



Diana Shamaa

Around Al Dir`aiyah, the forgotten capital of the first Saudi kingdom

The photos were taken in a historical area which is situated on the banks of the Wadi Hanifa, on the outskirts of Riyadh. The landscape is stunningly beautiful, Al Dir`aiyah is also known under its traditional name of Al Awja. It is regarded as an important landmark due to the fact that it was the first capital city of the first Saudi state in 1745. One of the most interesting parts is represented by the Turaif neighborhood which was preserved in a remarkable state. It was the headquarters of the Saudi royal family. The defensive wall that intersects a few forts which were built under the rule of Abdul Aziz Ibn Muhammad Ibn Saud in order to defend the ensemble from potential threats. The total length of the wall is about 7 km.

The picture represents a simple building with a flat roof where we find a terrace, this place was usually used for spending time with friends and guests where the weather made this possible.



This building is filled with Najdi tribal patterns, they are quite easy to spot due to their complex geometry and light color scheme which is highly representative for the indigenous art of the Najdi people.



The *Sawani* is a contraption that was used in the past for extracting water which was used for drinking and for irrigations. The wooden wheels that were positioned above the well, four camels would usually make the wheels spin, as they spin water would be extracted from the underground. This is one of the few examples of ingenious vernacular technology.



This tower is an old minaret from the Dir`iyah area which was used by the muezzins would announce the beginning of the prayers and would call on the believers to pray.