



Saudi Arabia Cultural Discovery

15 Days



The Adventure Company | EST. 1969

MT+SOBEKTM
MOUNTAIN TRAVEL SOBEK

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS
AS THE PIONEER OF ADVENTURE TRAVEL

➤ Saudi Arabia Cultural Discovery

MT Sobek is known for epic, insider adventures that go deep into the heart of a destination. Explore Saudi Arabia on our cultural discovery adventure that travels from modern, vibrant Riyadh, to ancient rock art at Jubbah and into AlUla to explore Nabataean tombs. Take a high speed train to Jeddah and travel through the juniper-covered mountains of the Asir region, and into the magical desert of the Empty Quarter. Explore villages and souks, and enjoy authentic interactions with local people, and enjoy warm hospitality along the way.

Details

Arrive: Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Depart: Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Duration: 15 Days

Group Size: 6-15 Guests

Minimum Age: 18 Years Old

Activity Level:



Testimonials

"We have traveled throughout the world, but never experienced a level of service and attention to detail as we did with MT Sobek."

Dennis G.

"I've taken six MT Sobek trips and they have all exceeded my expectations. The staff, the food, the logistics and the communications have always been exceptional. Thank you for being my "go to" adventure travel company!"

Margaret I.

GOT QUESTIONS? SPEAK WITH AN EXPERT.

☎ 1-800-974-0300

✉ info@mtsobek.com

Why Take This Trip With Us?

REASON #01

MT Sobek has been leading immersive cultural adventures across the globe for more than 50 years and we have decades of experience in the Middle East.

REASON #02

We work with professional local guides who are experts at leading adventures in Saudi Arabia.

REASON #03

We know because we go. This trip has been extensively scouted first-hand by MT Sobek staff, including MT Sobek President & CEO Massimo Pioreschi.

What to Expect



ACTIVITIES

Cultural touring of historic sites and ancient towns and villages. Authentic insider experience and interactions with local people.



LODGING

Stay at charming and comfortable accommodations, and enjoy two nights of desert camping in the Empty Quarter.



CLIMATE

Climate of Saudi in general from November to the end of February ranges between a low of 50 F and a high of 77 F.

Meet Our Guides

Our expert guides and trip leaders are truly the key to our trips' success. Many are locals who live in-country year-round; others have made it their second home—all are passionate, enthusiastic and endlessly knowledgeable. Meet two of the guides that might be on your trip.

Fatimah (nickname Fatmah) is a licensed tour guide in Saudi Arabia with an unwavering passion for travel. She hails from Bishah in the south, a region renowned for the Najd Gate, and is familiar with most of the cities of Saudi Arabia—each with its own history, historical sites, stories, poems, dialects, traditional food, songs and special customs. As well as extensively exploring her country and guiding others to its hidden charms, she is an active member of both the Bisha and Asir youth councils and enjoys rock climbing. Fatmah looks forward to sharing her amazing country with you!

Fatimah Alzammam

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Itinerary

DAY 1

ARRIVE IN RIYADH

Welcome to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia's bustling capital city! Your guide will transport you from the airport to your hotel, where you'll enjoy a rest and a first-night dinner with the group.

Meals: D

DAY 2

EXPLORE RIYADH

Begin the day by exploring the sights of Riyadh, from the vast, mudbrick Masmak Fortress to the vibrant Al Zal souk. Next, visit the King Abdul Aziz Historical Center and marvel at the stunning modernist architecture of the National Museum, which beautifully showcases Arabian prehistory, history, culture, and art. After a traditional lunch in the city, travel across town for some insight into modern Riyadh among the skyscrapers and modern mosque of King Abdullah Financial District. Next, get a glimpse into the future at the Line, a planned city in the NEOM urban complex, which will house 9 million inhabitants when completed! Finish the day delving into the ancient past at Ad Diriyah, the UNESCO-protected first capital of the Saudi Dynasty. Return to Riyadh for dinner at a local restaurant.

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 3

FOLLOW DESERT CARAVAN ROUTES TO BURAYDAH

Today, travel from Riyadh's center to the edge of the plateau on which it sits. The dramatic drop-off offers panoramic views of the ancient seabed below. Take a short walk down the switchback trail which camel caravans used to tread. Drive through the desert to explore the extensive ruins at Ushaiger, which was once an important pilgrimage stop on the way to Mecca. Continue alongside ancient caravan routes to Buraydah.

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 4

BURAYDAH MARKETS & TRAIN TO HAIL

After breakfast set out to discover the bounties of the Buraydah region, exploring a famed date market, where stalls are piled high with delectable produce. Stop at a wet market to see and hear vendors auctioning meats from the back of their trucks, and finally experience the world's largest camel market, where Arabian camels exchange hands.

Board a local train for the scenic trip through rocky desert landscapes to Hail, where you'll have the chance to check out Al Qishlah, an impressive mudbrick fortified palace, before dinner.

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 5

JUBAH ROCK ART, SHARAAN NATURE RESERVE & ALULA

Travel into the Al Nafud Desert to marvel at Jubah's prolific UNESCO-listed neolithic rock art. Continue past the Sharaan Nature Reserve, watching for ostriches and Idmi gazelles among the dry desert grasses and stopping for a picnic lunch with beautiful scenery. The last leg of your drive takes you to the breathtaking canyons and otherworldly rock formations of AlUla, where you'll enjoy the sunset at Elephant Rock.

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 6

VISIT ENCHANTING ALULA

Start the day with a visit to the Nabataean site of Hegra, which was the southern capital of the Nabataean kingdom, dating back to the first century BCE. You'll explore several of the UNESCO-listed site's well-preserved tombs. Next take a stroll through the palm trees orange groves of the AlUla oasis, continuing into the historic district, once the crossroads of the Silk Route and Incense Route! Explore ancient alleys and modern art and finish the day with dinner at a local restaurant.

Activity: Up to 3 hours / 2.5 miles walking (including water breaks and photo time) with 75' of elevation gain and 49' of loss

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 7

ALULA TO JEDDAH WITH HIGH-SPEED TRAIN

Set out for Medina, Saudi Arabia's second-holiest city after Mecca. Tracing an ancient pilgrimage route and old tracks of the Ottomani Railway, pass through a volcanic area with black lava stone and mountain views. View the Al Masjid an Nabawi and enjoy a lunch with a spectacular view before boarding a high-speed train to Jeddah on the Red Sea coast. Explore art and culture as the sun sets and the call to prayer sounds.

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 8

EXPLORE JEDDAH'S REEFS & AL BALAD

This morning, board a private speedboat for a snorkeling adventure over coral reefs teeming with marine life! Then head ashore to check out UNESCO-listed architectural treasures in the historical merchant houses of old town, Al Balad.

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 9

ARRIVE IN ABHA

Enjoy a leisurely morning before flying to Abha in the mountains of the Aseer Region. Explore traditional design and natural painting techniques used to decorate homes at the Fatima Museum of Aseeri Women and walk along a cliff taking in spectacular views of the mountains before dinner at a local restaurant.

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 10

HIKE JABAL SAWDA & VISIT RIJAL ALMA VILLAGE

Wake early for a drive to the Soudah Mountains, one of Saudi Arabia's top adventure destinations. Follow your guide on rugged hiking trails through juniper trees and marvel at spectacular mountain views. Then visit the traditional village of Rijal Almaa, dating back 900 years. After lunch in the mountains, explore Soudah's market and the Al Muftaha Art Center. Return to Abha for dinner and overnight this evening.

Activity: Up to 3 hours hiking / 4.5 miles with 95' elevation gain and 2500' loss

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 11

AHA TO NAJHRAN & AL UKHDOOD

Head toward Najran, stopping at traditional mountain villages for views and culture along the scenic route. Take in the architectural gem that is the historical palace of the governor. Continue to the ancient city of Al Ukhdood to stroll through the 2,000-year-old ruins and discover its enchanting civilization. Return to Najran for dinner at a local restaurant.

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 12

SEE PETROGLYPHS AT HIMA & JOURNEY TO THE EMPTY QUARTER

After breakfast, start the day with a journey to the ancient wells of Hima, one of the most important historical sites in Saudi Arabia. See 3,000-year-old rock art, including depictions of humans, animals, and hunting tools. Then it's off to explore Qaryat al-Faw, a fascinating - and even older - ancient city. From there, journey to the Empty Quarter, where your guiding team will set up camp for the night. Your three-day desert adventure begins!

Activity: Full-day cultural touring and journey to the Empty Quarter

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 13

EXPLORE THE EMPTY QUARTER

Wake to sunrise over the desert and enjoy breakfast at camp. After a briefing on today's route from your guides, you'll begin venturing deeper into the Empty Quarter. Along the way, be wowed by the high dunes and spectacular valleys of Oroq Bani Maraith. Stargaze at your second camp tonight.

Activity: Full-day exploration of the Empty Quarter

Meals: B, L

DAY 14

LEAVE THE EMPTY QUARTER & RETURN TO RIYADH

Rise early for your last breakfast in the desert, then cross a dry lakebed and experience what it's like to be stuck in soft sand. A fun experience - really! Enjoy lunch at a well and prepare for your departure. Before bidding farewell to the Empty Quarter, indulge in a special farewell dinner, then drive back to Riyadh, arriving around 10:00 pm for a final overnight stay.

Activity: Full-day exploration of the Empty Quarter and return to Riyadh

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 15

DEPART FROM RIYADH

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your homeward-bound flights.

Meals: B

Dates

Oct 7 - 19, 2024

Oct 28 - Nov 9, 2024

Nov 30 - Dec 12, 2024

For full terms and conditions please visit www.mtsobek.com/terms. Please note that our itineraries may be subject to change.

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Inclusions & Exclusions

PRICE INCLUDES

- Expertise and services of our experienced adventure guides
- All accommodations as noted in the itinerary
- All breakfasts, almost all lunches and dinners as noted in the itinerary
- Snacks and water between meals
- Additional regional guides and experts on many trips
- Comprehensive Trip Planner with detailed pre-trip information
- Private guided tours at historic sites, museums, wineries and other select attractions as noted in the itinerary
- Special events and other select attractions as mentioned in the itinerary
- All gratuities at hotels and restaurants
- Equipment and experienced guides for activities as described in the itinerary
- Park and other entry fees (unless otherwise noted)
- Fares for trains, ferries and other modes of travel as listed in the itinerary
- Select transfers as mentioned in the itinerary
- Baggage transfers and portorage

PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE

- International airfare, airport taxes, and excess baggage fees
- Alcoholic beverages (MT Sobek provides wine at select events)
- Gratuities for MT Sobek guides and guide-drivers
- Travel Protection Program
- Personal expenses

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➤ **The World of MT Sobek**

At Mountain Travel Sobek, we believe life is an adventure and adventure is life.

As the originators, innovators and leaders in adventure travel for more than five decades, we passionately create, craft and share indelible, transformative journeys to the world's most memorable places. Our more than 200 unique and once-in-a-lifetime trips are designed to inspire and exhilarate, enliven and excite--opening eyes and minds through profoundly personal connections with nature and culture.

Our small group and custom adventures span the globe, and the spectrum—of interests, environments and activities—every one expertly planned and knowledgeably and passionately guided. And our commitment to making every experience a remarkable one has earned us preferred travel outfitter status for National Geographic Active Expeditions, Active New York Times Journeys, and Smithsonian Active Journeys.

We are *the* adventure company.

Awards



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