

Hajj tips part 1: Pre-departure, and Madinah

Intentions:

- **Actions are judged according to intentions**
 - Purify and renew your intentions often. Especially when you feel lazy, or challenges arise.
 - Guard against everything that would pollute your intentions. Be cautious about thoughts, feelings, activities, discussions, and even people that could drive you away from Allah's pleasure.

Personal preparation:

- **Make a huge dua list:** Write down all your own duas, as well as those that others ask you to make for them. Use that list throughout the journey (even before the 5 days). It'll be helpful when you want to make dua, but you're overwhelmed by emotion or tiredness. Dua lies at the core of your relationship with Allah. On this journey of dua, make sure you're well-equipped.
- **Learn the Janazah salaah:** You'll experience plenty of them. Don't miss the rewards.
- **Brace yourself to have sabr:** Things *will* go wrong. Mentally prepare to consciously decide to be patient, to not panic, and to enjoy the experiences. Take positives from them. Stop and think before you complain. Try to see the wisdom of why these problems are in your path.
- **Push through fear and anxiety:** They're all in your mind. The reality usually isn't as bad as you imagined. Necessity conquers fear. Save yourself the trouble beforehand by remembering this.
- **Fear displeasing Allah:** At all times, be VERY CAREFUL of that which will displease Allah – e.g. inappropriate interactions with non-mahrams, over-indulging food, etc.

Logistics:

- **Don't stress about foreign exchange:** There are many money exchanges on that side, so don't panic. At a minimum, just keep some Riyals for your first few days before you can change money.
- **Clothes:** Travel light. And do your own handwashing in your room (unless you can afford expensive laundry prices).
- **Make your luggage identifiable:** Even if you have to put children's stickers on your suitcases. It'll be easier to find your bags at the airport and other parts of your journey.

While travelling:

- **Guard your salaah:** Never miss it – even when you're on the plane. Learn how to make salaah while flying, and ask the crew to help you with Qibla direction if you can't work it out from the in-flight map. Look up the times before you fly: <https://www.halaltrip.com/prayertimes/inflight>
- **Help others:** Earn reward on your travels. Share food, help others with paperwork (if you're good at that), carry luggage for the weak, etc. And make special efforts to help older people.
- **Minimise entertainment:** Try NOT to watch the movies / TV shows on the plane (regardless of their content). Start avoiding these distraction early, so that it'll be easier in Madinah and Makkah.
- **Use your time wisely:** You'll be waiting *a lot* on this journey. Avoid useless chatting and things that have no spiritual benefit. If you want to sleep, intend it as a form of worship (i.e. to gain strength for the upcoming travel). If not, engage in other acts of worship, or even spiritually beneficial conversations with your travel companions. You may never travel with people like this again, so get maximum benefit from the situation.
- **Don't judge others:** When foreigners push and shove, remember that it may just be normal behaviour for them back home – and that they're not trying to be rude. Be compassionate yet firm with them, and be patient.

Madinah:

- **Before getting off the plane:** Use the toilet. The ones inside may not be very clean.
- **Imagine your departure:** From day 1, imagine how it'll be when leave Madinah. Use this feeling to help you appreciate it and make the most of it.
- **Connection overcomes distractions:** Ringing cellphones and other distractions will always be present. You can't change or avoid this, so don't complain. Accept the reality and try to focus your heart on Allah instead. Make dua for sabr and a strong connection which will help you connect to Allah – regardless of these disturbances.
- **Dua, dua, dua:** Hajj is a journey of dua and constant connection to Allah. Use your time to make all the duas you want. Your list should help. Strengthen your bond with Allah via acts of worship pleasing to Him. After all, back home, you'll probably never get this kind of chance to focus 100% on such activities – so embrace and use the chances while you have them on this trip.
- **Zam-zam water:** Drink plenty of it, make intentions each time, and make duas with it. Believe with certainty that zam zam carries the benefits mentioned in the hadiths.
- **Go to the masjid prepared:** You'll spend a lot of time in the masjid between salaahs, so plan your activities beforehand and take the stuff you'll need (e.g. your Quran, books, pen and paper, tablet or smartphone with the relevant beneficial material). Keep mobile devices on airplane mode unless you really need to communicate with others.
- **Respect the locals:** When visiting masjids and sacred sites, respect the people there and maintain the proper etiquettes of the place. If there are rules posted on a noticeboard (e.g. no photography), follow them. And don't disturb people by raising your voice.
- **Learn from history:** When learning about historical events and places, try to extract lessons that you can apply in today's times – and your own personal life.
- **Seal your dates:** If you buy dates to take home, make sure you seal them properly, or you may have trouble bringing them into the country. Your Hajj operator should be able to advise you.
- **Manage and limit your shopping:** Shopping is a secondary reason for your visit, so don't make it your priority. Maximize your time in the masjid. You may never visit Madinah again.
- **Sabr:** When touring, others may make things difficult for you. If you have no control, don't complain or whine. Just appreciate that you got to be there and make the most of it. And make dua that you'll get another chance to FULLY experience it in future.
- **Keep it authentic:** Don't believe everything you hear about the historical sites in Islam. Many people narrate unauthentic stories and folklore that may have no real basis.
- **No bi'dah:** Whether you're at 'permitted' or 'unofficial' tourist sites, never break the shariah. The Saudi government discourages visits to certain sites largely because they fear people will engage in bi'dah – so don't prove them right.
- **Janatul Baqi:** For males, try to visit – but again, DO NOT carry out any acts of shirk or bi'dah. Never, ever pray **TO** the dead – only pray **FOR** them! Participate in a burial if you can, and use it to remind you of your own death.
- **Go up:** If it's too busy in or outside the masjid, try to go up to the roof. You won't be disappointed.
- **The Rawdah:** If you're on the green / cream carpet but can't make salaah yet, make dua – because you're still in a piece of Jannah. And once inside, don't push and don't be rude – even though others may do it to you. Be patient, and when you get your chance, don't take too much time. Give others a chance.

See the next tipsheet for advice related to Makkah.