

UK entry options

Printable guide for UK pilgrims

Editorial review: 19 September 2026

Before you travel

- **Check your passport.** Six months from arrival, per GOV.UK.
- **Choose your route.** Eligibility and conditions differ.
- **Validity is not stay.** Read both limits on the permission.
- **Health checks.** Check current certificate requirements.
- **Permits separately.** A visa is not a Rawdah booking.

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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Getting an **Umrah visa from the UK** is far simpler than it was a decade ago, but it is also the part of the journey that changes most often. Entry routes, fees and permit arrangements have all been revised repeatedly in recent years, which is why so much of what circulates online is out of date.

This guide explains the entry routes generally available to British passport holders, what documents you need, how the application process runs, what it typically costs, how long it takes, and the mistakes that cause refusals and delays.

One principle runs through all of it: verify before you book. Every official requirement in this article should be confirmed on [GOV.UK entry requirements for Saudi Arabia](#) and the Saudi [Nusuk](#) platform before you commit money to flights.

Umrah visa from the UK at a glance

Here is the orientation most pilgrims are looking for, followed by the detail behind each row.

Question	Position for UK pilgrims
Who needs entry permission	Every traveller including children, each with their own passport
Usual routes	Check current ETA, e-visa, visa-waiver or operator-arranged eligibility
Passport validity	Normally at least six months from your date of entry
Typical processing	Often days online; agent applications follow operator timescales

Question	Position for UK pilgrims
When to apply	Start document checks early; submit within your route's permitted application window
Umrah and Rawdah permits	Booked separately through Nusuk after entry permission is issued
Health requirements	Check current meningococcal certification and any origin/transit requirements
Where to verify	GOV.UK entry requirements and official Saudi platforms

Umrah entry from the UK at a glance

Confirm eligibility before taking a financial risk. Check the current route and document requirements before committing to non-refundable travel. Where an application requires flight details, use accurate arrangements and understand the cancellation terms.

British Passport Holder or UK Resident?

Living in the UK does not make every Saudi entry route available to you. The [GOV.UK guidance](#) used here expressly covers travel on a full British-citizen passport; nationality, residence and the visa category are separate facts.

Your document situation	What to check	Avoid this assumption
Full British-citizen passport	The current official ETA, e-visa or other route offered for your purpose and dates	That every route has the same stay limit, insurance or number of entries
Another nationality living in the UK	Your passport's eligibility and whether the selected Saudi route accepts your exact UK residence status	That a UK address, UK eVisa or residence permission is the same as British citizenship
Refugee travel document, emergency document or a different British nationality category	Written guidance from the Saudi authorities and your airline before relying on a standard online form	That a document issued by the UK is automatically a full British-citizen passport
Family with different nationalities	Each traveller's document, eligibility, permission and return-to-UK requirements	That one parent's eligibility extends to everyone on the booking

Eligibility routing checked against the scope of GOV.UK guidance on 19 September 2026; the Saudi authorities decide applications.

A UK eVisa is evidence of UK immigration status, not permission to enter Saudi Arabia. If your situation is outside the British-citizen guidance, use the official Saudi application route or [Saudi Embassy in the UK](#) to confirm which evidence is accepted before paying an intermediary.

Do you still need a dedicated Umrah visa?

This is the question that causes most confusion, because the answer changed. For many years an Umrah visa could only be obtained through an approved agent, and independent travel was not possible.

Saudi Arabia has since opened additional entry routes that permit holders to perform Umrah, which is why some UK pilgrims now travel independently and others still book through an operator. Both approaches exist side by side.

Why old advice misleads. Articles written before these changes state that Umrah is impossible without an agent. That is no longer the complete picture, but the details of which routes are open, and to whom, are reviewed regularly. Check the current position rather than relying on any article, including this one.

The usual entry routes for British passport holders

British-citizen passport holders should compare the actual current routes rather than assuming there is one generic Umrah visa. The [GOV.UK page checked on 19 September 2026](#) lists electronic travel authorisation, e-visa and electronic visa-waiver information. Availability and the conditions issued with your permission control your trip.

Route listed by GOV.UK	Validity / stay in guidance	Insurance	Important qualification
Electronic travel authorisation (ETA)	730 days; 180 days total across that period	Not included	Check current eligibility; not a Hajj visa
Tourist e-visa	365 days; 90 days total	Specified medical cover included	Check your issued conditions and any additional cover needed
Electronic visa waiver	One entry; up to 180 days	Not included	GOV.UK lists 48 hours to 90 days before departure; verify current availability
An operator-arranged Umrah route	As stated on your issued permission	Confirm the policy supplied	Get the exact route, conditions and charges in writing

British-citizen routes: GOV.UK checked 19 September 2026; issued conditions and current eligibility take priority

Electronic travel authorisation and e-visa

GOV.UK describes an ETA valid for 730 days with multiple entries and a total permitted stay of 180 days across that period; it does not include health insurance. Its listed purposes include Umrah outside the Hajj season. Follow the official [ETA application link](#) and check the terms currently offered to you.

The same guidance describes a tourist e-visa valid for 365 days with multiple entries and 90 days' total stay, including specified health insurance. Apply through [Saudi Arabia's official e-visa portal](#) where eligible. Neither an ordinary ETA nor tourist e-visa replaces a Hajj visa.

Electronic visa-waiver information

GOV.UK also lists a single-entry electronic visa waiver allowing up to 180 days and no included health insurance. Its stated application window is at least 48 hours before travel and no more than 90 days ahead, with flight details required. Check whether this route is currently offered to your passport on the official portal rather than assuming every listed route remains available to every applicant.

The Umrah route through an approved agent

The traditional route is arranged by an operator as part of a package. The agent handles the application alongside your accommodation and transport. Many UK pilgrims prefer this because the paperwork, permits and transfers are managed together.

Which one should you use?

If you are booking a package, the operator will normally tell you which route applies and handle it. If you are travelling independently, you will be applying yourself and should budget time for it.

Ask your operator directly. When comparing quotes, ask explicitly whether entry permission is included, who applies for it, and what happens if an application is refused. A good operator will answer all three without hesitation.

What documents do you need?

The document list is stable even when the routes change, and almost every delay traces back to one of these.

Your passport

A British passport valid for at least six months from your date of entry is the standard requirement. Check the photo page is undamaged and fully readable, because a worn or marked page causes scanning failures.

Photograph, accommodation and flights

Follow the document checklist for your chosen route: photograph, accommodation and flight fields are not identical across every system. Some routes specifically ask for flight details. Use accurate, verifiable information and refundable bookings where appropriate rather than inventing a hotel or purchasing a non-refundable flight solely on a general article's advice.

Travel insurance

Separate compulsory or bundled medical cover from comprehensive travel insurance. GOV.UK states that an e-visa includes specified health cover while the listed ETA and visa waiver do not. Arrange suitable protection for your health, cancellation and other risks, and declare existing conditions to the insurer.

Item	What is expected	Why applications fail
Passport	British passport valid six months from entry	Expiry too close, or a damaged photo page

Item	What is expected	Why applications fail
Photograph	Clear image meeting the stated specification	Wrong dimensions, poor lighting or a filtered photo
Name details	Exactly as printed in the passport	Missing middle names or differing spellings
Accommodation	Provide accommodation information if the selected route requests it	Provisional bookings that cannot be evidenced
Flights	Provide flight details where required by the route	One-way bookings with no onward travel
Insurance	Check bundled medical cover and any additional insurance needed	Policy missing, expired or not covering the dates
Payment	Card accepted by the official platform	Declined cards and unofficial reseller charges

Documents for a UK Umrah application and the reasons applications are delayed

Name spelling matters more than people expect. Your application must match your passport exactly, including middle names and hyphens. A mismatch between the booking, the application and the passport is one of the most common reasons a pilgrim is stopped at check-in.

How to apply for an Umrah visa from the UK

The sequence below is the order most UK applicants follow.

Step	What you do	Why it matters
1. Check your passport	Six months validity from entry	Renewal takes time
2. Confirm the route	Check current rules on GOV.UK	Routes change between seasons
3. Prepare documents	Passport, photo, hotel, flights, insurance	Missing items cause refusals
4. Apply officially	Official platform or approved agent	Resellers charge a mark-up
5. Health requirements	Check vaccinations early	Some need a set number of days
6. Book permits	Umrah and Rawdah via Nusuk	Separate from entry permission

Applying for Umrah entry from the UK, step by step

Check your passport first

Do this before anything else. UK passport renewal takes time, and discovering a validity problem after booking flights is an expensive mistake. Renewal timescales are published on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Apply through official channels only

Use the official Saudi platform or a genuine approved agent. A large number of third-party websites charge substantial mark-ups for submitting the same form, and some are outright scams.

Arrange permits separately

Entry permission and pilgrimage permits are not the same thing. Umrah slots and Rawdah visits are booked through Nusuk once you have your entry permission. Our guides to the Nusuk app and the [Rawdah in Madinah](#) cover that side.

Beware of inflated fees. If a website's charge looks far higher than the official fee, it is a reseller. Search for the official platform directly rather than clicking a sponsored result.

How much is an Umrah visa from the UK?

The honest answer is that the total depends on which route you use, whether insurance is bundled, and whether an agent is handling it for you.

Use the total displayed by the official application portal for your route on the day you apply. Record the government fee, insurance and any agent charge separately. We have not obtained a verified live checkout fee for each route, so no estimated number here should be treated as an official tariff.

What the total usually includes

Expect the overall cost to cover the entry permission itself, any mandatory insurance, and a service charge if an agent applies on your behalf. Ask for these to be itemised separately so you can see what you are paying for.

1. **Identify the product:** record the exact route, number of entries, validity and permitted stay before comparing prices.
2. **Read the official checkout:** record the government charge, any displayed processing charge or tax, currency and payment date.
3. **Check insurance:** record whether it is included, its cover and any separately chosen policy; do not add bundled cover twice.
4. **Separate assistance from the official fee:** ask an agent what its service charge buys and whether any part is refundable if permission is refused.
5. **Check the GBP amount:** allow for your payment provider's exchange rate and foreign-currency charge, rather than treating a converted blog estimate as a tariff.

Where to check the current fee

Check the official Saudi platform for the current figure, and ask your operator to state their service charge separately from the official fee. For the full picture of what a trip costs beyond entry, see our [published Umrah package options](#).

Ask for the breakdown in writing. A quote that bundles entry, insurance and service charge into one number makes comparison impossible. Any reputable UK operator will itemise it if you ask.

How long does it take?

Online routes are often processed quickly, sometimes within a few days. Applications made through an agent depend on the operator's own timescales and the season.

Both can slow down considerably during peak periods, particularly in the run-up to Ramadan, which is the busiest Umrah season for UK travellers.

Apply early, not efficiently. The temptation is to leave it until close to departure because processing is usually fast. Peak-season delays, passport problems and photo rejections all need buffer time. Four to six weeks ahead is comfortable.

Passport problems and how to fix them quickly

More UK Umrah trips are disrupted by passports than by the application itself, and every one of these situations has a solution if it is found early.

Not enough validity remaining

If your passport expires within six months of your intended entry date, renew before applying. Standard renewal timescales are published on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk), and they lengthen considerably in spring and summer.

Travelling sooner than renewal allows

There is an urgent service for travellers who cannot wait for standard processing, explained under [getting a passport urgently](#). It costs more and requires an appointment, so it is a fallback rather than a plan.

A damaged passport

Water damage, torn pages or a worn photo page can all cause a refusal at check-in even when the passport has not expired. Guidance on damaged documents is published under [GOV.UK passport advice](#). If in doubt, replace it.

A child's passport nobody checked

Child passports are valid for a shorter period than adult ones, which is why they expire unnoticed. Check every family member's document on the same day you start planning, not the week before departure.

Do this today, not later. Take every passport in the household out and photograph the expiry dates. It takes five minutes and is the single highest-value thing you can do before booking anything.

Travel insurance for Umrah

Insurance is both a common entry requirement and a genuine practical necessity, and the two are not quite the same thing.

What cover you actually need

Look for medical cover, repatriation, cancellation and baggage. General guidance on choosing a policy is published under [GOV.UK foreign travel insurance](#). Check that the policy names Saudi Arabia and covers your full travel dates.

Declare pre-existing conditions

Undeclared medical conditions are the most common reason a claim is refused. Declare everything, even if it increases the premium, because an invalid policy is worse than an expensive one.

Insurance bundled with the application

Some entry routes include a basic policy in the fee. Read what it actually covers before assuming you need nothing further, as bundled cover is often minimal.

Check the financial protection too. When booking a package, ask how your money is protected if the operator fails. [ABTA](#) and ATOL arrangements differ by operator and by what is being sold, so ask rather than assume.

If you would like entry arrangements included in a package quote, [ask our UK team to state the proposed route and charges in writing](#).

Approval and entry decisions remain with the Saudi authorities.

Booking as a package or travelling independently

The entry route often follows from this decision, so it is worth making deliberately.

What a package handles for you

Entry permission, flights, hotels, transfers and often permits are arranged together. For a first Umrah, or for families and older travellers, that coordination is usually worth more than any saving from doing it yourself.

What independent travel demands

You take on the application, the accommodation booking, the transfers between Jeddah, Makkah and Madinah, and the permit bookings. It suits experienced travellers who have been before and want to control the itinerary.

If you are weighing the two, a written quote should identify which elements change between the approaches, and the [Umrah packages](#) page shows current durations and hotel distances.

Health requirements for UK pilgrims

GOV.UK currently lists a **meningococcal quadrivalent vaccination certificate for Hajj and Umrah pilgrims**, as well as yellow-fever certification for arrivals from specified risk countries. Other requirements can depend on where you have travelled and your circumstances. Check the current official requirements for the travel season and ask a travel-health professional about timing and suitability.

Check the current position on [TravelHealthPro](#) and [GOV.UK health advice](#), and speak to your GP or a travel clinic well in advance. Some vaccinations need to be given a set number of days before arrival to be accepted.

Scotland's [Fit for Travel](#) service publishes destination advice as well, and general information on routine immunisation is on the [NHS vaccinations pages](#). Keep any certificate you are issued with your travel documents rather than in your suitcase.

Timing is part of the requirement. A vaccination administered too close to travel may not be accepted. This is the single most common health-related problem for UK pilgrims and it is entirely avoidable with a few weeks' notice.

Can women travel for Umrah without a mahram?

This is among the most frequently asked questions from UK pilgrims, and the position has changed in recent years.

Saudi Arabia has relaxed the requirement that previously applied to women travelling for Umrah, and women now travel without a male relative on many itineraries. Separately from the entry rules, there is a scholarly discussion about travel for worship that pilgrims may wish to raise with their own imam.

Two different questions. What the Saudi authorities permit and what your school of thought advises are separate matters. Confirm the entry position officially, and take the religious

question to a qualified scholar.

Children and family applications

Children need their own entry permission and their own passport. There is no arrangement by which a child travels on a parent's application.

Check each child's passport validity individually. Family trips are frequently delayed by one expired child passport that nobody checked because the adults' documents were in order.

Arriving in Saudi Arabia

On arrival you will pass through immigration, where biometrics are usually taken. Have your accommodation details accessible, since you may be asked where you are staying.

Keep your entry permission, insurance certificate and hotel confirmation downloaded to your phone rather than relying on email, because airport connectivity is unreliable and roaming may not activate immediately. It is also worth reading the current [GOV.UK safety and security advice](#) before you fly, which covers local laws that differ from UK norms.

Getting between the cities

Most UK itineraries include both Makkah and Madinah. Transfers are usually by coach or by the high-speed rail link, which we cover in our guide to the [Makkah to Madinah train](#). If you are moving to Makkah from Madinah, remember the miqat is crossed on that journey.

If you are entering ihram before landing, which most pilgrims flying direct to Jeddah do, read our guide to [ihram rules](#) before you fly, because the miqat is crossed in the air.

What to do if your application is refused

Refusals are uncommon and are usually administrative rather than a judgement about you personally.

Identify the actual reason

Most refusals trace back to something correctable: a photograph that failed the specification, a name mismatch, accommodation that could not be evidenced, or insufficient passport validity. Read the reason given rather than immediately reapplying.

Correct and reapply

Fix the specific problem before submitting again. Reapplying with the same error simply repeats the outcome and, in some cases, costs the fee a second time.

Protect your flights

This is exactly why entry permission should be settled before flights become non-refundable. If your flights are already booked, contact the airline about changes and check whether your insurance covers the situation.

If you are travelling on a package, the operator handles the resubmission. If you applied yourself and are unsure, the consular guidance on [GOV.UK travel advice for Saudi Arabia](#) is the right starting point.

Keep every reference number. Save your application reference, payment receipt and any correspondence in one place. If something needs resolving quickly, having the references to hand turns a long problem into a short one.

Money, connectivity and practical arrival details

Two small things cause disproportionate difficulty on arrival, and both are easy to handle in advance.

Payment cards

Tell your bank you are travelling so your card is not blocked on first use. Card payment is widely accepted in both cities, but having some local currency for smaller purchases and for charity is sensible.

Staying connected

Check your roaming charges before departure, or arrange a local eSIM. Several services, including permit bookings through Nusuk, are easier with a working data connection, and the [official Nusuk service](#) sets out the current booking options.

Download before you fly. Entry permission, insurance, hotel confirmation, flight details and your permit bookings should all exist offline on your phone. Signal inside the Haram during peak hours is unreliable for everyone.

Common reasons applications are delayed or refused

Almost all of them are avoidable, and almost all are found in this short list.

Passport validity under six months. A photograph that does not meet the specification. Names that do not match the passport exactly.

Unconfirmed accommodation. No return flight booking. Missing insurance.

Applying through an unofficial website. Leaving the application too late in a peak season.

The pre-flight check.

- Passport valid six months
- Names match exactly
- Accommodation confirmed
- Return flight booked
- Insurance active
- Entry permission issued and saved offline

Six checks, and they prevent nearly every problem at the airport.

When to travel, and how that affects your application

The season you choose changes how much buffer time you should build into the process.

Ramadan and the winter holidays

These are the busiest Umrah periods for UK travellers. Applications, flights, hotels and permits all come under pressure at the same time, and processing that normally takes days can take noticeably longer. Apply considerably earlier than you would otherwise.

Quieter months

Outside the peaks, the whole process is calmer. Hotels closer to the Haram become affordable, permit slots are easier to secure, and there is far more room for a passport or photograph problem to be fixed without threatening the trip.

Avoiding the Hajj period

Arrangements around the days of Hajj are different, and Umrah travel is managed differently in that window. If your dates fall near Dhul Hijjah, confirm what is possible before booking anything, and see our comparison of the [difference between Hajj and Umrah](#) for why that period is handled separately.

Build in a buffer you expect not to need. Two spare weeks costs nothing if everything goes smoothly, and saves the trip if it does not. Check the latest [entry requirements](#) again shortly before

you fly, because they can change after you have applied.

Tips for a smooth Umrah application from the UK

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

1. **Check passport validity first.** Before flights, before hotels, before anything else.
2. **Confirm the current route on GOV.UK.** Rules change between seasons; verify in the week you apply.
3. **Prepare documents early.** Submit the actual application within the window allowed for your selected route, rather than using one timetable for every visa.
4. **Use official channels only.** Avoid resellers charging a large mark-up on the same form.
5. **Match every name exactly.** Passport, booking and application must agree completely.
6. **Sort vaccinations early.** Some must be given a set number of days before arrival.
7. **Save everything offline.** Entry permission, insurance and hotel confirmation, downloaded to your phone.

Frequently asked questions

How do I get an Umrah visa from the UK?

British passport holders generally apply either through an online tourist route or through an approved agent as part of a package. Confirm which routes are currently open on GOV.UK and the official Saudi platform before booking flights.

How much is an Umrah visa from the UK?

The total depends on the route, whether insurance is bundled and whether an agent applies on your behalf. Fees are revised periodically, so check the official platform for the current figure and ask any operator to itemise their service charge separately.

How long does an Umrah visa take?

Processing depends on the route, complete documents and current service conditions. Start preparing early, but submit within your route's allowed application window. Do not treat an estimated processing time as a guarantee or make irreversible bookings on that basis.

How long is the Umrah visa valid for?

The GOV.UK guidance checked for this review lists ETA validity of 730 days with 180 days' total stay, and e-visa validity of 365 days with 90 days' total stay. It also lists single-entry visa-waiver information. Verify current eligibility and follow the exact conditions issued with your own permission; validity is not permission to remain for the entire validity period.

Can I perform Umrah on a tourist visa?

Tourist entry permission has generally allowed holders to perform Umrah since the routes were expanded. Confirm the current position officially before relying on it.

Do women need a mahram for Umrah?

Saudi Arabia has relaxed the previous requirement for women travelling for Umrah. The separate scholarly question about travelling for worship should be taken to a qualified scholar.

Do children need their own visa?

Yes. Every child needs their own passport and their own entry permission. Check each child's passport validity separately.

What vaccinations do I need?

Current GOV.UK guidance lists meningococcal quadrivalent certification for Hajj and Umrah pilgrims and yellow-fever certification for arrivals from specified risk countries. Check the correct Saudi Arabia health page for your travel season and itinerary. Ask a travel clinic about timing, medical suitability and any additional requirements.

Get the paperwork right and forget about it

The entry process is not the difficult part of Umrah. It becomes difficult only when it is left late, submitted through the wrong website, or built on a passport nobody checked.

Pilgrims are instructed to take provision for the journey in [Quran 2:197](#). Paperwork is simply the modern form of that preparation.

Handle it early and it disappears into the background, which is where it belongs. If you would rather not manage it yourself, our team arranges entry permission alongside flights, hotels and transfers, and will itemise every element so you can see exactly what you are paying for.

Babul Haram Travels is a UK Umrah and Hajj specialist, and we put every quote in writing before you commit.

Photographs retain their linked licences.

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/difference-between-hajj-and-umrah/>
2. <https://babulharamtravels.co.uk/blog/ihram-rules/>
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