



Frequently Asked Questions

1.0 General

1.1 How many groups are you taking for Hajj, this year?

We are taking two groups in 2020.

1.2 What are the dates for Hajj, this year?

Group 1 - Fri 18th Jul – Wed 6th Aug (14 working days)

Group 2 - Tues 23rd – Tues 6th Aug (11 working days)

1.3 How long is our stay in Madinah and Makkah?

Group 1 - Madinah: 18th – 23rd July 2020

Makkah: 23rd July – 6th August 2020

Group 2 - Madinah: 23rd - 26th July 2020

Makkah: 27th July – 6th August 2020

Please note that these dates are subject to availability of flights and may change slightly. The exact dates will be confirmed at the Logistics seminar.

1.4 What are the costs, for this year?

Group 1 - £4,595

Group 2 - £4,795

1.5 What is the difference between the Long (Group 1) and the Short (Group 2) Hajj? Is there anything that is excluded in the Short Hajj?

Other than the number of days, there is no difference. We offer a shorter Hajj package as an alternative to those who cannot be out the country for too long.

Those going in the Short Hajj group will spend fewer days in Madinah and in Makkah and therefore will have fewer 'free' days to themselves. Both groups will perform the all the same Ziyarats (visitations) and of course the Hajj rituals.

1.6 Why is the shorter Hajj more expensive when the group will be spending less days in Saudi Arabia?

The European Hajj Company Ltd is a not for profit organisation and therefore sets prices based on actual costs. The prices for the hotels are based on seasons. The Short Hajj group will arrive in Madinah around 1st Dhul-Hijjah, which is considered peak season and therefore the rates are more expensive.

1.7 For first time Hujjaj, would you recommend going the long or the shorted Hajj?

Other than the number of days and the dates of travel, there is no difference between the groups. Both groups will also be together in the same hotel in Makkah. It is therefore a matter of preference and personal circumstances, as to which group you choose to travel with.

However, as a first timer, you may derive more benefit travelling with the long Hajj group, as you will have more days to spend in Madinah and Makkah.

1.8 What is the total size of the group?

The group will comprise of a total of 150 Hujjaj.



2.0 Pre- Application

2.1 When is the deadline for the applications?

We recommend submitting your application as soon as possible, as spaces usually fill up quickly. We generally accept applications on a first come first served bases and therefore stop when all spaces are filled. However, as a general rule, we need to have received all applications six weeks prior to departure to allow us to process everything.

2.2 What happens if I change my mind after I have paid the deposit?

We will only be able to refund your deposit if we are able to allocate your space to someone else. Therefore, please be sure before applying but should you need to cancel, due to the unforeseen circumstances, do so as soon as possible so that we may offer your space to another applicant. We highly recommend purchasing Travel Insurance, as this will help cover costs in the event of a cancellation, due to unforeseen circumstances. In any event, please speak to our team and we will be happy to advise.

2.3 Are children allowed to go for Hajj?

Yes.

2.4 Can non-UK passport holders travel with your group?

Yes, subject to the person residing in the UK by producing a Resident Permit and utility bill. This applies to EU passport holders as well as non-EU passport holders. This is due to the strict quota system from Saudi Embassy which we need to adhere to.

2.5 Can non-UK residents travel with your group?

As long as they are British citizens, they can travel with us. There is no need to prove residency.

2.6 I am a British citizen; however, my spouse holds a foreign passport. Can we travel with your group?

Yes, as long as they are a UK resident with no restrictions on their passport. They will need to provide proof of residency (Resident Permit/Utility bill).

2.7 Can we travel from a different country and join the group, or do we need to connect from London?

No. Unfortunately, due to the logistical challenges, we are unable to make separate/individual arrangements.

2.8 Can you arrange for me to depart and return to another city (I.E not London)?

No. Unfortunately, due to the logistical challenges, we are unable to make separate/individual arrangements.



3.0 Application Process

3.1 I have submitted my application. What happens next?

Our team will review your application and will be in contact with you with further instructions. Usually, we acknowledge receipt within 3 working days of your application being received. We will then write to you to confirm your application. The confirmation letter will include information about the next steps.

3.2 When will you collect the passports for the Visa?

We collect passports at the logistics seminar that we hold, around 4 weeks before departure. This year the seminar will be held on Sunday 14 June 2020.

3.3 I need to travel, when will you return my passport?

Once we collect the passports, we hold on to them until the date of departure and return them to the Hujjaj, at the airport. However, if you do need your passport back, please speak to a member of our Administration team and they will be happy to help.

3.4 I am not able to submit my passport of the date you have requested, due to travel. Can I submit it at a later date?

We collect the passports on the day of the Logistics seminar (which is usually held 4 weeks prior to departure), to allow us adequate time to apply for your visa and to deal with and queries that may arise from the application. We therefore highly recommend that you submit your passport on the date requested, as they need to be submitted as part of the group. However, if you are unable to do that, please submit your passport as soon as possible after the deadline. Please be aware however, that in the event of a late submission, the visa may not be issued in time for travel, in which case you may still incur the full costs of the Hajj, as it will be too late to reallocate your space at that point.

We will be happy to provide more detailed guidance relating to your particular circumstances.

3.5 How long does the Visa process take?

Once the application has been submitted, Visas usually take 5 working days to be issued. However, please note that our team has to prepare the documentation for submission after collecting your passport and therefore, it will not be 5 days from the date you hand your passport in to us.

3.6 If my visa application is rejected, will I get a full refund?

Yes. But to date, we have not had any applications for visas that have been rejected.

3.7 What is the validity requirement for my passport?

Your passport needs to valid for a minimum of 6 months after the return date.

3.8 Can I provide only one e-mail address and/or one mobile number for all the members of my family who are travelling with me for Hajj?

Since we communicate all information electronically now (via e-mail and SMS), it is really important that we have each applicant's personal e-mail address and mobile number. This has the added advantage that if one member of the family receives some communication from us, they can alert other members of the family to check their Inboxes etc. This way, therefore is a greater likelihood of not missing e-mails and messages.

Also note that we will be communicating all logistics information and will be making announcements about programmes via WhatsApp, both in London and in Saudi Arabia. It is therefore vital that we have all family members' mobile numbers, so that everyone receives crucial updates.



4.0 Seminars and Workshops

4.1 I have never been for Hajj. Do you offer seminars?

Yes. We organise a 'Logistics' seminar, where we cover all the logistical aspects of the trip. Essentially, we walk you through all the steps from departure to return back to London, at this seminar.

The Council of European Jamaats (CoEJ) also organises a Hajj workshop, which is open to Hujjaj travelling with any group. This covers the spiritual aspects and rituals of Hajj.

4.2 What is the 'Logistics' Seminar?

This seminar is specific to our groups Hajj for the year. It covers all the logistics of the trip, starting with what time to meet at the airport, all the way through to our return. At this seminar, we will collect your passports and other important documents and issue your suitcases, dua books etc. It is therefore vital that you attend this session.

4.3 What is the 'Hajj workshop'?

This workshop has been organised by The Council of European Jamaats (CoEJ), as a service to all Hujjaj who are travelling for Hajj, regardless of which group they are going with. It covers the spiritual aspects and the rituals of Hajj. It is highly recommended to attend this workshop if you have never been for Hajj, or are going after a long time.

4.4 What if I can't attend the Logistics seminar?

It is really important to attend this seminar, as all the key information about the trip will be given at this session. If, however, you cannot attend, please speak to a member of our administration team for guidance. You will need to also arrange to deliver your passport and key documents as well as collect your suitcase, dua books etc.

Please note that outside of the seminar session, it remains your responsibility for the timely submission of the required documents and collections of your luggage.

4.5 What if I can't attend the Hajj workshop?

We highly recommend that you attend this workshop, as it will enhance your experience of Hajj, especially if you are going for the first time or returning, after a long time. The European Hajj Company Ltd, will cover the spiritual aspects and the rituals of Hajj, at key points, before that actual Hajj commences, in Saudi Arabia, therefore you will still receive all the guidance that you need.

4.6 Are the seminars and the workshops available online for me to watch?

Yes. We will endeavour to broadcast both sessions live on YouTube and will also upload the videos to watch at your convenience.

Live broadcast: www.hujjat.org

Videos: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCf7WxJhrdPeMegKuUBJtHog>



5.0 Accommodation

5.1 What is the distance of the hotels from the Harams?

Madinah – Less than 5-minute walk to the gates of the Haram.

Makkah – Approximately 15-minute walk, during rush hour, to the Haram.

5.2 What star ratings are the hotels?

Madinah – Rated 4 stars

Makkah – Approximately 2 stars

5.3 What camp with the group be staying at in Arafat and Mina?

European Camp (No: 48 or 49)

5.4 What is the distance of the camp in Mina from Jamaraat?

Approximately 45-minute walk each way.

5.5 Are the tents in Arafat and Mina air conditioned?

Yes

5.6 I have heard that the tent in the European camp in Mina are outside the 'Haram' area (I.E outside the borders of Mina), please can you advise?

No. The European camps are considered to be within the boundaries of Mina (known as the Haram area). Many groups stay there.

5.7 Will we be provided meals in Arafat and Mina, or do we take snack with us?

All meals will be provided.

5.8 What are the toilet facilities like in Arafat and Mina? Are Western toilets available?

The toilet facilities are quite good in Arafat and Mina. Western and Eastern toilets are available and are generally in good clean condition. However, please be prepared to queue, to use the facilities.



6.0 Services & Facilities

6.1 How many volunteers will be accompanying the group?

The group usually comprises of around 15 - 20 volunteers.

6.2 What meals are included as part of the package?

We will be providing full board, this year. Therefore breakfast, lunch and dinner will be included. In addition, we usually have a breakfast table setup on the gents and the ladies' floors with tea, coffee, snacks, cereals, eggs etc available 24 hours a day for Hujjaj to help themselves at any time. This is usually a good place to relax and socialise with members of the group.

6.3 Does The European Hajj Company Ltd. provide Ihram?

No. You must purchase your own Ihram. For gents, we will show you where to get one from, in Madinah. For the ladies, we will advise you at the Logistic seminar, in London, about what the Ihram entails.

6.4 Do you cater for non-English speakers?

We usually take an Urdu and an English scholar and therefore are able to cater for Urdu and English speakers. Please note however, that most of the programmes, announcements and seminars are predominantly in English.

6.5 I understand that you do not allow couples to share rooms. May I pay extra to share with my spouse?

No. Gents and ladies are segregated and cannot share accommodation. Gents and ladies cannot visit each other in their rooms.

6.6 Is Qurbani included?

The cost of Qurbani is covered in the package price.

6.7 Can I visit the slaughter house and do my own Qurbani?

We hope to be making arrangements for gents to go to the slaughter house and do their own Qurbani. Please indicate your preference on the application form.

It is not permissible for ladies to do their own Qurbani and therefore cannot visit the slaughter house.

6.8 Do you provide sleeping bags for Arafat, Muzdalifah and Mina?

For Arafat and Mina, you do not need a sleeping bag. For Muzdalifah, we recommend that you bring one with you. You may be able to purchase a cheap one in Madinah, which can then be discarded. Please bear in mind that you will be walking from Muzdalifah to Mina in heat and in a large crowd and will therefore want to travel light. Please therefore consider bringing a cheap/light sleeping bag and one which you could potentially open up and share with a family member or friend.

6.9 I understand that The European Hajj Company Ltd, is a Shia group. As a non-Shia (Sunni or another sect), may I travel with you for Hajj?

Yes. Whilst the group is a Shia organisation and we practice Hajj rituals according to Shia Fiqh (laws), we are all part of the same faith and welcome everyone from all sects. We respect everyone's views and individual practices.

The key difference in Hajj practice is that Shias go to Arafat first, followed by Muzdalifah and then Mina, whilst Sunnis will go to Mina, followed by Arafat and then Muzdalifah and then Mina again. Due to logistical reasons, unfortunately, we will not be able to take you to Mina first and then Arafat and would require everyone travelling with the European Hajj Company Ltd to follow the itinerary, set out by the organisation (which is based on Shia practices).

Title:	Frequently Asked Questions
Doc No:	INF-ADM-007
Date Created:	01/04/2019
Revision:	2.2
Review Date:	30/09/2020



7.0 Spiritual

7.1 Who are the scholars travelling with the group?

This year, we are fortunate to have with us, Syed Kalab Abbas Shah (Urdu), Sheikh Mohamed Al-Hilli (English), Sheikh Jaffer Ladak (English) and Sister Sheila Tejani (ladies English).

7.2 Which Jurist's ruling do you follow?

All the Hajj rituals are in accordance with the rulings of Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani. However, if you follow a different Marajah, we may be able to provide guidance, should it differ from Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani's rulings. For further information, please contact us.

7.3 I follow the rulings of the late Grand Ayatollah Khoei. Will you be able to cater for my needs?

Where the rulings of the late Grand Ayatollah Khoei differs to those of from Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani, we will be able to advise you on the differences and how to address these. Please note that in certain cases, due to logistical reasons, we may not be able to accommodate your specific needs, in accordance to the rulings of your Marajah. In these cases, we will advise you and you may need to pay a Kafara.



8.0 Medical

8.1 Do you have a doctor in the group?

Yes. We have a Medical team with us.

8.2 What medicines should I take with me?

You will be given a list of off-the-shelf medication that you should carry with you, at the Logistics seminar.

8.3 Can I carry my medication on me?

Yes. It is recommended that you carry your prescription medication with you, rather than check it in, as part of your main luggage. This will ensure that it does not get lost and is available when you need it.

8.4 What vaccinations do I need, before going for Hajj, and how do I arrange these?

The Saudi Arabian authorities require all Hujjaj to be vaccinated for Meningitis. This is valid for 3 years.

You can arrange to be vaccinated at your local pharmacy or through your GP. Please note that you will need to provide us with your vaccination certificate, when you submit your passport.

8.5 I have certain food allergies. How will you cater for my needs?

Please notify us of any food allergies on your application and we will do our very best to accommodate you.

8.6 I have certain medical problems. Can you provide me with the medical support that I will require?

Please briefly summarise your medical problems on your application and a member of the medical team will contact you to discuss these and will advise you on how best we can support you. If you have not been contacted by a member of the medical team within 5 working days of submitting your application, please call our Administrative team and let them know.

Please note that, regrettably, in certain circumstances we may decline your application, on medical grounds. This is due to the fact that Hajj can be physically challenging, with lots of walking in the heat.

8.7 Is there any help available for a disabled person going for Hajj?

Please ask one of our Administrators to put you in contact with our Medical Team to discuss this in greater detail.

8.8 Can I have access to a wheelchair?

Wheelchair services are available during Hajj. You will need to make arrangements with the locals, but our team will be able to provide you with some guidance. Please note that these wheelchairs are push by their owners and will not be released to individuals.

If you are bringing your own wheelchair, please note that you will need a member of your family or a friend to accompany you to help.

8.9 What happens if I get ill, during Hajj?

Our medical team is available to provide medical support throughout the trip and will be happy to help.

You are also required to carry travel insurance that will cover your medical costs, should you require to be hospitalised, whilst in Saudi Arabia. Please ensure that your Travel Insurance is valid from the day you book and covers the duration of the trip.



9.0 Logistics

9.1 I do not have a Mahram travelling with me. Please can you advise?

Please speak to a member of our Administration Team, who will be able to advise.

9.2 How much money should I bring with me?

All essentials, including meals are covered by the cost of the Hajj package and therefore you will only need to bring spending money with you. As a rough guide, £500 spending money should be adequate.

Please note that there are plenty of money Exchange facilities in Madinah and Makkah, so converting money to the local currency should not be a problem.

9.3 Where can I keep my valuables when I am in Arafat, Muzdalifah and Mina?

Please avoid bringing valuable items with you, on Hajj. During our stay in Arafat, Muzdalifah and Mina, we lock all the rooms and retain the rooms keys. You can therefore leave your valuables in your hotel room and can rest assured that not one will be accessing your room (not even the hotel staff).



10.0 Travel

10.1 Is the European Hajj Company Ltd ATOL protected?

Yes. Our Registration Number is: 9897

10.2 What time do I need to be at the airport by, on the day of departure?

We request all Hujjaj to be at the airport, 4 hours before departure, as group check-in takes longer than individual check-in

10.3 What is my luggage allowance?

We will advise you of this at the Logistics seminar.

10.4 How much ZamZam water can I bring back?

We will advise you of this before we leave Saudi Arabia.



11.0 **Further Information**

Should you have any specific queries or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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