

# TAIF NAMED THE ARAB SUMMER CAPITAL 2014



The Arab Tourism Organization (ATO) announced that the Arab Summer Capital 2014 is the city of Taif. According to ATO president, Bandar Al-Faheed, this year's program will have over 60 events.

Taif, the Saudi Arabian city of more than 500,000 people, was named the Arab Summer Capital after the meeting of all the parties involved, including Al-Faheed, Fahad bin Muammar (Taif Governor and Local Tourism Development Council President), Mohammed Ahmed Tyab (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Director General), Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Makhraj (Taif mayor) and diplomats from different Arab countries. The meeting took place at the ATO office in Jeddah.

The events which already kicked off in December will continue throughout the whole year. **Recently named as the Asian and Arab tourism capital, Manama (the capital city of Bahrain) will twin with Taif to host the planned cultural week.**

According to Muammar, Prince Mishaal bin Abdullah (the Makkah Governor) has to approve all events. He praised the country's leadership, particularly King Abdullah - the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, for their contribution in the development of Taif's tourism industry. He pointed out Souk Okaz - started by Prince Khaled Al-Faisal, the former Makkah governor - which has become a popular annual event with activities in various fields, such as traditional, cultural, sports, historical, educational and entertainment.

The Taif Governor also highlighted several ambitious projects that will help the city attract more tourists, such as a 13 square kilometers science and technology city, and a 150,000 square meters King Abdullah Park Project with various entertainment and service facilities.

Al-Makhraj, the Taif mayor, said such decisions will always enhance the cooperation between various Arab counties. **He added that Souk Okaz was a very important event in the Kingdom as it represents its heritage, culture and tradition.**

Currently, Taif development agencies have completed 159 out of the planned 513 service and infrastructure projects while 288 are under construction. The remaining 66 have already been approved.

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