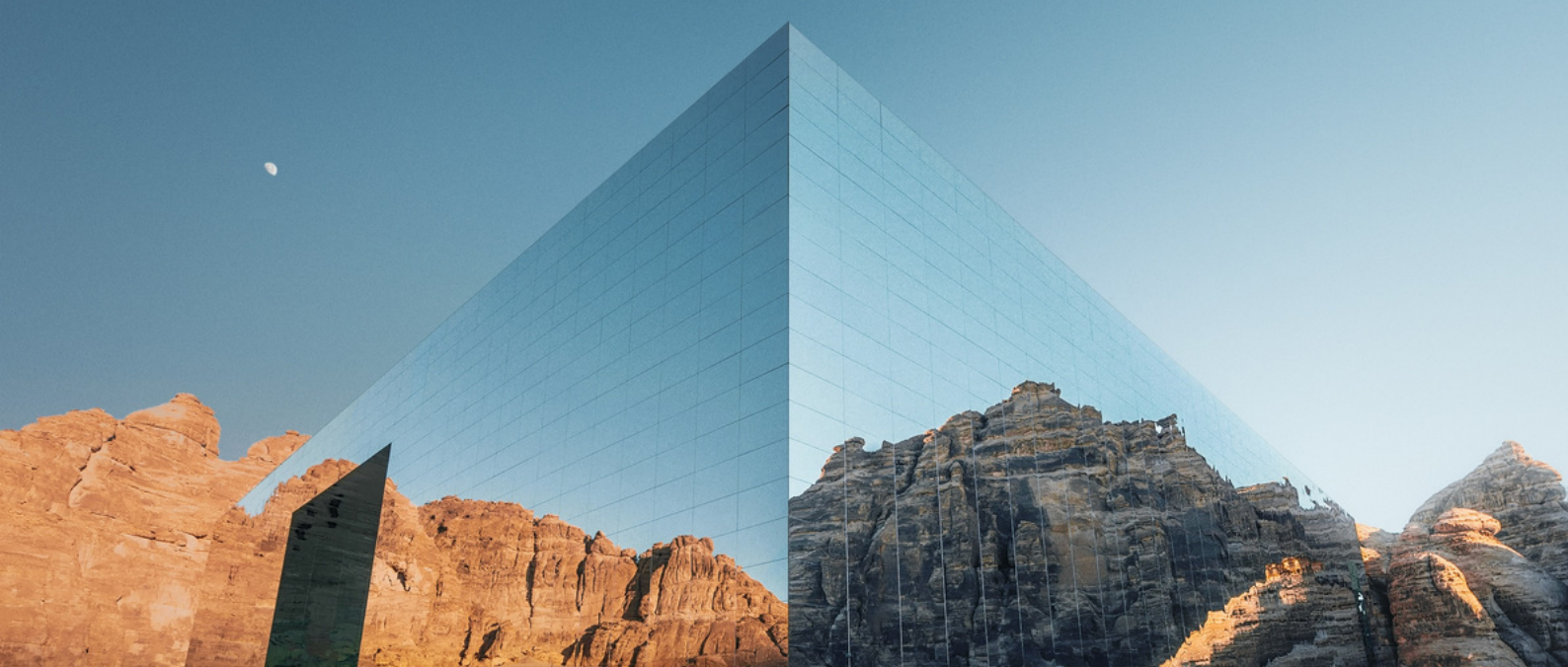
After breakfast, we enjoy a guided visit to the National Museum of Saudi Arabia, one of the Kingdom's most important cultural institutions. Across eight carefully curated galleries, the museum takes us on a seamless journey through Arabian history—from the formation of the universe and the earliest human presence on the Peninsula through to the rise of Islamic civilisation and the modern Saudi state.

Later, we wander through the enchanting Dirah Souq and experience the lively atmosphere of this traditional market renowned for its vibrant textiles and traditional goods.

We then continue on to the history Masmak Fort, an historic landmark in Riyadh's old quarter, where we can immerse ourselves in the rich history and architectural charm of this historic fortress before we enjoy lunch in a local restaurant.

In the late afternoon, we head to the Kingdom Tower for amazing views of the city from the sky bridge, 300 metres above sea level. Take in stunning panoramic views through highly secure glass panels, before we return to the hotel for dinner.





SUN 24 Depart Riyadh - fly to Tabuk

(B) (L) (D)

After breakfast, we check out of the hotel and transfer to Riyadh Airport for our **flight to Tabuk**.

On arrival, we'll head straight to lunch at a restaurant where you'll have the opportunity to sample camel meat - a regional specialty deeply rooted in **Bedouin desert culture**.

From here, we continue on to **Tabuk Fortress**, originally built in 1559 as part of a pilgrimage protection route. Its stone corridors and shaded courtyards once sheltered travellers crossing vast desert trade paths.

Next, we continue to **Masjid at-Tawbah** in Tabuk, an historic mosque associated with the Prophet Muhammad's journey through the region during the 7th century, giving it enduring significance within early Islamic history - sometimes referred to as the "Messenger's Mosque".

In the late afternoon we return to our hotel for dinner and evening relaxation.

MON 25 Tabuk - Wadi Disah - AIUla

(B) (L) (D)

We depart Tabuk and travel toward **Wadi Disah**, a hidden valley carved through towering sandstone cliffs where the landscape opens into a dramatic canyon of rock, palms, and natural springs.

After **lunch at a local farm**, we **explore the valley by 4WD** for 2-3 hours. As we move through the valley floor, keep an eye on the cliff walls—layers of fossilised coral and ancient seabed markings are still visible in the rock, revealing that this now-dry desert was once submerged beneath a prehistoric ocean millions of years ago. Freshwater springs continue to flow through the base of the valley today, sustaining pockets of green palm groves in an otherwise arid landscape.

Beyond its **dramatic canyon landscape**, Wadi Disah holds traces of ancient civilisation, with **Nabataean tomb facades**, remnants of stone settlements, and early Kufic inscriptions still visible among the cliffs and valley walls.

We continue the **scenic drive to AIUla** and arrive in the evening for dinner at our hotel.

TUE 26 Highlights of AIUla

(B) (L) (D)

This morning, we meet our private guide and journey through the extraordinary **desert landscapes of AIUla**, where towering sandstone formations rise from wide valleys once crossed by ancient incense and trade caravans.

Our first stop is the remarkable **Maraya Concert Hall**, the world's largest mirrored building. Its reflective exterior is designed to mirror the surrounding desert so completely that, under certain light conditions, the structure almost disappears into the sandstone cliffs and open sky, creating the illusion of a building suspended within the landscape itself.

We then continue to **Hegra (Madain Salih)**, Saudi Arabia's first UNESCO World Heritage Site and the southernmost settlement of the Nabataean Kingdom. Once an important stop along the prosperous ancient trade routes linking Arabia with the Mediterranean world, Hegra contains more than 100 monumental tombs carved directly into rose-coloured sandstone. As we explore the site, we discover intricately carved facades, burial chambers, ancient wells, and rock formations shaped by centuries of desert wind and heat.

We stop for **lunch at a local farm** surrounded by palm groves, offering a striking contrast to the surrounding desert terrain.

Later this afternoon, we explore the growing creative heart of AIUla at the **AlJadidah Arts District**, where contemporary galleries, murals, artisan spaces, and the world's largest hand-painted carpet bring new life to the historic quarter.

As the light begins to soften, we continue to the iconic **Elephant Rock**, one of AIUla's most recognisable natural formations. Sculpted over millions of years by wind and water erosion, the enormous sandstone arch rises dramatically from the desert floor, glowing deep amber and gold as the sun lowers across the valley. Local Bedouin oral tradition once imagined the formation as a giant guardian watching over the ancient caravan routes passing through AIUla.

We end the day exploring the atmospheric lanes of AIUla Old Town, where mud-brick houses and narrow passageways reveal centuries of settlement and daily life in this desert oasis, before returning for dinner.



WED 27 AIUla - Madinah - Jeddah

(B) (L) (D)

This morning, we depart AIUla and travel south towards Madinah, crossing wide **desert landscapes** once linked by ancient pilgrimage and caravan routes.

On arrival in **Madinah**, we enjoy lunch at a local restaurant before continuing a guided exterior tour of one of Islam's holiest cities. Long before Madinah became a major spiritual centre, the area was sustained by clusters of palm groves, wells, and underground irrigation channels known as qanats, which carried water beneath the desert surface and helped transform the city into a **fertile oasis settlement**.

Our tour provides insight into the city's religious and historical significance, including exterior views of **Al Masjid an Nabawi** (the Prophet's Mosque), built by the Prophet Muhammad himself and the place where he is buried, regarded as one of the most important sites in Islam. As non-Muslim visitors are not permitted to enter the mosques, all visits are respectfully experienced from the outside.

We also continue along **Quba Street**, the historic route connecting the Prophet's Mosque with Quba Mosque, regarded as the first mosque established in Islamic history. Walking through this lively pedestrian area offers a glimpse into the rhythm of local life, with traditional food stalls, cafés, and daily activity unfolding around us, where we'll stop for lunch.

Later, we transfer to **Madinah Harmain High-Speed Railway Station** and board the modern train to Jeddah. Travelling at speeds of up to 300 km/h, the journey carries us swiftly across vast desert landscapes that once took trading caravans and pilgrims many days to cross.

We arrive in **Jeddah** in the evening to check in and enjoy dinner at our hotel.



THU 28 Jeddah City Tour

(B) (L) (D)

We begin the day at Jeddah's lively **Central Fish Market**, where the good natured calls of vendors fill the air as freshly caught Red Sea fish are cleaned and prepared just hours after leaving the water - a photogenic feast, even if you're not eating. The market sits beside one of the oldest trading ports in the Red Sea, where for centuries traditional wooden dhows arrived from Africa, India, and across the Arabian Peninsula carrying spices, textiles, incense, and coffee, helping shape Jeddah into one of the region's great cultural crossroads.

From here, we continue to the **Tayebat Museum**, a richly detailed four-floor collection housed within a traditional Hijazi-style complex. Its galleries trace the history of the Arabian Peninsula through ancient pre-Islamic artefacts, exquisite Islamic manuscripts, Islamic art, traditional dress, old coins and weaponry, and recreations of old Saudi interiors.

After lunch we visit Jeddah's striking **Floating Mosque**, which appears to drift on the water's surface shimmering in the sunlight. Framed by sea air and open coastline, the white marble structure is especially beautiful in the changing afternoon light.

We then explore the **historic district of Al-Balad**, the old heart of Jeddah and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, where narrow lanes wind between centuries-old coral-stone merchant houses with intricate wooden balconies designed to capture cooling Red Sea breezes. We also visit Nasif House, one of old Jeddah's grandest historic homes.

This evening, we are **welcomed into a traditional Saudi home** for dinner, where conversation, hospitality, and shared food offer a more personal insight into Saudi culture, family life, and the country's remarkable transformation in recent decades.

FRI 29 Depart Jeddah to Auckland, NZ

(B) (L) (D)

After breakfast, we take a private transfer to Jeddah Airport for our return flight to New Zealand, marking the conclusion of our Saudi Arabian journey.

We arrive back into Auckland on Sunday 31 October and bid a fond farewell to the wonderful new friends we've made along the way. After a connecting domestic flight (if needed), we'll have a shuttle transfer home - a comfortable conclusion to an unforgettable adventure.



Independent Extensions

Inspiring your journey beyond Saudi Arabia

Whether you'd like to linger a little longer in the Middle East, explore Egypt's ancient wonders, unwind on a spectacular coastline, discover another fascinating culture, or continue on into Europe, your travel consultant can tailor an extension to suit your interests and schedule. With Saudi Arabia as your gateway, many remarkable destinations are just a short flight away, making it easy to make the most of your time away. Here are some hand-picked ideas to inspire the perfect finale to your journey.

Egypt

Luxor & Nile in Style (5–7 days)

Fly into Luxor as the days cool and the light softens over the temples. Spend a few unhurried days exploring the Valley of the Kings, Karnak, and Luxor Temple with a private Egyptologist, with time to absorb the scale and atmosphere of each site.

Continue onto a boutique Nile cruise to Aswan, drifting through timeless river scenery as life unfolds along the banks. Early evening felucca sails, cocktails on deck, and beautifully lit temple visits create a rich and atmospheric journey along the Nile.



Cairo Highlights & Nile Cruise (10 days/9 nights)

Begin in Cairo with three nights to ease into Egypt's energy, staying in a pyramid-view hotel while exploring the Pyramids, the Sphinx, the Grand Egyptian Museum, and the layered streets of Islamic Cairo with your private guide.

Fly south to Luxor and board a 5-day boutique Nile cruise. Along the way, explore the Valley of the Kings, Karnak, and Luxor Temple with your Egyptologist, enjoying sunset sails, relaxed evenings on deck, and evocative temple visits after dark.

Return to Cairo for two final nights to revisit a favourite café, browse local souqs, or enjoy one last Nile-side dinner before your journey home.



Independent Extensions

Jordan

Classic Jordan Highlights (5–7 days)

Late autumn is one of the loveliest times to experience Jordan, with warm days, cool evenings and ideal conditions for exploring. Wander through Petra by candlelight, venture into Wadi Rum for a sunset desert drive and traditional Bedouin dinner beneath the stars, then slow the pace with a few restorative days at the Dead Sea, where mineral-rich waters and luxury spa resorts provide the perfect finale.



Greece

Culture & Coastline (7–10 days)

November brings a quieter, more authentic side of Greece. Discover Athens' ancient landmarks before retreating to the elegant streets of Nafplio or a peaceful Peloponnese hideaway, where warm afternoons invite waterfront walks and long lunches. Add a nearby island or coastal village for a few days of sea views, local tavernas and unhurried evenings as autumn settles across the Aegean.



Turkey

Aegean Coast & Ancient Wonders (7–9 days)

As the summer crowds disappear, Turkey's Aegean coast settles into a gentler rhythm. Explore the remarkable ruins of Ephesus and the dazzling white terraces of Pamukkale before retreating to Bodrum or Kuşadası for harbour strolls, fresh seafood and relaxed afternoons by the sea. Mild temperatures and quieter towns make late autumn an ideal time to savour this beautiful corner of the Mediterranean.



Morocco

Imperial Morocco (7–9 days)

Morocco's imperial cities are at their most comfortable in late autumn, when cooler temperatures make wandering the medinas a pleasure. Stay in beautiful riads as you explore Casablanca, Rabat, Fes and Marrakech, discovering colourful markets, intricate architecture and centuries of history before retreating each evening to peaceful courtyards and rooftop terraces.



Independent Extensions

Maldives

Lagoon Days & Starlit Nights (6 days)

After the energy and discovery of Saudi Arabia, the Maldives offers the perfect opportunity to slow down completely. Spend six days in barefoot luxury, waking to turquoise lagoons, snorkelling vibrant reefs, lingering over long lunches and watching the sun sink into the Indian Ocean each evening. It's an effortless way to finish your journey feeling rested and refreshed.



Oman

Desert, Canyons & Coast (6 days)

Oman shines in late autumn, when clear skies and comfortable temperatures invite you outdoors. Wander Muscat's elegant waterfront and bustling souqs before heading into dramatic desert landscapes, rugged mountain canyons and secluded beaches. With warm Omani hospitality, luxury desert camps and time to simply pause and absorb the scenery, it's a wonderfully relaxed way to round off your Arabian adventure.



Europe on the Water

River Cruise in Europe (7-10 days)

Unpack once and settle into the gentle rhythm of a river cruise along the Danube, Rhine or Rhône. As vineyards, castles and historic villages drift past your balcony, each day brings a new destination without ever having to repack. Fine dining, elegant surroundings and seamless organisation make this a wonderfully effortless finale.



Ocean Cruise Grand Finale (7-14 days)

Swap desert landscapes for endless ocean views on a Mediterranean or Northern European cruise. Lazy sea days, colourful ports, leisurely shore excursions and afternoons in the spa create an easy transition from exploration to relaxation while your floating hotel carries you from one destination to the next.



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12 DAYS • Fully Hosted from New Zealand with a YOURTours Host

COUNTRY: Saudi Arabia

DATES: 20 - 31 October 2027

PRICE: Twin Share From \$16,995 per person
Single From \$18,995 per person

TOUR INCLUSIONS

- Home pick-up and drop-off. T&Cs apply
- YOURTours Host travelling with you from New Zealand
- Return international flights ex Auckland
- High speed train in Saudi Arabia to Jeddah
- Premium accommodation
- Services of local English-speaking guides throughout
- Most meals, as per itinerary; welcome drinks and bottled water
- All excursions and activities as per itinerary
- Comfortable air-conditioned private vehicles
- All gratuities included and tips paid on your behalf

WE CAN ALSO ASSIST WITH

- Flight upgrades and additional travel arrangements on request
- Tour extensions to Egypt, Jordan, Turkey and beyond available on request.



You are invited to join us on our fully hosted small group tour, with a maximum number of guests is 16.

Based on the beautiful Kapiti Coast with our guests joining us from all corners of New Zealand, we believe you will be pleasantly surprised by just how much we include in our tour price.

You can be rest assured that your Tour Host will always be one of our friendly well-experienced YOURTours Team Members providing a relaxed and worry-free holiday from start to finish.



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