

ضيوف البيت
Al Bait Guests

لخدمات الحجاج Pilgrims Services

What to Expect on Your Hajj Journey

2026 • 1447





Understanding the journey ahead

Hajj is a journey of profound spiritual significance, accompanied by considerable practical and logistical demands.

For many pilgrims, particularly those undertaking Hajj for the first time, the experience can feel unfamiliar and complex.

With decades of experience supporting pilgrims, Al Bait Guests recognise that clarity and preparation play a vital role in enabling a smooth and meaningful Hajj journey.

This guide has been developed to address common questions, outline practical considerations, and set appropriate expectations, helping pilgrims approach Hajj with confidence and peace of mind.

It provides a clear and structured overview of what pilgrims can generally expect throughout the journey: from preparation before travel, to departure from your home country and arrival into the Kingdom, the main rites of Hajj, and finally the return home.

While individual itineraries and services may vary depending on package type, the stages outlined reflect the standard flow and practical realities of Hajj as experienced year after year. Pilgrims are encouraged to read this guide carefully and refer back to it as needed in the lead-up to departure. It is intended to complement, rather than replace, the briefings, updates, and guidance provided through Al Bait Guests' official support channels.

Before reviewing the practical details outlined in this guide, it is helpful to be mindful of several core realities that are an inherent part of the Hajj experience.

Core realities of the Hajj Experience



Patience Is Essential

Hajj naturally requires patience in many forms. Long waiting times, delayed movements, queues, crowd control measures, and changes to schedules are a normal part of managing the safe movement of millions of pilgrims.

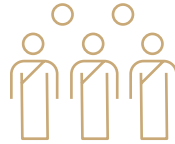
These realities are not indicators of poor organisation, but a reflection of the scale and complexity of Hajj. Approaching each stage with calmness, restraint, and trust allows pilgrims to navigate the journey with greater ease, remembering that patience itself carries immense spiritual value.



Heat and Physical Strain

Hajj currently takes place in extremely high temperatures, which can place significant physical demands on the body. Pilgrims should expect exposure to heat, extended periods of walking, and general physical fatigue.

Maintaining hydration, allowing time for rest, following medical advice, using sun protection, and pacing oneself are essential to sustaining health and wellbeing throughout the journey.



Heavy Crowds & Long Waiting Times

Large crowds are present throughout Hajj, particularly in airports, hotels, transport hubs, the Haram, Mina, Arafah, Muzdalifah, and the Jamarat.

Movement is often slow, controlled, and carefully regulated by the authorities. At times, pilgrims may find themselves standing, waiting, or moving gradually with the crowd for extended periods.

Maintaining composure and awareness in these environments is essential for personal and collective safety, and being mentally prepared for this reality helps prevent unnecessary frustration or fatigue.

Core realities of the Hajj Experience

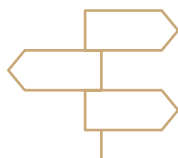


Staying With the Group

Group-based movement plays an important role in maintaining safety, coordination, and access to support. Remaining with one's assigned group is particularly important at key transition points, including:

- ◆ Airports
- ◆ Arrival into Saudi Arabia
- ◆ Transfers between locations
- ◆ Boarding and disembarking coaches, trains, or the metro
- ◆ Movements between the Hajj sites: Mina, Arafah, Muzdalifah, and the Jamaraat

In crowded environments, separation from the group can lead to unnecessary distress, delays, and safety concerns. Al Bait Guests representatives and group leaders are positioned to guide and support pilgrims most effectively when the group remains together.



Guidance and Flexibility

Throughout the journey, guidance is provided by Al Bait Guests representatives, group leaders, and official authorities to ensure safety, coordination, and compliance with Hajj regulations.

At times, arrangements or timings may change in response to crowd management requirements or official directives. Flexibility, cooperation, and understanding are therefore an integral part of the Hajj experience.

Core realities of the Hajj Experience



What We Expect from Pilgrims

Hajj is a sacred journey that we undertake together, and we kindly ask all pilgrims to be mindful of the collective nature of this experience.

Travelling as a group requires patience, respect, and a sincere effort to maintain harmony and a spirit of brotherhood and sisterhood. Please be considerate of others' needs and sensitivities, and refrain from offering unsolicited opinions, particularly on matters of Fiqh or politics. Daily reminders will be given on the rites of Hajj, with opportunities to ask questions and seek guidance.

Al Bait Guests' guides are available at all times for emergencies, and in any unforeseen circumstances, we ask that instructions are followed carefully, as decisions will always be made with the well-being of the whole group in mind.

At the same time, this is your personal act of worship. Make the most of every moment by focusing on your intention, your supplications, and your connection with Allah. While we are here to facilitate the journey - by Allah's permission - strength, ease, and success ultimately come from Allah alone.



A Word from our Medical team: Health, Safety, and Wellbeing

“Our mission is to support a safe, healthy, and spiritually fulfilling pilgrimage by promoting a culture of proactive care, physical resilience, and personal responsibility.

Hajj places unique demands on the body, particularly during the 2026 season when temperatures may reach 50°C, and preparation is therefore essential.

Pilgrims are encouraged to anticipate these challenges through appropriate health screening and planning, to equip themselves with a personal health kit containing essential first-aid items and prescribed medication, and to approach the rites of Hajj at a sustainable pace that respects the body’s limits.

Equal importance is placed on maintaining a positive and patient mindset, recognising that mental resilience is as vital as physical wellbeing in managing large crowds and challenging conditions.

The body has a right to be adequately hydrated, properly nourished, and sufficiently rested, and by honouring these needs, we endeavour to help pilgrims complete their journey with strength, dignity, and ease.”



A Word from our Scholars: Preparing for an accepted Hajj

“Hajj is one of the greatest and most rewarding acts of worship in Islam. It is also among the most unique, as for most people it brings together both physical and financial sacrifice, requiring travel and movement between sacred sites over several days. Hajj demands time, effort, patience, and resilience, and for this reason it is only obligated once in a lifetime.

Due to its significance and challenges, proper preparation is essential to maximise the chances of an accepted Hajj. Part of that preparation is understanding what to expect; both from an Islamic and a practical perspective, and equipping oneself with the knowledge needed to benefit fully from the journey and navigate the unexpected.

The immense reward of Hajj is captured in the words of the Prophet ﷺ :

‘Whoever performs Hajj and does not commit any lewd act or sin will return as they were on the day their mother gave birth to them.’

(Al-Bukhari)



Travel, Accommodation, and the Days of Hajj



Before Departure: Preparation, Guidance, and Support

The Hajj journey begins well before the day of travel. In the weeks and months leading up to departure, pilgrims are supported through:

- ◆ Pre-departure webinars and seminars covering practical, medical, and general guidance
- ◆ Written guidance relating to documentation, vaccinations, packing, and travel requirements
- ◆ Ongoing updates and reminders shared via official Telegram channels
- ◆ Access to Al Bait Guests representatives for questions, clarification, and reassurance
- ◆ Guidance relating to the Nusuk platform and booking process where applicable. By the time of departure, pilgrims should feel informed, prepared, and aware of the practical realities of the journey ahead.



Day of Departure

On the day of departure, organisation and coordination are prioritised to ensure a smooth start to the journey. Pilgrims should ensure they arrive early to the airport as instructed by their guides. Bear in mind that online check-in and pre-allocation of seats is not available on group flights.

For those pilgrims travelling on group flights, at the airport,

Pilgrims can expect:

- ◆ A designated meeting point with Al Bait Guests representatives. Please meet the representative and introduce yourself before you check-in.
- ◆ Group check-in support and guidance
- ◆ Distribution of identification cards, luggage tags, and essential information
- ◆ Clear instructions regarding boarding and onward travel
- ◆ The opportunity to meet fellow group members

Pilgrims are advised to follow group instructions closely and remain patient, as airport processes during Hajj travel periods can take longer than usual.

Travel, Accommodation, and the Days of Hajj



Arrival in Saudi Arabia (Jeddah or Madinah Airport)

Upon arrival, pilgrims should expect a busy airport environment, particularly during peak arrival periods close to the days of Hajj.

The arrival process typically includes:

- ◆ Immigration procedures, during which health authorities may request vaccination documentation
- ◆ Baggage collection
- ◆ Waiting in the baggage reclaim area until the entire group is ready to depart.
- ◆ Pilgrims on group flights should avoid leaving the baggage area independently, even after collecting their luggage, as doing so can result in separation from the group.

If any baggage is missing:

- ◆ Lost luggage forms should be completed before leaving the luggage collection area.
- ◆ The accompanying guide must be informed immediately

Boarding transport from the airport may feel busy and disorganised at times. Buses may occasionally be shared with pilgrims from other groups, and delays are common while procedures are completed. Pilgrims are asked to remain patient and follow instructions from guides and the Al Bait Guests airport team.

Approximate transfer times:

- ◆ Jeddah Airport to Makkah: 2–3 hours (traffic dependent)
- ◆ Madinah Airport to Madinah hotels: approximately 40 minutes



Inter-City Travel

All pilgrims travelling with Al Bait Guests will utilise the Haramain High-Speed Railway for travel between Makkah and Madinah.



Haramain High-Speed Railway

The Haramain Railway is a high-speed rail line in Saudi Arabia connecting Makkah and Madinah via Jeddah, offering fast, safe, and efficient travel. This modern rail service significantly reduces travel time and minimises fatigue. The journey time between Makkah and Madinah is approximately 2h 20m.

Pilgrims can expect:

- ◆ Pre-allocated seating
- ◆ On-time departure
- ◆ A smooth and efficient journey
- ◆ Significantly reduced exposure to road congestion

Guides will provide clear instructions regarding meeting points, luggage handling, and boarding procedures.

Travel, Accommodation, and the Days of Hajj



Transport During the Days of Hajj (Mashaer Metro & Coaches)

Transport during the days of Hajj is a major logistical operation managed through official systems designed to move large numbers of pilgrims safely between the sacred sites. Movement is structured, scheduled, and may change at short notice due to crowd conditions and official directives.

Pilgrims should be prepared for transport during this period to differ from standard travel expectations. Waiting times are common, and patience and cooperation are essential. Al Bait Guests representatives and group leaders will provide clear instructions throughout all movements to ensure orderly group coordination.

Movement between Mina, Arafah, Muzdalifah, and the Jamarat typically takes place using the Mashaer Metro for pilgrims accommodated in the Majar Al-Kabsh camp. Those accommodated in the Muaisim camp will travel by coach.



Mashaer Metro

The Mashaer Metro is a dedicated rail system used exclusively during Hajj to transport pilgrims between Mina, Arafah, and Muzdalifah for pilgrims staying in the Majar Al-Kabsh camp.

Pilgrims can expect:

- ◆ Walking 20-30 minutes to and from the metro stations
- ◆ Movement in groups during allocated time slots
- ◆ High passenger volumes, particularly during peak movement periods
- ◆ Significant periods of waiting at stations and controlled boarding procedures
- ◆ Standing during parts of the journey due to crowd density
- ◆ Supervised group movement to and from stations

Pilgrims are advised to remain with their group and follow instructions closely.

Travel, Accommodation, and the Days of Hajj



Coach Travel

Travelling by coach during the days of the Hajj rites is specifically for pilgrims staying in the Mu'aisim camp.

Pilgrims can expect:

- ◆ The coaches to operate as shuttles between the Hajj sites. There will be little walking involved in boarding buses and moving from one site to another.
- ◆ Significant delays and waiting at each point whilst waiting for your allocated slot
- ◆ Delays due to the volume of pilgrims being transported during limited time frame
- ◆ Potential for (significant) road congestion



Important Guidance During Hajj Transport

During all movements in the days of Hajj, pilgrims are advised to:

- ◆ Remain with their assigned group at all times
- ◆ Follow group timings and instructions promptly
- ◆ Carry essential items in a small bag (water, medication, identification)
- ◆ Be patient and avoid rushing in crowded areas

Transport during Hajj is managed at scale, and schedules may change. Clear communication and experienced supervision are prioritised to ensure pilgrims move safely and confidently between each stage of the journey.



Hotels and Accommodation

Accommodation during Hajj operates under extreme pressure due to the volume of pilgrims. While hotels are selected carefully, service levels may differ from non-Hajj periods.

Pilgrims should expect:

- ◆ High hotel occupancy
- ◆ Busy public areas, particularly around prayer times
- ◆ Elevator congestion, sometimes requiring extended waiting
- ◆ Busy restaurant and dining areas
- ◆ Possible delays at check-in due to extremely high occupancy level and large number of check-ins and check-outs, especially on peak dates.

Room arrangements:

- ◆ Every effort will be made to keep families together, however there is a small chance that families may be split in rare cases, due to the limitations of the Nusuk booking system.
- ◆ As per hotel policy, in most 4 & 5 star hotels triple and quad rooms are configured by adding one or two extra rollaway beds

The Main Days of Hajj



Mina (8th–12th/13th Dhul-Hijjah)

Arriving in Mina marks the beginning of the rites of Hajj. Of all the Hajj sites, most of your time will be spent in Mina.

Pilgrims should expect:

- ◆ Shared tent accommodation allocated by authorities
- ◆ Segregated tents for men and women
- ◆ Very limited personal space, typically equivalent to the width of a single-bed mattress. Due to limited space, pilgrims are advised to take only essential belongings to Mina, no larger than a small rucksack.
- ◆ Mattresses, pillows, and basic bedding provided
- ◆ Air-conditioning
- ◆ Power supply and lighting
- ◆ Meals and refreshments provided throughout
- ◆ Sufficient provision of toilets, showers etc, however there may be queues at times. Cleanliness levels may vary due to volume of use



Arafah (9th Dhul-Hijjah)

Arafah is the most significant day of Hajj.

Pilgrims can expect:

- ◆ A full day dedicated primarily to supplication and reflection
- ◆ Shared tent accommodation allocated by authorities
- ◆ Segregated tents for men and women
- ◆ Basic facilities consistent with Mina
- ◆ Provision of hot meals and refreshments
- ◆ Despite air conditioning in the tents, it can get quite hot especially at midday
- ◆ Pilgrims are advised to remain in shaded areas and avoid unnecessary exposure to heat.

Departure from Arafah occurs after sunset.

The Main Days of Hajj



Muzdalifah (Night of 9th Dhul-Hijjah)

Upon leaving Arafah after sunset, pilgrims travel to Muzdalifah where they spend the night outdoors. Pilgrims will usually stay in Muzdalifah until Fajr.

Pilgrims should expect:

- ◆ No tents
- ◆ Resting on open ground
- ◆ Congestion and large crowds
- ◆ Limited toilet facilities

Pilgrims can expect:

- ◆ Significant walking distances from the Muaisim camp – approx. 1hr
- ◆ A shorter walking distance from the Majar al Kabsh camp – approx. 10-15mins
- ◆ Large crowds, especially at peak times
- ◆ Guided group timings for safety

Pilgrims unable to walk due to health or mobility concerns may utilise the Islamic concession of deputising another to perform the stoning on their behalf.



Stoning the Jamaraat

Stoning takes place on:

- ◆ 10 Dhul-Hijjah
- ◆ 11 and 12 Dhul-Hijjah
- ◆ Optional on 13 Dhul-Hijjah



After the Main Rites

Following completion of the core rites, the pace of the journey gradually eases.

Pilgrims can expect:

- ◆ Time for rest and recovery
- ◆ Completion of remaining acts of worship
- ◆ Continued guidance and communication
- ◆ Preparation for return travel

The Main Days of Hajj



Departure from Saudi Arabia (Jeddah or Madinah Airport)

Pilgrims should expect:

- ◆ Airport arrival approximately 6 hours before flight time
- ◆ Extremely busy airport conditions
- ◆ Extended check-in and waiting periods

Zamzam water

- ◆ Airlines permit a maximum of one 5 litre bottle per pilgrim
- ◆ Zamzam can be purchased at the airport prior to departure

Guides will provide clear instructions throughout the departure process.

Return Home

The return journey is coordinated with the same level of organisation as departure.



Conclusion

Hajj combines profound spiritual meaning with physical and logistical demands. While challenges are an inherent part of the journey, preparation and experienced guidance play a vital role in ensuring a smooth and meaningful experience.

This guide has been prepared to help pilgrims understand what to expect and approach the journey with confidence, clarity, and peace of mind.

We pray Allah facilitates an easy and accepted journey for us all.



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