

ALULA

# JOURNEY THROUGH TIME

ALULA, SAUDI ARABIA







# WELCOME

AlUla is an untold story, a land preserved by time, a breathtaking jewel of archaeological and cultural history. Discover its celestial desert landscape, its unique UNESCO World Heritage Site, its ancient legends and colourful stories. Be among the first to experience the spine-tingling, spiritual monumentality of AlUla. Feel humbled and alive in a landscape captured in time. Delight in Mother Nature's art, human ingenuity, and Arabian hospitality at its best.

AlUla is a place like no other,  
and now it is yours to experience.

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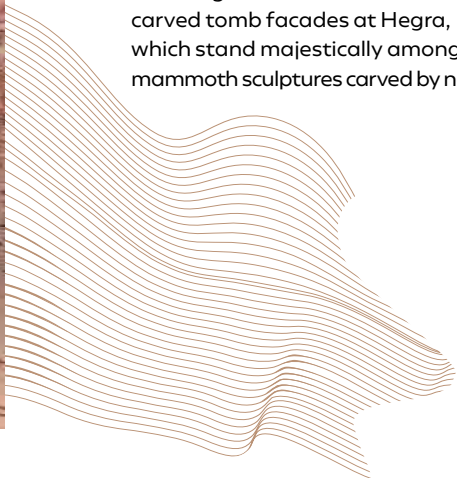






## COME DISCOVER A LAND OF LEGEND

An open-air museum the size of a country (22,561 km<sup>2</sup>), AlUla is certain to take your breath away. Located in northwest Saudi Arabia, on the original incense road and pilgrimage route to Makkah, this historical land is steeped in the immense beauty of the natural world, alongside the dramatic splendour of human creations. An ancient oasis in a desert valley, the site was a hub of trade and cultural exchange for millennia, and still bears witness to those who passed through. Golden sand stretches to the horizon, and rocky outcrops emerge from the desert's expanse. Thousands of tombs and burial places can be found in AlUla, including more than 100 intricately carved tomb facades at Hegra, which stand majestically among mammoth sculptures carved by nature.



# Unique Experiences

Float above ancient landscapes  
in a hot air balloon, ride an Arabian horse  
across the dunes, see the stars  
perform at a world-class concert or  
else sparkling in the immensity  
of the night-time desert sky.







## VISIT AN OPEN-AIR MUSEUM IN THE HEART OF THE DESERT

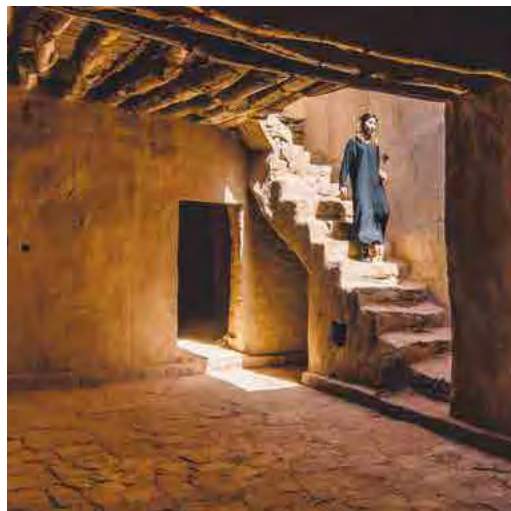
Alula's sites tell of ancient times, when civilisations flourished in its lush oases. A trading route hub, it was criss-crossed by caravans loaded with incense, spices, beads, glazed ceramics and more, its mountains echoing with the music of different tongues. Hegra, a UNESCO World Heritage site, was the Nabataean Kingdom's principal southern city, where the elite buried their dead in elaborate cliffside

tombs. Important information is being discovered about water management and agriculture practices from the ancient city of Dadan, in new, ongoing excavations. At Jabal Ikamah, you will find hundreds of ancient written inscriptions describing pilgrimages, rituals and offerings. Alula overflows with archaeological riches, and more are discovered every day.

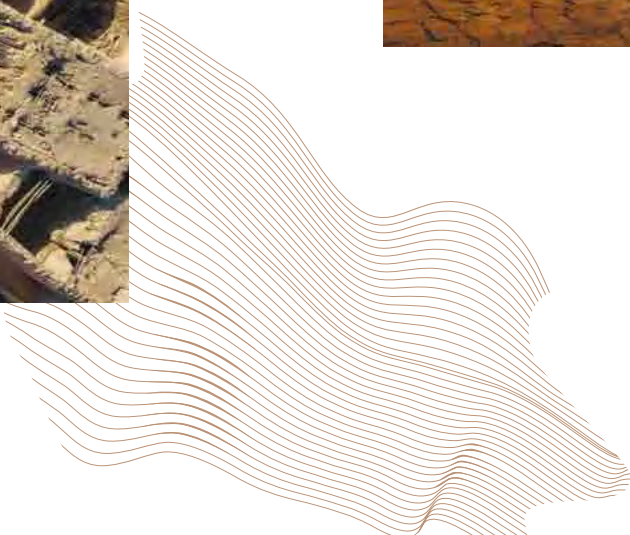




The ancient walled city of AlUla (Old Town) was at the crossroad of civilisations from around the 12th century CE.



The winding streets of Old Town AlUla are tightly packed with hundreds of mud-brick houses.



With hundreds of etched and relief inscriptions from the Dadanite and Lihyanite periods, Jabal Ikmah is like an open-air library.



Elephant Rock is one of Alula's most beloved landmarks, a sandstone monolith shaped by nature to resemble a pachyderm three storeys high.









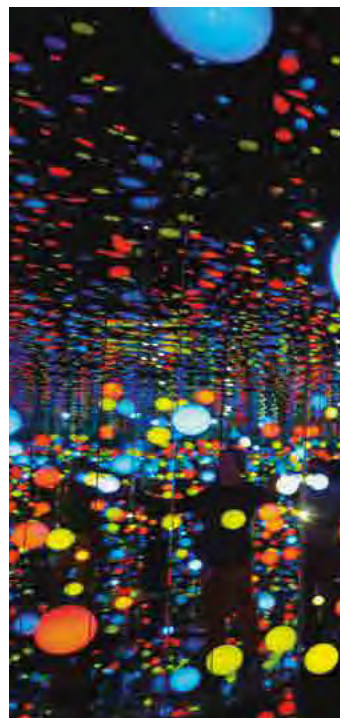


During “Desert X Alula”, contemporary artists from around the world took inspiration from the unique landscape to create site-specific installations.



The world's biggest music stars, from José Carreras to Lionel Richie, have performed to sold-out crowds at Maraya.

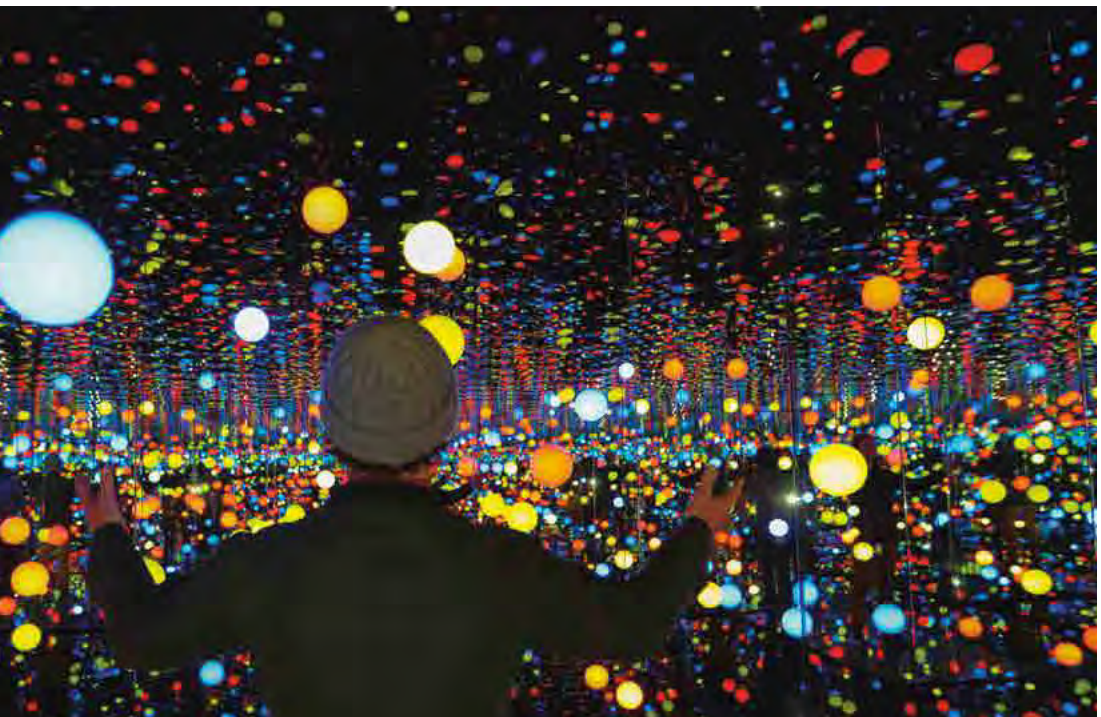
Mesmerising kaleidoscope environment created in the mirrored infinity room at Maraya by the Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama.



# MAKE TRACKS TO A UNIQUE DESTINATION FOR CULTURE AND EVENTS

Since its inception in 2018, Winter at Tantora has wowed the arts world, featuring the best in art, music, culture and history, against the awe-inspiring backdrop of AlUla's desert scenery. Attendees relived the 3,000-year history of Hegra and Dadan through unique experiences including storytelling through immersive technology. At "Desert X AlUla", guests were

witness to AlUla's first contemporary art exhibition, which included monumental art installations that played off the sculptural surroundings. At the stunning Maraya, a building wrapped in shimmering mirrors to simulate a dazzling desert mirage, concert-goers enjoyed seeing some of the world's legendary stars perform live.



An architectural marvel, Maraya is a multipurpose 500-seat events venue and concert hall, wrapped in nearly 10,000 m<sup>2</sup> of mirrors to reflect its surroundings.







## EXPLORE A REGION OF ASTONISHING NATURAL BEAUTY

Enter a desert that stretches as far as the eye can see. Marvel at ochre-streaked sandstone canyons and lunar plateaus of black volcanic stone. Massive rocks rise from out of the sand, chiselled by the wind into works of art such as the now-iconic Elephant Rock, benevolently watching over her desert home. Amidst this wild and enigmatic landscape, ostriches, camels,

gazelles and more exotic flora and fauna thrive. A lush oasis also thrives, green canopies of a palm grove offer coolness and shelter, and the air is perfumed with the scent of dates, orange, and mint. This oasis is the heart of AlUla, and has nourished life here for millennia, inviting people to settle here and develop their rich and varied cultures.



The Sharaan Reserve is being designed to protect some of the most important and significant natural habitats for conservation of biodiversity in the region.



An oasis of palm trees offers a surprising burst of greenery among AIUA's cliffs and rock formations.













Gaze down upon  
AlUla's many wonders  
while flying in a  
twin-engine Beech 18,  
part of aviation history.



## FROM LAND, SEA AND AIR

There are so many ways to enjoy the extraordinary environment of AlUla. It is hard to beat the experience from the skies, floating above the magnificent landscape in a hot air balloon<sup>(1)</sup> or flying in a vintage Beech 18 airplane. For a closer look, tour the site by foot, bicycle, camel or 4x4. During the Winter at Tantora festival, equestrian aficionados might

cross the drifting sands on an Arabian horse, watch a desert polo tournament, or cheer on the riders navigating the 120 km Fursan Endurance Race. For thrill-seekers, a zip line is the most exciting way to cross the Harrat mountains. With AlUla's easy access to the Red Sea, many on-water activities are on offer from luxury yachts to adrenalin sports.

(1) Seasonal.





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Colourful hot air balloons dot the skies and offer passengers a bird's-eye view of this spectacular landscape.

Take your pick of exciting outdoor excursions, whether by land in a 4x4 or by boat on the Red Sea.



# AIUla Hospitality

As the magnificence of AIUla draws the world's most curious and discerning travellers, a stunning selection of new properties will combine the best in comfort, sustainability, and respect for the local vernacular. From boutique hotels to villas, you will be delighted and surprised by AIUla's unique and genuine hospitality.





# ENJOY A MIX OF LUXURY AND AUTHENTICITY



In your desert home, luxury and authenticity await. In addition to the current accommodation in AIUla, Aman Resorts is building three new properties, an upscale tented camp that blends into the natural environment, a resort inspired by the local architecture and close to heritage sites, and a sophisticated ranch-style desert resort. More destination resorts, from the boutique to the palatial, will grace this sensational landscape. One of them, the

sumptuous Sharaan Resort, is being designed by the Pritzker Prize-winning architect Jean Nouvel, with an enviable location in the nature reserve and an opening slated for 2023. Looking for something a little different? Stay in a high-end RV park, complete with sleek, self-contained Airstream accommodation. Wherever you choose to sleep, AIUla promises travellers the utmost in contemporary comfort and Arabian hospitality.



#### **ASHAR RESORT**

This magnificent tented resort seems to rise up from the sands and is a favourite place to stay.



#### **SHADEN RESORT**

Guests enjoy luxurious tent-like rooms with an incredible location among the rocks and less than 30 km to Hegra.

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#### **RV PARK**

Well-equipped vintage Airstreams provide a distinctive and extremely comfortable place to sleep under the desert stars.

## RELAX AND BE PAMPERED



Surrounded by the raw natural beauty of the desert, you will receive a royal Arabian welcome that will make you feel as special as the landscape.

Your experience might start with traditional mounted guards turning out to welcome you.

At the region's exclusive hotels, reserve your own private swimming pool, a personal chef to design meals with local ingredients to your specifications,

or a butler to attend to your every need. A dedicated concierge can ensure the best concert seats or unforgettable visits of AlUla's heritage sites. After a day of activities or sightseeing, your hotel spa offers a full menu of treatments and massages. Sample the benefits of spa products made with *Moringa peregrina*, a miracle tree native to AlUla and used in traditional medicine and precious perfumes.





Indulge yourself with *Moringa peregrina* creams, soaps, lotions, balms, body oils, and candles, all made in AIUla.

## SAVOUR DESERT-STYLE DINING



From the moment the seasonal Winter at Tantora festival was launched, the region has welcomed an enviable list of pop-up restaurants from many of the world's Michelin-starred chefs, intrigued by the region's culinary culture, the quality of its

products, and the gorgeous rocky landscape as a theatrical backdrop for their creations. From fine French food to a mocktail in the shade of Elephant Rock, Alula is a pleasure for the taste buds as much as for the eyes.

### **AWNA**

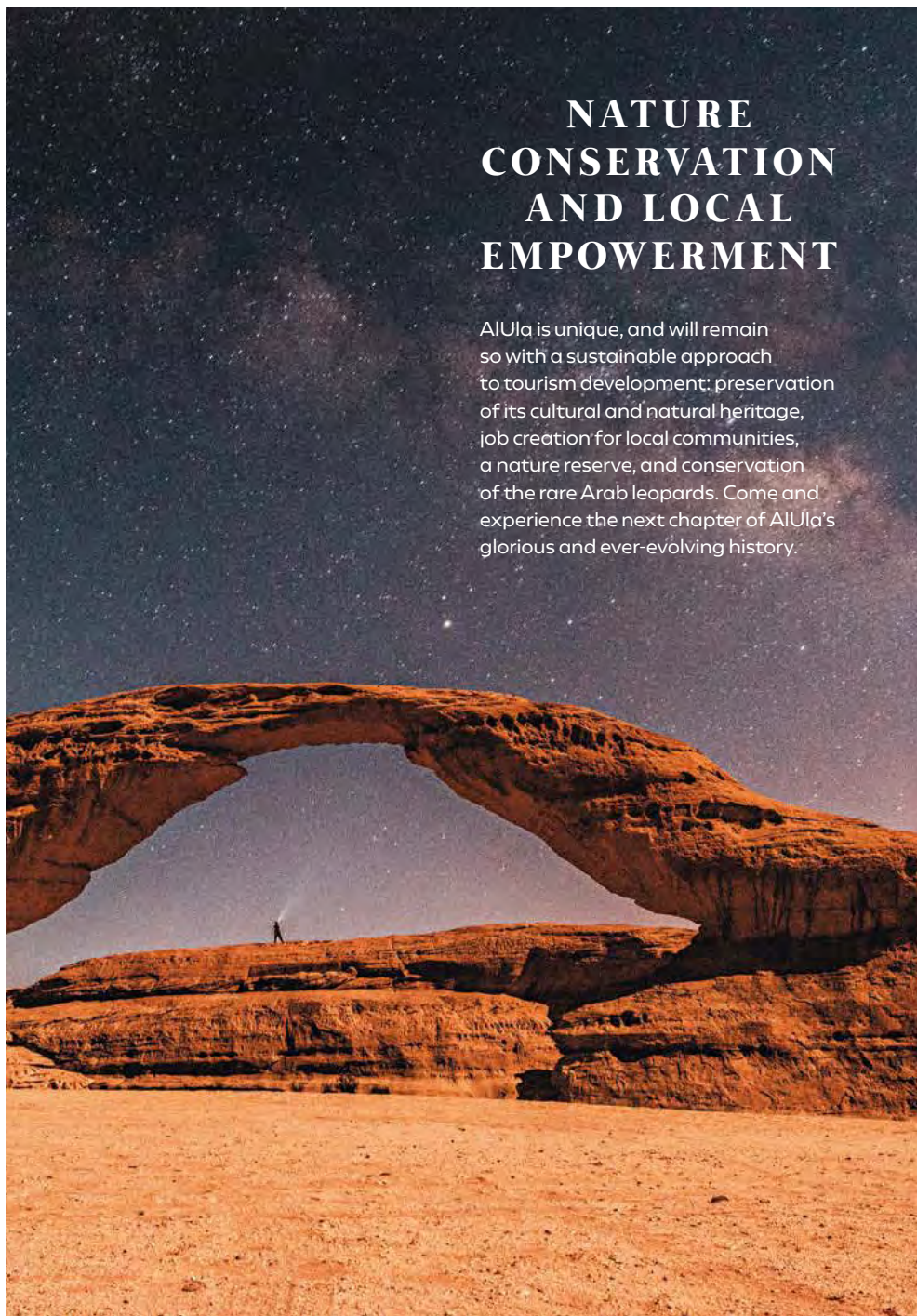
Located at the heart of a UNESCO World Heritage site, Awna restaurant hosted a different Michelin-starred chef every weekend during Winter at Tantora in 2019.





# NATURE CONSERVATION AND LOCAL EMPOWERMENT

Alula is unique, and will remain so with a sustainable approach to tourism development: preservation of its cultural and natural heritage, job creation for local communities, a nature reserve, and conservation of the rare Arab leopards. Come and experience the next chapter of Alula's glorious and ever-evolving history.





**c. 300 million years ago**  
**AUSTRALIA**



**c. 252 million years ago**  
**PALAEOZOIC**  
• Trilobites in sandstone



**200,000 BCE or earlier**  
**PALAEOLITHIC**  
• Handaxe among earliest discovered in Arabia



**c. 5200 BCE**  
**NEOLITHIC**  
• Ritual deposits of animal skulls, horns and teeth



**c. 5000-2000 BCE**  
**LATE PREHISTORY**  
• Monumental burials and seasonal campsites



**2550 BCE**  
**EGYPT**



**c. 900-100 BCE**  
**ANCIENT NORTH ARABIAN KINGDOMS**  
• Multiple scripts and languages inscribed in stone  
• Prosperity from incense trade  
• Water management and cultivation in the AIUla Valley, developing the oasis



**c. 100 BCE-106 CE**  
**JORDAN**

**c. 100 BCE-106 CE**  
**NABATAEAN KINGDOM**  
• Spectacular carved tombs  
• Prosperity from incense trade  
• Oasis development on the Hegra Plain



**70-80 CE**  
**ITALY**



**106 CE-c. 400 CE**  
**ROMAN PRESENCE**  
• Roman camp at Hegra  
• Southernmost inland limit of the Roman Empire



**1000 CE**  
**RAPA NUI**

**c. 622-1200 CE**  
**EARLY ISLAMIC**  
• Prosperity from trade and pilgrimage to Makkah  
• Largest city after Makkah in the 10th century



**1648 CE**  
**INDIA**

**c. 1200-present**  
**LATER ISLAMIC**  
• AIUla Old Town is the cultural heart of AIUla from c. 1200 until the 1980s




**1889 CE**  
**FRANCE**

**1870-1980 CE**  
**MODERN TIMES**  
• Western explorers discover and document AIUla  
• Hijaz Railway built to modernise pilgrim travel





[experiencealula.com](http://experiencealula.com)

ExperienceAlUla   

الهيئة الملكية لمحافظة العلا  
Royal Commission for AlUla

