

Discover

Jeddah



Jeddah: A Pocket Guide

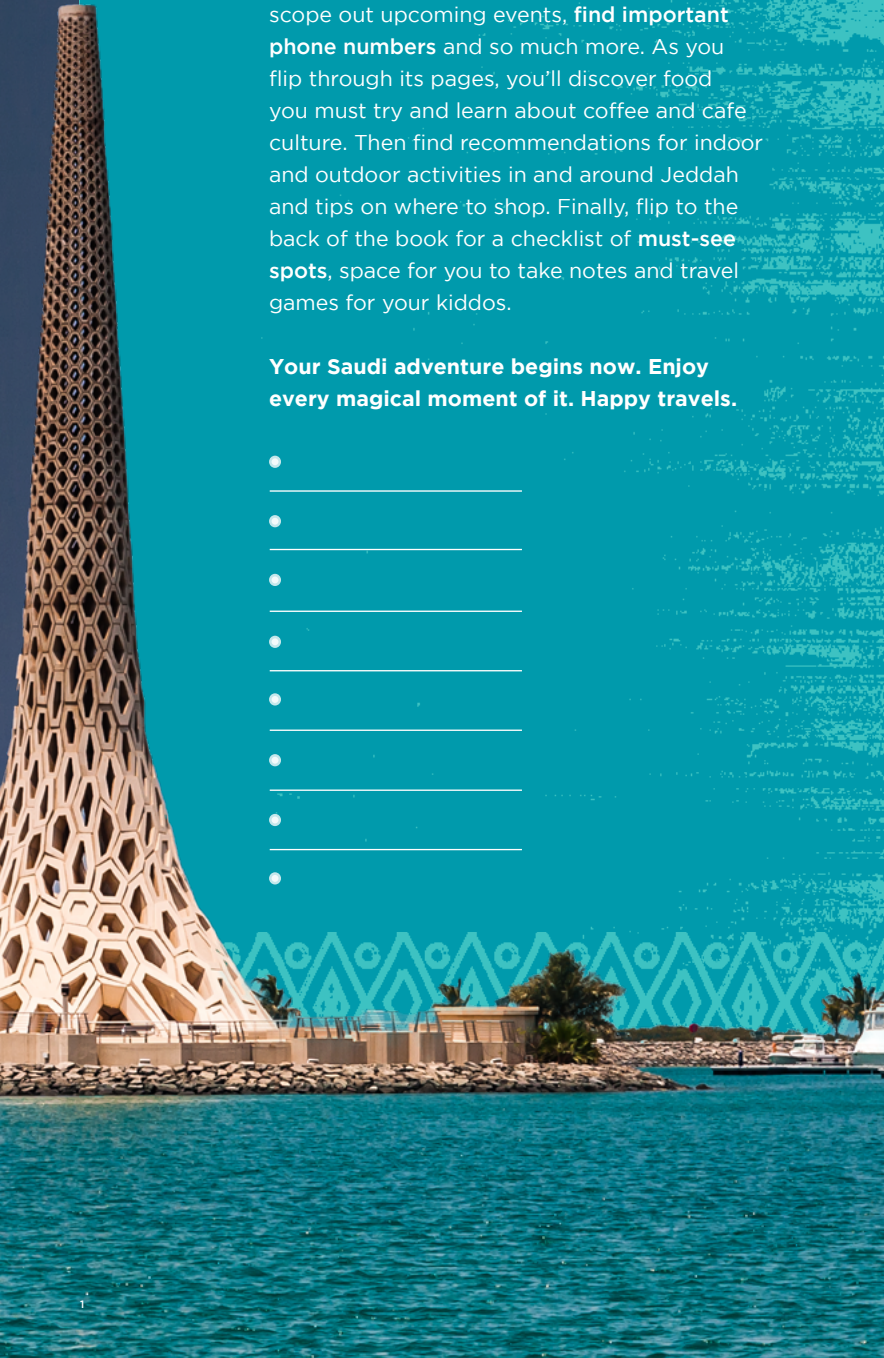
Saudi
Welcome
to Arabia

You've arrived!

We're so happy you made it to **Jeddah**. Saudi is full of wonder and adventure, and this guidebook is here to help you make the most of your time in the **"Bride of the Red Sea."** 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 must try and learn about coffee and cafe culture. Then find recommendations for indoor and outdoor activities in and around Jeddah 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 kiddos.

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

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____





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 Jeddah, 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): 998

Traffic Accidents: 993

Highway Patrol: 996

Coast Guard: 994

Tourism Hotline: 930



Welcome to Jeddah!

No Saudi city has been more open to outside influencers such as traders, international artists and Makkah-bound pilgrims than the ancient port of Jeddah. Indeed, the city's unofficial motto is "Jeddah ghair," or "Jeddah's different." Today, the cosmopolitan hub is home to gleaming hotels and big-ticket events like the Saudi Arabian Grand Prix. Explore this charming city from Al Balad, the magical historical quarter, to the Red Sea — still a central location for trade, diving among pristine reefs, and fishing for Jeddah's legendary seafood.



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

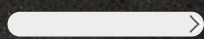
La = No

Shukran = Thank you

Afwan = You're welcome

02

Transportation



Transportation

Transportation in Jeddah

It's easy to get around this coastal 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 in Jeddah

While you probably know where you're staying, you may find yourself wanting to sleep one night at a hotel that's closer to an event you're attending, or perhaps you're looking for an untraditional lodging experience. If so, you're in luck. In Jeddah, there's no shortage of places to stay.



Hotels: Enjoy vibrant city views in the business-friendly and luxurious Mövenpick Hotel, a kids room at the economical Ibis Jeddah City Center or the central location of Novotel Jeddah Tahlia Street.



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

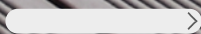
TRAVEL TIP

Check out special hotel packages on visitsaudi.com



03

Food



Food

Taste of Jeddah

From street-stall kebabs to fine-dining fusion, Jeddah is home to a diverse bill of fare. Below are some local favorites.

Shukri Bakery

Sample the pillowy spiced khubz bread at this established bakery in the historic Al Balad district.

Saedi Fish Restaurant

Savor Red Sea hammour cooked to order at this Jeddah Waterfront staple.

Al Nakheel

Enjoy the breeze and the sea views while sampling the iconic Hijazi dish of saleeq chicken and milky rice.

Al Baik

Indulge in fried chicken at this chain beloved by locals for its top-secret spice mix.

Maqadeer

Bite into traditional dishes such as saleeq, aish bellaham and kabli rice or modernized dishes like kafta edam and bechamel at this family-owned restaurant.

Naji Al Harbi

Satisfy your craving for street food with sumptuous kebabs served with a side of yogurt in Al Balad.

MUST-TRY INTERNATIONAL EATS

When you're ready for a serving or two of international cuisine, you can savor Pakistani curries at Makkah Restaurant, dig into Brazilian cuisine at Spears, get a taste of Indonesian cuisine at Wong Solo or grab Anatolian eats at Turkuoise.

Jeddah's International Cuisine

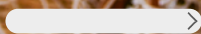
A historic port town and pilgrim gateway, Jeddah is a city used to welcoming the world, so it's little wonder, then, that the city's cuisine brims with international flavors. Today, huge expatriate communities have made Jeddah a cultural melting pot where nearly every culinary whim can be satisfied. "This has allowed [the country's] food offering to evolve and become a fusion of other cultures as well as introduce Saudi cuisine to the newcomers," says Mayada Badr, CEO of the Culinary Arts Commission in Saudi Arabia.





04

**Seafood
in Jeddah**



Seafood in Jeddah

Jeddah's Gifts from the Sea

While Jeddah is known for having a range of cuisines to enjoy, the city's proximity to the sea makes its seafood offerings particularly memorable. Dip into the options below.

Coastal cuisine

Jeddah is famous for its seafood, from flaky deep-fried hammour at Al Balad's tiny rustic restaurants to seafood platters at the Miami-style Blue Ocean and marina-side rock lobsters and langoustines at Al Qalzam Fisheries, in the north of the city. Shrimp is popular, and Jeddawis swear by the boiled version, which you can try served in a bag at Shrimp Anatomy, doused in garlic butter or cajun spices.

Central Fish Market

In a cluster of aquatic-blue buildings at the harbor near Al Balad, Jeddah's lively Central Fish Market is the place to get a sense of the Red Sea's fresh bounty, from kingfish and sea bass to pyramids of prawns, crabs and lobsters, all at lower prices than elsewhere in the city. It's also possible to buy up seafood or fish and have it cooked to order in the little restaurant in the market. Visit early in the morning, and they'll even store your fish until lunchtime.

With many vendors displaying English-language labels, it's a good idea to browse from stall-to-stall and get accustomed to the colorful variety of seafood on offer.

From local favorites including the red grouper ("najil") and the Napoleon wrasse ("tarabani") to seabass, tuna, calamari, and mountains of crab and lobster, you'll not be short of choice. Egyptian parrotfish and Omani sardines are among the catches from elsewhere in the region, but if you'd prefer to try only local fare then look for those labeled "baladi."





05

Outdoor
Sites

Outdoor Sites

Outdoor Activities in Jeddah

The metropolitan city of Jeddah is also an outdoor enthusiast's dream thanks to its prime location on the Red Sea.

Jeddah's Beaches

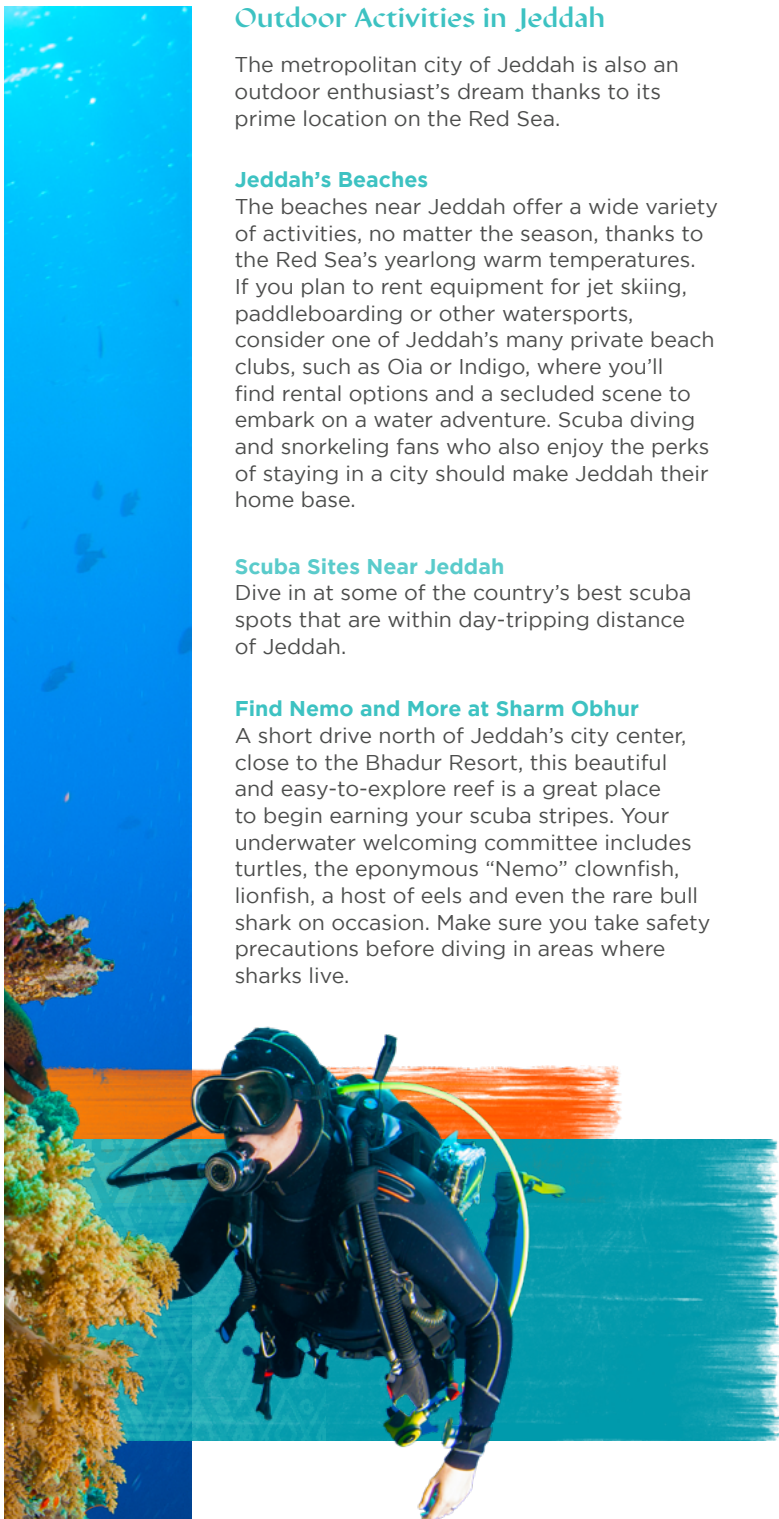
The beaches near Jeddah offer a wide variety of activities, no matter the season, thanks to the Red Sea's yearlong warm temperatures. If you plan to rent equipment for jet skiing, paddleboarding or other watersports, consider one of Jeddah's many private beach clubs, such as Oia or Indigo, where you'll find rental options and a secluded scene to embark on a water adventure. Scuba diving and snorkeling fans who also enjoy the perks of staying in a city should make Jeddah their home base.

Scuba Sites Near Jeddah

Dive in at some of the country's best scuba spots that are within day-tripping distance of Jeddah.

Find Nemo and More at Sharm Obhur

A short drive north of Jeddah's city center, close to the Bhadur Resort, this beautiful and easy-to-explore reef is a great place to begin earning your scuba stripes. Your underwater welcoming committee includes turtles, the eponymous "Nemo" clownfish, lionfish, a host of eels and even the rare bull shark on occasion. Make sure you take safety precautions before diving in areas where sharks live.



Explore Shipwrecks in Abu Tair

The most famous shipwreck at Abu Tair reef is the Staphonos, also known as the Cable Wreck (when the Staphonos went down in **1978**, its cargo was mainly cables, chain-link fences and large steel beams). The ship rests on its side, and on calm days, much of the wreck is beautifully illuminated by sunlight coming through the crystal-clear waters, making it easy for divers to explore. The Staphonos wreck is also a popular hangout for whitetip sharks, schools of goatfish and blue-spotted stingrays.

Jeddah Waterfront

Head to the Jeddah Waterfront, also known as the Jeddah Corniche, which is one of the city's biggest attractions. Spanning the coastline, the corniche features beaches, parks, play areas for kids, dancing fountains, and dedicated sports and fishing areas. It's also home to Jeddah's outdoor sculpture park, the largest open-air museum in Saudi, featuring statues from prominent artists including Maha Malluh, Alexander Calder, Henry Moore and Joan Miró. Here you can also see one of the world's tallest fountains. At dusk, King Fahd Fountain glows with the help of more than **500** LED spotlights. Backdropped by the Red Sea, the fountain is a sight to behold as it shoots a plume of saltwater **312** meters in the air at nearly **375** kilometers per hour.

Al Balad

A UNESCO World Heritage Site since **2014**, Jeddah's historical district of Al Balad was founded in the seventh century; today, the neighborhood's preserved architecture tells stories of the city's past. Here, you'll find houses built from the 16th to early **20th** centuries. One reason these homes are unique is that, unlike other regional high-rises that were constructed out of clay, Al Balad's were built with coral limestone brought in from the Red Sea. The impressive woodwork adorning these structures is another striking feature. In **1869**, the Suez Canal opened, and Jeddah profited along with it. Merchants began decorating Al Balad's traditional buildings with ornate wooden details around the doors and windows and carving highly decorative wooden bay windows and balconies, known as rawasheen. From the Nassif House to Al Alawi market, there's a ton to see in Al Balad.





06

Indoor
Sites

Indoor Sites

Indoor Activities for You in Jeddah

No Saudi city is as culturally diverse as Jeddah. Here are a few not-to-be-missed sites.

Nasseef House

On a plaza in the heart of Al Balad, this beautiful 106-room coral stone mansion was built in **1881** for wealthy merchant Omar Nasseef Efendi, and in **1925** was the home of Abdulaziz Ibn Saud, who would become the first king of a unified Saudi Arabia. With its carved roshan windows, roof terrace chambers and wide stairwells on which camels used to ascend, it is now a captivating museum and a portal to Saudi's ancient past.

Matbouli House Museum

Full of oddities, the Historic District of Jeddah is home to several old houses. As one of Al Balad's more curious spaces, the **400-year-old** Al Matbouli House allows you to experience local life in the **17th** century. From how the city's residents dined to the various traditions of hospitality, the museum offers a great insight into the values and customs of those who once dwelled in this historic neighborhood.

Our Days of Bliss Magad

Situated just a few meters opposite the far popular Nasseef House, the museum is a window into life in Jeddah during the mid **20th** century. This museum beautifully tells the story of that era using quotidian items such as canned food, glass bottles of soft drinks, gramophones and some of the earliest minted Saudi coins.

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 Jeddah

From educational activities to hands-on venues that inspire creativity, there is so much to do for everyone in Jeddah — from the youngest to the oldest members of the family.

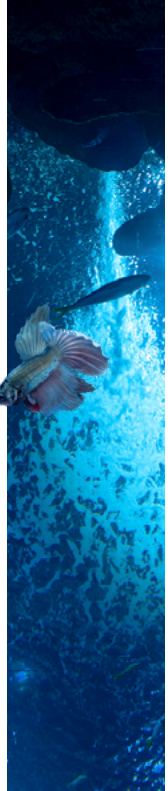
Fakieh Aquarium

Located just off Al Kurnaysh Road on Jeddah's north corniche, Fakieh Aquarium is the first marine exhibition of its kind in Saudi Arabia, and it's no coincidence that it finds itself within earshot of the city's lapping Red Sea.

The sprawling tunnels and vast tanks that make up the aquarium house over **200** species and around **85** percent of them are native to Jeddah's undisturbed coral reefs. It makes this colorful window into the Red Sea the next best way to experience the region's vibrant underwater ecosystem without needing to squeeze into scuba gear.

Accompanied by a meditative soundtrack and enclosed in cavern walls, a trip through the aquarium brings you up close to some of the **800** Red Sea oddities that don't exist anywhere else on the planet. Throughout the tour, detailed information is provided in both English and Arabic.

The knowledgeable staff are also proud to inform visitors that some of the endangered marine life — including giant turtles — have been rescued following injury or illness. Those that are able to fully recover are then released back into their natural habitat.



Little Baker

Kids love to help decorate cakes, which makes this the perfect spot to bring them. Have children supervised by experts as they embellish their cakes with colorful sprinkles and frostings. The cafe hosts the liveliest bake-off-style parties, which makes it even more exciting!

Colorfly

This space joins creativity with adventure. Let your kids get drenched in color and express themselves through art.



07

Shopping



Shopping

Shopping Adventures in Jeddah

Jeddah has every kind of shopping imaginable, from open-air souqs to cutting-edge concept stores. Here are some of the best spots to visit.

Souq Al Alawi

Get lost in the labyrinthine lanes of Souq Al Alawi. Set within the walls of the old town, this is one of Saudi's largest traditional markets and a hive of color, scents and sounds. Wander the walkways to find stores and stalls laden with well-priced goods — spices, incense, textiles and jewelry are just the tip of the iceberg — or peruse carts brimming with delicious treats. The souq is especially enticing at sunset, when the call to prayer sings out through the lanes.

Grey Collective

Started by two sisters, Grey Collective is a sophisticated mix of contemporary kaftans and urban streetwear paired with modernized Saudi leather slippers. It offers an array of design objects, plus homegrown treats such as Raymans Cookies and Honest KSA, which shoppers can enjoy at the coffee bar.

Hub 27.1

The contemporary interior of Hub 27.1 is sure to appeal to urbanists on the hunt for high-street finds and indie designers. Its repertoire is a mix of local and international brands sharing similar DNA and a penchant for pretty packaging. With a selection of scents, some niche, as well as Saudi urbanwear, this store is worth the visit.

Homegrown Market

This concept store is the epitome of modern Saudi art with its vibrant colors, fabrics and designs. It also boasts a collection of locally designed abayas.

Makeen Space

A hip and fun place to be, this store's shelves are lined with funky local clothing brands and intricate household items. If you are a coffee lover, Makeen Space has you covered!





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 Jeddah Checklist

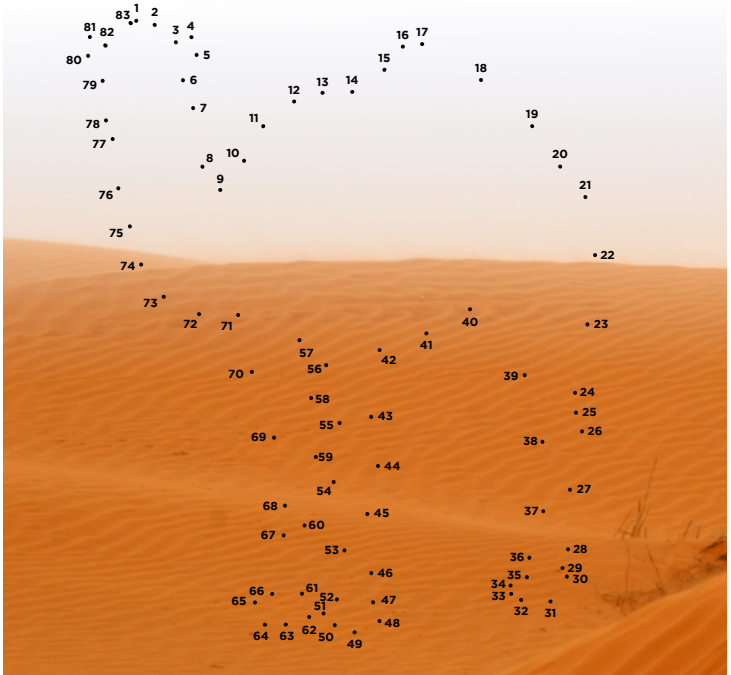
- 🍽️ Eat Coastal Cuisine
- 🤿 Scuba dive or snorkel in the Red Sea
- 🚶 Walk through Al Balad
- 👁 Watch King Fahd Fountain light up at night
- 🛍 Shop at Souq Al Alawi
- 🌊 Visit the Jeddah Waterfront
- 🏛 Visit the Tayebat Museum



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