

Saudi Arabia to unveil new destinations at WTM 2024

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Riyadh: Saudi Arabia is poised for a dynamic return to the World Travel Market (WTM) London 2024, bringing a core delegation of 61 key stakeholders.

The delegation will showcase the country's remarkable growth in tourism while strengthening trade partnerships within the industry.

The Saudi delegation will be led by His Excellency Ahmed Al-Khateeb, Minister of Tourism and Chairman of Saudi Tourism Authority (STA), accompanied by Fahd Hamidaddin, the CEO of Saudi Tourism Authority and leaders from the wider Saudi tourism ecosystem, as well as prominent industry partners.

The delegation includes key entities such as the Ministry of Tourism, the Tourism Development Fund, ASFAR, Cruise Saudi, Saudia, Riyadh Air, Red Sea Global, Diriyah Company, the Royal Commission for AlUla, and

visionary projects like NEOM. Cultural and entertainment highlights, including Riyadh Season, MDL Beast, and Qiddiya will also be represented, showcasing Saudi's diverse offerings and investment in tourism innovation. For the first time at WTM, 17 international and local hotel brands will join the Saudi delegation, making this the largest number of hotel partners in the Saudi Pavilion.

Across the three-day event, the Saudi delegation will unveil significant announcements and partnerships that showcase Saudi's future-forward approach to tourism. Delegates will also host bilateral meetings and participate in key speaking engagements and networking opportunities, reflecting a tourism sector surpassing records with Saudi welcoming over 100 million tourists seven years ahead of target.

On 5 November, visitors are invited to gather at the Saudi Pavilion at 11:30 AM for a special announcement delivered by His Excellency Ahmed Al-Khateeb, where he will reveal a new destination in Saudi. Ahead of this reveal, Fahd Hamidaddin, CEO and board member of STA, will deliver opening remarks at 10:00 AM at the Yellow Theatre to welcome all delegates and visitors to WTM 2024.

The Saudi Pavilion offers an immersive journey through Saudi's authentic cultural heritage and diverse landscapes, featuring traditional music and dancing, Saudi coffee, a mocktail experience, date carts, a Saudi café offering a taste of local cuisine, plus demonstrations of traditional Saudi crafts from different regions - such as basket weaving and creating vibrant flower crowns. Also this year, the Saudi Pavilion will feature some new and engaging activations.

Guests are invited to experience the country's unique Sun and Sea destinations on a virtual jet ski ride through the Saudi Red Sea, and dance to an on-stand collaboration with MDLBEAST - the organisers behind the biggest music festival in the Middle East - with DJ Leen an emerging Saudi female DJ playing on stand. For sports fans, there will be a thrilling Saudi PRO League activation. Finally, through interactive technology, visitors to the stand will be able to discover the country's winter tourism products across its expansive geography, diverse terrain, and natural wonders.

Saudi is ready to engage with visitors to the stand and give them a true glimpse of the Heart of Arabia. The stand has been designed to

accommodate trade partners, with a dedicated space for business partners where they will find all of the information they need along with growth opportunities. And, they will be able to effortlessly register as trade partners using a QR code. Special kiosks will display Saudi's advancements in tourism technology, while the Saudi map and activities calendar and a Saudi Expert guide will show trade partners destination insights through VR.

Saudi's presence at WTM highlights the growing interest from European and American travellers in Saudi as a winter sun destination since the launch of "Where Winter Lights Up", the second phase of the cinematic global Saudi tourism campaign "This Land is Calling".

The Winter campaign encourages travelers from around the world to embark on a journey of discovery across several destinations: Riyadh, Jeddah, AlUla, and the Red Sea, and immerse themselves in Saudi's packed year-round events calendar - Riyadh Season, AlUla Festival and Events, Jeddah Calendar, Diriyah Season, the Dakar Rally, Spanish Football Cup and Italian Football Cup, and Formula 1 Saudi Arabian Grand Prix in Jeddah.

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