

Wonders of Arabia Tour

March 2-10 2023

Saudi Arabia



INTRODUCTION:

Beginning in the cosmopolitan Red Sea city of Jeddah and ending in Saudi Arabia's vibrant capital, Riyadh, this tour is your opportunity to see Saudi Arabia at a unique point in its history.

We'll head north to the city of Tabuk from where we'll be able to see both the beauty of Saudi nature as well as its incredible history, with visits to Wadi Al Disah, Al-'Ula and Mada'in Salih.

Heading south towards Riyadh we'll try some local cuisine, enjoy amazing vistas, gape at pre-modern rock paintings, and experience Saudi life, for better and worse. We'll stop at the 'Edge of the World' before wrapping up our trip in the ultra modern capital, albeit with a recent dark history, as we go to the former Execution Square.

HIGHLIGHTS:

Explore the vibrant old city of **Jeddah**

Take in the spectacular natural wonder of **Wadi Al Disah**

Explore the sister city of Petra, the ancient **Mada'in Salih**

Get a first hand view of how **Saudi Arabia** is modernising

Excited? Come with SAIGA to Saudi Arabia.

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Tour Details:

DATES: March 2-10 2023

PRICE: \$2595 USD (twin share)
Single Supplement \$495 USD



INCLUSIONS:

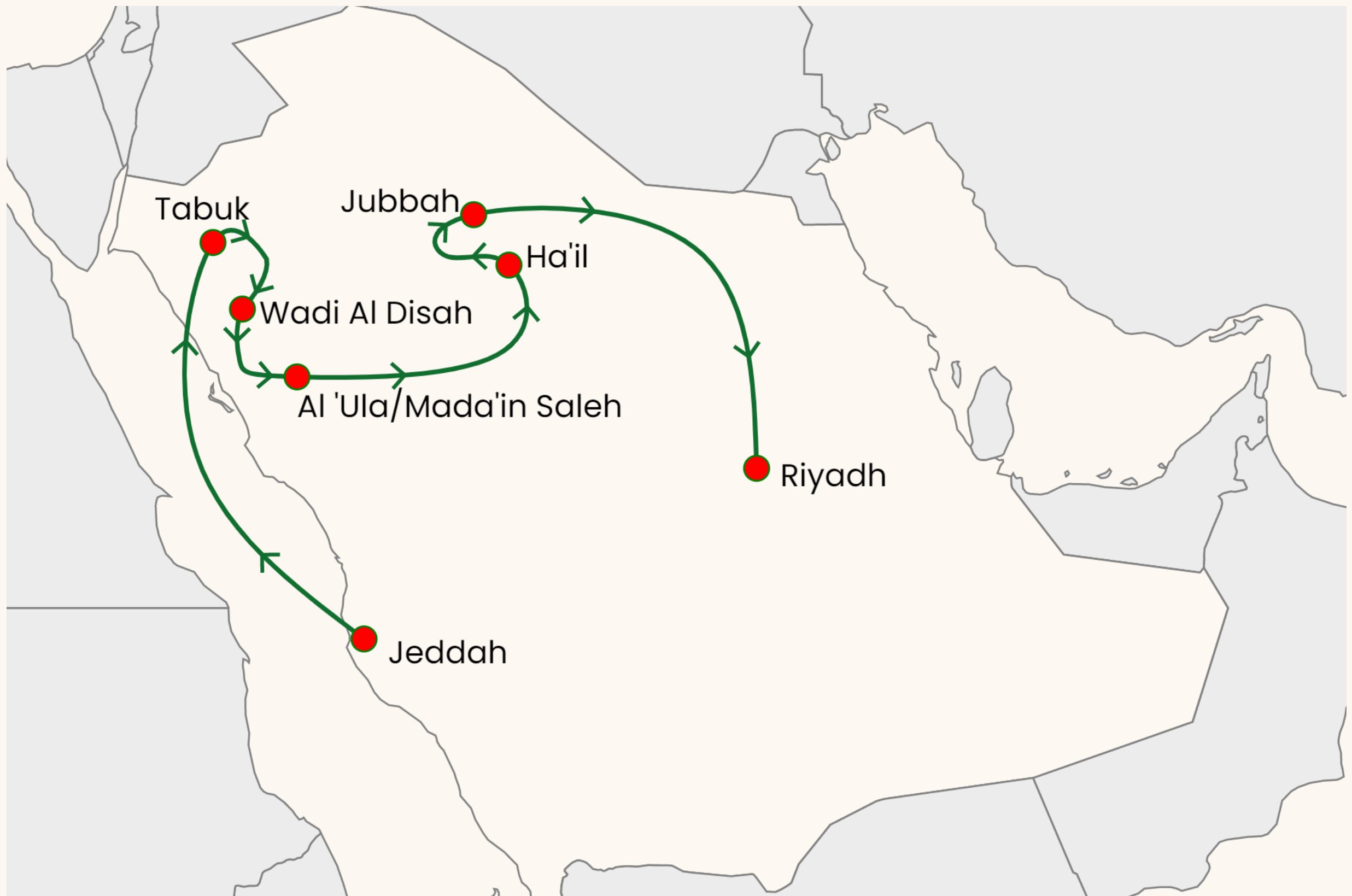
- Accommodation in twin share at roughly 3 star hotels/guesthouses, breakfast included
- Transport, beginning in Jeddah and ending in Riyadh
- Entrance fees to all sites mentioned in the itinerary
- Welcome dinner and farewell dinner
- SAIGA guide and local guides

EXCLUSIONS:

- Visa fee
- Meals other than breakfast and two dinners
- Transport to Jeddah and from Riyadh
- Accommodation and any other services before or after the tour
- Personal expenses such as souvenirs or any optional activities

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Day 1	Jeddah
Day 2	Jeddah to Tabuk
Day 3	Tabuk - Wadi Al Disah - Tabuk
Day 4	Tabuk - Al-'Ula
Day 5	Al-'Ula - Mada'in Salih - Al-'Ula
Day 6	Al-'Ula - Ha'il
Day 7	Ha'il - Jubbah - Riyadh
Day 8	Riyadh
Day 9	Riyadh

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Itinerary:

Day 1: Jeddah - Thursday 2nd March

- We start today with a city tour of Jeddah, showing you both the old and new of this vibrant city.
- We will visit the Jeddah Corniche which runs along the Red Sea, as well as introducing you to the old part of Jeddah, the Al Balad district, where we will see some of the most iconic historical architecture in Jeddah. This area is host to numerous cafes and small museums as well as the old Souq.
- A quick photo stop by the world's second largest flag pole! (It overtook the Baku flagpole in 2014 and then was overtaken by a flagpole in Egypt in 2021.)
- We will also see the distant Jeddah Tower, which is eventually to be the world's tallest building. Later, we will finish up at the Floating Mosque, another one of Jeddah's must-see attractions.
- Afterwards we will head back to the hotel where you will have the afternoon and evening to explore Jeddah. We recommend heading back to the Al Balad district at night, as it comes alive (as does most of the country) once the sun goes down.

Day 2: Jeddah – Tabuk - Friday 3rd March

- We will head to the airport in the morning to catch a domestic flight to Tabuk, which lies in the far north of the country near the border with Jordan.
- Once we have checked into our accommodation and freshened up we will head to the heart of the city where we can visit the Tabuk Castle and Souq Twaheen where many local Bedouin traders come to sell all kinds of things.
- We will have free time in the evening to enjoy the city.

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Day 4: Tabuk – Wadi Al Disah – Tabuk - Saturday 4th March

- We will be up early for a journey into the wilderness of Saudi Arabia to see Wadi Al Disah. This is one of the most spectacular sights in all of Saudi Arabia and is still relatively unknown by outsiders. This amazingly beautiful area is home to canyons and palm trees and provides for some unreal photo opportunities.
- Here we will learn about the amazing history of the region, which shares close links with other sites such as Wadi Rum and Petra in Jordan.
- After a full day of exploring the valleys we will arrive back at the hotel where you will have a free evening.

Day 5: Tabuk – Al-'Ula - Sunday 5th March

- Walking along the narrow passageways of Al-'Ula, you'll feel like you're stepping back in time. It's phenomenal to think the last residents moved out in the 1980s! This maze of densely built mud-brick houses, many of which are more than 2000 years old, will amaze you. It won't be here for long either as it is slowly disintegrating.
- The walled city of Al-'Ula was founded in the 6th century BC, an oasis in the desert valley, with fertile soil and plenty of water. It was located along 'Incense Road', the network of routes that facilitated the trading of spices, silk and other luxury items through Arabia, Egypt and India.
- The drive will take approximately 3.5 hours through stunning rocky landscapes. We will arrive and settle into our accommodation before heading out for stargazing in the remote desert where we will also enjoy a group BBQ dinner. (Note: be sure to bring warm clothes for stargazing as the desert can be very cold at night.)
- Around 11pm we will arrive back at our accommodation where we will rest up for the night.

Day 6: Al-'Ula – Mada'in Salih – Al-'Ula - Monday 6th March

- Today we'll visit Mada'in Salih. Possibly the most famous archeological site on the Saudi peninsula. The site is similar to that of Petra in Jordan, due to them both being built during the Nabatean empire, however until recently was much harder to get to due to visa restrictions. Visiting the Nabatean tombs of Hegra as well as the many wonderful rock formations in the area such as Elephant Rock, this ancient city carved into solid rock is the highlight of Saudi Arabia.
- There is also an optional extra to go on a 4km or 8km hike through the park which is the best way to see the many different landscapes of the region.
- In the evening you will have free time to roam around Al-'Ula town where you can enjoy a sunset dinner and explore Al-'Ula old town.

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Day 7: Al-'Ula – Ha'il - Tuesday 7th March

- We will once again hit the road (approx. 5 hours), this time heading deeper into the interior of Saudi Arabia, to Ha'il, which sits on the edge of the Nafud Desert and the rugged Shammar Mountains.
- Once we have arrived in Ha'il and settled into our hotel, we have the option to explore the Qishlah Castle in the centre of the city, and afterwards head up the Jabel al Samra mountain that overlooks the city of Ha'il and makes for great views.
- You will have a free evening in Ha'il where we recommend you try local Najd cuisine which is very hearty, perfect for surviving in the desert.

Day 8: Ha'il – Jubbah – Riyadh - Wednesday 8th March

- We will have an early morning drive out to Jubbah, where we will see some of the oldest rock carvings in Saudi Arabia, which are possibly over 10,000 years old, and is a UNESCO World Heritage site.
- After visiting the rock art we will head back to Ha'il where we will grab some lunch and board our 3:35pm train to Riyadh which will take 4 hours and 40 minutes. Relax on the train and watch the desert landscape go by.
- We will arrive in Riyadh around 8pm where we will check into our hotel and then have a free evening.

Day 9: Riyadh - Thursday 9th March

- On the last day of our Saudi adventure we will take in the sites of Riyadh, the amazingly modern capital of the Kingdom. Here we will visit Masmak Fort and the infamous 'Chop Chop' Square, as well as the local Souq which is a heaven for collectors of cool antiques and souvenirs.
- After lunch we will head out to view the 'Edge of the World', out in the desert. The Edge of the World is a viewpoint that sits at the top of a mountain range outside of Riyadh. This is possibly one of the most incredible views of the entire journey.
- We will have a BBQ dinner, weather permitting, and then return to Riyadh where we will have the night to unwind and reminisce about the past week on the road.

Day 10: Riyadh - Friday 10th March

- After breakfast in the hotel, we will say our goodbyes and finish the trip.
- Transfer to airport to continue your journey or head back home.
- If you wish to stay longer in Saudi Arabia, please let us know and we can organise travel to many of the other amazing destinations this country has to offer.

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