

Demographic Questions

1. Age

I'm currently in my mid-20s, and I've had the opportunity to explore a range of cultural institutions, both locally and internationally.

2. Museum-visiting frequency

I make an effort to visit museums quite regularly, especially when traveling or when new exhibitions are announced. In Saudi Arabia, I've visited several museums including the National Museum in Riyadh, the King Abdulaziz Historical Center, and Al Masmak Palace Museum.

Objective 1: Perceptions of Saudi Museums & Cultural Heritage

3. First impressions

When I think about museums in Saudi Arabia, a few things come to mind—an increasing effort to preserve and showcase our heritage, growing attention to detail in curation, and a modern take on storytelling. The National Museum in Riyadh especially stands out. It's not just a museum; it's an experience. From the architecture to the immersive displays, it feels like a bridge between the past and the present. Al Masmak Palace Museum, on the other hand, gives you this sense of stepping directly into history—it's more intimate and atmospheric, with textured walls and traditional displays that immerse you in the story of the Kingdom's formation.

4. Memorable experience

One memorable experience was at the King Abdulaziz Museum. I remember walking through the exhibit on the unification of the Kingdom and being completely engrossed in the audiovisual presentations. There was one room that projected archival footage of King Abdulaziz addressing citizens—it gave me goosebumps. You really felt the weight of history and how one man's vision laid the foundation for modern Saudi Arabia. The museum's integration of historical documents and personal belongings of the king made it feel deeply personal and respectful.

5. Representation of history & diversity

I believe Saudi museums are making excellent progress in representing our cultural history and diversity. The National Museum, in particular, does a commendable job by showcasing different eras—from prehistoric times to the Islamic age to the foundation of the modern Kingdom. That said, I feel there's still room to highlight more regional diversity—stories from the south, the eastern provinces, and even more about the Bedouin lifestyle could be amplified.

6. Understanding culture & traditions

Saudi museums, especially the National Museum and Al Masmak Palace, have helped me understand the cultural and tribal complexity of the Kingdom. They shed light on our architectural evolution, the importance of the Islamic pilgrimage, and the social transitions the Kingdom has undergone. At Al Masmak, seeing artifacts from the early 1900s, like

traditional weaponry and attire, was eye-opening. It makes you realize how far we've come and how much resilience is in our DNA.

Objective 2: Motivations for Visiting

7. Trigger for visit

My visit to the National Museum was initially sparked by curiosity. I had read about its immersive exhibitions, and I was eager to experience them firsthand. Later, it turned into a kind of reflective journey—I wanted to understand the deeper layers of my cultural identity and how our past has shaped our present.

8. Engaging experiences

I find interactive exhibits the most engaging. At the National Museum, there are digital screens where you can explore ancient manuscripts and rotate 3D models of historic artifacts. This level of interaction kept me engaged for hours. At the King Abdulaziz Museum, I really appreciated the personal narratives—they made history feel human, not just dates and events.

9. Attractive features

I'm particularly drawn to well-curated exhibitions, audio-visual storytelling, and architectural ambiance. The sweeping dome and tranquil gardens of the King Abdulaziz Historical Center, for instance, set a calming tone before you even enter. I also value guided tours, especially when they're led by knowledgeable guides who can add layers of context and emotion to the exhibits.

Objective 3: Barriers to Visiting

10. Obstacles faced

In the past, one challenge I faced was limited English-language signage. While my Arabic is fluent, I've had non-Arabic speaking friends who found it difficult to engage with the content. Additionally, some museums, like Al Masmak Palace, could benefit from better lighting and climate control—these may seem small, but they impact comfort and experience, especially in the summer.

11. Appeal & accessibility

Some Saudi museums feel a bit traditional in layout and could benefit from more modern, user-friendly interfaces. For example, ticketing systems or mobile apps for navigation would greatly enhance the experience. Accessibility for people with disabilities is also an area that could be strengthened—ramps, tactile signage, or audio guides would make a big difference.

12. Inclusivity suggestions (personal)

For me personally, inclusivity would mean seeing more exhibitions that highlight women's contributions to Saudi history and culture. I'd also love to see temporary exhibitions that rotate, giving a platform to local artists or community stories. Multilingual support and more

interactive stations would also help in making the museums more inclusive and engaging for all age groups and nationalities.

Objective 4: Strategies to Improve Engagement

13. Attracting & engaging visitors

Saudi museums could benefit greatly from more community-based programming. Hosting thematic weekends, family days, or school outreach programs could drive more foot traffic. Digital campaigns featuring sneak peeks of new exhibits or virtual tours could also spark interest. More partnerships with educational institutions to integrate museum visits into curricula would also deepen impact.

14. Desired exhibitions or events

I'd love to see exhibitions on Saudi cinema, music, or fashion—elements of culture that are currently undergoing such rapid change. Also, interactive events like archaeology workshops, calligraphy lessons, or storytelling nights based on folklore would make museums a vibrant part of community life. For younger audiences, perhaps AR/VR experiences where you can “walk” through ancient Riyadh or join an expedition in the Empty Quarter would be incredibly compelling.
