



Photo: Richard Mortel/cc by 2.0/Flickr



Volodymyr Burdiak / Shutterstock.com

The region of Al-Qassim is a land of palm trees and festivals, the fertile land plentiful agriculture, particularly dates — the cornerstone of the province's economy and culture. The yearly date festival, which takes place in the autumn, is a sight to behold. No matter the time of year, you are sure to find a festival underway. Rich in nature, heritage and handicrafts, Al-Qassim makes for a wonderful visit, whether you are looking for delicious fruit in the countryside or culture and shopping in the cities.



Rabah Al Shammary/unsplash

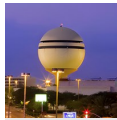


H1N1/Shutterstock.com

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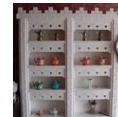
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The Aloqilat Museum features a plethora of documents and artefacts related t...



## THE REGION



*Richard Mortel/cc by 2.0/Flickr (image cropped)*

Al Qassim region, also known as Al Gassim, gets its name from the word Qassimah — a reference to the region's sand dunes from which the white saxaul trees grow.

Located right in the very heart of the Arabian peninsula, Al-Qassim is very lush in comparison with the rest of the country, and as such it is the richest region and the agricultural centre of the Kingdom. It is often referred to as the "alimentary basket" of Saudi Arabia. The region is home to more than eight million palm trees and is thus one of the world's largest producers of dates, as well as oranges, lemons and other fruit. Every autumn, thousands gather for the yearly date festival, where over 300,000 tons of dates are put on display and sold to eager and hungry visitors.

The region's capital and largest city is Buraidah, where approximately half of the province's 1.4 million inhabitants reside. It is the financial and cultural centre of the region, and holds most of the points of interest for tourists, including interesting museums, green parks and excellent markets. Unaizah is the second city in the region and also provides plenty of attractions and entertainment for visitors. The cities' surrounding rural areas are also worth visiting for a peek into the fascinating world of desert

agriculture.

## DO & SEE



*cmonville/cc by 2.0/Flickr (image cropped)*

The Al-Qassim region is quite unique in Saudi Arabia for green areas and agricultural prowess. The areas around Buraidah and Unaizah have some fascinating places to visit. Explore farms, orchards, palm tree plantations and the world's largest camel market. But the cities and towns themselves also offer travellers plenty of museums, parks and interesting sights, as well as heaps of entertainment in the form of excellent eating and shopping.

### Al Qassim Camel Market



The city of Buraidah is home to the largest camel market in the world.

Every morning at 6 am thousands of dromedaries, as well as

goats and sheep, are bought and sold here, along with saddles and other accessories. The Arabian one-hump camels are traditionally prized in Saudi Arabia as a source of protein (meat and milk), as well as leather. The best specimen are thoroughbred racing animal and are kept to keep up the country's culture camel racing.

The market is an integral part of Saudi Arabia,



and an excellent way to experience Arabian culture. You'll find many friendly smiles, baby camels, and a lively hectic atmosphere common for all animal markets.

Photo: Llana/pexels  
Address: Camel Market, Buraidah  
Internet: [www.travel2unlimited.com/saudi-arabia-buraidah-al-qassim-camel-market](http://www.travel2unlimited.com/saudi-arabia-buraidah-al-qassim-camel-market)

### Buraidah Museum



The fascinating history of the city of Buraidah is on display in this museum, designed like a mini Najd fort. It showcases a number of well-preserved artefacts and pieces of art, including a pavilion with collections that once belonged to King Abdul-Aziz himself. Automotive enthusiasts will love the old cars, especially King Abdul-Aziz' white Cadillac.

Photo: Tawfiq mohammad/cc by-sa 4.0/Wikimedia(image cropped)  
Address: King Abdulaziz Rd, As Safra, Buraydah  
More Info: Next to King Khalid Park

### King Abdullah National Park



This enormous and beautiful park spans 50,000 square metres and provides an inviting green space for residents and visitors to relax and find respite from the bustle of the city. It has fountains and artificial waterfalls, areas for picnics, children's playgrounds, a cafeteria, and much more. The best time to enjoy this lush area is during sunset, when a cool wind takes away the sweltering heat of the day. The twinkling lights of the city will keep you company.

Photo: Adrian Pereira/unsplash  
Address: King Fahd Road, Buraidah

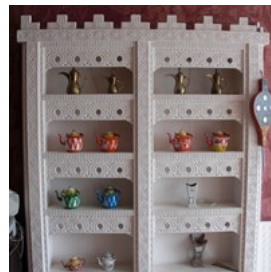
### Al Bassam Heritage House



On the western gate of the Unaizah city, Al Bassam Heritage House is a traditional building, carefully preserved to showcase architectural elements and relics of the past. The mansion has an open area, a dining area, and a majlis ("sitting room"), with a men's reception section, garden section, family section, and animal pens.

Photo: cmonville/cc by 2.0/Flickr(image cropped)  
Address: Ad Dulayah, Unayzah  
Phone: +966 55 280 3377  
Internet: [heritage.moc.gov.sa/en/points-of-interest/al-bassam-heritage-house](http://heritage.moc.gov.sa/en/points-of-interest/al-bassam-heritage-house)

### Aloqilat Museum



The Aloqilat Museum features a plethora of documents and artefacts related to the first man residing in Al-Qassim region. You'll see maps of trade routes, as well as objects from the daily life of the explorers. The museum has a number of exhibits showcasing the history and culture in the region in the pre-Islamic times. Take a seat on the soft carpets and cushions and enjoy some tea with dates during your visit.

Photo: cmonville/cc by 2.0/Flickr(image cropped)  
Address: 418, Wahtan, Buraidah  
Opening hours: Daily 8:30am-noon / 4pm-6:30pm  
Phone: +966 50 513 3191  
Internet: [www.aloqilat.com](http://www.aloqilat.com)

### Uyun Al-Jiwa



Uyun Al-Jiwa — literally "the valley's ponds" — is often referred to as the oasis celebrated by Arab poets for its significance in several poetry

collections known as the Suspended Odes (Mu'allaqat). The area is known for the ancient Banu Abs communities that lived here since prehistoric times. Depicting the lifestyle of ancient people, several Thamudic rock paintings can be found in the Al-Jiwa region — particularly in Al Hanadir, 15 km outside the city.

Be sure to visit the mud-and-adobe Al Margab Watchtower. Take a walk through the Old Uyun — a collection of houses built of clay and mud. Get souvenirs from the vibrant Old Souq and take a photo of the Antarah Rock. Also known as the Lovers' Rock, this precariously perched boulder is rumoured to be the place where the celebrated poet Antarah bin Shaddad met with his sweetheart Ablah.

Photo: Richard Mortel/cc by 2.0/Flickr

More Info: The name of the area is sometimes also transliterated as Uyun Al-Jawa

### Buraidah Water Tower



The Buraidah Water Tower is a popular landmark in the city, especially during the summer, when visitors can climb to the top of the tower to take in the spectacular views of the surrounding area. The tower is used as the central point of the water festival in the summer.

Photo: Daydream-Pho/cc by-sa 3.0/Wikimedia (cropped)(image cropped)

Address: Water Tower, Buraidah

### Al Shinanah Tower



Despite being composed of mud and camel hair, Al Shinanah Tower has survived centuries and numerous battles.

Reportedly, the 27-meter (88-foot) tall tower was constructed in 1699, but some historians estimate the building was erected anywhere between the 12th and 19th centuries. A low, narrow door at the base of the structure gives you access to the eight floors and three lookout windows.

The tower is located on the edge of Ar Rass town, whose name means "old well". Said well made human settlement possible in the area, and marked the town as one of the most important trade and pilgrimage stops.

Photo: Richard Mortel/cc by 2.0/Flickr(image cropped)

Address: Ar Rass

Internet:

[www.saudiarabiatourismguide.com/al-shinanah-tower](http://www.saudiarabiatourismguide.com/al-shinanah-tower)

### Al Bukayriyah City



The small city of Al Bukayriyah is considered an up-and-coming tourist destination in Al-Qassim. Take a short trip from

Buraidah to discover this hidden gem. You'll encounter lush greenery and a warm, inviting climate, historical sights, a variety of restaurants, shops and cafes. Kids will love the Waterfall Park, while architecture fans should see the square minarets Az Zahraa Grand Mosque and Maqsorat Alrajhi (the ancestral home of the Alrajhi family).

Photo: Richard Mortel/cc by 2.0/Flickr(image cropped)

### Farms and Orchards



The Al-Qassim region is perhaps the lushest part of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, responsible for much of the country's agriculture. The area

around Buraidah is rich in farms, orchards and palm trees that are free for tourists to visit and admire. You can also buy produce directly from the farmers.

Photo: Richard Mortel/cc by 2.0/Flickr(image cropped)

Address: Buraidah

## DINING



mo3esa / Shutterstock.com

Dining out is one of the favourite pastimes in Al-Qassim Province. The typical Saudi diet consists of a range of pulses such as rice, bulgur wheat, lentils, or chickpeas (hummus) served with grilled/barbecued meats like lamb or chicken, plus the obligatory pita bread. But you will also find plenty of fine international restaurants in the region offering a great selection of food for all tastes.

### Al Nakheel Restaurant



Located on the ninth floor of the luxurious Mövenpick Hotel Qassim, right in downtown Buraidah, this fantastic restaurant offers

international cuisine, specialising in Swiss dishes as well as breakfast buffets, and full international buffet for lunch and dinner, including some scrumptious desserts.

Photo: ShutterOK/Shutterstock.com

Address: King Khalid Rd, An Naziyah, Buraydah

Opening hours: Daily 6:30am-12am

Phone: +966 920000375

Internet: [www.movenpick.com/en/middle-east/saudi-arabia/qassim/hotel-qassim/restaurants/restaurants/al-nakheel-restaurant](http://www.movenpick.com/en/middle-east/saudi-arabia/qassim/hotel-qassim/restaurants/restaurants/al-nakheel-restaurant)

Email: [hotel.qassim@moevenpick.com](mailto:hotel.qassim@moevenpick.com)

More Info: Located in Mövenpick Qassim

### Burger Avenue – Unaizah



Burger Avenue is, without a doubt, the best place to get a burger in Unaizah. The menu is packed with great options, such as the double cheeseburger, the

more exotic Swiss Cajun chicken burger, chilli cheese fries, and even a few salads that will leave you more than satisfied.

Photo: Yuganov Konstantin/Shutterstock.com

Address: King Abdulaziz Road, Ash Shuwaymiyyah, Unaizah

Opening hours: Daily 12:30pm-3am

Phone: +966 16 364 6443

Internet: [www.linktr.ee/Avenuesaa](http://www.linktr.ee/Avenuesaa)



## CAFES



Sophie James / Shutterstock.com

Escape the oppressive heat of the Qassim region by visiting one of the many modern and sleek cafes spread out throughout the city. They are a great way to relax and people watch while enjoying some hot coffee or tea, with high-quality beans and professional roasting and preparation. Most places also offer fantastic desserts and snacks.

### Ripple Cafe



Modern interior design with mid-century furniture and marble bistro tables meets skilled baristas — and you get Ripple. You will find some

of the best coffee in Buraidah here, both hot and iced. Tiramisu and sweet pecan cheesecake come highly recommended.

Photo: Rizky Subagja/unsplash

Address: 2980 Uthman Ibn Affan Road, Buraidah

Opening hours: Sat-Wed 6:30am-midnight, Thu & Fri 6:30am-2am

Phone: +966 56 118 3881

Internet: [www.ripplecafe.sa](http://www.ripplecafe.sa)

### Bash Specialty Coffee



Tradition meets modernity at Bash. Cozy wood furniture, lots of throw pillows and rugs, lush potted plants and huge windows — you can

stay for hours socialising, reading or planning your next move. The obligatory Marzocco coffee machine is a sign of quality

Photo: Toa Heftiba/unsplash

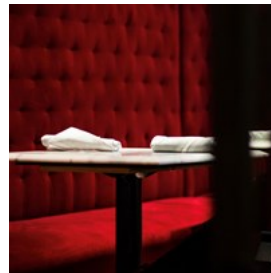
Address: 52388 Uthman Ibn Affan Road, Al Rawaf Planning, Buraidah

Opening hours: Sat-Thu 6am-2am; Fri 6:30am-2am

Phone: +966 53 991 5599

Internet: [www.instagram.com/bashcoffee](http://www.instagram.com/bashcoffee)

### Samra



Samra is an absolute institution in Buraidah. Elegant and luxurious, the cafe invites you to celebrate any special occasion over breakfast

or brunch. European style desserts with a creative twist are beyond compare. Spend some quality time with friends in this exquisite venue with wood panelling and marble tabletops.

Photo: Drew Beamer/unsplash

Address: Al Nahda District, Buraidah

Opening hours: Sat-Thu 6am-midnight, Fri 1pm-midnight

Phone: +966 16 323 5995

Internet: [samra.cargo.site](http://samra.cargo.site)

More Info: Samra strives to create a peaceful atmosphere that is child free

### Kooz Cake Bakery



This American style bakery can definitely tickle anyone's sweet tooth. Tiramisu, cheesecakes, muffins, cookies — they do it all!

Photo: Maslova Valentina/Shutterstock.com

Address: Uthman Ibn Affan Road, Al Amn, Buraidah

Opening hours: Daily 3pm-11pm

Phone: +966 9200 09972

Internet: [www.koozcake.com](http://www.koozcake.com)

### Fan Jan Cafe



Fan Jan Cafe takes coffee seriously. They use only beans of the highest quality and implement only the finest roasting techniques to ensure that

they always get the very best flavour out of their drinks. Add to that a good selection of desserts and pastries, friendly service and a cosy atmosphere, and you have one of the best cafes in the Qassim region.

Photo: YuG/Shutterstock.com

Address: King Abdullah Road, Al Safra', Buraidah

Opening hours: Daily 7am-1am

Phone: +966 16 397 0060

### BARS & NIGHTLIFE



Natalia Klenova / Shutterstock.com

The cultural environment in Saudi Arabia is highly conservative. Religious law forbids the sale or consumption of alcohol throughout Saudi Arabia, so there are no bars or nightclubs. Instead, evening social activities are centred on shopping or dining out in one of the city's many restaurants or cafes whilst indulging in a delicious mocktail (a mix of fresh fruit juices) or a strong cup of Arabic coffee.

### SHOPPING



zeljkodan / Shutterstock.com

Much of Saudi Arabia's social life revolves around shopping. It is very common for families to visit one of the many large shopping centres and spend the whole day browsing, enjoying some refreshments, and escaping the intense heat in the air-conditioned malls. But be sure to head to some of the smaller markets for more traditional and authentic shopping experiences, as well. The date market is an absolute must.

### Al Othaim Mall



As one of the newer malls in the city, Al Othaim gathers a huge array of shops, restaurants and entertainment options under one roof in modern facilities. Shoppers can find everything from brand name chain stores to unique boutiques, accessories, home goods, electronics, and much more.

Photo: Kzenon/Shutterstock.com

Address: Al Iskan, Buraydah

Phone: +966 11 8299999

Internet: [www.othaimmalls.com/english/discover-our-malls/our-malls/othaim-mall-buraidah](http://www.othaimmalls.com/english/discover-our-malls/our-malls/othaim-mall-buraidah)

### Nakheel Mall



Though it may not be quite as large as some of the newer shopping centres in the area, Nakheel Mall is dedicated to creating a vibrant upscale shopping, dining and entertainment environment, focusing on being accessible and appealing to the whole family, with a wealth of shops and dining options.

Photo: Naufal MQ/Shutterstock.com

Address: King Khalid Road, Buraidah

Phone: +966 9200 00262

Internet: [www.twitter.com/nakheelmall](http://www.twitter.com/nakheelmall)

### Jarir Bookstore



This large chain of bookstores has locations all around the Arab world, in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. It is the best resource in town for books,

electronics, accessories and office supplies. They also have the area's widest selection of English language books.

Photo: Thinglass/Shutterstock.com

Address: 8221 Uthman Ibn Affan Road, Al Safra, Buraidah

Opening hours: Sat-Thu 9am-11pm, Fri 4pm-11pm

Phone: +966 9200 00089

Internet: [www.jarir.com/sa-en](http://www.jarir.com/sa-en)

### Date Market



The Al-Qassim region is known for its dates, and the main market in Buraidah offers a spectacular variety of this sweet and chewy fruit year-round, though especially during the Annual Date Festival. An estimated 300,000 tonnes of dates are sold annually here, picked from 8 million palm trees in the region. Special seasonal dates are available and should not be missed.

Photo: Suliman Alkurishan/cc by 2.0/Flickr(image cropped)

Address: Date Market, As Sabbakh, Buraidah

Opening hours: Date season is in August & September

Internet: [www.travel2unlimited.com/saudi-arabia-buraidah-date-market](http://www.travel2unlimited.com/saudi-arabia-buraidah-date-market)



## TOURIST INFORMATION



Rabah Al Shammary/unsplash

### Saudi Arabia eVisa



Saudi Arabia introduced a new eVisa system in October 2019, dramatically simplifying visa applications for citizens of multiple world

countries, including the USA, Canada, China, Japan, Australia, and much of Europe. The new multiple-entry visa will be processed within record time (as quickly as 30 minutes), issued for one year, and will allow visitors to stay in the country for up to 90 days during its validity period. This marks a watershed moment in the country's history, as Saudi Arabia has historically been off limits to non-Muslim tourists, with visas notoriously difficult to secure.

Citizens of countries not covered by the eVisa program will still need to turn to their nearest consulate to obtain a visa.

Photo: uxwing.com

Internet: [visa.visitsaudi.com](http://visa.visitsaudi.com)

### Al-Qassim Regional Airport



The Prince Naif bin Abdulaziz International Airport (ELQ), more commonly known as the Al-Qassim Regional Airport or simply Gassim,

serves flights to various destinations around the Arab world, including the Emirates, Bahrain, Egypt and Qatar, and even reaches as far as Istanbul. It is located about 30 kilometres west of the city of Buraidah and about 40 kilometres from Unaizah, and the best way to get to either city from the airport is to take a taxi, but be sure to agree on a price beforehand.

Photo: Juan Garces

Address: Al-Qassim Regional Airport, Buraidah

Internet: [www.gaca.gov.sa/web/en-gb/page/home](http://www.gaca.gov.sa/web/en-gb/page/home)

Email: [gaca-info@gaca.gov.sa](mailto:gaca-info@gaca.gov.sa)

### Cultural Norms



When strolling and exploring the city please make sure you wear the appropriate attire.

Women must be covered from neck to toes and in

certain areas scarves are used to cover the face and head. Shorts and tank tops should not be worn outside of your accommodation by women. For men, loose clothing is recommended and shorts are prohibited.

When visiting, please make sure you respect and abide by the laws and culture of the country.

Photo: uxwing.com

## Postal Service

Saudi Post



Photo: Andy Fuchs

Address: Ali Ibn Abi Talib Road, Al Iskan, Buraydah

Opening hours: Sat 4pm-9pm, Sun-Thu 8am-9pm, Fri closed

Phone: +966 9 2000 5700

Internet: [www.splonline.com.sa/en](http://www.splonline.com.sa/en)

## Pharmacy



Adel Pharmacy is a popular chain of pharmacies in Buraidah.

Photo: Gemma Garner

Address: Ali Ibn Abi Talib Road, Buraidah

Opening hours: Always open

Phone: +966 16 384 6693

Internet: [www.adelpharma.com](http://www.adelpharma.com)

## Telephone



Country code: +966 Area code: 06

Photo: Jardson Almeida

## Population

1.4 million (2017 census)

## Currency

1 Saudi riyal (SAR) = 100 halalas

## Opening hours

The working week is generally from Sun-Thu with some businesses open Saturday mornings.

Government offices: 7:30am-2:30pm.

Banks: 9:30am-4:30pm.

Private businesses: 8am-12pm and 4am-8pm.

## Internet

[www.visitsaudi.com/en/see-do/destinations/qassim](http://www.visitsaudi.com/en/see-do/destinations/qassim)

## Newspapers

Saudi Gazette – [saudigazette.com.sa](http://saudigazette.com.sa)

Al Jazeera

## Emergency numbers

Police: 999

Fire: 998

Ambulance: 997