

CULTURE & LIFESTYLE

Saudi Arabia's Luxury Train, Dream of the Desert, To Bring Back the Golden Age of Travel

Designed by AD100 designer Amman-based architect Aline Asmar and inspired by Arab traditions, its palatial suites are an ode to high craft

By Fanny Guénon des Mesnards

January 31, 2025



Photo: Supplied

A first look at Dream of the Desert, Saudi Arabia's luxury train, where craftsmanship, contemporary details and age-old traditions come together.



Photo: Supplied

It is a case of past meeting the future. Saudi Arabia's luxury train, Dream of the Desert, comes at a time when not only when we have fallen back in love with the glamour of overnight trains of yore – the Britannic Explorer, A Belmond Train will soon be departing from London, the Orient-Express is preparing to open a new chapter in its history from Paris, the interiors of the Dolce Vita Orient Express are by Dimorestudio – the Middle East is charting its own new path with Etihad Rail set to transform travel Across the UAE.



Photo: Supplied



Photo: Supplied

This is the culmination of a project led by Saudi Arabian Railways (SAR) and the Italian luxury hotel company Arsenale. The *Dream of the Desert* luxury train will soon redefine the codes of the immersive travel experiences, offering guests a once-in-a-lifetime experience as it courses through the Saudi desert. Inside the 14 carriages (including 34 suites worthy of palaces), AD100 designer Aline Asmar of Amman has imagined a décor inspired by the desert landscape and traditional Saudi architecture: think earthy tones, opulent textiles, motifs in nod to mythical places such as AlUla, Madain Saleh, Hail.

Where Does Saudi Arabia's Dream of the Desert Train Start? And How Long Is the Journey?

Departing from Riyadh, the train is set to explore Saudi Arabia's most beautiful sites and spotlight the Arab kingdom's majestic landscape as it courses some 1,300 kilometres of existing tracks and through Al Qurayyat in the northern province of Al Jawf. Overnight route also offer tailor-made cultural programs thanks to a close collaboration with the Saudi Ministry of Culture.



Photo: Supplied

A Gastronomic Experience in a Sumptuous Setting on Wheels



Photo: Supplied

On board, the suites feature Arab craftsmanship at its finest, as marquetry panels interact with several variations of hand-crafted tiles and precious tapestries. In the restaurant, the dining experience promises to be rich and immersive, with the traveler dining almost face-to-face with the landscape as it unfolds.



Photo: Supplied



Photo: Supplied

Camaïeux of amber tones, shades of green, leatherwork... Designed with meticulous attention to detail by, the decor of the bar and restaurant cars convey an idea of this Saudi luxury train being a 'fantasy' in every detail.

When will Saudi Arabia's Luxury Train, Dream of the Desert, start operating?

A tribute to the kingdom's traditions in a modernised design, Saudi Arabia's Dream of the Desert, the first five-star rail service in the Middle East will start welcoming passengers at the end of 2026.



Photo: Supplied



Photo: Supplied

AD



Connect with AD

About AD Middle East
Contact the Editors
Newsletter Sign Up

Our website, admiddleeast.com, offers continually updated coverage of the best design, interiors and architecture in the Middle East and beyond. There's also a curated selection of covetable and clever products, travel destinations and cultural events, plus a dash of celebrity style, access to the VIP homes featured in our print magazine and exclusive video content.

CULTURE & LIFESTYLE

Saudi Arabia's Luxury Train, Dream of the Desert, To Bring Back the Golden Age of Travel

Designed by AD100 architect Aline Asmar d'Amman and inspired by Arab traditions, its palatial suites are an ode to high craft

By Fanny Guéron des Mesnards
January 31, 2025



Photo: Supplied

A first look at Dream of the Desert, Saudi Arabia's luxury train, where craftsmanship, contemporary details and age-old traditions come together.



Photo: Supplied

It is a case of past meeting the future. Saudi Arabia's luxury train, Dream of the Desert, comes at a time when not only when we have fallen back in love with the glamour of overnight trains of yore – the Britannic Explorer, A Belmond Train will soon be departing from London, [the Orient-Express](#) is preparing to open a new chapter in its history from Paris, the interiors of the Dolce Vita Orient Express are by [Dimorestudio](#) – the Middle East is charting its own new path with Etihad Rail set to [transform travel Across the UAE](#).



Photo: Supplied



Photo: Supplied

A first look at Dream of the Desert, Saudi Arabia's luxury train, where craftsmanship, contemporary details and age-old traditions come together.



Photo: Supplied

It is a case of past meeting the future. Saudi Arabia's luxury train, Dream of the Desert, comes at a time when not only when we have fallen back in love with the glamour of overnight trains of yore – the Britannic Explorer, A Belmond Train will soon be departing from London, the Orient-Express is preparing to open a new chapter in its history from Paris, the interiors of the Dolce Vita Orient Express are by Dimorestudio – the Middle East is charting its own new path with Etihad Rail set to transform travel Across the UAE.



Photo: Supplied



Photo: Supplied

This is the culmination of a project led by Saudi Arabian Railways (SAR) and the Italian luxury hotel company Arsenale. The *Dream of the Desert* luxury train will soon redefine the codes of the immersive travel experiences, offering guests a once-in-a-lifetime experience as it courses through the Saudi desert. Inside the 14 carriages (including 34 suites worthy of palaces), AD100 designer Aline Asmar d'Amman has imagined a décor inspired by the desert landscape and traditional Saudi architecture: think earthy tones, opulent textiles, motifs in nod to mythical places such as AlUla, Madain Saleh, Hail.

Where Does Saudi Arabia's Dream of the Desert Train Start? And How Long Is the Journey?

Departing from Riyadh, the train is set to explore Saudi Arabia's most beautiful sites and spotlight the Arab kingdom's majestic landscape as it courses some 1,300 kilometres of existing tracks and through Al Qurayyat in the northern province of Al Jawf. Overnight route also offer tailor-made cultural programs thanks to a close collaboration with the Saudi Ministry of Culture.



Photo: Supplied

A Gastronomic Experience in a Sumptuous Setting on Wheels



Photo: Supplied

On board, the suites feature Arab craftsmanship at its finest, as marquetry panels interact with several variations of hand-crafted tiles and precious tapestries. In the restaurant, the dining experience promises to be rich and immersive, with the traveler dining almost face-to-face with the landscape as it unfolds.



Photo: Supplied



Photo: Supplied

Camaïeux of amber tones, shades of green, leatherwork... Designed with meticulous attention to detail by, the decor of the bar and restaurant cars convey an idea of this Saudi luxury train being a 'fantasy' in every detail.

Desert, start operating?

A tribute to the kingdom's traditions in a modernised design, Saudi Arabia's Dream of the Desert, the first five-star rail service in the Middle East will start welcoming passengers at the end of 2026.



Photo: Supplied



Photo: Supplied