

Discover

Dammam

Dammam: A Pocket Guide

Saudi
Welcome
to Arabia

You've arrived!

We're so happy you made it to **Dammam**. Saudi is full of wonder and adventure, and this guidebook is here to help you make the most of your time in the Eastern Province. Use it to **learn common expressions**, **scope out upcoming events**, **find important phone numbers** and so much more. As you flip through its pages, you'll discover food you'll want to try and learn about the region's diverse cultural offerings. You'll also find **recommendations for indoor and outdoor activities** in and around Dammam and **tips on where to shop**. Finally, flip to the back of the book for a checklist of **must-see spots**, space for you to take notes and **travel games for your children**.

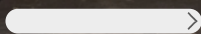
Your Saudi adventure begins now. Enjoy every magical moment of it. Happy travels.

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The background image shows a traditional building with a prominent minaret. The minaret is a tall, white, cylindrical tower with a decorative balcony featuring colorful tiles (red, yellow, green, blue). Below the balcony is a large, arched doorway with a green awning and a yellow decorative border. To the left, there is a red archway leading to a wooden door. The sky is a clear, bright blue with some light clouds. A teal banner with a wavy pattern is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text '01 Useful Information'.

01

Useful
Information



Useful Information

What to Wear in Saudi

Traditional Saudi clothing is worn out of love and pride by locals. Traditionally, women wear an abaya (a long robe or cloak that covers the whole body) over their everyday clothing, and men wear a thobe (a long-sleeved, gownlike garment); however, not all Saudis wear traditional clothing all the time. As a tourist, you are not expected to wear the same attire as locals, or cover to the same extent, but it's highly recommended that you dress modestly. For example, loose-fitting clothing that covers the elbows and ankles is recommended for both men and women in public.

Numbers to Know

Before you dive into our guide of Dammam, take note of these important numbers just in case you need any assistance along your way.

TRAVEL TIP

When visiting religious sites, women must cover their heads, so it's a good idea to bring a scarf with you.



EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Police: 911

Ambulance: 997

Civil Defense
(e.g. fire, natural disasters): 966

Fire: 998

Traffic Accidents: 993

Highway Patrol: 996

Coast Guard: 994

Tourism Hotline: 930



Welcome to Dammam!

Boasting endless views of the tranquil Arabian Gulf, Dammam is a modern metropolis that thrives on its coastal location. Although it is known for its lush green parks, airy waterfronts and sandy beaches, it is highly enjoyable in the winter, too, with daytime temperatures averaging in the low **20s** Celsius during the day and around **10** degrees at night. The region also has a growing reputation as an arts, sports and entertainment destination. It is home to Saudi's first street art exhibition, in Al Khobar's Bayoonya district, and offers a range of museums as well.



But first, a bit about the language: Arabic is the official language of Saudi Arabia and the primary language used in all dealings and public transactions. English serves as an informal second language and is spoken by much of Saudi's population. All road signs are bilingual, showing information in both Arabic and English.



TRAVEL TIP

Common Expressions

Salam Alaykum = Hello/Hi

Min Fdlek = Please

Eewa = Yes

La = No

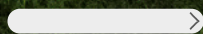
Shukran = Thank you

Afwan = You're welcome



02

Transportation



Transportation

Transportation in Dammam

It's easy to get around this port town.

TRAVEL TIP

Leaving the airport? Follow signs to pick up your rental car, look for a line of local taxis or order a car through a ride-sharing app.



Rental Cars: Choose from a host of car rental companies, including Sixt, IDrive and Budget. Pick up your car at the airport or a location in the city.



Ride-Sharing Apps: Preorder a car through apps such as Careem, Uber, or Bolt. Each service averages about **SAR30** (about **US\$8**) per **15**-minute trip.



Taxis: The city's local taxis are easy to find — just look for a queue of green cars. The base fare is **SAR5** (about **US\$1.33**), and after that you'll pay **SAR2** (about **US\$0.50**) per kilometer to go anywhere in the city.



Where to Stay

Accommodations Around Dammam

While you probably already know where you're staying, you may find yourself wanting to spend one night at a hotel that's closer to an event you're attending, or perhaps you're looking for a less traditional lodging experience. If so, you're in luck. There's no shortage of places to stay in the tri-city area of Dammam, Dhahran and Al Khobar.



Hotels: Enjoy five-star treatment, an indoor pool and spa treatments at the stylish Crowne Plaza Al Khobar or the comfort of Voco Al Khobar, just a stone's throw from the Al Rashid and Venicia shopping malls. Or opt for modern sophistication at the InterContinental Al Khobar, where you shouldn't miss the chance to try the hotel's date pudding.



Unique Stays: Want to stay somewhere truly original? Download Gathern to your mobile device (available in the App Store for iOS and Google Play for Android). Use this app to find unique vacation rentals, including chalets, farms and tents located in and around Dammam.

TRAVEL TIP

Check out special hotel packages on visitsaudi.com



03

Food



Food

Taste of Dammam

From cozy brunch spots to fine-dining fusion, the Dammam metro area is home to a diverse bill of fare. Below are some local favorites.

Maharaja by Vineet

Lovers of fine Indian cuisine can indulge their senses in the contemporary menu served at Maharaja. Vineet Bhatia, the globe-trotting chef whose restaurants in London earned Michelin stars, turns Indian tradition into cutting-edge cuisine at this hot spot. Specialities include live tandoori cooking stations and innovatively rethought Indian classics. The restaurant has an elegant ambience that is highly popular with local diners.

Caffeination Coffee House

If you're looking for a quick and quiet brunch in a unique and beautifully decorated interior, coupled with an expertly brewed cup of coffee and freshly baked pastries, then Caffeination Coffee House should be on your list.

The Breakfast Club

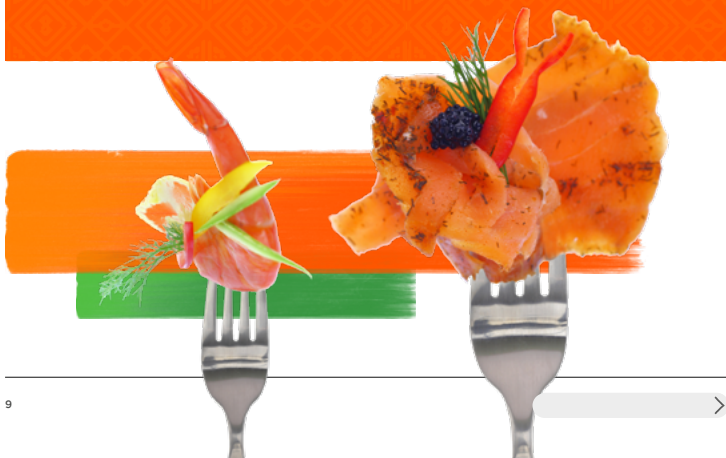
For a relaxing atmosphere, exceptional breakfast food with a twist and accommodating service, visit The Breakfast Club in the Khobar Pavilion mall. Its menu includes a typical Western breakfast with an Arabic touch. Don't miss the shakshuka sliders!

Sky Lounge

This cafe known for its mouth-watering brunches and unique coffee concoctions is located in the Kempinski Hotel in Al Khobar. Whether you want to enjoy a relaxing meal with friends or a nice outing with the kids, Sky Lounge will have something on the menu for you.

Must-Try Seafood

With elegant style and a view of the Gulf, Fusion serves relaxing business lunches and exquisite dinners. Staff at its live kitchen stations prepare an impressive array of fresh sushi, sashimi and seafood. Have a sweet tooth? The restaurant's substantial dessert menu features an Arabic Crumble: apple and fresh figs, crushed almonds, served with homemade date ice cream.





04

**Outdoor
Activities**

Outdoor Activities

Outdoor Activities in Dammam

Get a breath of fresh air and enjoy remarkable views while embarking on some of the best outdoor activities in and around Dammam.

Must-Visit: Half Moon Bay

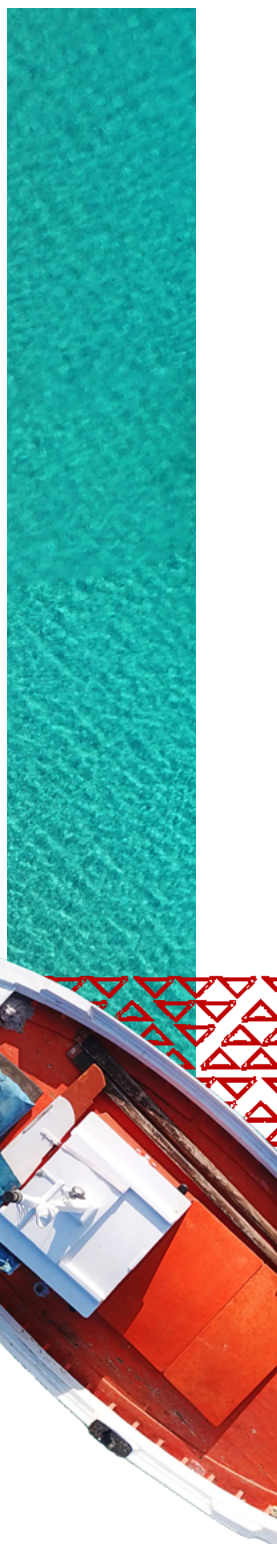
Drive just south of Dammam to Half Moon Bay, a recreation hot spot among locals and visitors alike, thanks to its family-friendly setup. The entrances to the cove are very shallow and tranquil, and the average water depth reaches about **7** meters, so it's an ideal location to learn how to scuba dive, or just to dip your toes on a warm winter day. Prefer to stay dry? Go fishing, take a boat ride or simply pack a picnic and enjoy the gorgeous coastal views.

Al Khobar Waterfront

Dancing fountains and landscaped gardens make this seafront stretch a family favorite. Kids can play in the park as adults take Instagram-worthy snaps of the historic water tower and the series of bridges that make up the King Fahd Causeway. For a bite among the sights, discover a range of dining options on the bustling Ajdan Walk, an open-air retail village south of the corniche, or immerse yourself in Al Khobar's café culture at one of its dozens of waterfront coffee shops. End your day by catching a private sunset boat cruise.

Desert Camping

For a true Arabian experience, try kashta, a tradition that invites travelers to sleep among the sand dunes and beneath the stars. Fuel up on fresh Arabic coffee in the morning before heading out to enjoy activities such as dune bashing, camel riding and sandboarding. At night, turn your gaze upward, where the winter sky serves up different seasonal constellations during this magical time of year. Book your desert camping experience through outfitters such as Adventure Khobar.



Outdoor Attractions for the Whole Family in and around Dammam

For family fun in and around Dammam, check out these attractions.

King Fahd Park

Covering more than **100** hectares, King Fahd Park is one of the largest in Saudi. Explore this green space packed with fountains, lagoons, waterfalls and hundreds of trees and plants. Enjoy the serenity of the Family Garden or the excitement of the amusement park, which features a roller coaster and other thrilling rides and games. You'll also find food outlets and tons of shaded seating in the park.

Dolphin Village Dammam

If you love making a splash, head to Dolphin Village Dammam. This entertainment village features swimming pools for kids and adults, games, rides and a wildlife museum. See dolphins perform tricks and snap a picture or two with these beloved mammals of the sea.

Al Ahsa Oasis

Drive about two hours south of Dammam to Al Ahsa, the largest self-contained oasis in the world. With more than **2.5** million date palm trees blanketing this expanse just inland from Saudi's Gulf coast, the lush Al Ahsa landscape is part of UNESCO's World Heritage List. From hot and cold springs to historic mosques to sweeping panoramic views, you'll find a lot to explore in this **6,000**-year-old oasis, which has long been a gateway to the Arabian Peninsula for travelers from the East. Don't miss a chance to sample a khalasah date before you leave — locals proudly proclaim it's one of the world's best.



06

Indoor
Sites



Indoor Activities



Indoor Activities in and around Dammam

This region is where Saudi's wells of black gold were first discovered, and where the world's largest oil company was born. It's also where a small fishing village grew into one of the Middle East's largest ports, and where Arabia's biggest and most impressive cultural center was forged. Here are some of the region's top indoor draws:

The Energy Exhibit in Dhahran

The Energy Exhibit is a hands-on, immersive voyage into the world of petroleum, its science, energy and technology. The focal point of this kaleidoscopic space is a **12**-player interactive game that brings energy production to life through touch screens. Don't miss the cutting-edge exhibits, especially those on alternative energy sources.

Taybeen Museum in Al Khobar

This **300**-square-meter museum in Al Khobar was born of Majid Al Ghamdi's urge to preserve the vintage finds of his youth — a pastime that grew into a collection of retro toys, board and video games, posters, televisions, cameras, and branded food and drink containers. With a cabinet charting the evolution of Coke bottles from the **1970s** on, plush Sesame Street character toys and vintage Barbies, there is no better place to relive your childhood.

MUST-SEE: TAYEBAT CITY MUSEUM

One of the most popular museums in the city, the Tayebat Museum houses a prized collection of pre-Islamic-era pieces. There's also a charming little mosque within the premises, which is a work of art in and of itself. If you fall in love with antiquities after your visit, then you can buy some at one of the many antique shops that line the façade of the museum.



Indoor Fun for the Whole Family in and Around Dammam

From educational activities to hands-on venues that inspire creativity, there is so much to do for family members young and old in Dammam.

King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture

The iconic monolithic design of the King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture, known as Ithra, has become a symbol of Saudi's cultural renaissance. The sprawling building houses a theater, library, cinema, galleries and museum, alongside a wealth of interactive activities for children. The Ithra Journey Tour, a **30**-minute guided walk, offers an ideal overview of the complex.

Science and Technology Centre

Forget tedious textbook-based science lessons. Al Khobar's Science and Technology Centre (SCITECH) is home to exhibits so interactive and immersive that they mesmerize children and adults alike. Want to take a tour through the human body or get up close with Arabian sea creatures? SCITECH can make that happen.

Soaring above the city's corniche, SCITECH combines imaginative displays, interactive experiences and visual galleries, all aimed at getting kids — and people of all ages — excited about science and technology. The complex is Saudi's biggest public science gallery, with more than 350 exhibits in six main halls that explore topics such as electricity, sound waves, robots and the solar system. Among the center's biggest draws is its IMAX theater, where the latest 3D technology lets viewers become part of the films. Experience the plains of Africa, take an underwater journey through coral reefs or whiz through space and watch the wonders of the world come to life. Programs and attractions take place throughout the year, so there are plenty of excuses for a return trip.



07

Shopping



Shopping

Shopping Adventures in Dammam

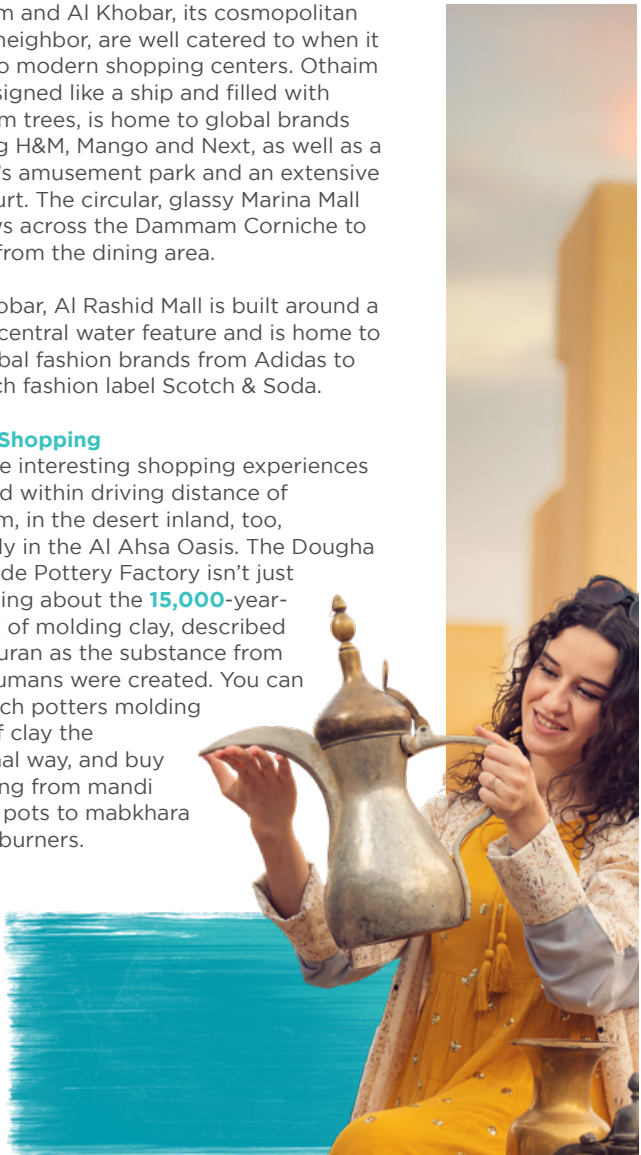
The most atmospheric shopping experience in Dammam is the Share Al Hob market. It comes alive at night, when the air is filled with the scents of spice and perfume, and concessions sell everything from traditional carpets to ceramics, art and ceremonial swords. There are live sketch artists and singers, and locals come to eat falafel and steaming luqaimat, a type of sweet fried dumpling doused in date syrup and sesame seeds. The Dammam Souq, also known as the women's market, features a **17,500**-square-meter collection of jewelry, handicraft and clothing stores, as well as traditional stalls mostly overseen by women.

Dammam and Al Khobar, its cosmopolitan coastal neighbor, are well catered to when it comes to modern shopping centers. Othaim Mall, designed like a ship and filled with high palm trees, is home to global brands including H&M, Mango and Next, as well as a children's amusement park and an extensive food court. The circular, glassy Marina Mall has views across the Dammam Corniche to the sea from the dining area.

In Al Khobar, Al Rashid Mall is built around a striking central water feature and is home to cool global fashion brands from Adidas to the Dutch fashion label Scotch & Soda.

Nearby Shopping

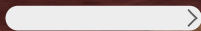
There are interesting shopping experiences to be had within driving distance of Dammam, in the desert inland, too, especially in the Al Ahsa Oasis. The Dougha Handmade Pottery Factory isn't just for learning about the **15,000**-year-old craft of molding clay, described in the Quran as the substance from which humans were created. You can also watch potters molding lumps of clay the traditional way, and buy everything from mandi cooking pots to mabkhara incense burners.





08

Notes and
Checklist




Notes and Checklist

Take Note!

Use this page to take notes and to check-off some of the must-see spots you just read about.

YOUR DAMMAM CHECKLIST


 Visit King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture (Ithra)

 Go desert camping

 Tour Heritage Village

 Explore Al Khobar Waterfront

 Scuba dive in Half Moon Bay

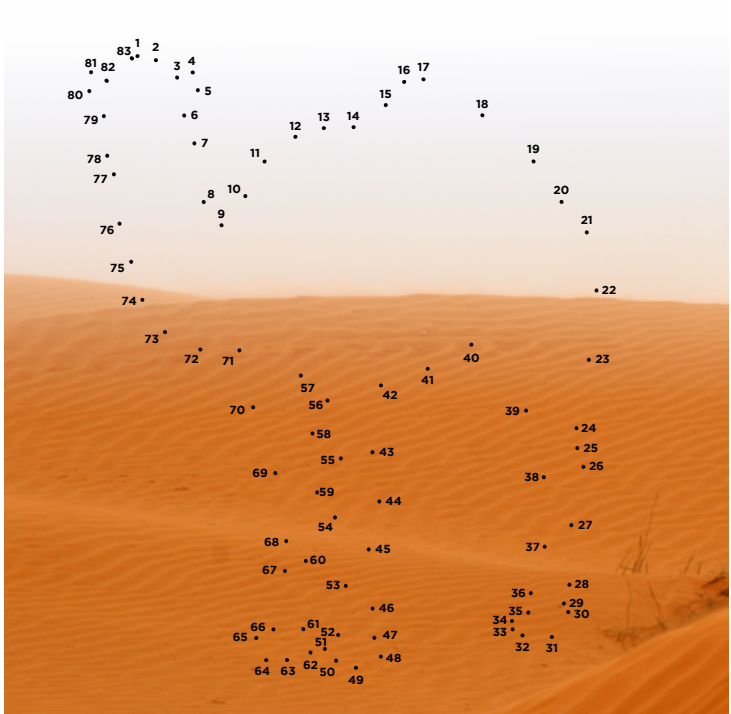
 Stroll around King Fahd Park



Kids Page

Travel Games for Your Adventure Connect The Dots for a SAUDI Surprise

Connect the dots for a picture of one of the region's most revered animals. Want more info about what your picture depicts? Turn this page upside down.



You drew a dromedary, also known as an Arabian camel, which has one hump and can reach up to **2** meters tall. For more than **3,000** years, camels have been a part of life on the peninsula.



Saudi

Welcome
to Arabia

