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Winner of the "Most Influential Tourism Newspaper in the Arab World 2026" Award by AFUSU

INTERNATIONAL ATF26 Türkiye The Heart of Tourism

Al Rehla Participates as Strategic Media Partner for the Middle East at Antalya Tourism Fair ATF 2026

Aleppo's Laurel Soap Makers: A Craft Bearing Family Names and Taking Nine Months to Perfect

Hail Prepares to Open SAR 268 Million Central District Combining Heritage Markets and Entertainment

Abu Dhabi's Archaeological Heritage Inspires Contemporary Designs Through Al Hosn Emerging Talent Programme



Al Rehla Participates as Strategic Media Partner for the Middle East at Antalya Tourism Fair ATF 2026



The eighth edition brings together 331 registered companies and targets more than 40,000 visits, featuring specialised sessions on hotel investment, artificial intelligence and the future of global tourism.

Antalya – Türkiye | Al Rehla

Al Rehla, the first and largest daily tourism newspaper in the Arab world, is participating as the Strategic Media Partner for the Middle East at the Antalya Tourism Fair (ATF 2026), which opened its eighth edition on Monday, October 26, and runs until October 28, 2026, at the ANFAŞ Exhibition Centre in Antalya, Türkiye.

The exhibition brings together representatives of hotels, resorts, airlines, travel agencies, tour operators, tourism technology providers, international destinations and investors. Its professional programme focuses on developing commercial partnerships and discussing the transformations shaping the tourism industry.

331 Companies and an Extensive International Programme

The official exhibition website lists 331 participating companies, while organisers have announced a target of more than 40,000 visits, international participation from over 60 countries, and a programme featuring more than 50 specialised sessions and seminars.

The exhibition spans approximately 40,000 square metres, with dedicated areas for exhibitors and direct business meetings between companies and international buyers.



Selçuk Meral
Founder of Antalya Tourism Fair

Tourism and Hospitality Leaders Attend Opening Ceremony

The opening ceremony was attended by Selçuk Meral, Founder and Chairman of ATF; Hulusi Şahin, Governor of Antalya; Kaan Kavaloğlu, President of the Mediterranean Touristic Hoteliers and Operators Association (AKTOB); and Davut Günaydın, Vice President of the Association of Turkish Travel Agencies (TÜRSAB).



Sezgin Yılmaz, Deputy General Manager of Türkiye İş Bankası (İşbank), also participated alongside officials and representatives of tourism institutions and the public and private sectors.

The programme also featured Fettah Tamince, Founder of Rixos Hotels, and Dimitris Manikis, President of Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA) at Wyndham Hotels & Resorts.

Selçuk Meral: Founder of Antalya Tourism Fair

Selçuk Meral is an established figure in Türkiye's tourism and specialised exhibition industries. He is the founder of Antalya Tourism Fair (ATF) and Chairman of GMT Fuarcılık and GM Center.

He began his career in tourism at the age of 16 and launched GM Tourism & Management magazine in 2004, before establishing the tourism-focused QM Awards in 2010.

His professional activities span tourism media, exhibition organisation and hotel consultancy. Through ATF, he works to bring together hotels, tour operators, tourism companies and investors on a professional platform for networking and business development.

From Hotel Investment to Artificial Intelligence

Among the exhibition's major events is the Tourism Cities Summit, alongside sessions exploring the future of investment and hospitality, women's leadership, winter tourism, sustainability, waste management, digital technologies and booking platforms.

The programme also addresses the future of tourism employment, the impact of artificial intelligence, sports tourism and the travel experiences of younger generations, in addition to business meetings between hotels and tour operators.

Commercial negotiations concerning upcoming tourism seasons are taking place throughout the exhibition. However, as of October 27, no verified final aggregate value of contracts concluded during this edition has been announced.

Al Rehla Strengthens Tourism Connections Between Türkiye and the Middle East

Al Rehla's participation reflects its commitment to expanding its international media presence and strengthening Arabic-language coverage of tourism investments, markets, destinations and participating companies.

The newspaper focuses on monitoring commercial developments, verified agreements and discussions with tourism and hospitality leaders, supporting stronger professional and media connections between the Turkish tourism market and markets across the Middle East.

Hail Prepares to Open SAR 268 Million Central District Combining Heritage Markets and Entertainment





Spanning more than 750,000 square metres, the development features 18 kilometres of walking and cycling paths, 3,000 trees and an open-air theatre, reshaping the visitor experience in the city centre.

Hail – Saudi Arabia | Al Rehla

The Saudi city of Hail is preparing to inaugurate its Central District redevelopment project on Wednesday, October 28, 2026, at a cost of approximately SAR 268 million, introducing a new tourism and leisure destination that brings together traditional markets, green spaces, cultural facilities and commercial activities.

The inauguration is scheduled to take place under the patronage of Prince Abdulaziz bin Saad bin Abdulaziz, Governor of Hail Region, in the presence of Deputy Governor Prince Faisal bin Fahd bin Muqrin, according to an official announcement by the Saudi Press Agency.

Covering more than 750,000 square metres and connected to six major roads, the project includes the redevelopment of central city squares, Afnan Street and surrounding market areas, transforming parts of the city centre into public spaces designed for pedestrians, recreation and community activities.

From Parking Areas to Green Walkways

The development features more than 30,000 square metres of landscaped green spaces, approximately 3,000 trees, 12

"The project focuses on enhancing the experience of residents and visitors, revitalising and reorganising the city centre, and creating spaces that support social and commercial activities."

Eng. Sultan bin Hamed Al-Zaidi
Mayor of Hail Region



kilometres of pedestrian walkways and six kilometres of dedicated cycling paths.

Its facilities include a 13,000-square-metre open-air theatre, interactive fountains covering 12,000 square metres and 1,500 parking spaces.

Approximately 250,000 square metres have also been allocated to community events, supported by internet connectivity, modern management and operating systems, lighting and surveillance infrastructure.

Historic Markets and New Visitor Experiences

The redevelopment includes the revitalisation of the Samah and Barzan markets, connecting central Hail with its historic surroundings, including Qishlah Palace and A'arif Fort.

This allows visitors to combine shopping, outdoor recreation and exploration of the city's historical landmarks within a single urban district.

The area also includes 17 commercial units for shops, restaurants and cafés, alongside spaces for activities and events, as well as a site designated for potential future commercial and hospitality developments.

Engineer Sultan bin Hamed Al-Zaydi, Mayor of Hail Region, explained that the project focuses on improving the experience of residents and visitors while reorganising the city centre and creating spaces that support social and commercial activities.

A New Addition to Hail's Visitor Experience

The project's tourism value lies in bringing multiple activities together in one destination, from walking and cycling to exploring traditional markets and discovering nearby historic landmarks.

However, no figures have yet been released regarding visitor numbers or tourism revenue associated with the development. Final details of the events programme and operating hours for all facilities have also not been announced.

The Central District is scheduled to be officially inaugurated on October 28, with the activities and facilities available to visitors subject to operational arrangements announced at the opening.



Travel Compass

Between Planning and Execution: Where Do Travel Companies Lose Their Customers?

By:

Ali Al-Yousef

Tourism Operations Consultant

A travel company may succeed in attracting customers with an appealing travel package, offering attractive destinations, quality hotels, and exciting activities. However, this does not necessarily mean it will succeed in delivering a satisfying travel experience. There is a significant difference between what customers are promised before booking and what they actually experience during their trip.

From my experience working in the tourism industry, I believe that one of the biggest challenges facing travel companies is not always marketing or price competition, but rather their ability to turn plans and promises into services delivered with the quality and efficiency travellers expect.

A travel itinerary may look perfectly organised on paper, yet lack practicality in certain details. For example, it may include too many attractions in a single day without allowing sufficient travel time, or rely on arrangements that have not been properly confirmed. Such issues can negatively affect the overall customer experience, even when other services are satisfactory.

In my view, tourism operations management goes beyond monitoring reservations and ensuring that itineraries are followed. It also involves anticipating potential problems, maintaining effective coordination with service providers, and making the right decisions at the right time.

It is equally important to recognise that some challenges are beyond a company's control, such as flight delays, unexpected weather conditions, or other unforeseen circumstances. However, travellers often judge a company not by the problem itself, but by how it responds, how quickly it acts, and how committed it is to finding solutions.

At the same time, operations teams cannot be expected to deliver perfect results when the packages being marketed include promises that are difficult to fulfil. Successful tourism operations require genuine coordination between sales, marketing, and operations departments, ensuring that everyone understands what can realistically be delivered to customers.

Perhaps what some travel companies need today is not more promotional offers, but a closer examination of their operational practices, service quality, and customer feedback. This is particularly important as travellers become more informed and increasingly capable of comparing services and experiences.

Ultimately, I believe that the real challenge for travel companies is no longer limited to attracting new customers, but also lies in retaining existing ones and earning their long-term trust.

Customers may choose a company because of its prices or offers, but they return because of the experience it delivers.



Egypt's Ministry of Labour and InterContinental Citystars Sign Agreement to Train Young Hospitality Professionals



Two-year agreement covers five hotel specialisations, with a daily training allowance of EGP 250 and priority access to available jobs, without guaranteed employment.

Cairo – Egypt | Al Rehla

Egypt's Ministry of Labour and InterContinental Citystars Hotels have signed a two-year cooperation agreement to provide vocational training programmes within hotel facilities, aimed at preparing young Egyptians for careers in hospitality and aligning training with actual operational requirements.

The agreement was signed on October 27, 2026, in the presence of Minister of Labour Hassan Raddad. The ministry was represented by Mohamed Nasser, Head of the Central Administration for Ministerial Office Affairs, while Martin Drenth, Regional Director of InterContinental Hotels in Egypt and Africa, signed on behalf of the hotel group.

Five Hotel Specialisations

The agreement covers practical training in culinary operations, front office services, housekeeping, reservations and hotel maintenance.

Training will take place within the hotel, in accordance with workplace requirements and occupational health and safety standards.

The Ministry of Labour will be responsible for announcing the programmes, nominating applicants and participating in the approval of training curricula and certificates.

The hotel group will oversee practical training and provide the necessary facilities and equipment.
The number of trainees and the opening date for applications have not yet been announced.

EGP 250 Daily Allowance and Employment Priority

Under the agreement, trainees will receive EGP 250 for each day of actual attendance, along with meals, professional uniforms and personal protective equipment.

Programme graduates will also receive priority consideration for available positions at the hotel. However, the agreement does not guarantee employment for all participants.

Both parties have agreed to establish a joint committee to monitor implementation and evaluate the training programmes.

Developing Skills for the Hospitality Industry

The partnership forms part of the Ministry of Labour's efforts to strengthen vocational training through cooperation with private-sector businesses, focusing on skills required in real working environments.

Hotel training programmes are particularly relevant because service quality depends heavily on employees' skills in guest reception, accommodation services, food and beverage operations, and daily hotel management.

However, the agreement's actual impact will need to be assessed through data on the number of trainees completing the programmes, their employment rates and their retention in the workforce.

Dubai Chambers Launches 22 AI Assistants, Targeting 295,000 Companies Over Two Years





"The success of digital transformation depends on institutions' ability to address their challenges and achieve practical results, rather than simply adopting technologies."

Sultan bin Saeed Al Mansoori
Chairman of Dubai Chambers

Digital platform covers procurement, human resources, sales and logistics, with plans to expand to 100 AI assistants and train 14,000 companies.

Dubai – UAE | Al Rehla

Dubai Chambers announced the launch of its Chamber AI Hub platform on October 26, 2026, describing it as the first platform of its kind among chambers of commerce worldwide. The platform provides AI-powered digital assistants designed to handle administrative and operational tasks for businesses.

The platform initially features 22 specialised AI assistants across seven areas: compliance, procurement, operations, financial services, sales, human resources and logistics. Dubai Chambers plans to expand the offering to 100 assistants over the next two years.

Digital Tools for Everyday Business Operations

The platform enables companies to identify suppliers, review contracts, match invoices with purchase orders, prepare business proposals, screen job applications and classify potential customers.

Businesses can test the AI assistants before deploying them, with free introductory credits available upon registration and paid packages offered according to usage.

The platform supports Arabic and English, with data hosted in the UAE. It also provides tools to monitor usage, manage costs and control access permissions for business teams.

Programme Targets 295,000 Companies

The launch forms part of Dubai Chambers' AI adoption programme for the private sector, which aims to enable more than 295,000 companies to benefit from AI-powered solutions over two years.

The initiative also includes specialised training for 14,000 companies belonging to business groups and councils operating under Dubai Chamber of Commerce.

Tonight's Room | Hotel Review

Royal Garden Palace in Djerba: A Seaside Stay Surrounded by 20,000 Square Metres of Gardens

Published room rates start from TND 240, with the hotel located 4 kilometres from Midoun and 15 kilometres from Houmt Souk.

Djerba, Tunisia | Al Rehla

On the northeastern coast of Tunisia's island of Djerba, Royal Garden Palace offers a resort-style stay combining beachfront facilities with extensive green spaces, in an area home to several hotels and resorts near Midoun.

One of the property's main attractions is its setting amid 20,000 square metres of gardens, with direct beach access, according to information published on the hotel's official website.

A Location Between the Beach and the Island's Attractions

The hotel is approximately 4 kilometres from central Midoun and 15 kilometres from Houmt Souk, while Djerba–Zarzis International Airport is around 25 kilometres away.

It is also approximately 16 kilometres from the El Ghriba Synagogue and 24 kilometres from Guellala, a village renowned for its traditional pottery.

These distances allow guests to combine a seaside holiday with visits to cultural attractions. However, taxis or private transportation are practical options for travelling between different parts of the island.

The Rooms: How Views Influence Prices

The hotel offers several categories of rooms and suites, ranging from standard accommodation to sea-view rooms and larger suites.

A review of the hotel's official website on October 27, 2026, showed the following published rates:
Published Hotel Room Rates – October 27, 2026
- Room CategoryPublished RateStandard RoomTND 240
- Superior RoomTND 355
- Sea-View RoomTND 375

These are advertised room rates, not confirmed booking offers for a specific stay date. The website did not clearly indicate whether all taxes and service charges were included, and prices may change at the time of booking.

The different categories illustrate how room location and views influence accommodation pricing, alongside room size and available amenities.

Facilities and the Guest Experience

Royal Garden Palace features dining and hospitality facilities, access to the beach and landscaped gardens, and spaces dedicated to meetings and events.

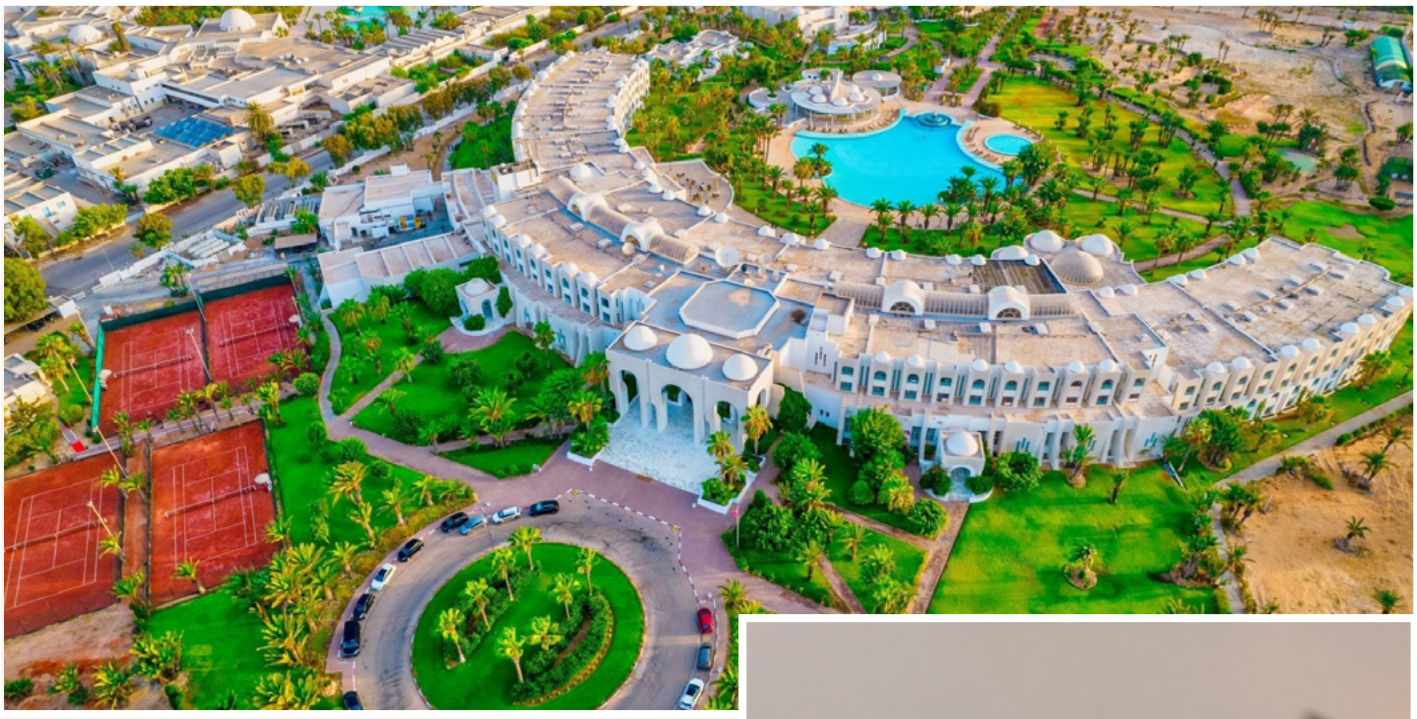
This style of accommodation is suited to travellers who prefer spending a substantial part of their holiday within the resort while arranging separate excursions to explore Djerba.

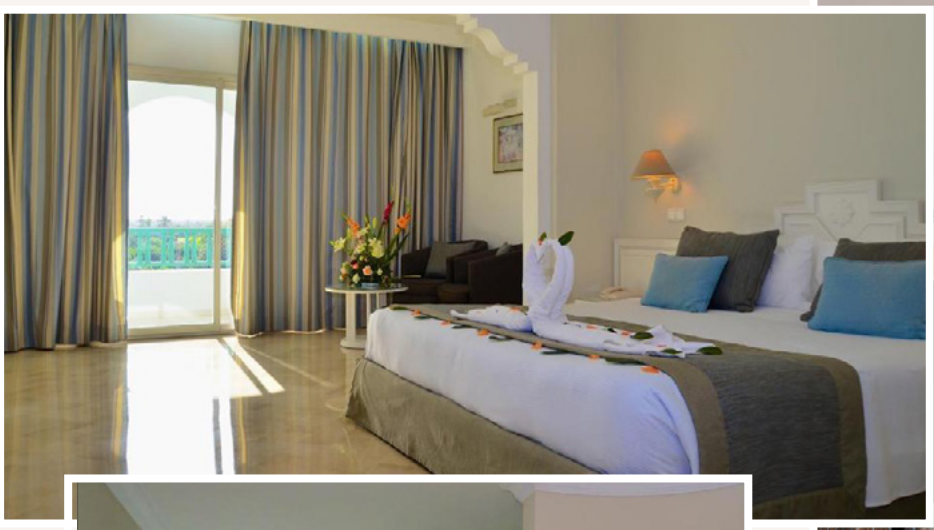
However, choosing a hotel should not depend solely on its classification or promotional photographs. The actual guest experience may vary according to room category, location and the services included in the reservation.

Al Rehla Perspective

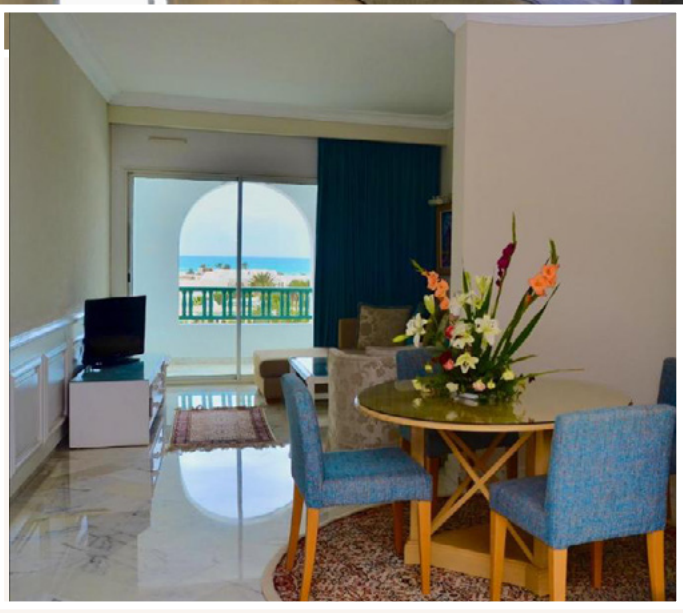
Royal Garden Palace's tourism appeal lies in its combination of a coastal setting and relatively convenient access to Djerba's attractions, although it offers a different experience from staying within the island's historic neighbourhoods.

Before booking, travellers are advised to compare the final price after taxes, cancellation conditions, included meals and airport transfer costs to determine the overall value of their stay.









Abu Dhabi's Archaeological Heritage Inspires Contemporary Designs Through Al Hosn Emerging Talent Programme

The Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi connects archaeological heritage with creative industries through a programme running until November 19, aiming to develop products inspired by the emirate's history.



Abu Dhabi – UAE | Al Rehla

The Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi (DCT Abu Dhabi) is continuing its Al Hosn Emerging Talent Programme 2026 under the theme "Traces of Abu Dhabi," bringing together archaeological research and contemporary design to help emerging creatives develop products inspired by the emirate's history and cultural collections.

Running until November 19, 2026, at Qasr Al Hosn, the programme forms part of initiatives designed to introduce young designers to local heritage and encourage them to incorporate its distinctive elements into contemporary creations.

From Archaeological Artefacts to Contemporary Design

The programme focuses on exploring visual and craftsmanship traditions associated with Abu Dhabi's history, encouraging participants to study heritage sites and cultural collections while discovering the stories behind archaeological objects and traditional production techniques.

Its activities include research sessions, workshops and specialised mentorship, supporting participants as they develop initial concepts into design prototypes, with particular attention to materials, manufacturing techniques and practical production possibilities.

What distinguishes the initiative is its approach to heritage as a source of inspiration for new creations, rather than





simply reproducing historical forms or using traditional motifs without their cultural context.

Qasr Al Hosn as a Starting Point

Qasr Al Hosn, one of Abu Dhabi's most prominent historic landmarks, provides a fitting setting for the programme, preserving important evidence of the city's social, architectural and urban development.

The site is part of a wider cultural environment that includes the House of Artisans, which introduces visitors to traditional Emirati crafts and production techniques.

This setting enables participants to explore the relationship between heritage objects and the materials used to create them, before considering how these elements might be reinterpreted through contemporary design.

No confirmed commercial sales figures or financial values for manufacturing contracts associated with products developed during the current edition have been announced.

Al Rehla Perspective | Can Souvenirs Become Part of the Museum Experience?

Museum and heritage-site shops can extend the visitor experience when they offer products directly connected to a destination's history, collections and traditional craftsmanship.

Rather than purchasing a conventional souvenir featuring a famous landmark, travellers can choose objects inspired by an archaeological story, a traditional design technique or a local craft, giving each purchase educational and cultural value alongside its commercial purpose.

The significance of the Al Hosn Emerging Talent Programme lies in exploring this connection between heritage and creative production.

Its actual commercial impact, however, will depend on whether the designs progress to manufacturing and retail distribution, and how visitors respond to the finished products.

Heritage Makers | Al Rehla

Aleppo's Laurel Soap Makers: A Craft Bearing Family Names and Taking Nine Months to Perfect

UNESCO inscribed traditional Aleppo soap-making on its Intangible Cultural Heritage List in 2024, recognising a craft whose skills continue to be passed down through generations.

Aleppo – Syria | Al Rehla

Inside the traditional soap factories of Aleppo, Syria, the production of laurel soap does not begin on automated assembly lines. Instead, it relies on generations of inherited craftsmanship, combining olive oil and laurel oil with traditional methods of cooking, cutting and drying that artisan families have preserved for centuries.

The significance of this industry extends far beyond producing a personal hygiene product. It forms part of Aleppo's economic and social identity, deeply connected to the history of its markets, craftsmen and family-run businesses.

In December 2024, UNESCO inscribed the Craftsmanship of Aleppo Ghar Soap on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, recognising the traditional knowledge and skills associated with its production.

From Laurel Berries to Soap Bars

Traditional production begins in autumn with the collection of wild laurel berries, which are boiled to extract their oil.

During winter, artisans combine olive oil and laurel oil with a natural alkaline substance. The ingredients are then cooked before the mixture is poured onto the floors of traditional soap factories to cool and solidify.

One of the most distinctive stages follows, when workers use large wooden shoes and cutting tools to divide the hardened mixture into individual soap blocks.

Each bar is manually stamped with the producing family's name, then stacked in towers or carefully arranged formations that allow air to circulate. The soap is left to dry for approximately six to nine months.

The family stamp is more than a trademark; it preserves the identity of the maker and the legacy of generations of craftsmanship.

Artisans Keeping the Tradition Alive

A report published by the Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) on October 19, 2026, highlighted Aleppo artisan Abdullah Hardan, who has more than 40 years of experience in soap-making, having inherited the craft from his father and grandfather.

Hardan participated in the Benan Handicrafts Exhibition in Saudi Arabia, demonstrating how Aleppo's traditional soap industry continues to maintain a presence beyond its local markets.

The report also featured Ammar Marwan Najjar, an entrepreneur specialising in laurel soap and natural products, who discussed the characteristics that laurel oil brings to traditional soap.

The continued work of these artisans





illustrates how the craft has preserved its fundamental knowledge while adapting product designs and presentation methods to contemporary markets.

Between Heritage and Modern Markets

Aleppo soap-making is no longer limited to local consumers. Its products have reached markets outside Syria, with variations in bar sizes and packaging designed to meet different customer preferences.

However, preserving the craft involves more than maintaining soap sales. It also requires passing down the skills of selecting oils, cooking ingredients, cutting soap blocks and managing the lengthy drying process to younger generations.

UNESCO documentation explains that children become familiar with the production process through their families, participating in the collection of raw materials and observing the different stages of soap-making.

A Tourism Value Beyond the Product

Laurel soap forms part of the artisanal heritage that defines Aleppo's identity, alongside its historic markets and traditional industries.

Understanding the story behind this craft offers travellers a deeper appreciation of the relationship between a product, the city where it is made and the families who have preserved its traditions.

Rather than viewing Aleppo soap simply as a commercial commodity, visitors can recognise it as a living expression of local history, craftsmanship and cultural continuity.

Protecting these artisanal skills and sustaining traditional production workshops remain essential to preserving this heritage, particularly amid the profound changes Aleppo has experienced in recent years.

ICAO Lifts Airspace Warnings for Libya After More Than a Decade, but European Restrictions Remain



Tripoli reports requests for 61,968 monthly overflights for the upcoming winter season, while the decision does not automatically lift European restrictions on Libyan airlines.

Tripoli – Libya | Al Rehla

Libya's Ministry of Transport has announced that the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has withdrawn previous aviation safety warnings concerning Libyan airspace, issued in 2013 and 2015, marking a significant development for the country's aviation sector after more than a decade of restrictions linked to security conditions.

According to the ministry, the decision was officially issued on October 23, 2026, and announced during a meeting of civil aviation officials in Doha, before Libyan authorities disclosed further details on October 26.

The development represents a step towards reintegrating Libyan airspace into international aviation networks. However, it does not mean that all scheduled flights have resumed or that restrictions on Libyan airlines have been removed.

International Overflight Requests Exceed 61,000 per Month

Alongside the announcement, the Ministry of Transport reported receiving requests for permits to use Libyan airspace during the 2026–2027 winter season, indicating that the number had reached 61,968 flights per month from November, compared with an average of approximately 2,000 flights per month during the previous season.

Authorities aim to capitalise on Libya's geographical position as an air corridor connecting Europe and Africa, potentially increasing overflight traffic and revenue from air navigation services.

However, these figures represent reported permit requests, not flights already operated or revenue actually generated.

European Restrictions Remain in Place



Despite the latest decision, Libyan airlines remain subject to European Union aviation safety restrictions.

The European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) also maintains its warning concerning operations in Libyan airspace, with the latest advisory remaining valid until the end of January 2027 unless revised earlier.

This distinction is important for airlines and travellers, as the withdrawal of warnings by an international organisation does not automatically override decisions made by other aviation regulators or the risk assessments conducted by individual carriers.

Resumption of Direct Flights Remains Uncertain

Libyan Minister of Transport Mohamed Al-Shahoubi said the ministry intends to promote Libyan airspace to international airlines and encourage the resumption of direct flights.

The return of international carriers remains dependent on their operational, security and commercial assessments, alongside the necessary regulatory approvals.

International air services currently remain limited to a number of regional connections, while no broad resumption of international tourist flights has been announced as a direct result of the decision.

Al Rehla Perspective | What Does the Decision Mean for Travellers?

For travellers, the withdrawal of the warnings represents a development in aviation regulation. However, it does not mean that Libya is now accessible through all airlines or that security and insurance-related restrictions have ended.

Before booking, passengers should verify which flights are actually operating, entry requirements, travel advisories issued by their home countries, and the availability of appropriate travel insurance.

For the tourism industry, an increase in aircraft flying over Libya is different from an increase in flights landing at its airports.

The former relates primarily to air navigation services, while the latter requires scheduled airline operations and actual passenger arrivals before measurable benefits can be reflected in hotel occupancy and tourism-related businesses.



"The ministry intends to promote Libyan airspace to international airlines and encourage the resumption of direct flights."

Mohamed Al-Shahoubi
Libyan Minister of Transportation

UNESCO celebrates audiovisual memory on October 27, with screenings in Istanbul and initiatives to preserve thousands of historical recordings from deterioration and loss.

Paris – France | Al Rehla

Under the theme "Your Window to the World," countries around the globe are marking World Day for Audiovisual Heritage today, Tuesday, October 27, 2026, through cultural events, film screenings and initiatives dedicated to preserving historical films and recordings that document the transformation of cities, communities and cultures across generations.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is highlighting the role of moving images and sound recordings in preserving collective memory, giving younger generations an opportunity to discover places, events and people from times they never experienced.

Istanbul Rediscovers Its Cinematic Heritage

In Istanbul, the celebrations coincide with the "Back on Screen" programme, taking place from October 22 to 27 in collaboration with Turkish film institutions, including Istanbul Modern.

The programme features a selection of restored Turkish films, including productions dating back to 1935, 1953 and 1983, offering audiences an opportunity to revisit significant chapters in Türkiye's cinematic and cultural history.

Istanbul Cinematheque is also marking the occasion with a screening of a restored version of Yalnızlar Rıhtımı (The Lonely Pier), released in 1959, highlighting the connection between preserving historic cinema and reintroducing classic films to contemporary audiences.

Preserving 45,000 Recordings in Somalia

As part of efforts to protect endangered archives, UNESCO has announced the continuation of initiatives to preserve and digitise approximately 45,000 analogue recordings held by Radio Mogadishu in Somalia.

The collection includes musical programmes, news broadcasts, and cultural and social recordings that reflect important aspects of the country's history and collective memory.

These efforts form part of broader initiatives to safeguard documentary heritage threatened by deterioration and the disappearance of equipment needed to play older recording formats.

International preservation initiatives also include efforts to rescue audiovisual collections in Zambia through conservation, restoration and digitisation techniques.

Historic Cities Through the Camera Lens

The tourism value of audiovisual heritage lies in its ability to reveal familiar destinations from different historical perspectives.

Historic films and photographs of Dubai Creek, Cairo's streets and Istanbul illustrate how architecture, transportation and traditional markets have evolved, documenting the transformation of cities over many decades.

These examples do not represent a joint exhibition featuring the three cities as part of this year's celebrations. Rather, they demonstrate how audiovisual archives can become valuable resources for exploring the history of destinations and enriching visitors' experiences.

UNESCO established World Day for Audiovisual Heritage in 2005 to raise awareness of the importance of preserving films, sound recordings and moving images, and ensuring their accessibility for future generations.

Al Rehla Perspective | When Archives Become Tourism Experiences

The value of historical films and photographs extends beyond preserving the memory of cities. They can also enrich the travel experience by allowing visitors to explore destinations at different points in their history and compare their former appearance with today's urban landscapes.

Museums and tourism authorities can use these materials to develop interactive exhibitions and guided tours that connect historical images with their original locations, allowing visitors to see how a place looked decades ago and understand the transformations it has undergone.

In cities such as Dubai, Cairo and Istanbul, audiovisual archives add a human dimension to landmarks, markets and streets that goes beyond conventional sightseeing, helping travellers understand how local communities have interacted with their surroundings over time.

The tourism opportunity lies in transforming these historical records from materials stored in archives into accessible cultural experiences for visitors, while respecting usage rights and preserving the authenticity of the original recordings.









Dubai Expands Al Ruwayyah Winter Camps Capacity by 120% to 600 Campsites and Opens Registration

50 caravan pitches and 10 fully equipped camps available for daily rental, as the new season begins in November with event spaces and opportunities for small businesses.

Dubai – UAE | Al Rehla

Dubai Municipality has opened registration for the 2026–2027 winter camping season in Al Ruwayyah, following a 120% increase in capacity to 600 campsites and the introduction of new accommodation options, including dedicated caravan pitches and fully equipped camps available for daily rental.

The expansion forms part of plans to develop Al Ruwayyah into a seasonal destination for desert camping, family recreation and community activities.

The season will run from November 1, 2026, to April 30, 2027, with seasonal campsite reservations available to UAE nationals through the municipality's official digital platforms.

New Options for Desert Camping

This season marks the return of double-sized campsites measuring up to 800 square metres, alongside standard campsites covering 400 square metres.

For the first time, Dubai Municipality has allocated 50 caravan pitches and introduced 10 fully equipped camps for daily rental, offering visitors an opportunity to experience desert camping without arranging and setting up their own facilities.

Caravan pitches and daily rental camps will operate under separate booking arrangements and applicable regulations. The municipality has not announced rental prices or confirmed eligibility requirements for all categories of users.

Winter Events and Seasonal Markets

As part of the destination's development, Dubai Municipality has allocated 10 spaces for winter events and gatherings, including family activities, community programmes, recreational experiences and seasonal markets.

Bader Anwahi, CEO of the Public Facilities Agency at Dubai Municipality, said the development of Al Ruwayyah aims to provide more diverse and flexible options





"We are working to develop the Al Ruwayyah area into a fully integrated winter destination, offering families a wider range of camping options and enhanced recreational facilities, while creating opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises to introduce new services and experiences that enrich the visitor experience and support the local economy."

Bader Anwahi
Chief Executive Officer of the Public Facilities Agency at Dubai Municipality

for families while enhancing facilities, services and community activities.

He also confirmed that the municipality is creating opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises to participate in providing food and beverage services, desert activities and recreational experiences.

However, the municipality has not disclosed the financial value of these opportunities or the number of businesses awarded operating contracts.

Seasonal Reservations for Three to Six Months

UAE nationals can reserve seasonal campsites for periods ranging from three to six months through Dubai Municipality's official winter camping portal or the DubaiNow application.

Permit holders may begin preparing their sites once the necessary approvals have been issued and campsite boundaries established.

They must comply with municipal regulations, including requirements concerning temporary fencing and the use of campsites exclusively for family and camping purposes.

Al Rehla Perspective | A Desert Escape Without Setting Up Camp

One of the most significant additions this season is the introduction of fully equipped camps for daily stays, alongside dedicated caravan pitches.

These facilities broaden the range of experiences compared with traditional seasonal camping, which generally requires visitors to prepare and equip their own sites.

However, access remains subject to booking conditions and eligibility requirements, which should be checked through official channels before planning a visit.

Dubai Municipality has not yet released visitor numbers, tourism spending figures or other operational data that would allow the economic impact of the expanded camping facilities to be assessed.



Expo 2030 Riyadh Tenders "Culture of Wisdom" Pavilion Designed for 20,000 Daily Visitors

The cultural and interactive pavilion will cover more than 12,000 square metres, featuring exhibition halls, three courtyards, dining and retail facilities. Contractors have until January 6, 2027, to submit their bids.

Riyadh – Saudi Arabia | Al Rehla

Expo 2030 Riyadh Company has issued a tender for the design and construction of the "Culture of Wisdom" Pavilion, located within the Humanity Zone of the World Expo site north of Saudi Arabia's capital. The pavilion is designed to accommodate at least 20,000 visitors per day during peak periods.

According to details published by MEED on October 26, 2026, the tender was issued on October 1, with January 6, 2027, set as the deadline for contractors to submit their bids.

The project forms part of preparations for Expo 2030 Riyadh, scheduled to take place from October 2030 to March 2031.

Three Courtyards and Interactive Experiences

The pavilion will occupy a plot of at least 12,293 square metres and feature three interconnected courtyards, exhibition halls across three levels, and an auditorium for presentations and events.

It will also include interactive visitor areas, food and beverage outlets, retail facilities, VIP spaces, offices and operational support services.

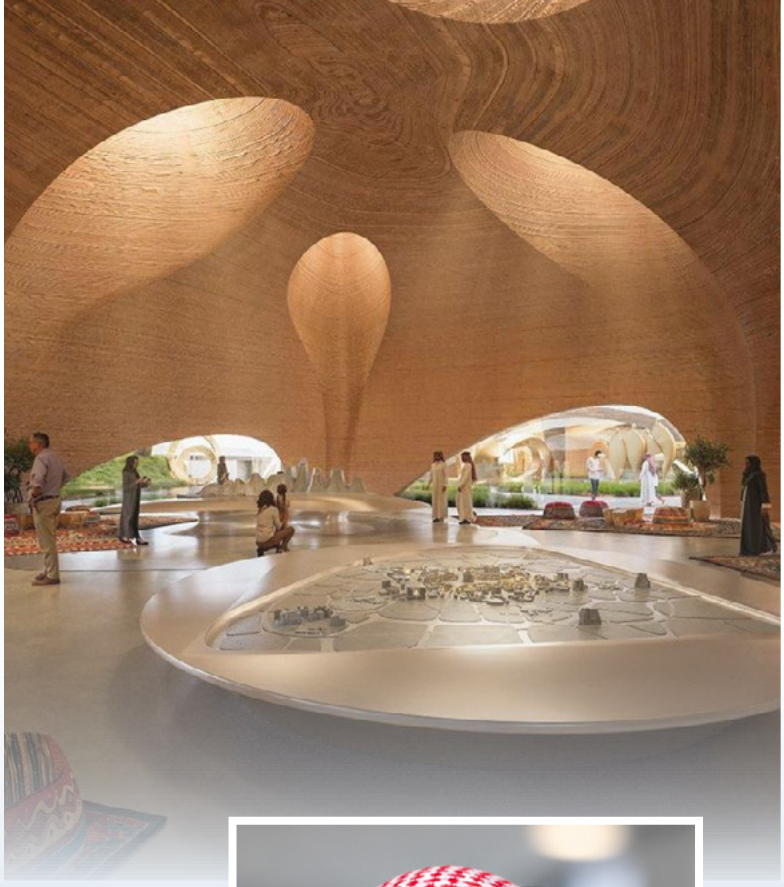
The design targets an average of approximately 15,000 visitors per day, with greater capacity during peak periods. The project will also seek LEED Gold sustainability certification.

Design, Construction and Exhibition Facilities

The tender covers the completion of the pavilion's design and construction, including electrical and mechanical works, safety and security systems, and technical infrastructure.

The scope also includes digital exhibition technologies, interactive experiences and audiovisual systems, while some elements





of the visitor experience will be finalised at later stages.

The company has not disclosed the contract value or announced the winning contractor, and construction of the pavilion itself has not yet been confirmed to have started.

Preparations for the World Expo

The tender forms part of the development programme for Expo 2030 Riyadh, whose site covers approximately six million square metres.

Earlier in October, the company's CEO, Eng. Talal Al-Marri, announced that more than 70% of the site's main utility corridors had been completed, alongside ongoing progress on infrastructure development.

Expo 2030 Riyadh is scheduled to run from October 1, 2030, to March 31, 2031, under the theme "Foresight for Tomorrow."

The event is expected to attract broad international participation, with organisers projecting more than 42 million visits throughout its six-month duration.

Al Rehla Perspective | What Will the Pavilion Offer Visitors?

The significance of the Culture of Wisdom Pavilion lies in bringing cultural exhibitions, interactive experiences and live presentations together within a single venue, making it part of the wider visitor experience planned for the World Expo.

However, the final exhibitions and cultural programmes have not yet been announced, and the pavilion's planned capacity should not be confused with actual visitor attendance.

The quality of the visitor experience will ultimately depend on the content approved for the pavilion, the efficiency of visitor circulation and the accessibility of its activities when Expo 2030 Riyadh opens.



Engineer Talal Al-Marri
Chief Executive Officer of the "Expo 2030 Riyadh" company

Algeria Unveils 14 Thermal Tourism Projects Under Development at Guelma Forum



2,366 additional beds and 1,155 targeted jobs, as more than 200 participants discuss investment in mineral springs and the development of wellness tourism facilities.

Guelma – Algeria | Al Rehla

Algeria's Minister of Tourism and Handicrafts, Houria Meddahi, announced that 14 thermal tourism projects are currently under development across the country, with a planned accommodation capacity of 2,366 beds and the potential to create 1,155 direct jobs.

The announcement came during the National Thermal Tourism Forum, held in Guelma on October 26–27, 2026.

The forum brought together more than 200 participants, including investors, industry experts, academics, representatives of thermal establishments and government officials, to discuss the development of mineral spring destinations and improvements to accommodation and wellness services.

From Traditional Baths to Integrated Tourism Facilities

Discussions focused on modernising thermal facilities in accordance with applicable standards, improving accommodation and reception services, developing workforce skills and encouraging projects combining wellness and recreational tourism.

Minister Meddahi emphasised the importance of improving service quality, strengthening public-private cooperation and protecting the natural resources on which thermal tourism depends.

Guelma is among Algeria's best-known thermal tourism destinations, with sites such as Hammam Debagh and Hammam Ouled Ali offering experiences that combine mineral springs, natural landscapes and local heritage.

Investment Opportunities and Operational Challenges

Zouheir Maouche, President of the Algerian Association for Tourism, Culture and Sustainable Development, called for transforming traditional thermal baths into integrated facilities offering accommodation and recreational services.

He also stressed the need to simplify administrative procedures, improve hospitality standards and strengthen professional training.

The forum addressed investment, financing and tourism marketing, alongside opportunities to incorporate thermal destinations into travel itineraries that showcase nearby natural and cultural attractions.

However, the total investment value and opening schedules for the 14 projects have not been disclosed.

The announced accommodation capacity and employment figures relate to projects still under development and should not be considered operational achievements.

Option Travel Adds 32 Foton Electric Minibuses to Its Tourist Transport Fleet in Egypt





Partnership with Infinity to provide EV charging solutions as the company operates a fleet of approximately 750 vehicles serving tourists, businesses and VIP clients.

Cairo – Egypt | Al Rehla

Egyptian transport company Option Travel has announced the addition of 32 electric minibuses manufactured by Chinese automaker Foton to its fleet, as part of its efforts to expand the use of electric vehicles in tourist transportation, corporate mobility and VIP services.

The announcement was made on October 26, 2026, alongside the signing of a memorandum of understanding and a partnership agreement with Infinity, a company specialising in electric vehicle charging solutions, to support the operation of the new fleet.

Option Travel has not disclosed the purchase value or financing arrangements for the vehicles, nor has it specified their intended tourist routes or the date they will enter commercial service.

A Fleet of 750 Vehicles Serving Tourism and Business

Option Travel has operated in the Egyptian market for approximately 20 years. According to its published figures, the company has a fleet of around 500 buses of various sizes and 250 passenger cars.

Its services include tourist transportation, business and VIP transfers, employee transportation for companies and institutions, and mobility services for conferences and exhibitions.

Mohamed Kamel, Chairman and Managing Director of Option Travel, explained that introducing electric vehicles forms part of the company's efforts to modernise its fleet and improve customer services.

Partnership to Develop Charging Infrastructure

Under the announced partnership, Infinity aims to provide charging solutions to support the operation of the new electric vehicles.

"The introduction of electric vehicles is part of efforts to modernise the fleet and enhance the services provided to customers."

Mohamed Kamel
Chairman and Managing Director, Option Travel

However, neither company has disclosed the number or locations of charging stations or the financial value of the partnership.

Charging infrastructure is particularly important for tourist transportation, where operational efficiency depends on journey schedules, daily travel distances and vehicle availability for organised tours and group transfers.

Egypt Uncovers Weni's Tomb in Saqqara, Along with Rare Wooden Statues and Bronze Tools



Inscriptions reveal senior positions held during the Old Kingdom, while skeletal analysis offers insights into the tomb owner's life and health more than 4,000 years ago.

Saqqara – Egypt | Al Rehla

Egypt's Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities announced on October 26, 2026, the discovery of an inscribed tomb belonging to a prominent official named Weni, who lived during the Old Kingdom.

The discovery was made near the funerary complex of King Merenre in Saqqara by an Egyptian archaeological mission affiliated with the Supreme Council of Antiquities.

The excavation uncovered a mudbrick mastaba containing several burial shafts, including one leading to an inscribed burial chamber documenting Weni's administrative and religious titles.

Archaeologists also discovered two wooden statues and bronze tools whose original functions remain under investigation.

Inscriptions Reveal the Status of a Royal Official

Located northwest of King Merenre's pyramid, the tomb contains inscriptions recording several titles held by Weni, including Mayor, Sem Priest, Overseer of Every Royal Apron, Treasurer of the House of the North, Sole Companion and Lord of the City of Elkab

Dr. Hisham El-Leithy, Secretary-General of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, explained that the discovery provides new information about funerary architecture, religious practices and the social and administrative standing of senior officials during the Old Kingdom.

Wooden Statues and Mysterious Bronze Tools

Inside a vaulted chamber above the burial chamber, archaeologists found two small wooden statues depicted in an unusual worshipping posture.

The burial shaft also contained bronze tools that researchers believe may have been used for medical purposes.

However, the tomb inscriptions provide no evidence that Weni was a physician, and further research is underway to determine the tools' functions and their connection to the tomb owner.

The mission also uncovered a false door belonging to a woman named Sekhet Nebty, who held the title Priestess of Hathor, offering additional evidence of women's religious roles in ancient Egypt.

What Weni's Remains Reveal

Preliminary skeletal examinations indicate that Weni was over 50 years old when he died.

The analysis identified advanced dental and surrounding tissue problems, along with physical indicators consistent with repeated bodily strain.

Archaeologists are continuing architectural, archaeological and scientific investigations to better understand the tomb and its different phases of use.



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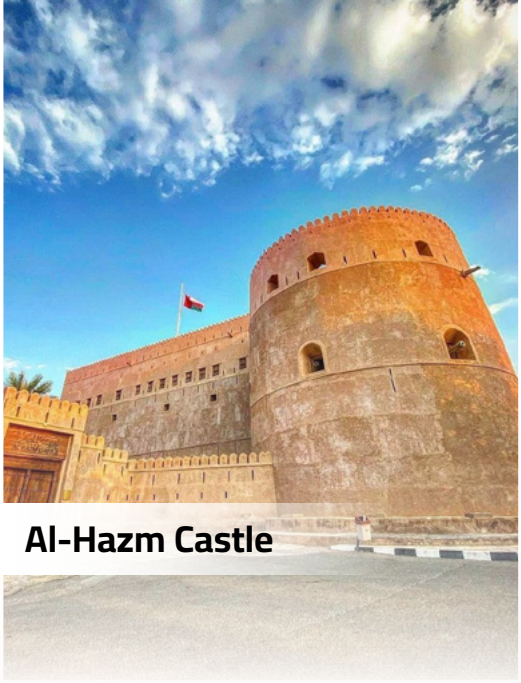
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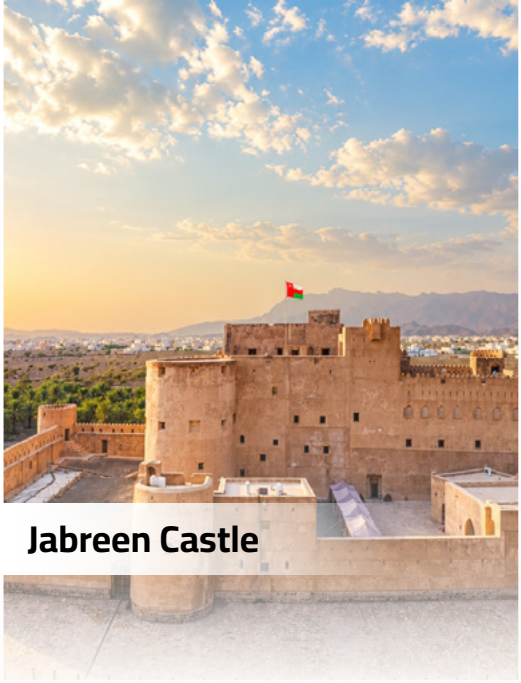
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Bait Al Khubaib Castle



Al-Hazm Castle



Jabreen Castle

Three Omani Forts Added to the Arab Register of Architectural and Urban Heritage

Jabreen, Al Hazm and Bait Al Khubaib receive new Arab heritage recognition, highlighting three chapters of Oman's architectural history across Al Dakhiliyah, South Al Batinah and North Al Sharqiyah.

Muscat – Oman | Al Rehla

Three historic landmarks in the Sultanate of Oman have been added to the Arab Register of Architectural and Urban Heritage: Jabreen Fort, Al Hazm Fort and Bait Al Khubaib Fort. The announcement followed the 11th meeting of the Arab Observatory for Architectural and Urban Heritage, held in Cairo from October 25 to 27, 2026.

Oman's Ministry of Heritage and Tourism confirmed that the registration, approved on October 26, forms part of ongoing efforts to document and preserve historic landmarks while highlighting the artistic and architectural characteristics that distinguish Omani heritage within the wider Arab cultural landscape.

Jabreen: A Palace of Learning and Governance

In the Wilayat of Bahla, in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, Jabreen Fort stands as a remarkable example of architectural development during the Ya'aruba dynasty in the second half of the 17th century.

Built during the reign of Imam Bil'arab bin Sultan Al Ya'rubi, the fort served residential, administrative, defensive and educational purposes.

It is distinguished by its intricately decorated wooden ceilings and impressive interior chambers, particularly the Sun and Moon Hall, alongside geometric and floral motifs that reflect the sophistication of traditional Omani architecture and craftsmanship.

Al Hazm: Defensive Architecture and Hidden Passages

Al Hazm Fort, located in the Wilayat of Rustaq in South Al Batinah Governorate, dates back to 1708, during the reign of Imam Sultan bin Saif II.

The fort is renowned for its massive wooden gates, underground tunnels and internal passageways, as well as its stone ceilings, towers and defensive features that illustrate traditional Omani fortification techniques.

Visitors can explore the fort's historical rooms, exhibits and architectural elements to gain insight into the military, educational and administrative functions of fortified buildings in Oman.

Bait Al Khubaib: Preserving the Heritage of Al Mudhaibi

In the Wilayat of Al Mudhaibi, North Al Sharqiyah Governorate, Bait Al Khubaib Fort joins the two better-known landmarks, bringing wider recognition to a lesser-known historical site.

Situated on a hill in the Al Khubaib quarter, the fort forms part of an area with archaeological sites and landmarks associated with traditional settlement patterns, local architecture and community life.

Its inclusion highlights the importance of documenting heritage sites connected to the collective memory of local communities, alongside the country's more prominent castles and forts.



Qatar Airways and WestJet Expand Air Connectivity Between Doha and Canada Through Codeshare Agreement

14 weekly flights to Toronto and Montreal, with the partnership offering access to additional Canadian cities through connecting itineraries.

Doha – Qatar | Al Rehla

Qatar Airways and Canadian airline WestJet announced a reciprocal codeshare agreement on October 26, 2026, expanding travel options between Doha and Canada and allowing passengers to reach additional destinations through connecting flights operated by the two carriers.

The announcement coincided with Qatar Airways increasing its direct services to Canada from 12 to 14 weekly flights, effective October 25, offering daily flights to both Toronto and Montreal.

Nine Additional Canadian Destinations

Under the agreement, Qatar Airways will place its QR code on selected WestJet-operated flights to nine Canadian cities: Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Halifax, Ottawa, Regina, Saskatoon, St. John's and Winnipeg.

In return, WestJet will place its code on Qatar Airways' direct flights to Doha, with plans to expand the partnership to additional destinations in the future.

Seamless Booking and Baggage Transfers

The partnership enables eligible passengers to book connecting journeys on a single ticket, benefit from coordinated check-in procedures and have their baggage transferred to their final destination, subject to booking conditions.

Eligible routes will also offer opportunities to earn rewards through the WestJet Rewards programme.

Ticket sales began on October 26, while codeshare operations are scheduled to commence on November 2, 2026.

Al Rehla Perspective | What Does the Agreement Mean for Travellers?

The partnership gives passengers departing from Doha more options to reach Canadian cities not served directly by Qatar Airways, without having to arrange separate bookings for each flight.

It also makes it easier for travellers from Canada to reach Doha and connect to Qatar Airways' global network of more than 170 destinations.

However, the codeshare agreement does not mean Qatar Airways is launching new nonstop services to the nine Canadian cities. The domestic connecting flights covered by the partnership will be operated by WestJet.

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