

Eventful Travels: Riyadh Season Visitors Add Sparkle to the Saudi Economy

In Q4-2024 travel trends, Visa zooms in on the impact of key events on inbound travel during Riyadh Season 2024 (12 October 2024 – 1 March 2025). The event saw a successful first half, according to VisaNet data, with a 47.6% YoY increase in international visitors and substantial growth in spending. Cultural and sports events had the greatest impact, attracting international visitors and spending, especially from GCC countries, the US, UK, CIS, and Asia Pacific. The week hosting events like the Amr Diab concert, Rabeh Saqr Night, WWE, and WTA finals, saw significant growth in both spending and travelers.



Visa Cardholders Visiting Riyadh in Q4-2024



Top Spend Categories

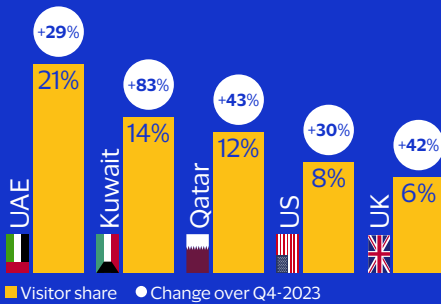


Food & Dining
23%
YoY increase in spend



Shopping & Retail
25%
YoY increase in spend

Top Source Countries of Visa Cardholders Visiting Riyadh in Q4-2024



Events with the Top Impact on Visitor Growth

by net growth³ in traveler numbers

CULTURAL



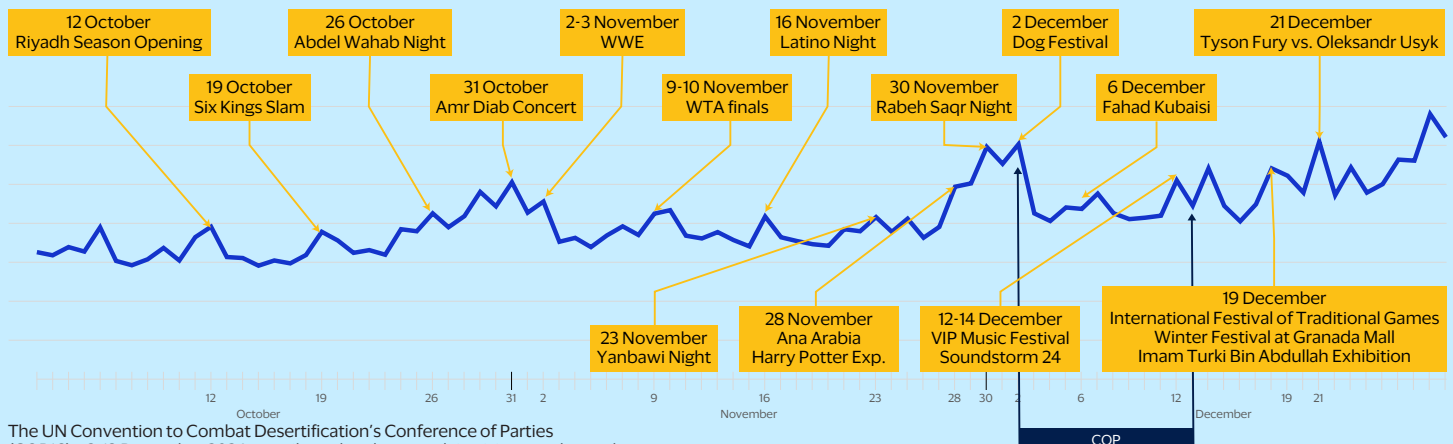
↑28%
Amr Diab concert

SPORTS



↑26%
WWE

Spend Trend by Visitors in Q4-2024 as Riyadh Season Progressed



The UN Convention to Combat Desertification's Conference of Parties (COP16) – 2-13 December 2024 contributed to the growth in visitors and spend.

Methodology: This report has been prepared using transaction data related to the use of cards issued by Visa globally. The transaction data has been anonymized before being analyzed for trends. **1.** Weekly growth trends, compared to the same week in the previous year, showcase the impact of the events held during this period. **2.** Q4-2024 is the period between 1 October and 31 December 2024. **3.** Net growth: Impact of the events obtained after deducting the organic growth rate, which is the YoY growth rate excluding the previous year's Riyadh Season impact. **4.** Food & Dining includes the categories Food & Drug and Restaurant & Quick Service Restaurants. **5.** Shopping includes the categories General Retail & Professional Services, General Retail Goods, and Department & Apparel. **6.** Quick Service Restaurants. Text and design are by [White Paper Media Consulting](#).