

Exploring Jeddah's Corniche, Al Balad; where waves meet history

- A Monitor Desk Report

Date: 19 April, 2025



Dhaka: Stretching over 30 kilometers along the shimmering Red Sea, the Jeddah Corniche is not just a seaside promenade—it is a lifestyle. With its blend of sculpture parks, cycling paths, interactive fountains, and oceanfront cafes, it has transformed into one of Saudi Arabia's most iconic public spaces.

Families gather here at sunset to enjoy the cool breeze, children race their bikes down the designated lanes, and young couples stroll by the water, the city skyline glowing behind them. The Corniche has long been a symbol of Jeddah's openness—a literal edge where the city meets the world.



Shooting water over 300 meters into the sky, King Fahd Fountain is Jeddah's iconic landmark—best admired as it glows against the night sky

Not far from the Al Rahma Mosque, famously built on stilts above the sea, visitors can pause at one of many contemporary sculptures scattered along the coast. These art pieces—some gifts from international artists during the city's early days of expansion—symbolize Jeddah's role as a cultural melting pot, historically welcoming pilgrims, traders, and travelers through its ports.

Adding to this modern energy is the Jeddah Yacht Club and Marina, a sleek waterfront development that blends luxury and leisure. Here, yachts bob gently in the harbor, while locals and visitors sip coffee in seaside lounges or prepare to set off for diving trips and Red Sea cruises. The boat club reflects Jeddah's growing maritime culture and its deepening connection to the sea.



Gracefully resting over the sea, the Floating Mosque offers a serene place of worship with waves gently lapping beneath its pillars

The North Corniche, particularly near the Jeddah Waterfront, is now a hotspot for both locals and tourists. It is part of the Vision 2030 transformation, giving the city a modern facelift while preserving its laid-back coastal charm. From high-end restaurants with panoramic sea views to modest tea vendors brewing karak under palm trees, it is a space where luxury meets simplicity.

Time travel in Al Balad

Step into Al Balad, and you are in another world. A UNESCO World Heritage site, Al Balad is the historic heart of Jeddah, founded in the 7th century. With coral-stone buildings, intricate wooden latticed windows (mashrabiyyas), and spice-scented souks, it offers a sensory dive into the past.

The district is a living museum. Here, you will find the Naseef House, once a palace for a prominent merchant family, now repurposed into a cultural center. There are small art galleries hidden within alleyways, where modern Saudi artists reinterpret heritage through contemporary lenses.



Wander through the timeless alleys of Al Balad, where coral-stone homes and wooden balconies whisper stories of Jeddah's centuries-old past

Al Balad is not frozen in time—it breathes. The ancient mosques still hold daily prayers. Bakeries tucked into old walls churn out fresh samoon bread before dawn. Residents greet each other across balconies, maintaining traditions older than the nation itself.

In recent years, restoration efforts have revitalized many of Al Balad's crumbling buildings, turning them into boutique hotels, cafés, and artisan shops. The change is gentle, respectful—designed to preserve

the soul while inviting new eyes to appreciate it.

During Ramadan nights, the district transforms. Lanterns light the streets, food stalls pop up selling sambousek and mutabbaq, and the air is filled with laughter, oud music, and the call to prayer. It's a time when the spirit of the community is most palpable.

One city, two Souls

The beauty of Jeddah lies in its dual identity. The Corniche, wide and breezy, shows the city's modern ambitions, its yearning for progress and openness. Al Balad, with its shadows and textures, reflects its depth and wisdom, the layered stories of generations.

Together, they form a portrait of a city in motion—anchored by tradition, inspired by the future. Whether you are sipping Arabic coffee by the sea or wandering through the echoing footsteps of ancient traders, Jeddah speaks in many voices, but with one heartbeat.

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