

Haramain checklist

Printable guide for UK pilgrims

Editorial review: 19 September 2026

Before you travel

- **Book officially.** Check route, class and live fare.
- **Large case.** 25 kg; up to 65 x 55 x 35 cm.
- **Hand item.** One small additional item.
- **No miqat stop.** Prepare before travel to Makkah.
- **Check transfers.** Station access adds time and cost.

The following pages retain the revised guide, tables and references.
Confirm changing official rules for your dates and consult a qualified scholar about personal religious rulings.

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The **Makkah to Madinah train** is the Haramain High Speed Railway, a 450-kilometre line connecting the two holy cities via Jeddah. It has transformed the journey between them from a long road transfer into a comfortable ride of roughly two to two and a half hours.

This guide explains the route and stations, how to book, what the journey is actually like, luggage rules including the question of Zamzam, how the train compares with a coach or private car, and the one mistake that catches out pilgrims travelling towards Makkah.

Timetables, fares and rules are set by the operator and change, so confirm current details on the [official Haramain railway site](#) before you book anything.

The Haramain train at a glance

Here is the orientation most pilgrims need before planning their transfer day.

Detail	Makkah to Madinah by train
Line	Haramain High Speed Railway
Route length	Approximately 450 kilometres
Journey time	Around two to two and a half hours
By road instead	Approximately four to six hours
Stations	Makkah, Jeddah city, Jeddah airport, Rabigh (KAEC), Madinah
Classes	Economy and business

Detail	Makkah to Madinah by train
Booking	Official Haramain website or app, using exact passport details
Stops at the miqat	No, enter ihram before boarding towards Makkah
Zamzam on board	Commonly restricted; check the current policy first

The Makkah to Madinah train at a glance

The mistake that costs pilgrims most. The train does not stop at the miqat. If you are travelling from Madinah to Makkah for Umrah, you must enter ihram before you board.

The route and its stations

The line runs between Makkah and Madinah with intermediate stops, and knowing which station serves your hotel saves considerable time.

The five stations

Makkah at one end and Madinah at the other, with Jeddah city, King Abdulaziz International Airport and King Abdullah Economic City at Rabigh in between. Not every service calls at every station.

Journey time

Makkah to Madinah direct is roughly two to two and a half hours depending on the service and how many stops it makes. Compare that with a road transfer of four to six hours and the appeal is obvious.

The airport station

The line serves Jeddah airport directly, which is useful for pilgrims flying into Jeddah and travelling on to Madinah, or returning to the airport at the end of a trip.

Two different Jeddah stations. The city station and the airport station are not the same place. Check which one your ticket shows, because arriving at the wrong one is an expensive taxi ride and a missed train.

How to book the Makkah to Madinah train

Start with the operator's booking result for your date, route and passenger group. If you compare a reseller or a package transfer, compare the final payable total and support terms, not just the first price shown.

Step	What you do	Why it matters
1. Fix your travel day	Decide the transfer date first	Popular departures sell out
2. Book officially	Use the Haramain site or app	Resellers add a margin
3. Enter passport details	Exactly as printed	A mismatch can prevent boarding

Step	What you do	Why it matters
4. Choose your class	Economy or business	Compare seat comfort and fare terms; do not assume extra luggage
5. Save the ticket	Save appointment details and check the current entry code	Station wifi is unreliable
6. Arrive early	At least forty minutes	Airport-style security screening

Booking the Haramain train, step by step

Book through the official operator

The operator's website is sar.hhr.sa; follow its own app-store links. A website using the words "Haramain train" in its name is not necessarily the operator. Independent sellers may offer useful assistance or transfers, but identify the seller and its terms before paying.

Enter passport details exactly

Your name must match your passport. Mismatches can prevent boarding even with a ticket in hand, and correcting them at the station is not quick.

Book early for popular days

Services fill up, particularly around weekends, Ramadan and the winter holidays. If your itinerary depends on travelling on a specific day, book as soon as your dates are fixed.

Ask your operator first. If you booked a package, the transfer may already be included. Check before buying tickets yourself, so you are not paying twice for the same leg.

Operator, Reseller or Package: Compare the Whole Booking

Booking route	What to compare	Keep before payment
Haramain operator website or app	The selected service, class, passenger categories and final SAR total	Fare conditions, correct station names and the operator's booking reference
Independent reseller	The same service plus any booking fee, currency conversion or added support	Seller identity, ticket delivery terms and who handles changes or refunds
Train included in an Umrah package	Whether tickets, hotel-to-station cars and assistance are all included	A written itinerary naming the stations and the contact for a missed connection

The cheapest headline ticket is not necessarily the lowest door-to-door cost.

For children and infants, enter each traveller's age and whether a separate seat is required before comparing totals. Do not calculate a family price by assuming that every child is free or every passenger pays the adult fare.

Before buying a restrictive ticket: record the change and cancellation deadlines, the applicable time zone, any fee or fare difference, and what happens after departure. "Refundable" does not by itself mean a full refund at any time; obtain the conditions for the fare actually in your basket.

Classes, fares and what you get

There are two classes, and the difference is comfort rather than speed.

Economy

Comfortable, air-conditioned seating in a modern carriage. Perfectly adequate for a two-hour journey and considerably cheaper than business.

Business

Business class offers a different seating product, but do not buy it on the assumption of extra baggage. The published [Haramain baggage policy](#) states a passenger allowance without a larger business-class entitlement. Compare comfort, fare conditions and actual availability separately.

A note on fares

The live booking result is the source for the fare on your particular date and service. Record the total in Saudi riyals, class, passenger category, change terms and whether any taxes or extras remain. We have not verified a live fare quote for every date, so the calculation below is an example, not an advertised rail price.

Worked comparison, reviewed 19 September 2026: if the booking screen quotes SAR 180 per adult, two adults cost SAR 360 before any separately stated charges. Add the actual taxi quotes at both

ends before comparing with a door-to-door transfer. Replace SAR 180 with the fare shown for your journey on the [official booking site](#).

Compare total cost, not ticket cost. For a family of five, a private transfer can work out similar to five business-class seats, and it collects you from the hotel door. Do the arithmetic for your own group rather than assuming.

What the journey is actually like

Pilgrims are usually surprised by how modern and orderly the whole operation is.

Airport-style stations

Security screening, departure boards and boarding gates all work much like an airport. Allow well over half an hour, and longer at busy times.

On board

Carriages are clean, quiet and air-conditioned, with luggage racks at the carriage ends and overhead space for smaller bags. Prayer facilities are available at the stations.

Arrival

Both terminal stations sit outside the immediate city centres, so factor in a taxi to your hotel at the far end. In Madinah the station is a short drive from the Prophet's Mosque area.

Prayer times and the journey

A two-hour journey can easily straddle a prayer time, and pilgrims often ask how to handle it.

You are a traveller

The concession for shortening prayer while travelling is established in [Quran 4:101](#), and the Prophet's practice of shortening on journeys is reported in [Sahih al-Bukhari 1090](#). Pilgrims travelling between the cities are travellers in the relevant sense.

Praying at the stations

Both terminal stations have prayer facilities, which is usually the simplest option. Arriving early for security gives you time to pray before boarding rather than managing it on a moving train.

Combining prayers

Combining is also permitted for travellers according to the position of most schools, and it removes the difficulty of a prayer falling mid-journey entirely. Follow the position of the school you normally follow.

Plan it before you leave the hotel. Check what prayer falls during your travel window and decide in advance whether you will pray at the station before boarding or on arrival. Deciding in the moment on a crowded platform is harder.

Luggage rules and the Zamzam question

This causes more confusion than any other aspect of the journey.

Plan for this	This causes problems
Arrive forty minutes before departure	Arriving minutes before the train
Carry your passport as well as the ticket	A name that does not match the passport
Enter ihram before boarding for Makkah	Assuming the train stops at the miqat
Keep luggage within the allowance	Oversized or excess bags at the gate
Check which station serves your hotel	Confusing Jeddah city and airport
Save the QR ticket offline	Booking through an unofficial reseller

What to plan for, and what causes problems on the day

Standard luggage

Checked on 19 September 2026, the operator's published allowance is one large item up to **25 kg and 65 x 55 x 35 cm**, plus one small hand item such as a backpack or handbag. The page does not state an extra allowance for business class. Measure your case and recheck the policy before travel.

Do not assume a five-litre Zamzam container is accepted

The baggage page allows only small drinks in their original packaging; it does not establish a separate five-litre Zamzam allowance. Ask the operator about your exact container before taking it to the station. Buying your airline-approved container after the rail journey avoids that uncertainty.

The practical solution is simple: buy your sealed Zamzam close to your departure flight rather than before the train journey. Our guide to [Zamzam water](#) covers the rules for carrying it home to the UK.

Verify before you buy. Restrictions are set by the operator and can change. Check the current luggage policy on the official site before purchasing a five-litre container you may not be able to carry.

Ihram and the train: the critical point

This deserves its own section because it is the single most consequential detail in this article.

The train does not stop at the miqat

The train does not stop for pilgrims to change at the miqat. A private road transfer can include a stop at Dhul Hulayfah, but only if you arrange it with the driver or operator. Do not assume every coach or taxi will stop automatically.

What to do instead

Change into ihram at your Madinah hotel and make the intention before boarding. Arriving in Makkah without having entered ihram is a violation that then needs correcting.

The miqat boundaries were set by the Prophet ﷺ as recorded in [Sahih al-Bukhari 1524](#), and our full guide to [ihram rules](#) explains what applies from that moment.

Say this out loud before you leave the hotel. "Am I in ihram?" If you are travelling to Makkah for Umrah and the answer is no, do not get on the train.

For a transfer plan covering your hotels, luggage and travelling party, [request an itemised itinerary from our UK team](#). We can set out the proposed transport before you decide.

Travelling with family, children and older relatives

The train suits some family groups better than others, and it is worth thinking it through before booking six seats.

Children

Children generally travel well on a two-hour journey, and the train is far easier than a long coach transfer with young ones. Book seats together rather than assuming the system will allocate them adjacently.

Older relatives and mobility

Stations are large, with security screening and a walk to the platform. If someone in your group has limited mobility, request assistance when booking and allow extra time. A door-to-door private transfer may genuinely be the kinder option.

Luggage with a family

This is where the train is weakest. Six people with suitcases, hand luggage and shopping is a lot to move through a station twice. Weigh it honestly against a private car that collects you from reception.

General health and accessibility guidance for Saudi Arabia is published on [TravelHealthPro](#) and under [GOV.UK safety and security](#).

Count the transfers, not the hours. A train journey is really hotel to taxi to station to train to station to taxi to hotel. That is six movements with luggage. A private car is one.

If you miss your train

It happens, usually because security took longer than expected or a taxi was delayed.

Go to the ticket desk immediately

Do not wait. Staff at the station are best placed to advise on the next available service and what your ticket allows.

Understand what your fare permits

Flexibility depends on the fare type you bought. Cheaper advance fares are usually the most restrictive, which is worth knowing at the point of booking rather than at the point of missing.

Have a fallback in mind

Road transfers run between the cities throughout the day. If a connection genuinely cannot be remade in time, a car is the reliable alternative, and on the Madinah to Makkah leg it has the advantage of stopping at the miqat.

Never book the last train of the day. If anything goes wrong there is no later service to move to. An earlier departure leaves you options.

Train, coach or private car?

The train is not automatically the right answer, and it is worth weighing honestly.

Factor	Haramain train	Coach or private car
Journey time	Two to two and a half hours	Four to six hours
Predictability	High, unaffected by traffic	Varies with traffic and stops
Door to door	No, taxi needed at both ends	Yes, hotel to hotel
Luggage	One 25 kg case (65 x 55 x 35 cm) and one hand item	Generally more generous
Cost for a couple	Often competitive	Usually higher for a private car

Factor	Haramain train	Coach or private car
Cost for a large family	Rises with each seat	Often better value
Miqat stop	No	Only if arranged with the driver/operator
Zamzam	Commonly restricted	Normally carried without issue

Train compared with road transfer between the two cities

When the train wins

Speed and predictability. Two hours rather than four to six, with no risk of traffic. Ideal for couples, small groups and anyone travelling light.

When road transport wins

Door-to-door convenience, luggage capacity, cost for larger groups, and the miqat stop. For a family of six with suitcases, a private transfer is often simpler.

Direction matters. Many pilgrims take the train from Makkah to Madinah, where ihram is not a factor, and a road transfer for the return leg so they can stop at the miqat. That combination works well.

Why the line was built

A little context explains why the service is as good as it is, and why it matters to pilgrims specifically.

A route travelled for centuries

The journey between Makkah and Madinah is one of the oldest continuously travelled routes in the world. Pilgrims have covered it on foot, by camel, by caravan and by coach, and the distance has always shaped how long a pilgrimage takes.

Built for pilgrim volume

The Haramain line was built specifically to move very large numbers of pilgrims between the two cities quickly and safely, relieving pressure on a road corridor that carries enormous traffic during peak seasons.

Why both cities matter

Madinah is one of the three mosques towards which journeys are specifically undertaken, alongside Masjid al-Haram and Masjid al-Aqsa, as reported in [Sahih al-Bukhari 1189](#). Almost every UK Umrah itinerary therefore includes both, which is precisely the journey this line serves.

What it means practically. Removing four hours of road travel from the middle of a trip gives you most of an extra day in one of the two cities. That is the real value of the line, more than the speed itself.

Seasonal demand and when to book

Availability varies enormously across the year, and UK pilgrims travel disproportionately in the busiest windows.

The peak periods

Ramadan, the winter school holidays and the weeks around Hajj are the heaviest. Services sell out, and the flexible fares that remain are the expensive ones.

Book as soon as dates are fixed

The moment your hotel nights are confirmed, book the transfer. Waiting rarely produces a better fare and frequently produces no seat at all on the day you need.

Quieter months

Outside the peaks you can often book close to travel and still choose your departure time. That flexibility is worth factoring into when you travel if your dates are not fixed.

Check connectivity for booking on the move

If you intend to book or amend tickets while in Saudi Arabia, confirm your roaming arrangements first. Guidance on roaming charges is published by [Ofcom](#), and travel insurance guidance is under [GOV.UK foreign travel insurance](#).

Book the transfer before the permits. Train seats are finite and sell out; permit slots keep releasing on a rolling basis. Fix the leg that can run out first, then build the [Nusuk](#) bookings around it.

Planning your transfer day

The transfer is the day most likely to go wrong in a UK itinerary, so build it deliberately.

Do not stack commitments

Avoid scheduling a Rawdah permit, a checkout and a train departure within the same few hours. Our guide to the [Rawdah in Madinah](#) explains why permit slots need space around them.

Check permits through the [official Nusuk service](#). Coordinate the appointment with your train ticket yourself; one booking does not reserve or change the other.

Allow for the taxi legs

Both stations are outside the city centres. Add thirty to forty-five minutes at each end for the transfer between hotel and station.

Keep documents together

Passport, train ticket, hotel confirmation and permits should all be accessible without a data connection.

Keep your appointment and train confirmation together, with times in Saudi local time. A rail ticket does not change a mosque permit, and a permit does not reserve a train seat.

Write the day out in order. Checkout time, taxi, station arrival, departure, arrival, taxi, hotel check-in. Seeing it written down exposes the gap that is too tight before it becomes a problem on the day.

At the stations

The terminals are large modern buildings, and knowing the layout removes the uncertainty of a first visit.

Makkah station

Located in the Rusaifah district, a short drive from the Haram. Expect a full security screening area, seating, prayer facilities and refreshment outlets before the platforms.

Madinah station

Set outside the central area, with a straightforward taxi run to the hotels around the Prophet's Mosque. Allow around twenty to thirty minutes for that leg at ordinary times, and longer around prayer times when traffic around the mosque is heaviest.

Facilities and waiting

Both terminals have prayer rooms, accessible toilets, lifts and step-free routes to the platforms. Arriving early is genuinely comfortable rather than a chore, which is the opposite of most coach stations.

Checking your platform

Departure boards show the platform shortly before boarding. Services are punctual, so do not assume a late-running departure will wait.

Station details, timetables and any service disruptions are published by the operator on the [official Haramain website](#). Broader travel guidance for UK visitors is kept current under [GOV.UK travel advice](#), and health requirements are listed on [Fit for Travel](#).

Use the waiting time. Both stations have prayer facilities and are calm compared with the Haram at peak hours. Arriving an hour early and praying at the station is a far better use of the time than rushing and missing the service.

Common mistakes UK pilgrims make

Every one of these is avoidable.

Boarding towards Makkah without entering ihram. Buying Zamzam before the train journey. Arriving at the wrong Jeddah station.

Turning up minutes before departure. Booking through a reseller at an inflated price.

Names that do not match the passport. Underestimating the taxi time at either end.

The five-minute check the night before.

- Ticket saved offline
- Station name confirmed
- Departure time in local time
- Ihram decided
- Taxi booked

That is the whole list.

Tips for taking the train between Makkah and Madinah

Seven steps in the order you will need them, whether you fly from London, Manchester or Birmingham.

1. **Check whether your package includes it.** Do not buy a ticket for a transfer you have already paid for.
2. **Book through the official operator.** Resellers charge more for the same seat.
3. **Match your passport exactly.** Name mismatches can stop you boarding.
4. **Enter ihram before boarding towards Makkah.** The line does not stop at the miqat.
5. **Do not buy Zamzam before the train.** Buy it close to your flight home instead.
6. **Arrive at least forty minutes early.** Stations run airport-style security.
7. **Confirm which station.** Jeddah city and Jeddah airport are different places.

Frequently asked questions

How long is the Makkah to Madinah train?

Roughly two to two and a half hours depending on the service and the number of stops, compared with four to six hours by road.

How do I book the Haramain train?

Through the official Haramain railway website or app, entering passport details exactly as printed. Booking directly avoids reseller mark-ups.

How much does the train cost?

Use the official booking result for your date, class and passenger category; no single price applies to every departure. Add station transfers to compare the total. The published baggage policy does not give business class a larger allowance.

Can I take Zamzam on the Makkah to Madinah train?

Do not assume a five-litre container is accepted. The operator's baggage page permits small drinks in original packaging, but does not list a separate five-litre Zamzam allowance. Obtain confirmation or buy your airline-approved container after the rail journey.

Does the train stop at the miqat?

No. For the journey to Makkah for Umrah, prepare and enter ihram before boarding so you do not cross unprepared. A road transfer can stop at Abyar Ali if that has been agreed with the operator.

Which stations does the line serve?

Makkah, Jeddah city, King Abdulaziz International Airport, King Abdullah Economic City at Rabigh, and Madinah. Not every service calls at every station.

Is the train better than a coach?

It is faster and more predictable. A coach or private car is door-to-door, carries more luggage, is often cheaper for large groups, and stops at the miqat. Many pilgrims use the train in one direction and road transport in the other, taking the train from Makkah to Madinah where ihram is not a factor, and a car on the return leg so they can stop at Abyar Ali to change and make their intention.

How early should I arrive at the station?

At least forty minutes, and longer at peak times, because the stations use airport-style security screening.

Two hours, one decision to get right

The Haramain line is one of the genuine pleasures of a modern Umrah trip. It is fast, clean, punctual and comfortable, and it removes hours of road travel from the middle of a journey.

It is worth remembering what it replaced. Pilgrims covered this same route for centuries at enormous cost in time and hardship, and many did not complete it. Two air-conditioned hours between the two cities is a mercy that is very easy to take for granted while complaining about a luggage allowance.

Book it directly, arrive early, and settle the ihram question before you leave your hotel. If you would like your transfer day planned around your permits and hotel checkout, our team can put a written itinerary together before you book.

You can compare durations and hotel distances on our [Umrah packages](#) page, request the full cost breakdown for your dates, or [ask Babul Haram Travels for a written quote](#). Before you travel, check current

advice on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) and confirm timetables on the [official Haramain site](#).

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Sources and further checks

Links were reviewed for this edition; official conditions can change. The article distinguishes verified rules from illustrative budget assumptions.

1. <https://babulharamtravels.co.uk/blog/ihram-rules/>
2. <https://babulharamtravels.co.uk/blog/rawdah-in-madinah/>
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