

# TOP 7 RELIGIOUS SITES IN SAUDI ARABIA



The Saudi Minister of Tourism announced that the Kingdom recorded 30 million international arrivals in 2024, setting a new record for the country. This marks a significant increase from 2019, when Saudi Arabia opened its borders for international tourism and welcomed just over 17.5 million visitors.

In addition to its culture and rich heritage, the Kingdom boasts a remarkable natural diversity. It is also a significant religious destination, the Islamic faith's birthplace. **Millions of Muslims visit the Grand Mosque in Mecca and the Prophet's Mosque in Medina yearly to perform Hajj and Umrah, further contributing to the Kingdom's appeal as a tourist hotspot.**

Saudi Arabia has been ranked as the top preferred Arab destination for Muslim tourists.

The Kingdom boasts more than 10,000 heritage and religious sites, including 500 places referenced in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry and approximately 400 mentioned in the biography of the Prophet Muhammad. Among these, Mecca stands out as the most attractive city, followed closely by Medina.

This overview highlights the most famous religious sites in Saudi Arabia.

## Grand Mosque

The Qibla of Muslims is located in the heart of the Holy City of Mecca and includes the Holy Kaaba. This is the first house built for worship and can accommodate millions of worshipers. It serves as a major center for both Hajj and Umrah, which are religious obligations that every Muslim must fulfill at least once in their lifetime, provided they have the means to do so.

## The Prophet's Mosque

Situated in Medina, this site contains the tomb of Prophet Muhammad and serves as a major destination for religious tourism, attracting visitors from around the world.

## Makkah Museum

The Makkah Museum offers a fascinating insight into the history of ancient Islamic civilization. It is one of the most important museums in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, featuring various exhibits showcasing the masterpieces of Islamic culture across various fields and periods.

Located in the Al Zahir district on Madinah Road, the Makkah Museum is easily accessible for visitors interested in exploring the long history of Islamic civilization.

## Hira Cave

The cave of Hira is situated on the northeastern side of the Grand Mosque, atop Jabal al-Nur in Makkah. Before his prophetic mission, the Prophet Muhammad sought refuge in this cave, spending many nights contemplating the universe and worshipping his Lord.

The cave is symbolic for Islam, where the Prophet received his first revelation. Thousands of Muslims visit it yearly to pay their respects and reflect on its historical importance.

## **Cave of Thawr**

It is situated on the southern side of Makkah and is a rock with a cavity at the top of the mountain of the same name. This rock has two holes—one at the front and the other at the back. The Prophet chose to take shelter there when he altered the usual route during his migration from Makkah to Medina, accompanied by his companion Abu Bakr al-Siddiq.

## **Quba Mosque**

The Quba Mosque is located in Medina and is the first mosque established by the Prophet Muhammad upon his arrival in the city after migrating from Mecca. He personally laid its first stones, which his companions later completed.

Today, the Quba Mosque receives great care and attention, making it one of the largest mosques in Medina, second only to the Prophet's Mosque. It attracts both visitors and residents, and its distinctive elevated location allows it to be seen from various points throughout the city.

## **Baqi**

The Baqi cemetery is the primary burial site for the people of Medina, dating back to the era of the Prophet Muhammad. It is recognized as the most famous cemetery in the Islamic world, where all individuals who die in Medina, whether locals or visitors, are laid to rest.

Located to the east of the Prophet's Mosque, Baqi is the final resting place for more than ten thousand companions of the Prophet, including Uthman ibn Affan, known as Dhul-Nourain, who was the third of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. Many members of the Prophet's family and several of his wives, known as the Mothers of the Believers, are also buried there, except Lady Khadija and Lady Maymouna.

The cemetery is frequently visited by pilgrims and those performing Umrah in Medina. They do so following the example set by the Prophet, peace be upon him, who would visit Baqi day and night to pray and seek forgiveness for its inhabitants.

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