

Where to Eat in Makkah and Madinah - The UK Pilgrim's Food Guide

Where to eat in Makkah and Madinah — best restaurants near the Haram, budget meals, UK-friendly food, and what to expect from hotel buffets.

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Let's talk about the question we hear every single season: **where to eat in Makkah** when you're tired, you've just finished Tawaf (circling the Kaaba), and you don't want to waste time hunting for food.

We get it. You've come for worship, not for restaurant drama. But food matters. It keeps your energy up for Salah (prayer), Sa'i (walking between Safa and Marwah), and those long, emotional nights in Masjid al-Haram and Masjid Nabawi.

Our Noor Umrah Travels ground staff eat out in Makkah and Madinah every season. And we've helped 2,000+ UK families plan this trip. So we're sharing what actually works in 2026: what's close, what's quick, what's worth it, and what to skip (trust us, we've seen it happen).

If you'd like help picking a hotel with easy food options, you can browse our [Umrah Packages UK 2026](#). It makes a big difference.



How Eating Works During Umrah (Prayer Times, Timing & Daily Budgets)

First, here's the truth.

Food in Makkah and Madinah runs on prayer time. Places don't just "slow down". Many shutters come down fully for Salah. So your timing matters.

Prayer-time closures: what to expect in 2026

Most restaurants near the Haram pause around each prayer. Some close 15–30 minutes before. Others stop taking orders, then reopen after the Jama'ah ends.

So plan like this:

- **Eat early** before Maghrib and Isha. Crowds jump fast.
- **Keep snacks** in your bag for post-Tawaf hunger.
- **Don't leave food ordering** to the last 10 minutes before Salah.

One small hack? If you’re near Masjid al-Haram, buy something simple right after Fajr. It’s calm. And you’ll thank yourself later.

Also, keep your money plan simple. We wrote a full guide on spending and exchange in Saudi, including card vs cash: [Saudi Arabia Currency Guide for UK Pilgrims – SAR to GBP Exchange Rates](#).

Daily food budget table (SAR and GBP)

Prices move by season. Ramadan spikes. School holidays too. But these 2026 ranges are realistic for most UK pilgrims.

Style	What you’ll eat	Per person / day (SAR)	Per person / day (GBP)
Budget	Food court meals, shawarma, rice plates, supermarket snacks	40–70 SAR	£8–£15
Mid	Family restaurants, mixed meals, fresh juice, dessert	70–120 SAR	£15–£26
Comfort	Hotel dining, premium grills, frequent delivery, coffees	120–200 SAR	£26–£43

Quick note: GBP is a guide. Rates change daily. Use your bank rate for the real number.

And if you’re still choosing where to stay, hotel location affects food cost. A hotel 800m further out can mean more taxi rides and more “let’s just order delivery” moments. Our hotel guides help a lot: [Best Hotels Near Haram Makkah – Complete Guide for Umrah Pilgrims](#).

Where to Eat in Makkah Near the Haram

Stay close. Eat smart.

When people search **where to eat in makkah**, they often mean one thing: “What can I eat within five minutes of my hotel?” That’s the right question.

Now, here’s the thing. The ground-floor restaurants right on the main pedestrian routes can be pricey and average. We often tell our groups: **skip the first row**, walk one street back, and you’ll usually get

better food for less.

If you're doing Ziyarat (visiting key sites), you'll also find food stops along the way. For ideas on routes and timings, see [15 Best Places to Visit in Makkah – Complete Ziyarat & Sightseeing](#).

Food courts around the Clock Tower (Abraj Al-Bait)

For speed and choice, food courts are your friend. The Abraj Al-Bait area is packed with options. It's also easy when you've got kids or elders.

What works well there:

- Rice plates (mandi, kabsa)
- Grilled chicken meals
- Shawarma and wraps
- Fresh juice and laban (yoghurt drink)

Best time to go? Between Dhuhr and Asr. It's busy, but manageable.

Quick meals under 20 SAR (yes, they exist)

You can eat cheap near the Haram. You just need to keep it simple.

- **Shawarma sandwich:** often 8–15 SAR
- **Falafel sandwich:** often 6–12 SAR
- **Small rice plate:** sometimes 15–25 SAR
- **Tea + snack:** about 5–12 SAR

Pro tip from our staff: buy water and fruit from a supermarket, not a kiosk. Kiosks near the main gates can cost more.

If you want a full “Umrah steps + timing” plan so you can match meals to your worship, keep this open on your phone: [How to Perform Umrah Step by Step - The Complete Guide for UK Pilgrims](#).

Family restaurants: when you need to sit properly

Some days you just need a chair. And a calm meal. That's normal.

Family restaurants near the Haram are great for:

- Mixed grills and rice platters for sharing
- Soups and warm bread when you're run down
- Big portions that feed 2-3 people

What to order when you're not sure:

- **Mandi** (rice cooked with meat or chicken). It's smoky and filling.
- **Kabsa** (spiced rice with chicken). It's a Saudi staple.
- **Mixed grill** with rice and salad. Safe choice.

Desi food for British Asian palates

We get asked this a lot: "Will I find proper desi food?" Yes. You'll find Indian and Pakistani restaurants in Makkah. And many UK pilgrims feel at home there.

Just keep two things in mind:

- Spice levels can be unpredictable. Ask first.
- Portions can be huge. Share to save money.

Our favourite approach is a mix. Eat Saudi rice meals most days. Then do desi food when you miss home.

The Al Baik Question

Yes, it's a real thing.

If you've heard UK pilgrims talk about fried chicken in Saudi, they mean Al Baik. It's famous. It's also a test of patience.



Is Al Baik worth it?

For many people, yes. It's tasty. It's consistent. And it feels like part of the Saudi "Umrah culture".

But don't make it your main plan. Queues can be long, especially after Isha and on weekends. If you've got elders, it can be a tough wait.

What to order (simple picks)

Keep it easy:

- Chicken pieces meal (good to share)
- Chicken nuggets for kids
- Extra garlic sauce (people love it)

Prices vary by branch and combo. Expect a basic meal often around 20–35 SAR per person in 2026.

Queue strategy our staff use

Go at odd times. It helps.

- Late morning after breakfast
- Mid-afternoon between Dhuhr and Asr

- Not right after a prayer ends

And if you're thinking, "We'll just grab it after Tawaf," be careful. You may end up hungry in a queue. That's not fun.

Hotel Buffets - What Your Package Breakfast Really Looks Like

This can surprise people.

Many UK pilgrims assume hotel breakfast will be like a UK buffet. Sometimes it is. Often it's different. And it depends on star rating and how close you are to the Haram.

If you're comparing stays, our team breaks down what hotels are really like near Masjid al-Haram and Masjid Nabawi. Start here: [Best Hotels Near Masjid Nabawi Madinah - Complete Guide for Umrah Pilgrims](#).



What breakfast usually includes (3-star vs 5-star)

Here's what we commonly see in 2026.

- **Basics:** eggs, toast, jam, tea, coffee, juice

- **Local items:** foul, hummus, labneh, olives
- **Desi-friendly bits:** paratha-style bread, beans, sometimes curry
- **Always:** dates. Lots of dates.

In 5-star hotels, you'll often get more variety and better timing. In 3-star hotels, breakfast can be simpler and crowded.

Timing tip: don't miss it

Some hotels stop breakfast earlier than you expect. So check the timings on day one.

If you're planning a long morning in the Haram, eat first. Then go. It's easier.

Should you rely on the buffet for lunch and dinner?

Usually, no.

Most packages include breakfast only. Lunch and dinner are on you. If you want a plan that includes more meals, tell us before you book. It can be added in some cases.

To compare package styles, have a look at [Umrah Packages UK 2026](#). You'll see what's included.

Where to Eat in Madinah

Madinah feels calmer.

After Makkah, many pilgrims tell us Madinah is where they finally breathe. The food scene matches that. It's still busy near Masjid Nabawi, but it's less intense.

Also, your walking pattern changes. You might do more relaxed meals after Salah, then return for Qur'an and durood.

If you're planning Ziyarat in Madinah, keep this handy: [15 Best Places to Visit in Madinah – Complete Ziyarat & Sightseeing](#).

Best restaurants Madinah: what pilgrims actually enjoy

We won't pretend there's one "best" place for everyone. Taste is personal.

But pilgrims often enjoy:

- Grill spots with mixed platters
- Rice restaurants serving mandi and kabsa
- Desi restaurants for a comfort meal
- Simple bakeries for breakfast and tea

And yes, you'll find UK-friendly food. Think burgers, pizza, and fried chicken too. It's easy when kids are picky.

Madinah's dates and market culture

Try dates in Madinah. It's part of the trip.

Ajwa dates are the famous one. They're linked with Madinah and deeply loved by pilgrims. You'll see them everywhere.

Our tip: don't buy the first box you see. Walk a little. Compare quality. Then choose.

And when you drink Zamzam with dates, slow down. Make dua. It's a small Sunnah moment that stays with you.

If you want the background and duas for Zamzam, we've written it clearly here: [Zamzam Water - The Complete Guide to Its History, Benefits and Duas](#).

Street Food and Markets - What to Try, What to Skip

Street food can be great.

But you need to be careful. Heat and crowds change everything. So we tell our pilgrims: be brave, but be wise.

What to try (safe, common, filling)

- **Fresh bread** from busy bakeries
- **Shawarma** from a shop with fast turnover
- **Corn on the cob** (if it's hot and fresh)
- **Fresh juice** from a clean counter

What to skip (especially with kids or elders)

- Food sitting out in open heat for long periods
- Anything with raw sauces that look warm
- Unknown seafood stalls (unless you're sure it's fresh)

Is street food in Madinah safe? Often, yes. But choose busy places. Busy means fresh. It's that simple.

One more thing. If you're doing a lot of walking, your stomach can get sensitive. Keep oral rehydration salts in your bag. And drink water often.

Food Delivery Apps in Saudi (HungerStation & More)

Delivery saves time.

In 2026, food delivery in Makkah and Madinah is normal. And it can be a lifesaver after a long day in the Haram.

How delivery works to hotels near the Haram

Most hotels don't let drivers come up to rooms. So you'll usually meet at:

- the main lobby
- a side entrance
- or a known pick-up point outside

Put your hotel name clearly. Add a note like: "I will meet you at lobby." It avoids delays.

HungerStation: when it beats going out

HungerStation is one of the most used apps. It's popular with pilgrims. And it covers a lot of areas.

Use it when:

- you're with elderly parents and don't want extra walking
- you've just finished Umrah late at night
- your kids are asleep and you need food fast

Expect delivery fees and surge pricing at peak times. That's normal.

And if you need mobile data for apps, you'll want a good SIM or eSIM. We broke it down here: [eSIM Saudi Arabia – Best SIM Card Guide for Umrah Pilgrims](#).

Eating on a Budget – Feed a Family for Under 200 SAR a Day

Yes, you can do it.

We've seen families of four eat well on a tight budget. The trick is planning. And not buying everything "right outside the gate".

A simple budget day plan (family of 4)

- **Breakfast:** hotel buffet (included) or bakery + tea (30–45 SAR)
- **Lunch:** 2 large rice plates to share + water (70–90 SAR)
- **Dinner:** shawarma/falafel + fruit (50–70 SAR)

Total: often **150–200 SAR** for the day. That's about **£32–£43**, depending on the rate.

Money-saving tips we use with our own groups

- **Share big dishes.** Mandi platters can feed 2–3 people.
- **Buy snacks in bulk.** Dates, biscuits, fruit, yoghurt.
- **Keep a "post-Salah snack".** It stops impulse buys.
- **Walk one street back.** Prices often drop.

A real example: last season, a family from Manchester told us they were spending too much near the Haram. Our staff walked them one road back and pointed out a simple rice place. They tried mandi for the first time. They loved it. And they saved around 60–80 SAR a day after that.

If you're still choosing trip length, food budget changes with days. A 7-day trip is very different to 14 days. You can compare options on our [7 Days 4 Star Umrah Package](#) page.

Dietary Needs (Vegetarian, Allergies, Diabetes)

You're not alone.

We support pilgrims with all sorts of needs. So let's make this practical.

Vegetarian options in Saudi

Are there vegetarian options during Umrah? Yes. But you may need to order carefully.

Good options to look for:

- falafel sandwiches
- hummus, labneh, fowl
- salads and soups
- veg pizza or pasta in chain places

Always ask if rice is cooked with meat stock. Some places do that.

Allergies (nuts, dairy, gluten)

If you've got a serious allergy, keep it simple. Stick to foods you can recognise.

Also:

- carry antihistamine and your EpiPen if prescribed
- avoid mixed desserts if you're unsure
- use packaged snacks with labels from supermarkets

Diabetic pilgrims: stable meals win

Long walks can drop your sugar fast. So steady meals help.

- Eat protein with carbs (eggs + bread, chicken + rice)
- Carry dates, but don't overdo it
- Keep water on you at all times

If you're planning a lot of Tawaf and Sa'i, don't skip meals. It's risky.



FAQ



What food is Makkah famous for?

Makkah is famous for simple, filling rice meals like **kabsa** and **mandi**. You'll also see shawarma everywhere. And of course, dates and Zamzam are part of the spiritual feel of the city. Many pilgrims also treat Al Baik like a "must-try" food stop.

Is food expensive in Makkah?

It can be, especially right next to Masjid al-Haram and at peak seasons. But you can still eat well on 40–70 SAR per day if you use food courts and share meals. The biggest cost jumps come from frequent delivery, premium hotel dining, and tourist-trap restaurants on the main routes. Walk one street back and you'll often pay less.

Where do pilgrims eat near the Haram in Makkah?

Most pilgrims eat in food courts around the Abraj Al-Bait (Clock Tower) area and in nearby family restaurants. These spots are popular because they're quick and close to hotels. Many also grab shawarma or bakery items between prayers. If you're looking for **where to eat in Makkah** with minimal walking, start with the food courts.

Are there Indian and Pakistani restaurants in Makkah?

Yes, there are many Indian and Pakistani restaurants in Makkah, and they're very popular with British Asian pilgrims. You'll find curries, biryani-style rice, naan, and grilled items. Spice levels vary, so ask before you order. Sharing dishes is a good way to keep costs down.

What time do restaurants close during prayer in Makkah and Madinah?

Many restaurants pause service around each Salah time. Some close 15–30 minutes before prayer, then reopen after the congregational prayer ends. Near the Haram, this pattern is very common. So it's best to eat a bit earlier, especially before Maghrib and Isha.

Can you get food delivered to your hotel in Makkah?

Yes, delivery is common in 2026, and apps like HungerStation are widely used. You'll usually meet the driver in the lobby or outside the hotel entrance. Add clear notes in the app so the driver can find you.

Delivery can cost more at peak times, but it saves walking and time.

What breakfast is included in Umrah packages?

Most Umrah packages include hotel breakfast, but what you get depends on the hotel. Expect eggs, bread, tea/coffee, and local items like fowl, labneh, and dates. In higher-star hotels, the buffet is often bigger and better organised. If breakfast matters to you, choose your hotel carefully via our [Umrah Packages UK 2026](#) page.

Is street food in Madinah safe?

Street food in Madinah is often fine if you choose busy stalls with fast turnover. Avoid food that's been sitting in the heat for a long time. Stick to hot, freshly cooked items and sealed drinks. If you've got a sensitive stomach, keep it simple and use supermarkets more.

Are there vegetarian options during Umrah?

Yes, but you'll need to order thoughtfully. Falafel, hummus, fowl, salads, and many bakery items are easy vegetarian choices. Some rice dishes may be cooked with meat stock, so ask. Supermarkets are also great for yoghurt, fruit, nuts, and simple snacks.

One last note from our team (before you go)

Food can make your Umrah days easier. Or harder.

So keep it simple. Eat around prayer times. And don't turn meals into a big mission.

If you want a hotel that's close to food courts and easy walks to the Haram, that's something we help with every day. You can explore options on our [Umrah Packages UK 2026](#) page, or learn more about us here: [About Us](#).

May Allah accept your Umrah, feed you with barakah, and bring you home safe. Ameen.