

Hajj & Umrah Travel Check List



companions of the mosque

Hajj & Umrah Travel Check List

Introduction

Hajj is a unique opportunity to seek Allah's (SWT) forgiveness and make a fresh start. The main thing you need is bags of Taqwaa, patience and best of manners. Insha'Allah you shall soon be a guest of Allah (SWT) in the most sacred of places on this earth.

“And take a provision (with you) for the journey, but the best provision is At-Taqwa (piety, righteousness). So fear Me, O men of understanding!”
(2:197)

Here are some suggestions of things you might want to take with you on your journey for Hajj. As everyone is different, the items are not all necessary – individually pick and choose what you feel is best suitable for you. I have given brief explanations of why you should take certain things and tried to make it convenient for you by adding boxes as the bullet point for you to tick. If you can think of anything else please add it to the list as it may come in handy for someone else.

Lastly, please remember my family and me in your Dua's. May Allah (SWT) invite us once again to his blessed land and I pray to Allah (SWT) that you have a safe and rewarding Journey.

'Oh Allah', I ask You for forgiveness for any mistakes I have made, due to my lack of knowledge or ignorance. Make us all hold fast to Your commands and to follow Your guidance unwaveringly. Allow us to make the most of all good activities and be safe from sin and overlook our shortcomings and cover us all with Your mercy in this world and purify us for the hereafter, 'Oh Allah' bless our Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and his family and companions, and grant them peace.

Ameen.

Yasmin Khan



Islamic things to learn

The first thing you need is obviously KNOWLEDGE! The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said: "Take your Hajj rites from me".

Study the following things before you travel:

- The history of Hajj & why we perform Hajj
- What are the rewards of Hajj/Umrah
- How to perform Hajj/Umrah its pillars, obligatory and Sunnah actions
- Learn the relevant Dua's & Etiquettes of Dua
- What violates the state of Ihram
- Tayammum – when one does not have access to water (know its rulings)
- Janazah Salah (there are a lot of funeral prayers in both the Holy Masjid)
- Learn the rulings to the travellers prayer

Islamic resources

- **Pocket Qur'an and Dua book**
 - Try to make up your own Dua collection on a note pad - **no less than 10 pages**
 - List what you want to ask from Allah and also names of those who have asked you to pray for them
 - Believe me it is very challenging once you are out there. This will most certainly come in handy on the day of Arafat)
- **Hajj/Umrah books**
 - Big books are OK for the journey to Makkah but it's better to take a small pocket one for your journey to Mina. Fisabilillah have a really good all-in-one Hajj, Umrah and Ziyarah book and it's pocket size
- **Prayer mat for the journey**
 - You will be praying at many airports and some places are very dirty (e.g. Jeddah). You can get a prayer mat that folds up very small and can even fit in your pocket or bag
- **MP3 player:**
 - Play Quranic recitation

Most important items to remember

- **Passport including visa documentation**
- **Medical certificates - vaccinations**
- **Local currency money**
- **Emergency contact numbers**
- **Photocopy of passport**

Main Shopping List

- **Suitcase and small trolley suitcase or light backpack**
 - **NOTE** Everybody has black suitcases, so try and take one that is not black OR have a fluorescent tape, tag or ribbon attached on the handles etc so it's easily recognisable from far
 - In Jeddah all the suitcases are left in a large open area. There is no conveyor belt so you will have to



trail around until find your suitcases

- Many people have the mistaken notion that everyone in and around the holy cities of Mecca and Madinah is God fearing, devoted Muslim. Therefore, they feel immune from criminal activity. Unfortunately, this is not true, crime does exist. Pickpockets find it easy to prey on unsuspecting pilgrims whose guard is down because of their preoccupation with Hajj activities
- Always keep your suitcase locked and do not ever leave money, important papers or other valuables in it
- Your hotel room will be periodically cleaned by the staff and the best way to keep everyone honest is not to offer any temptation. Ask the staff to clean your room when you are present.
- Backpack or small trolley suitcase is ideal for your stay in Mina

Ihram for men x 2

- In Mina the tents are air conditioned and in Muzdalifah you will be sleeping under the stars in a sleeping bag. It can get cold depending on the weather so most men take towel Ihram. However there are many different qualities so this is an individual choice

Slippers x 2

- Flip flops are better to take as it's easy to do wadu in them and they are very light to carry when you are bare feet
- Try to wear them in before you go to Saudi so they are comfortable
- Men should not cover the middle part of the foot so flip flops are the best option

Waist pouch (bum-bag) or neck carrier bags

- Keep valuables (documents, money, travellers' checks, keys, credit cards, etc.) in the waist pouch or neck carrier bag at all times during your flight
- Do not ever leave your home without it and do not put it in your hand luggage
- Be especially careful and wary in crowded places. Unfortunately, there are thieves and pickpockets even inside Makkah!
- Buy a good quality pouch or bag. It is a small but a very good investment
- For ideas of what's out there, visit www.goplanetgo.com

Small stringed bag (for sandals)

- When entering the mosque, to avoid losing your sandals you can pop them into the bag and carry it on your back
- You can leave your sandals on the shelf but with so many people leaving them there it's not always easy to find them again

Trainers of comfy shoes for women during the Hajj stay at Mina

- This suggestion is for ladies only! You will perform Rummy of Jamrat in total of three or four day so wear something comfortable on your feet
- At first it will look very clean when you arrive for your stay at Mina but shortly after it will get very, very, very dirty
- For some it can be a long walk depending where you camp is situated. So if you find flip flops comfortable then wear them but trust me, you will end up with very black feet
- The walk to the Jamrat is always very crowded. Should someone tread on the back of your flip flops and you lose them, you most certainly will not be able to go back for it

Sleeping bag & Inflatable pillow

- You will definitely need a sleeping bag as you will be sleeping out in the open plains of Muzdalifah. Get a cheap but comfortable bag as you will be sleeping on the ground and not on carpets or mattresses
- If you get a very thin bag you may feel the gravel underneath you while sleeping
- Tesco's do a very good sleeping bag and it costs roughly £10 - £14

Extra clothing

- Light and airy clothes for street wear are the best. One set of clothes lasts only a day.



- You can get your clothes cleaned professionally however its quite expensive, particularly as the prices tend to sky-rocket during the Hajj season
- DIY - light laundry may be necessary and I would highly recommend you do-it-yourself.
- It's a good idea to pack some laundry detergent and wash your light items yourself. You can take laundry detergent tablets that come individually wrapped and it costs roughly £1- £1.50 for 30 odd tablets. You will have a considerable amount of spare time before and after Hajj. Use some of it for "housekeeping"
- Take enough changes of clothes to make your stay comfortable, but be careful not to overburden yourself with unnecessary clothes
- Take plenty of underwear & socks

Folding umbrella

- You can get them out there but there is not a wide choice range
- Try to take an umbrella that stands out. It will shade you from the sun and you can hold it up high should you get separated
- If you choose to walk to Mount Arafat from your camp then definitely take an umbrella with you as the heat is intense

Toiletries

Toothbrush, miswaak and tooth-paste

- Although you can only use the latter after you come out of ihram
- Travel size paste will be more than enough

Towels – large and small

Soap, shower gel, shampoo & conditioner bottle

- Simple range are perfume free
- It's less messy to take bottle soap rather than bars and more hygienic if your sharing a room with other sisters

Brush/comb

- Once Ihram is lifted

Nail cutter, small scissors, disposable razors & shaving cream

- Do not pack these in your hand luggage as they will be confiscated at the airport

Toilet tissue rolls & pocket tissues

- Especial needed when staying in Mina, Muzdalifah and Arafat as it is not provided
- It can get very dirty and smelly so you might need more tissue than you think
- Some people forget to take tissue so it's always nice to share

Wet wipes (alcohol & perfume free)

- The shower facilities in Mina in not to everyone's taste so wet wipes come in handy should you need to freshen up

Deodorant and roll on

- Simple range are perfume free

Vaseline (small)

- For men you should rub a little between the thighs because after you sweat your skin rubs together, this can leave a sore, red area between my inner thighs, which is quite uncomfortable

Cream, lotion or balm

- Simple ranges are perfume free but take what suits your skin



■ **Pumice stone & cream for cracked or dry skin on feet**

- For cracked or dry skin on heels and feet. Everyone ends up with cracked feet there

■ **Sanitary towel & Panty liners:**

■ **Nappy bags**

■ **Anti-bacterial hand sanitizer**

■ **Safety Pins**

Medication

It is the requirement of Saudi Ministry of Health that all visitors should have a valid vaccination certificate against meningococcal meningitis. The certificate must have been issued not more than three years and not less than 10 days before arrival in Saudi Arabia. Flu vaccinations can also be very helpful.

There are many hospitals which provide free healthcare for pilgrims and most over-the-counter medicine is available at pharmacies in Makkah and Madinah. If you are used to a particular brand of medicine or if you take prescribed medication, it is recommended you bring adequate supplies of these with you. Below is a list of medication I would suggest you take with you.

■ **Any regular medication you take**

■ **Travel sickness tablets**

■ **Paracetamol or any pain relief tablets**

■ **Throat lozenges**

■ **Cold & flu relief: (Beechams or Lemsip)**

■ **Blister plasters and few normal plasters**

■ **Antacid drugs for treating light stomach inflammation**

■ **TCP or anti-bacterial cream (for cuts)**

■ **Muscle rub (deep heat)**

■ **Medicine to delay the onset of a woman's period (optional)**

■ **Oral rehydration salts, available in the form of powders or effervescent tablets**

- For heatstroke and severe diarrhoea that may cause dehydration esp. for older people
- Those who suffer from high blood pressure should seek medical advice before taking

■ **Cystitis relief (sodium citrate)**

- For those that have painful irritation and unpleasant burning sensation when passing water
- This makes the urine less acidic and you should feel the relief in a few hours

■ **Glucose Powder & Tablets**

- Tablets can be taken to give you an energy boost.
- Powder can be mixed to water and comes in many different flavours. They make for a tasty



nutritious drink and also serve to replenish body salts and chemicals lost through heavy perspiration

- Mix up a few bottles especially before you set out for rummy of Jamrat. It's very refreshing when walking amongst the large crowds and in the heat

Antibiotics (optional)

- You can ask your doctor to prescribe a broad-spectrum antibiotic to be taken should you feel you need to. I ended up with a very bad chest infection which started in Mina

Miscellaneous

Mobile phone & charger

- Mobile phones to keep in touch with your group and also to phone home.
- SIM cards only valid for a month are available over the counter in most phone shops in Makkah and Madinah.
- Before leaving, make sure your phone is unlocked (can accept any providers' SIM card), as opposed to being tied to a network

Travel alarm clock

- Depending on if the mobile your taking has an alarm facility

Universal adapter

Travel Iron

Pen & Notebook

Small Peg Clothes Dryer

- To hang wet clothes like panties and socks

Night eye mask and ear plugs

- This can in very handy in Muzdalifah as the lights were all lit making it hard to sleep
- Ear plugs come in handy in Mina as the tents are so close together, you can hear others snoring

Small Mirror

Snacks

- Crisps, sweet, biscuits etc
- Although food is widely available, you might want to pack a few things for your stay
- Ask your travel provider what your food arrangements will be during your stay in Mina, Arafat and Muzdalifah
- Food supplied by the agents tends to be repetitive, and the lack of variety is likely to kill your appetite after a couple of days!

Plastic zippered sandwich bags and carrier bags

- Keep items secure and dry
- Carry snacks for Mina, Arafat & Muzdalifah

Old bed sheet

- As both men and women will be sleeping out in the open in Muzdalifah it might be ideal to use an old for partition.
- Ask your travel provider what arrangements will be made for your group in Muzdalifah

Multi-blade pocket knife & can opener

- When we got bored of the food in Madinah we decided to make tuna sandwiches but struggled to open the tins.



The DO'S and DONT'S of Hajj

The DO'S

The following are some suggestions based on common sense and pilgrims experiences. They will make your life easier and your Hajj experience more pleasurable, Insha'Allah

- 1 DO carry sufficient money with you to cover your expenses comfortably. Even if your agent has made adequate arrangements for your meals, you will want to eat out at times, and then there is shopping! You may also choose to travel by taxi between cities at an additional charge to you. It is no fun running short on funds in a foreign country, especially during Hajj.
- 2 DO wash all fruits including dates in clean water before consumption. Stick to fruits that have to be peeled before use. Avoid pre-cut fruits, salads, and food handled in an insanitary fashion. Avoid all food exposed to the elements. Fast food is available at some places but tends to be of somewhat lower quality than its American counterpart. It is, however, safe and sanitized.
- 3 DO keep the name, address and the telephone number of your muallim as well as of your place of residence with you at all times. DO wear the bracelet issued by the muallim and DO carry your picture ID card at all times. They will prove to be invaluable should something happen to you or if you get lost.
- 4 DO be aware of the heat and the problems it can cause (e.g., dehydration, heat stroke). Drink plenty of water (bottled water only, with or without Glucose), soft drinks, and fruit juices. Stay in the shade when possible and use an umbrella and sunglasses to protect yourself from the harsh sun.
- 5 DO pace yourself in everything, including acts of worship. Know your physical limits and stay well within them. It is only too easy to get caught up in the emotion of the moment and exceed the boundaries of your strength and stamina. Pilgrims often try to spend every spare moment of their time in prayers and devotionals in Haram-ash-Shareef and often become sick. It is very painful and frustrating to get sick in a foreign country and an illness during Hajj is even worse as it defeats the purpose of your visit.
- 6 DO carry an ample supply of general purpose medicines for personal use. Most medicines are readily available in Saudi Arabia over the counter. Talk to a pharmacist or see a doctor promptly if you need help.
- 7 DO spend some time in studying and memorizing the layout and the location of your tent at Mina and Arafat, and your place of temporary stay in Muzdalifah with respect, possibly, to a nearby permanent landmark. All tents and pilgrims look alike. Should you get lost or confused, you will be faced with an extremely difficult, even an impossible, task of getting back to your base.
- 8 DO be patient, understanding, caring and compassionate. The hot weather, the tremendous crush of the pilgrims, and the considerable physical demands of Hajj tend to make people irritable and short of temper. You can avoid potentially awkward situations and unnecessary arguments by remaining focussed on your mission of Hajj, and by maintaining a positive and caring attitude towards others.
- 9 DO try to be responsive to others in need of guidance or help. Realise that your physical stamina and mental toughness will be repeatedly tried during Hajj.

The DONT'S

- 1 DON'T ever leave money or other valuables (e.g. papers, jewellery etc.) in your room. Always carry them with you on your person and be aware of people around you.



- 2 DON'T expect Hajj to be a pleasure trip. Try to take your frustrations, hardships, and disappointments (and there will definitely be many!) in stride as a part of the sacrifice expected of you. See if you can ease someone else's burden a little by offering your support.
- 3 DON'T break or try to circumvent Saudi laws and regulations. The rules are clear and rigid, and the authorities are very strict.
- 4 DON'T get involved in unnecessary religious discussions with anyone. You will see slight variations in religious and Hajj practices amongst different people. Someone may even point out to you the "wrongness" of your ways. Be patient and walk away from a difficult situation. Patience and understanding go a long way towards making your Hajj more meaningful and enjoyable.

The important questions to ask your Travel Agent

If you see Hajj as an obligation and a means to seek Allah's pleasure and forgiveness, Insha'Allah you will get much more out of it. Remember to have realistic expectations of the Hajj package you choose. The best way to match your expectations with your actual Hajj package is to **ask the right questions**.

Choosing a right agent is the most important part of planning for your Hajj. There are two types of tour guides: Authorised licensed agents and sub-agents:

- 1 Authorised licensed agents are companies or groups who hold their own licenses from the Saudi authorities.
- 2 Sub-agents are those who use the name of the agents to get the visas. These sub-agents simply get their people together, take their passports and go to the agent who gets them the paperwork to get you into Saudi Arabia. After that the main agent is not necessarily aware of who you are, so you have no protection if you are let down.

You should choose an authorised licensed agency, recognised by Saudi Arabian authorities. You can obtain a list of authorised licensed agencies in your country from the Saudi Arabian Consulate.

Below are examples of questions that you would ask your travel agent:

- 1 Do you hold your own license or are you a sub-agent?
- 2 If sub-agent, what is the name of the main licensed agent?
- 3 How long have you been in business as a Hajj/Umrah Group under the current name?
 - a. Many groups claim to have been in the Hajj/Umrah group for many years when in fact they may have only been doing the Hajj/Umrah group for a year or so. They distort the dates by including their years as a travel agent
- 4 Do you have an Air Travel Organiser's License or ATOL?
- 5 What is the package dates and what will be the duration of stay in Mecca and Medina?
- 6 Which airline are you using and what is the baggage allowance?
 - a. Have the seats been booked?
- 7 Are these dates firm and if not what's the possible variance?
 - a. Many times people have to schedule time off from work months in advance. Many groups promise a particular departure & arrival date. However, as the dates get closer, many group change these dates by as much as 5-7



- 8** What is your refund policy?
a. Unexpected events can happen. Be sure to know what the refund policy is for the group. Be certain to ask the amount of time it takes to get a refund, if a need arises
- 9** What type of accommodation will you provide and has it been booked?
- 10** Are you responsible for the accommodation or is it the main agent?
- 11** Can I have details of the accommodation of Makkah and Madinah in writing?
a. What is the distance from the Haram-ash-Shareef in both Makkah and Madinah?
b. I need to know the quality of room and the number of people sharing
c. Is there a bathroom in our room or is there a communal bathroom?
- 12** Are we taking a sheikh/imam with us?
a. Many people overlook this question and many groups do not give it much importance. A sheikh who is knowledgeable person who can make a world's difference to your Hajj experience.
- 13** How many people are in the group and how many helpers will we have?
a. Do you and your helpers speak English **AND** Arabic?
- 14** Does the price of your package include meals in Makkah and Madinah?
- 15** Does the price of your package include meals Mina, Arafat and Muzdalifah?
a. Food supplied can tend to get repetitive, and the lack of variety is likely to kill your appetite. If you can, take some snacks with you to keep your energy up
- 16** Do you provide our own transport to and from Mina?
- 17** Will the agent arrange for a sacrifice on your behalf on the 10th of Zul-Hijjah?
a. Is the price included in the package?
b. They will inform you of the time of the sacrifice so that you may perform other rites accordingly.
- 18** How will you organise the stoning of Jamrat's?
- 19** How do we travel from Makkah to Madinah?
- 20** Do we pay extra when visiting sites such as, Masjid Quba, Mount Uhud and Masjid Qiblatain etc?
- 21** Can you provide me everything we talked about in writing?
a. It is important to document everything you are told in writing. Request groups to email, fax or mail you what you talked about and discussed **AND** always get a name and number.

