



**Rakayib**

The Empty Quarter



# ❖ The wonders of silence at night and stars in the sky

Nighttime promises to treat visitors to one of the most captivating desert sceneries, and nothing resembles better than the Empty Quarter.





## Welcome adventurer!

The Empty Quarter desert stretches over an area of more than half a million square kilometres, where once-in-a-lifetime-journey awaits you in one of the world's largest, as well as the most interesting and the most challenging deserts, with Rakayib Caravan!

Rakayib Caravan is an exploratory journey programme designed for you to be at the forefront of explorers and adventurous enthusiasts, to cross the Empty Quarter on camelback in a convoy, to explore the treasures of this mysterious desert, and to learn about its wealth, civilizations, climate and geographical wonders. It offers you a unique experience in the heart of an unmatched desert environment.

This promising journey continues to reach some of the unknown and virgin places of the Empty Quarter, as well as to trace the ruins, plants, communities and ancient civilizations. We will rewrite history along with you when the caravans return to explore the desert in search of trade, water and grass as they used to do in the past.

In this unique experience, you will learn about some of the rare desert phenomena. You will find yourself in front of the rabadhat, soft sand dunes that are difficult to walk upon and one can possibly be sunk into. You will pass through sulphur lakes and springs for which the Empty Quarter desert is known. You will learn about horseshoe-shaped dunes, large dome-shaped dunes, as well as long linear dunes.

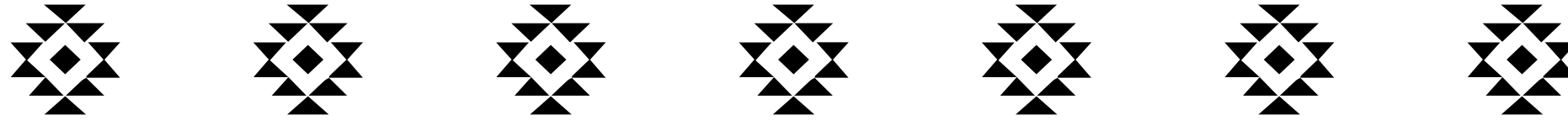


A person wearing a blue shirt and white pants, riding a camel on a sand dune. The camel is decorated with colorful patterns. The background is a clear blue sky.

# ❖ A Journey in Search of Gold, Flowers and History

In this desert which prides itself on black gold (oil) and yellow gold (sand), the journey aims to explore the history of ancient civilizations buried under sand dunes.





Rakayib Caravan is one of the programmes offered by the Camel Club in Saudi Arabia. It was founded by a royal decree in 2017 to be a national pride and to bear witness to the Kingdom's interest in its heritage, culture and pure Arab character that extends over the vast Arab Desert.

**As the royal decree states, “Due to the importance of camels in our history, given their close connection with our heritage and culture, and due to the importance of taking care of camels and those interested in them through an association that brings them together, we hereby order that a club, bearing the name ‘Camel Club’ be established. The general supervisor of the club and the Chairman and members of its Board of Directors are to be appointed by order of the Prime Minister. The relevant bodies shall be represented in the Board.”**

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Muhammad ibn Salman ibn Abdul-Aziz, the General Supervisor of the Camel Club, attaches great importance to this fundamental aspect of the country's culture and heritage, inspired by a promising vision that looks forward to universality, sustainability and continuous development.

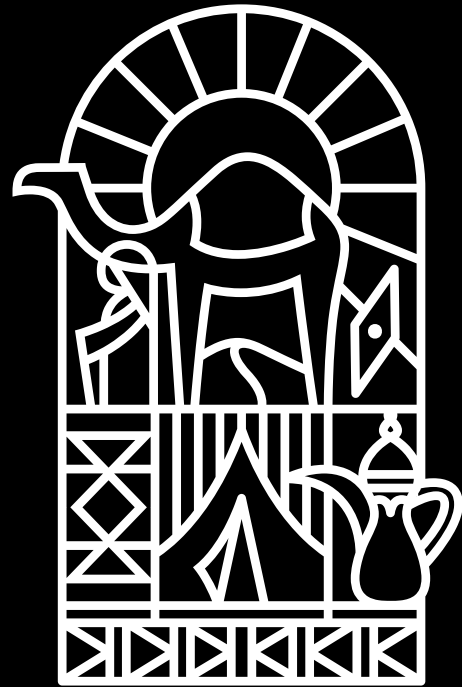




# ❖❖❖ **Wa ‘Urooqu Ardhee Dalilatun (The Linear Sand Dunes in My Land Are Our Guide)**

‘Irq (pl. ‘urooq) is a long, linear sand dune that is shaped by winds blowing in two directions. This saying indicates that Bedouins recognise the nature of the place and its characteristics from the colour and shape of these long, linear dunes, as though they were a land compass for them.





# The Empty Quarter

**The** very name of 'the Empty Quarter' had always stricken fear into the hearts of caravans and explorers well into the early 20th century. As you well know, dear explorer, Saudi Arabia has succeeded in uncovering some of the secrets of this desert and has employed advanced geographic services and modern survey tools. In this way, it has opened several roads through the Empty Quarter and established cities in the heart of the desert, ranging from oil and exploration to residential cities. It has also concluded agreements with a number of companies and teams to explore the vast desert valleys, yet the Empty Quarter desert still holds many secrets that have not yet been discovered.



**Today, Rakayib Caravan takes you through the Empty Quarter desert in order to discover more facts buried in its golden sands and its horizons that are tainted with the colour of its yellow sands and blue sky. Therefore, let us get to know this desert through these facts:**



The Empty Quarter desert is the largest contiguous sand desert in the world and the second largest desert in the world. It covers some 640,000 km<sup>2</sup> (250,000 sq mi) (the area of long. 45° 30′–56° 30′E, and lat. 16° 30′–23° 00′N).



80% of the Empty Quarter area is located in Saudi Arabia, while the rest of it is in the United Arab Emirates, Oman and Yemen.



The Empty Quarter is divided into 3 regions within the Kingdom. The northwestern part of the region is located in the Riyadh region. It represents less than 10% of its area. The southwestern part of it is situated in the Najran region, representing around 25% of its area. The Eastern Region has the lion's share of the Empty Quarter, and the rest of the area represents 65% of it.



The Empty Quarter is a huge basin into which large valleys flow from several sides and is surrounded by the most important mountain ranges in the Arab region. It is bordered on the north by the Najd plateau, on the west by the plateaus of Najran and Asir, on the south by the plateaus of the Republic of Yemen and the Sultanate of Oman and on the east by the Oman Highlands and the plains of the UAE.





Sand dunes in the Empty Quarter come in different forms and bodies. Some dunes rise to a height of 1000 meters above sea level, and include, among other things, quicksand, sand sheets, star dunes and pyramid-shaped dunes.



For centuries, the Empty Quarter has been a 'closed box' that is full of secrets, civilizations and mysteries waiting to be discovered. These include, among other things, oil and gas fields, wildlife, rare species of drought-resistant desert plants such as 'andab (*Cyperus conglomeratus*), and migratory birds such as turtle doves and bustards, as well as Arabian animals such as Oryxes and ostriches.



Archaeologists point to the existence of human civilizations and ancient cities in the Empty Quarter, which were then buried in the sand, specifically the civilization of 'Ad, which was in the region of Al-Ahqaf ('sand dunes' or 'the winding sand tract'), mentioned in the Holy Qur'an.



During the last century, a number of European travellers and explorers succeeded in crossing the Empty Quarter and wrote about it frequently in their memoirs and dairies. These include Bertram Sidney Thomas, the first documented Westerner to cross the Empty Quarter; R E Cheeseman, who in 1923 wrote *Unknown Arabia*; British explorer Sir Wilfred Patrick Thesiger, also called Mubarak bin London. He travelled to the Arabian Peninsula, in addition to Iraq, Iran, Pakistan and West Africa, and wrote several books about them. He was able to cross the Empty Quarter twice in 1945 and 1950. His book *Arabian Sands* is an important book in history and geography. It is one of the best works that lists the details of the two trips in the Empty Quarter desert with his Bedouin guide and his friends from the Rashid and two from the Bait Kathir tribes. Sir Wilfred Patrick Thesiger described him as a very accurate observer.





# ❖❖❖ How Does the Terrain Tell the Story of History?

Today's journey tells the story of yesterday's journey into this part of the world, where sand dunes, rocks, groundwater wells and sulphur lakes bear testimony to the historical, cultural and scientific importance of the Empty Quarter.





## Historical and Geographic Importance

The Empty Quarter occupies a unique place in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the project aims to explore this rare region of the world, which forms an important component of the geography and history of the Kingdom.

## Authenticity

The desert is an authentic gift in the social and cultural fabric of Saudi Arabia, in that it is a true reflection of desert life and its mobile nature and distinctive dialects and accents.





# ❖ 'As Numerous as the Sands of Yabrin'

Bedouins in the past associated something that was plentiful to the sands of Yabrin, a Saudi Arabian region, because of its abundant sands, vastness and numerous sand dunes. So is our journey, which is packed with diverse and multiple adventures.







## ❖ Surprisingly true

The Empty Quarter is a fantastic, vast historical and rarely visited area. It is rather unknown awaiting exploration.



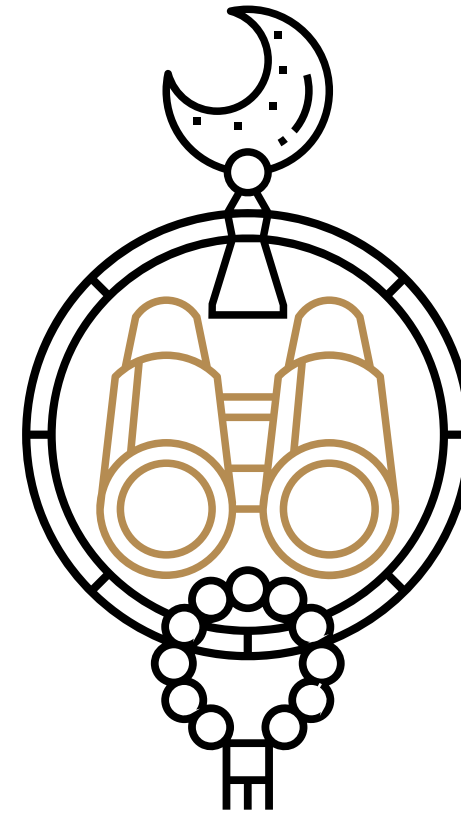
## Adventure and Exploration

Rakayib Caravan is a bold and unprecedented journey that is full of surprises and high expectations. It is an adventure unlike any other, because it crosses a desert that is unique in its characteristics, vastness and numerous exploration opportunities compared to all other deserts on earth.



## Global Reach

Rakayib Caravan offers its activities in the context of sports, exploration and science at the same time, making it of particular concern to a wide range of people, including athletes, geologists and those interested in heritage and archaeology. Rakayib Caravan is also expected to have a global reach and attract the attention of all those concerned from all over the world.







# A Story of the Sun, the Land and Water

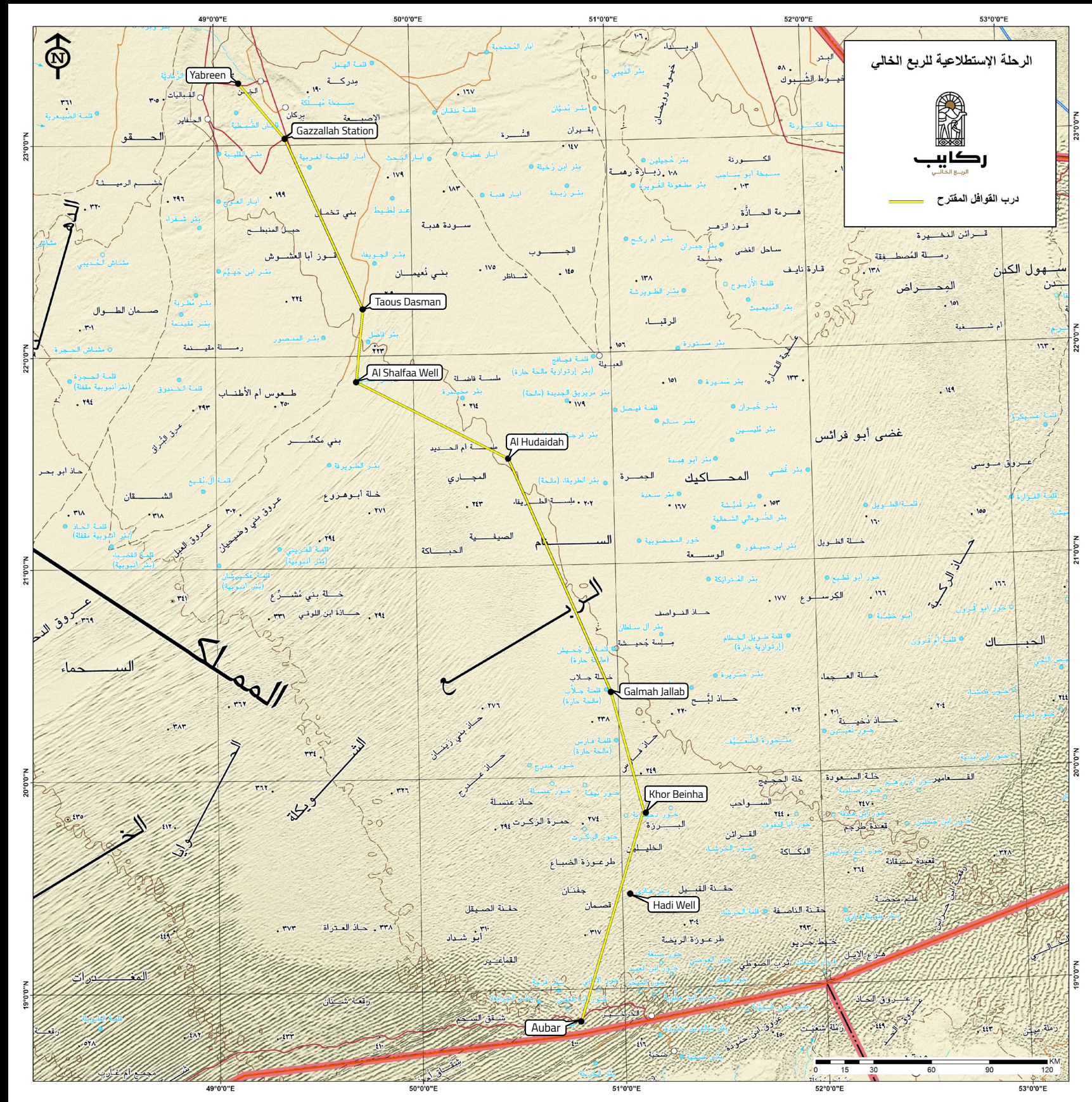
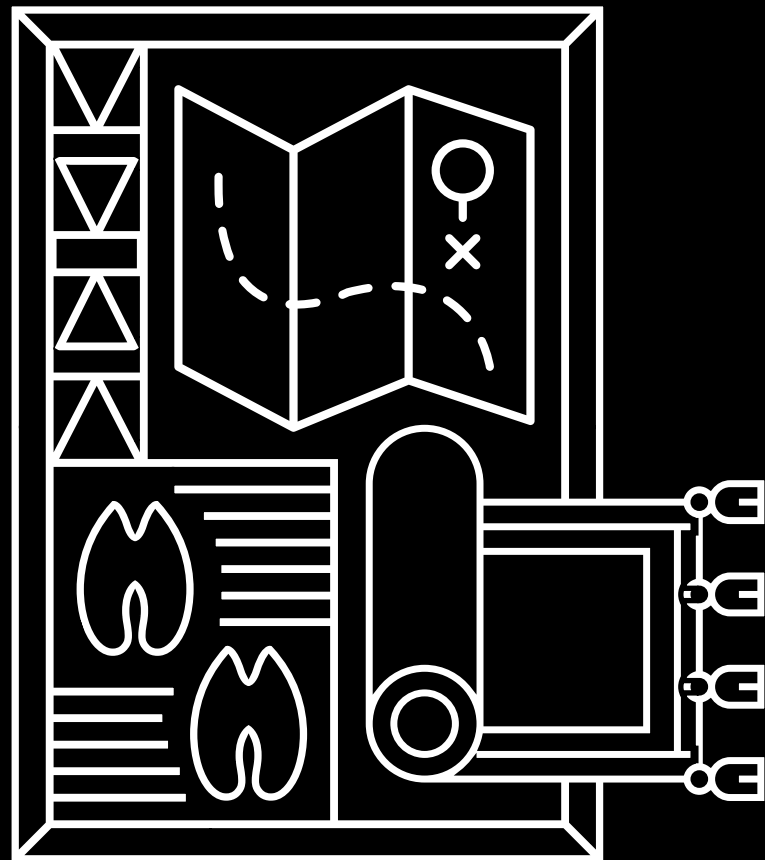
Abundant groundwater flows deep down the Empty Quarter, while sulphur lakes and hot wells are found on its surface. The Empty Quarter has witnessed many phenomena, such as meteorites striking its surface and the Gulf waters regression ... The story continues.





# ❖ Path of Rakayib

Within 26 days  
we will cut 600 kilo





## ❖❖❖ Join the convoy

Set your watch, and prefer to sign up for Rakayeb trip to live the adventure and discover the desert, by booking the flights described

**rakayib.com**



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