



Photo: Osama Ahmed Mansour/Shutterstock.com



marviikad/Flickr

Rose fragrance fills the air in Taif, a scenic Saudi town whose fertile lands are dotted with abundant rose and fruit orchards. Nestled amidst the Shafa Mountain range not far from Mecca, Taif historically used to be a major commercial hub for countries of the Arabian Peninsula but has now transformed into a popular summer holiday destination with well-developed infrastructure, magnificent natural beauty, and a mild climate, in pleasant contrast to much of the country.



Joe El Naggar/Shutterstock.com



Peter Dowley/Flickr

## Featured

## Top 5



### Shafa Mountains & Cable Car

An overwhelming number of travelers come to Ta'if for the beautiful vistas a...



### Souk Okaz

Souk Okaz is a historic marketplace dating back to the pre-Islamic era, when...



### Rose Farms and Factories

Ta'if is known as the "City of Roses" - roses have been farmed here for hund...



### Shubra Palace

The Palace is an attraction inside and out - the building itself is a fine e...



### King Fahad Garden

King Fahad Garden is a popular recreation spot in the city that boasts a wel...



## THE CITY



*KELANTAN JOTTINGS/Flickr (image cropped)*

The Saudi summertime favorite of Ta'if is located at a distance from the beaches and humid waterside areas of the country up in the mountains, at an elevation of 1700 meters above sea level (some areas reach up to 5000m).

During the summer months, the town's population doubles and the king himself, along with the Saudi government, relocate here for this hottest time of the year.

Ta'if is a city of historic significance which attracts visitors with its archaeological sites as much as its natural beauty. The city is known for its numerous rose fields and rose processing factories - the tradition of rose water and oils production started over a century back and is still going strong. The town is not only known for its roses - grapes, figs, pears, peaches, watermelons (and more) are all grown here organically and are available for purchase in the local souks and markets.

Ta'if is home to the Al-Massara International Equestrian Center (one of the most renowned in the country) where horse races and "pageants" are held frequently, drawing visitors from all over the nearby areas.

## DO & SEE

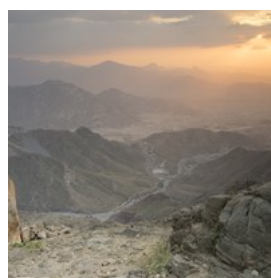


*Peter Dowley/Flickr (image cropped)*

Ta'if's number one attraction is, perhaps, its natural beauty. No visit to the area is complete without exploring the Shafa Mountains and taking a ride on the cable car - one of the most ambitious projects of the kind on the entire peninsula. Some of the most scenic areas full of parks, gardens and fruit farms include Al-Hada and Al-Shifa, conveniently connected to each other via a two-way road.

The town of Ta'if holds a few interesting locations, such as the famous Shubra Palace, historic Turkish Fort, informative National Museum and cultural Souk Okaz.

### Shafa Mountains & Cable Car



An overwhelming number of travelers come to Ta'if for the beautiful vistas and attractions in the mountainous areas surrounding the city.

Al-Hada and Al-Shifa are two locations with public parks, gardens and agricultural zones not to be missed. A cable car journey up to the Al-Hada Mountain starts down in Al-Kurr Village and takes visitors all the way up to the mountaintop, where an upscale restaurant and hotel are located.

Photo: drpyan/Shutterstock.com

Address: Shafa Road, Taif

### Souk Okaz



Souk Okaz is a historic marketplace dating back to the pre-Islamic era, when Arabian intellectuals gathered here to share ideas and discuss various issues. The Souk today (in addition to being a market) hosts a number of events, including seminars and lectures, that ring back to its glorious past.

Photo: Philip Lange/Shutterstock.com

Address: Soq Okadh, Taif

Phone: +966 2 725 3100

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

### Rose Farms and Factories



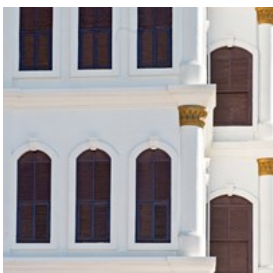
Ta'if is known as the "City of Roses" - roses have been farmed here for hundreds of years, and visitors to the area today have the unique opportunity of visiting one of the factories where the delicate flowers are processed and turned into perfumes, aromatic rose water and other products. One of the factories open to visitors is Al Gadhi Rose Factory:

Photo: Heather(image cropped)

Address: As Salamah Street, Ta'if

Phone: +966 2 2 733 4133

### Shubra Palace



The Palace is an attraction inside and out - the building itself is a fine example of old Ta'if architecture; it also contains the the Ta'if

Regional Museum. The museum's exhibits provide a brief excursus into Saudi royal history (King Abdul-Aziz and, later, King Faisal both resided here).

Photo: Gimas/Shutterstock.com

Address: Shubra Street, Ta'if

Phone: +966 2 2 732 1033

### King Fahad Garden



King Fahad Garden is a popular recreation spot in the city that boasts a well-developed infrastructure - the garden contains large green spaces, a lagoon with an artificial waterfall, a number of cafés and restaurants as well as a few souvenir shops.

Photo: roroto12p/Shutterstock.com

Address: Alhada Road, Ta'if

### DINING



Momen Khaiti/Shutterstock.com

Ta'if is not particularly known for its restaurant scene, but there are quite a few local eateries scattered throughout the town. Grains such as wheat or rice and meats such as chicken or lamb constitute the bulk of Saudi cuisine (pork is normally not served in the country, as its consumption is forbidden by Islam). Yoghurt is often used in local cooking, and dates constitute

a dessert staple. The signature dish to try when in Ta'if is a local variety of rice and milk pudding called "seleeg".

### Mirage Indian Food Restaurant



Located on the 30th floor of Awaliv Hotel, this eatery is one that, perhaps, tops the list of Indian restaurants in Ta'if. The menu offers an assortment of authentic Indian delights. Bear in mind that on the weekends, the restaurant caters to families only, so individual diners are advised to visit on working days only.

Photo: Nisha Ramesh/Unsplash  
Address: Al Sadad, Taif  
Opening hours: Daily 1pm-1am  
Phone: +966 54 968 3365

### Albaik



The Albaik fast-food restaurant holds somewhat of a legendary status in Ta'if (and Saudi Arabia in general).

Immensely beloved by locals, this restaurant is frequently busy with visitors and serves a variety of chicken- and seafood-based dishes that are consistently finger-licking good.

Photo: Abdullah\_Shakoor/Pixabay  
Address: 7565 Abu Bakr As Siddiq, Shubra, Taif  
Phone: +966 50 707 8308  
Internet: [www.albaik.com/en](http://www.albaik.com/en)  
Email: [info@albaik.com](mailto:info@albaik.com)  
More Info: At Taif's Heart Mall

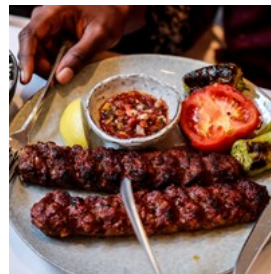
### Kabayan Restaurant



Only restaurant in Ta'if serving Filipino food and boasting quite an extensive list of menu items ranging from starters to desserts.

Photo: adamcreatives/Pixabay  
Address: 4863, Al Aziziyah, Taif  
Opening hours: Daily 12pm-12am  
Phone: +966 50 928 9682

### Ahlan Wasahlan



The restaurant offers a wide selection of high-quality meat, seafood, and vegetarian dishes. Expect friendly service and Turkish

flavours.

Photo: Suad Kamardeen/Unsplash  
Address: Shubra St, Shubra, Taif  
Opening hours: Daily 6am-2am  
Phone: +966 53 554 4799

### CAFES



*Sophie James/Shutterstock.com*

There are a few cafes throughout the city, with Western-style cafés and coffee houses gaining increasing popularity. Ta'if boasts a number of local and international chains, as well as individual establishments.

### Vitamin Palace



Vitamin Palace attracts visitors with its enticing display of fresh fruit and offers a large variety of fresh fruit juices and smoothies. The cafe offers

a few meal options, too--traditional Arabic shawarma, sandwiches, and other dishes are available to order.

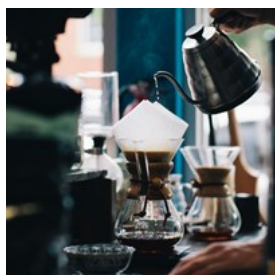
Photo: Yulia Khlebnikova/Unsplash

Address: Shubra, Ta'if

Opening hours: Daily 8am-2am

Phone: +966 53 611 8149

### Barn's



Barn's is a Saudi-wide chain with a couple of locales in the city of Ta'if. Meals are not served here, as the establishment specializes

rather in hot and cold beverages (coffee in particular), but a selection of baked goods are available for purchase.

Photo: Karl Fredrickson/Unsplash

Address: Shihar, Ta'if

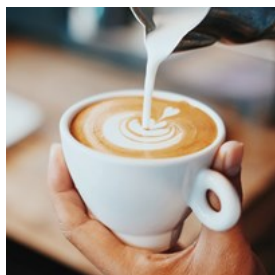
Opening hours: 24/7

Phone: +966 9200 06843

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

Email: [info@barncafe.com.sa](mailto:info@barncafe.com.sa)

### Etoile Cafe



The Etoile Cafe is a local establishment specialising in hot drinks, such as coffee (multiple varieties available) and sweet treats, such as

cakes and pies.

Photo: Fahmi Fakhruddin/Unsplash

Address: Shehar, Shihar, Taif

Opening hours: Daily 8am-2am

Phone: +966 54 708 8881

### BARS & NIGHTLIFE



*stockcreations/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 cafés whilst indulging in a delicious mocktail (a mix of fresh fruit juices) or a strong cup of Arabic coffee.

### SHOPPING



*Ilona Ignatova/Shutterstock.com*

While Souk Okaz is more of a cultural experience, most great bargains are to be had at Souk Al-Balad, where everything from handicrafts to spices to silver and gold items are on sale. Ta'if offers shopping opportunities to fit

any taste, including modern shopping malls, individual boutiques and busy markets. Do not miss Shahar Street - the local shopping street lined with fixed-price stores.

### Souk Okaz



Souk Okaz is a historic marketplace dating back to the pre-Islamic era, when Arabian intellectuals gathered here to share ideas and discuss various issues. The Souk today (in addition to being a market) hosts a number of events, including seminars and lectures, that ring back to its glorious past.

Photo: Philip Lange/Shutterstock.com

Address: Soq Okadh, Taif

Phone: +966 2 725 3100

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

### Joury Mall



Joury Mall is the newest and, arguably, finest mall in the city of Ta'if. A number of local and international brands are represented at its many stores, and visitors are welcome to explore the family entertainment areas (Billy Bees and Sparky's) as well as the food court with a variety of eateries.

Photo: Naufal MQ/Shutterstock.com

Address: King Khalid Street, Ta'if

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

### Heart Mall



Ta'if's Heart Mall was, for the longest time, the city's only shopping center of the kind. Now that the Joury Mall is a fair competitor, the Heart Mall has experienced a decline in visitors. It does have its advantages, however - the selection of stores here is decent and the location right next to Shubra Palace in the city center is unbeatable.

Photo: Blend Images/Shutterstock.com

Address: Abu Bakr As Siddiq, Ta'if

Phone: +966 127344445

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

### Queen's Taste



Queen's Taste Sweets is an unmissable shopping spot in Ta'if - the establishment sells an immense variety of sweets, chocolates, baked goods and cakes. Many of the items truly are pieces of art, and work well as a special treat or even as gifts for loved ones.

Photo: HLPhoto/Shutterstock.com

Address: Bldg 6647, Unit 1, Shehar-Shihar Street, Ta'if

Phone: +966 532 918 494

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

## TOURIST INFORMATION



Basheer Olakara/Flickr (image cropped)

### Ta'if Regional Airport



The Ta'if Regional Airport is a compact air hub located about 15km away from the town. Despite it being a "regional" airport it serves a number of

international destinations (most located on the Arabian Peninsula). There is a local bus service to the city (run by the Saudi Public Transport Company).

Photo: Juan Garces

Address: Ta'if Regional Airport

Phone: +966 12 726 0012

Internet: [www.gaca.gov.sa](http://www.gaca.gov.sa)

### 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: TukTuk Design/Shutterstock.com

Internet: <https://visa.visitsaudi.com>

### Public Transport



Buses operated by the SAPTCO (Saudi Arabian Public Transport Company) as well as private minibuses circulate around the city.

Destinations are displayed in the front window (in Arabic), so yell out your desired destination to passing buses to find the right one. The main station in Ta'if is located on Airport Road, next to the Centerpoint Mall.

Photo: Pierre-Luc Auclair

Address: Al Faisaliah - Airport Road, Ta'if

Phone: +966 53 515 7318

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

More Info: Opposite the Civil Status

### Taxi



To call a cab, ask the hotel staff for assistance. Otherwise, white taxis are widely available and can be flagged down throughout the city.

Drivers will most often readily use meters.

Photo: ArrivalGuides

## Pharmacy



Ghaya Pharmacy Shehar,  
Hawaya, Ta'if +966 12  
745 0209 Alnahdi  
Pharmacy 267, Shihar,  
Ta'if +966 12 748 6469

Photo: Gemma Garner

## Post



Saudi Post

Photo: Andy Fuchs

Address: Jubrah, Taif

Opening hours: 7.30am-9pm

Phone: +966 0127381200

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

## Telephone



Saudi Arabia +966 Ta'if  
city code 2

Photo: Jardson Almeida

## Electricity



127/220 V, 60 Hz

Photo: Stirling Tschan

## Population

688,693 (2020 estimate)

## Currency

1 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–noon and 4–8pm. Some shops close 4 times a day for half hour prayers, and often work "split days" closing for a few hours between noon and 4pm.

## Newspapers

Saudi Gazette

Al Jazeera

## Emergency numbers

Emergency 999

Traffic Accidents 993

Ambulance 997

## Tourist information

Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage

B.O.Box 66680

Riyadh 11586

Saudi Arabia

+966 11 8808855

Tourism Call Center

19988