



# BADAWI TRAIL TO THE LAST OASIS

28 March - 16 April 2026 \*

Saudi Arabia - Oman - U.A.E.



\* Dates subject to change



## HERO-ERA.COM



Authentic Motoring Adventures Forged By Pioneers





*A breathtaking motoring  
adventure through...*



**Sand Dunes**

**Mountain Passes**





## Race Tracks



Photo: Will Broadhead



Photo: Will Broadhead

## Coastlines



## Remoteness

Photo: Will Broadhead



# Badawī Trail To The Last Oasis 2026

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- HERO-ERA Return to Middle East for Second Edition of Badawi Trail
- Veteran Route Planner John Spiller Designing Route
- Extended Stay in Saudi Arabia
- Forbidden Kingdom Opens Doors to Even More New Territory

Having enjoyed a very positive reception on its inaugural edition in 2023, the Badawi Trail to the Last Oasis returns in 2026, in an expanded version of this transit of the Arabian Peninsula, set to pick up where the last edition left off, enhanced by its established and now, much welcomed presence in the region.

The 2023 debut edition of this Trans Arabian epic was very well received by the participants, who donned their pioneering caps and headed into the unknown, crossing territory hitherto not visited by an event of this type. However, the “pioneers” were met with spontaneous and abundant enthusiasm, hospitality and cooperation as the event wound its way across the peninsula as the local population became aware of the unique spectacle. This enthusiasm was mirrored by all those who took part in what became a great adventure, despite the route planning being somewhat cautious on this first visit to the region.

The great success of 2023 has opened up the huge potential that the region has to offer, and the 2026 edition will take full advantage of newfound freedoms, **delving deeper into the breathtaking landscape**, immersing the competitors further into the history and culture and finding new and more exciting territory to explore.

Without wavering from the formula that made 2023 such a success, the 2026 edition will see an evolution of the event, and will this time begin from the city of **Jeddah**, in the **Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**, for 20 days of rallying that will also visit the **UAE** and the **Sultanate of Oman**. Unfortunately, and for obvious reasons, the rally is unable to return to Jordan this time, and after such a warm welcome in 2023 by the inhabitants of Jeddah and the **Jeddah International Circuit**, this is the perfect place to begin the 2026 adventure.

Saudi Arabia was a mainstay of the inaugural Badawi event, and will remain so this time, with **an extended stay of 11 days in the Kingdom**, of which more than half is brand new territory for the rally. According to HERO-ERA Competition Director, Guy Woodcock, *“there are six days of completely brand-new areas for the rally in 2026, revealing even more of the Kingdom to us, the access to which has been made much easier after the last event. They know what we are about a bit now, whereas last time, I think they perhaps saw us as a little bit eccentric, or a bit of a novelty group.”*



## The Route



The route which the rally will take through these new regions is the responsibility of experienced route planner **John Spiller**, who was the mastermind behind the first Badawi and knows more than a thing or two about the components of a fabulous endurance event. He is not only a veteran of the first Badawi Trail event, but multiple rallies that sit within the HERO-ERA stable, including route planning on numerous Peking to Paris Motor Challenges, and the recent Sahara Challenge events, all of which are rooted in the kind of terrain that is to be expected during the Badawi Trail to the Last Oasis. The rally will spend 11 days in Saudi Arabia, taking in the diverse scenery, from towering desert dunes to even higher mountains and a route that will dance along the shores of the Red Sea. There will be a visit to **Al-'Ula**, with its incredible Nabatean history that fascinated the competitors in 2023, as well as stopovers in cities such as **Medinah** and the ultra-modern capital of **Riyadh**.





After leaving the KSA, the rally travels into the UAE at **Al Dannah**, for a couple of days in the Dunes and mountains of the **Abu Dhabi** Emirate, before traveling to the Sultanate of **Oman**, where the event will enjoy an extended stay over the 2023 rally, with five days in total, including a rest day in Muscat. **Muscat** will in fact act as a sort of staging point for the rally in Oman, offering up the opportunity to run a loop to the south of the city, and push further into this incredible country, with the stunning **Hajar mountains** and seemingly endless thrilling roads, including the “climb of climbs” up **Jebel Akhdar**, its abundant terraced orchards hinting at the more comfortable climate found at altitude.

It is perhaps this part of the rally which Guy Woodcock is looking forward to the most. *“Oman will be a real highlight, we only managed a brief experience of it in 2023, but its mountains and roads were breathtaking and clear that it could offer a perfect region for the sort of adventurous rallying that we enjoy, so it’s very exciting to double the amount of time that we have there. The Omani’s are also gearing up to welcome us in just as spectacular style as they did the first time as well.”*

There will also be a slightly extended end to the event, with two proper days rallying in the UAE before the finish in the Shadow of the **QE2** in **Dubai**, including an ascent of **Jebel Jais** that was so popular in '23, in an area that is effectively John Spillers back yard, where he has countless experience of organising Rally Raid events and knows plenty of exciting territory to bring the event to a close.



Photo: Will Broadhead



8,000 KM



20 Days



5°C to 40°C





## Motorsport History

HERO-ERA's pedigree and history in the running of events of this kind matches the organisations success, and it was only natural to push into the Middle East as a new area to explore in 2023. The region itself is building its own relationship and history with motorsport, with the KSA being home to Dakar Rally since 2020 and hosting Formula One at the Jeddah Corniche Circuit since 2021 and before this, Formula E visited the Kingdom for the Diriyah ePrix, the Riyadh Street circuit offering the curtain raiser to the Formula E Championship in 2018. The Badawi Trail to the Last Oasis became part of this motoring history in 2023, and HERO-ERA's return to the region in 2026 will bolster their part in that story, amongst their bigger brothers, a story which will also include the World Rally Championship in 2025, another world class event taking to a region that is world class in what it offers motorsport enthusiasts.

HERO-ERA Chairman Tomas de Vargas Machuca, who competed in the 2023 event, see's HERO's part in this story keenly, *"Alongside the world class motorsport experiences offered by our bigger brothers, with Dakar and F1, we want to cement a place as organising the most comprehensive desert endurance rallying adventure, for vintage and historic vehicles. 2023 showed what was possible here, and with the wonderful help from our new friends in the region, in 2026 we can build on that to offer a longer, more exciting and all-embracing rally. For 20 days we will enjoy the Arabian Mountains, the colossal desert dunes and visit the shores of the Red Sea and Indian Ocean, treading paths once closed to the western world and enjoying the history and culture of a region that is changing quickly, and won't be the same forever. There is also the wonderful hospitality of the people, not to mention the top-class hotels! We are also extremely excited at the prospect of adding some crews from the region, echoing the growing enthusiasm there is for historic motorsport across the peninsula, and building on the brief taster given to Saudi crews who joined the rally for a short time in '23."*

The rally itself will incorporate all aspects of the sport; sinuous mountain roads, offroad sections, mountain climbs, sun, sand and rain! All played out against a compelling competition, with challenging Regularities and thrilling Sporting Sections, that will test the competitive spirit, which, alongside the ever-changing scenery should cement the reputation of an adventure that will enthrall a new band of pioneers in 2026.









## Event Characteristics

Start Date:	28/03/2026
Finish Date:	16/04/2023
Length of Route:	8000 Km (Approx)
Approx. Daily Distance:	440 Km
Vehicle Eligibility:	Pre 1976
Event Level:	Advanced (red)
Exp. No. of Driving Sections:	15
Exp. No. of Regularities:	40

## Provisional Itinerary

Date	Country	From	To	Km
25 March	Saudi Arabia	Jeddah		0
26 March		Jeddah		0
27 March		Jeddah		0
28 March		Jeddah	Abha	450
29 March		Abha	Taif	450
30 March		Taif	Madinah	375
31 March		Madinah	Yanbu	300
01 April	U.A.E.	Yanbu	Al Ula	450
02 April		Al Ula	Al Ula	non driving day
03 April		Al Ula	Duba	375
04 April		Duba	Tabuk	450
05 April		Tabuk	Hail	600
06 April		Hail	Riyadh	500
07 April		Riyadh	Al Dhannah	900
08 April	Oman	Al Dhannah	Qasr Al Sarab	425
09 April		Qasr Al Sarab	Al Ain	375
10 April		Al Ain	Muscat	400
11 April		Muscat	Muscat	300
12 April		Muscat	Muscat	non driving day
13 April		Muscat	Akhdar	400
14 April		U.A.E.	Akhdar	Hatta
15 April	U.A.E.	Hatta	Fujeirah	400
16 April		Fujeirah	Dubai	350
			Total Km	8,000



# Detailed Event Schedule

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## **Day 0 – Scrutineering & Documentation – Friday 27 March**

Scrutineering and Documentation sessions will take place during Friday afternoon before crews join together to look forward to an unforgettable trip of some 8000kms of driving of Badawī motoring during the Welcome Dinner.

## **Day 1 – Jeddah to Abha – Saturday 28 March**

Exit the city and then a 55 km run down the beach/ shore of the Red Sea, before connecting over a sand section of 5 kms to the main highway south. It runs down the quiet highway for 120 kms before turning inland and encounters increasingly interesting roads as it climbs for 100 kms toward a climb to the top of the rift valley; and we continue our way to the overnight halt in Abha which is at over 2,250 m above sea level and known to the Saudis as The Bride of the Mountain with its number of Hilltop fortresses

## **Day 2 – Abha to Taif – Sunday 29 March**

Today's route will see us mainly traversing the Sarawat and Hijaz mountains with some awesome driving roads as we head north towards Taif along the edge of the escarpment for 100 km through pretty villages and scenery on an undulating twisty road, we bypass the city of Taif itself to reach the hotel on the Riyadh side of town

## **Day 3 – Taif to Madinah – Monday 30 March**

The same theme continues with our next day's route staying at altitude as we continue to head north to the cradle of Islamic Culture being one of the oldest and most important places in Islamic history. Madinah - the resting place of the prophet (PBUH) which, bar the central Haram area, has only recently opened to infidels!

## **Day 4 – Madinah to Yanbu - Tuesday 31 March**

A shorter day sees us leave Madinah and head west over the mountains before descending to the coastal city of Yanbu formally the staging post for the spice and incense trade but now is an important shipping terminal for the countries oil production. However, the natural harbour is protected and offers untouched coral reefs which are excellent for diving. Yanbu being the second largest city on the Red Sea after Jeddah it will see crews be able to enjoy the luxury of a coastline hotel

## **Day 5 – Yanbu to Al Ula – Wednesday 1 April**

The route sees us heads inland leaving the city but then climbs and sweeps through rolling hills until we eventually approach Al Ula from the south and we see some awesome sights of earlier civilisations combined with modern changes and improvements to what is one of the highlights of the trip and with the next day being the first non-driving day crews will be able to enjoy all Al Ula has to offer





### **Day 6 – Al Ula – Non-Driving Day – Thursday 2 April**

History, Geography, Petrography, Archaeology, Culture, Tranquillity - check your levels, tyre pressures, torques and get out to enjoy a spectacular and varied day ticking the various features off your bucket list. Elephant Rock, the Rainbow Rock (Arch), the Nabatean tombs (like Petra), Hijaz Railway Museum, Petroglyphs plus many more. There are balloon trips, flights, cycling routes and conducted tours for the more adventurous.

### **Day 7 – Al Ula to Duba - Friday 3 April**

We leave Al Ula and continue our route north we hope to enable a photo opportunity at the Mushroom Rock as we did in 2023. Our route will then take us into some serious scenery into a valley of Mesas and “Cathedral-like” massifs, Monument Valley of the Middle East. Turning north, there is a short but extreme ascent to regain the heights. The road then turns onto a plateau resembling driving on Mars. Very remote, undulating and twisting through fields of black volcanic rock before we finally drop to the coast of the Red Sea once again to arrive at Duba, described by the residents as the Pearl of the Red Sea.

### **Day 8 – Duba to Tabuk - Saturday 4 April**

The route sees us move inland from the Red Sea coastline and heads across the hills and deserts with some great driving roads and then on to Tabuk, effectively, the gateway to the Arabian Peninsula. Tabuk has strong associations with the Hijaz railway built by the Turks to ferry pilgrims to Mecca, but largely destroyed during the Arab revolt and never resurrected.

### **Day 9 – Tabuk to Ha'il– Sunday 5 April**

The route today is a long day which will help in the distances of the following two days as we head to Riyadh and then onto UAE. Ha'il was one of the main routes of the Hijaz railway and it's overlooked by the As-Samara Mountain. This is where Hatim al-Tai in the 6th century lit a fire on the summit to welcome guests. Today an asphalt road leads to the summit where a natural gas-powered fire is lit at night.





### **Day 10 – Ha'il to Riyadh – Monday 6 April**

This is inevitably another relatively long day as we head to the capital of Saudi Arabia, we pass through Buraidah It is known for its dates festival which is the biggest in the world with extensive variety of dates. It has been called the city of dates. We will continue traversing the main highway and as soon as you know it you are in Riyadh!

### **Day 11 – Riyadh to Al Dannah – Tuesday 7 April**

A “transit” day takes the route to the UAE border and a shortish drive after the border to the hotel on the shores of the Gulf. Where we arrive at the town of Al Dhannah built to accommodate the staff and infrastructure for ADNOC. Once a small fishing headland from which a handful of people scratched a seasonal living, Al Dhannah today is one of the most modern industrial complexes in the Middle east as in 2023 and the chance to enjoy a cold beer!

### **Day 12 – Al Dannah to Qasr Al Sarab – Wednesday 8 April**

The route heads inland and into classic sand desert. The golden dunes gradually increase in size as the Liwa Oasis draws closer. The verdant green oasis, a one hundred km crescent in the dunes contrasts markedly with the barren, yet beautiful landscape that is the gateway to the Rhub Al Khali (Empty Quarter) a virtually unbroken expanse of sand desert that stretches across the peninsula to the Yemeni border. A short diversion to Tal Morib (The Hill of Terror) takes in a wonderful drive through seriously big dunes, often favoured by Clarkson and Co to blow the cobwebs out of a variety of exotic machinery. With luck, some local sand driving heroes may be encountered and some entertainment in the sand, before heading to the hotel for sundowners.

### **Day 13 – Qasr Al Sarab to Al Ain – Thursday 9 April**

The route makes for the UAE/Saudi/Omani border and then heads north to the oasis, garden city of Al Ain, the second city of Abu Dhabi to which the locals migrated every summer to live on dates and escape the heat and humidity of their coastal fishing and pearling haunts. The day ends with a blast up Jebel Hafeet, at 1500 m, an impressive contrast to the largely flat surrounding terrain.

### **Day 14 – Al Ain to Muscat – Friday 10 April**

The route crosses into the Sultanate of Oman as it leaves Al Ain and weaves its way through and along the Hajjar mountains that run from the Straits of Hormuz and shadow the shores of the Arabian Sea to Muscat, and beyond with some excellent driving roads and sections before our arrival in Muscat. The Sultanate of Oman has a rich history, with strong Portuguese influences having, pre-Suez Canal, been a strategic location on the trade routes with the Far East. It has very close connections to Zanzibar and the culture of the Omanis differs distinctly to that of the Arabs of the Gulf States, dress, language and culture.





### **Day 15 – Muscat to Muscat – Saturday 11 April**

The route today sees a circular route heading down to the southern city of Sur on the coast and then heads into the mountains with some testing competition using the area crews enjoyed in 2023, we to arrive back in Muscat for an evening of entertainment with our friends of the Oman Automobile Association.

### **Day 16 – Muscat – non-driving day – Sunday 12 April**

Our wonderful beach side hotel will allow crews to enjoy a restful day in the capital city of Oman or enjoy a day sightseeing the cities rich history from the previous centuries with Portuguese and numerous other influences.

### **Day 17 – Muscat to Akhdar – Monday 13 April**

The next two days route see us head off into new territory for the Badawi event we head into the Jebel Akhdar mountain range with scenery that will never cease to amaze before we arrive at the overnight halt is in the balmy cool heights of the mountain retreat of Jebel Akhdar which stands at 3,000 m. Jebel Akhdar Mountains is famous for its labyrinth of wadis and terraced orchards, where pomegranates, apricots, and roses grow in abundance due to its mild Mediterranean climate.

### **Day 18 – Akhdar to Hatta – Tuesday 14 April**

Leaving Muscat, we head north taking in some of the driving roads popular with crews in 2023 with the end of day border crossing back into UAE to allow us more time on the last two days to enjoy the routes in UAE which our route planner John Spiller has been designing n for the 30 plus years

### **Day 19 – Hatta to Fujairah - Wednesday 15 April**

Our decision to transit into UAE for the start of the penultimate day give us extra time in the region to sample routes used on the Mille Miglia as well as routes and sections from the numerous events held both on road and off road in this area before we arrive at our beach front hotel for the last night of this great Trans-Arabian adventure.

### **Day 20 – Fujairah to Dubai – Thursday 16 April**

Some more Mountain driving in the Northern Emirates of Fujairah, Ras Al Khaimah and Sharjah culminating with another impressive climb to 2,000 m up Jebel Jais where the bold, leaving their respective team mate to descend the mountain alone, can take the world's longest zip line to the be reunited with their partner at a somewhat lower altitude. Finally, the run down the coast to Dubai and a well-deserved finale dinner and Maassalamas to all.







Photo: Blue Passion



Photo: Blue Passion



Photo: Blue Passion





# The Badawi Trail to the Last Oasis 2026

## WHAT TO EXPECT?

The Badawi Trail (Badawi is Arabic for Desert Dweller) winds its way through the Arabian Subcontinent, a route that will channel your inner Bedouin, from desert floor to soaring mountains, travelling in tracks cut into the sand by pilgrims, armies, explorers and nomads, and through landscapes, that until recently, have seldom been seen by the western world. With daily distances averaging 450 kilometers, this is a true endurance rally that will test your mettle.

## WHO CAN ENTER ?

### Eligible Cars :

There Are Three Main Categories and Two 'Invitation' Classes:

**A** – Pioneer up to December 1920

**B** – Vintage & Vintageant from January 1921 up to December 1947

**C** – Classic from January 1948 to December 1975

**D** - Pre-1985 4X4 Vehicles by 'Invitation' only some categories may be subdivided into classes based on engine size.

**E** – Pre-1985 2WD cars production based for 'Invitation' consideration. D and E classes will have separate classes and awards from the main event.



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