



الهيئة الملكية لمحافظة العلا
Royal Commission for AlUla



Press release
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Resumption of direct flights between Paris and the ancient oasis of AlUla

From December 4th, SAUDIA will resume its direct flights between Paris and AlUla in Saudi Arabia with one flight per week.

Saudi Arabian Airlines (SAUDIA), with the Royal Commission for AlUla and the French Agency for the Development of AlUla (AFALULA) has announced the resumption of a weekly direct flight between Paris CDG airport and AlUla international airport every Sunday from December 4, 2022 to March 12, 2023. The route will allow French travelers to reach AlUla in only 5 hours, with all the comfort provided by the Boeing 787 "Dreamliner".

Announced as part of AlUla's participating in the World Travel Market, London this week, the route represents an incomparable opportunity for French travelers to immerse themselves in the desert city of AlUla, an ancient oasis located on the incense route with 7000 years of successive civilisations.

AlUla is a unique site that was home to some of the most important civilisations of the region - the Dadanites, the Lihyanites, the Nabataeans, and the Romans. Among the must-see, UNESCO World Heritage Site of Hegra, the southern capital of the Nabatean Empire, are many other archaeological sites dating back to the first millennium BCE. Beyond its rich heritage, AlUla also offers stunning natural landscapes, ochre sandstone canyons and amazing rock formations, basaltic plateaus and golden sands, and a lush green oasis stretching for miles running through the city.

French connections to AlUla are strong. The Dominican fathers and explorers Antonin Jaussen and Raphaël Savignac produced some of the earliest pictures of the region in 1909. Today teams of French archaeologists are working to uncover more AlUla's mysteries. French artists and musicians have also left their marks in the region in recent years with exceptional concerts and performances or unique art projects. AFALULA was set up as an inter-governmental partnership to support the development of AlUla sustainably and to protect its unique cultural and natural heritage.

Intrepid French travellers have been some of the first to explore the destination and the return of the Paris direct flight is another step reinforcing the strong links between the two nations.

The launch of the new direct route coincides with AlUla Moments, the calendar of events taking place in AlUla and featuring series of continuous festivals and major events. Among the upcoming events, the Ancient Kingdoms Festival will be launched for the first time and will offer visitors a sneak peek into two adjacent heritage oases to AlUla, Khaybar and Tayma, which both have a significant geological and historical heritage. December will see the return of Winter At Tantora, AlUla Moments' signature festival, offering the best in eclectic, surprising and cutting edge events.

Philip Jones, Chief Destination Management & Marketing Officer at RCU, comments, "*This flight adds to the increasing accessibility of AlUla to international visitors with easier and faster connections for travelers coming from France and from the neighbouring European countries. With new world-class accommodation on offer and an event calendar shaping up to be exceptional, all the factors are converging to make AlUla one of the hottest new destinations to discover right now.*"

Arved Von Zur Muhlen, Chief Commercial Officer at SAUDIA said: "*We are delighted to resume regular direct flights between Paris and AlUla, a move that will further enhance connections for visitors from France who are eager to experience everything this remarkable destination has to offer. The relaunch of the route comes as part of our continuing partnership with the Royal Commission of AlUla, and builds on the strong ties between our nations to create exciting opportunities for cultural exchange. As the 'Wings of Vision 2030', we look forward to welcoming guests from Europe to discover the Kingdom's authentic heritage, unique natural wonders, and world-class events.*"

Gérard Mestrallet, Executive President of AFALULA, added: "*This direct flight from Paris to AlUla enhances even more the relation between France and AlUla which is at the heart of AFALULA's mission. It will greatly ease the travel to AlUla for the increasing number of people coming from France either for professional reasons or leisure, all discovering this outstanding new destination.*"

SAUDIA operates 32 weekly roundtrip flights from AlUla to Riyadh, Jeddah, and Damman with a seat capacity of more than 4.4 thousand seats.

Guests from all over the world can book special rate packages in AlUla that include flights, accommodations, and activities through www.saudiaholidays.com

For more information, please visit: www.experiencealula.com

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About RCU (Royal Commission for AlUla)

The Royal Commission for AlUla (RCU) was established by Royal Decree in July 2017 to preserve and develop AlUla, a region with outstanding natural and cultural heritage, located in northwestern Saudi Arabia. The RCU's long-term plan takes a sensitive, sustainable, and responsible approach to urban and economic development in order to preserve the natural and historical heritage of the region, while making AlUla a privileged place where it is possible to live, work and visit. The plan encompasses numerous initiatives in the fields of archaeology, tourism, culture, education, and the arts, to address different priorities in economic diversification, empowerment of local communities and the preservation of heritage, as part of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 agenda.

About AFALULA (French Agency for the Development of AlUla)

Born from an intergovernmental agreement signed by France and Saudi Arabia in April 2018, the French Agency for the Development of AlUla (Afalula) was founded in Paris in July 2018. Afalula aims to support, in a spirit of coconstruction, its Saudi partner, the Royal Commission for AlUla (RCU), in the sustainable economic, touristic, and cultural development of AlUla, a region with an exceptional natural and cultural heritage located in the Northwest of Saudi Arabia. The agency's mission is to mobilize all French know-how and expertise and to bring together the best operators and companies in the fields of archaeology, museography, architecture, urban planning, tourism, hospitality, infrastructure, education, security,

agriculture, botany, and sustainable management of natural resources.

About Saudi Arabian Airlines (SAUDIA):

Saudi Arabian Airlines (SAUDIA) is the national flag carrier of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Established in 1945, the company has grown to become one of the Middle East's largest airlines.

SAUDIA has invested significantly in upgrading its aircraft and currently operates one of the youngest fleet. The airline serves an extensive global route network covering around 100 destinations across four continents, including all 28 domestic airports in Saudi Arabia.

A member of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and the Arab Air Carriers Organization (AACO), SAUDIA has also been a member airline in SkyTeam, the second largest alliance, since 2012.

The airline is ranked as a Global Five-Star Major Airline by the Airline Passenger Experience Association (APEX) and has been awarded Diamond status by APEX Health Safety powered by SimpliFlying in recognition of its comprehensive approach to safety during the pandemic.

Most recently, SAUDIA was named the Middle East's Fastest Growing Airline in 2022 by Brand Finance® and the World's Most Improved Airline in 2021 by Skytrax, the second time it has received this prestigious accolade.

For more information on Saudi Arabian Airlines, please visit www.saudia.com

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