

The Saudi Run

Step 1: Al Kanz - Saudi Visa Service Point *(Time required: 3-7 days / Near the windmill bakery, Al Gharafa)*

All travellers through Saudi Arabia need a transit visa, which is obtained from the service agent for the Saudi Consulate, Al Kanz Rent-a-Car. They'll know you're not looking to rent a car when you walk in the door. In fact, I wonder if they rent any cars at all.

Documents Required *(for each person, unless noted):*

- Passport
- 2 passport sized photos, with a white background
- Letter of no objection to travel through Saudi from your sponsor, in Arabic only
If your sponsor is travelling with you, no letter is required. (Note this is not the same as your exit visa, which is also required, though not at this point.)
- Vehicle registration card (they will make a copy if you bring the original)
- Permission from customs to take the vehicle out of the country, if the car isn't registered in the name of a traveller *(ie. husband taking wife's vehicle alone, borrowing a friend's vehicle; see note 1 below)*
- ID & Passport copy of registered owner of vehicle, if not travelling
- QR 125

Step 2: Permission from the Bank *(Time required: over 1 week)*

- If your vehicle is financed, or otherwise owned in part by the bank, you may need permission to take the vehicle out of the country. In the case of QNB, this requires a visit by the registered owner, the driver (if the registered owner is not travelling), and a guarantor. The process can take over a week, expect to hassle them to get it done at all.

The guarantor is required to be a person who:

- a) banks at the same bank,
 - b) is staying in the country for the duration of your absence, and
 - c) is of a different nationality than the registered owner
- The guarantor is also required to bring a statement of income from their employer, to prove they can pay for the car. It should be duly noted that the two times I have travelled, I have never needed to produce this letter.

Step 3: Other items

- Bring some Saudi Riyals, 100 for one week's insurance and some more for fuel, as well as at least 100 UAE Dirhams for one week's insurance. You will need this at the border, and there is no exchange available. Some agents or gas stations may accept Qatari Rials, but then again they may not.
- Check with your insurance company, as some include coverage while in the UAE or Oman, though you will always be required to purchase insurance for the transit through Saudi. Insurance is mandatory in all countries.
- Make sure your cell phone allows roaming and top up before leaving, because you cannot activate roaming nor add credit once outside Qatar. Even if you don't plan on using it, it's a good idea to have available while on the road.
- If your spouse's last name isn't the same as yours, consider bringing a copy of your marriage certificate. Again, I've not heard of this being a problem, but it could be your only proof.

Step 4: Have a nice trip! *(Time required: 8-10 hours)*

Documents Required:

- Passports
- Vehicle registration card
- Doha City Centre to Saudi Border: 100 km / 1 hr

Industrial R/A is closed, you'll need to head west on Al Waab street a few extra blocks, following the trucks and signs. The speed limit is 120km/h on the highway, and there are a few cameras placed in full visibility in the median. I've seen them flash, but it was for oncoming traffic so I have no idea what they are set at. Otherwise, nothing of note for this leg of the trip.

Saudi Border to UAE Border: 142 km / 1.5 hrs

A fairly empty stretch of road, with no services at all for most of its length. Again, 120 km/h limit but with no enforcement visible at any time. There was a roadblock during one trip, but I was waved through when the officer saw I was a westerner.

Make sure to fill up on the last of the cheap fuel when you near the border and see a series of three service stations on your left, with the first one being the least 'ghetto'.

Obviously, women can only transit through Saudi with their husband or a male family member, and they cannot drive while in the country. Women should dress conservatively and although no longer required, bring an abaya if you have one but keep it hidden unless requested.

UAE Border to Dubai City Centre: 460 km / 4.5 hrs

The Emirati border is the only one where, for both entry and exit, non-GCC citizens are required to get out of their cars and go into a long hall to deal with immigration formalities. Bring a pen inside, find a form on the tables, then deliver it to the second room at the left end of the counter (the one facing the entry doors). The person inside will surely be busy on their phone, just give them your passport and the form, get a stamp, and go to the main counter to finish the process. I had to get a retina scan on my last trip, but being a Canadian citizen I think they made me even though I didn't actually have to, but that's par for the course!

There are lots of radar traps along the road into the Emirates, in three distinct flavours. In the long stretch before Abu Dhabi, they can be identified as short white boxes with a solar panel nearby. After Abu Dhabi but before you hit the emirate of Dubai, they are short dirty grey boxes hidden amongst the foliage and supposedly set at 140 km/h. Once you are on Sheik Zayed Road in Dubai you will notice taller and much more modern looking devices pointed towards you and spaced every kilometre or so, which average your speed so you can't race between them at all.

Also, within a day of your arrival, you will need to get a '[Salik](#)' tag for the toll roads and bridges, available at any Dubai gas station. Ask for details there, but be aware the fines are very stiff and go up steadily with each infraction.

There are also many cameras around the city for both speed and traffic violations, as well as enforced pay parking nearly everywhere, so take care.

Note 1: Customs & Port General Authority *(Time required: while you wait / Corniche near Museum of Islamic Art R/A)*

If the person's name on the registration card of the vehicle is not accompanying you, you will need to do this extra step. To get this permission, before going to Al Kenz, go to the Customs and Ports General Authority office, morning to afternoon, Sunday through Thursday only.

Bring with you:

- Your Qatari driver's license and the license of the registered owner (originals)
- The registration card for the vehicle
- QR 10 for one month or QR 60 for 6 months permission
- If possible, it might also be a good idea to bring both passports, just in case.

The security guard at the door will take your ID upon entry, and direct you to the correct floor only.

After that, it's all Arabic until you are finished! Good luck.

- Bring the receipt you get from customs with you on the trip, as customs at the border will likely have no idea what's going on unless you can show him this slip of paper.