

## APractical Preparation for Hajj – November 2006

### **Preliminaries:**

1. Hajj is a spiritual journey for the ‘self’. As each of us is unique so is our capacity to memorise duas and other aspects of the Hajj rituals. Do not get overwhelmed by the plethora of books, pamphlets and guides about the do’s and don’ts of Hajj. Remember it is your Hajj, and it is between you and your creator! Attitude is more important than aptitude!
2. Apply KISS! Keep it Simply Spiritual according to SUNNAH.
3. Of course there are rules. It would not be a ritual if there were not rules. Often however, you will find people telling you about the ‘rules’ when it may be their interpretation or their understanding. It does not make it right or wrong. It is up to you to ensure you understand the basic rules and apply them accordingly with KISS in mind! Ultimately you are judged by your ‘intention’.
4. Remember that “Hajj-e-Mabrur” – acceptance of your efforts for Hajj is solely the prerogative of Allah (SWT) and as such represents a mercy from Him.
5. In the preparation, travel and execution of the rites of Hajj never lose sight of the ‘purpose’ of Hajj. It is the completion one of the *five* pillars (for those that can afford it) of Islam and is solely for the Pleasure of Allah (SWT).
6. Please be clear in your minds which type of Hajj you intend to perform. If you are travelling first to Madinah and then to Makkah you will have options as to whether you will want to perform Umrah on arriving in Makkah or not. Ditto if you arrive in Makkah first and then travel to Madinah you have the option of performing a second Umrah as well as Hajj. It will all depend on your actual travel arrangements – especially the dates of travel before Hajj itself. I am sure you have given it some thought already but be clear of the practicalities. Please make the effort to discuss this with your group leader before you leave so you have made the right ‘Niyat’ for your Hajj. Obviously things can change for reasons outside of anyone’s control but you should have this in mind before you actually travel.

### **Practicalities (I am simply going to refer to things that people often forget or do not know when it comes to Hajj – so I will omit the obvious):**

#### **(a) Preparation:**

1. *Things you must take with you:* (a) English-Arabic phrase book (b) Make copies of all your travel documents including your vaccination certificates. Make a copy of your Hajj visa too including a separate note of your Hajj visa number! Leave one set with your family at home and ensure you have one set in each of your luggage (c) Identify your luggage with a coloured ribbon (d) Rucksack each for the 5 days of Hajj (e) Label your luggage inside and outside (f) Put your names inside your reading books (g) Mobile phone, charger *and adapter (you should acquire a local SIM card – see below)* (h) Waist pouch

for keeping money (buy a good quality pouch) (i) Clothing: People often assume you will need to take clothes as if you are on a holiday. This is **not** the case. You only need the minimum to make your stay comfortable. There are good and reasonably priced (prices rise closer to Hajj and the time for washing / ironing also doubles) laundry facilities in and around Makkah and Madinah where your garments are washed and ironed either the same day or the next day (see below) – travel light – you will have less to worry about and less to lose if things go awry. Also, if you prefer you can buy detergent and wash and wear in your hotel room! You will want to change your underclothes everyday but your Burkah and male Tobe you may change every 2-3 days. I would say Black is a better colour than white – and no it is not any hotter in black (j) Take sufficient snacks / drinks with you for the first part of the journey from Johannesburg to Jeddah. There can be severe delays at the Hajj Terminals and hunger leads to anger – and this defeats the object of the exercise! (k) Take at least 200 Saudi Riyals in cash with you for the first part of the journey preferably in small denominations 5’s, 10’s and 20’s – if you need to buy tea, coffee or water it will be easier (l) Take powdered form of ‘Gatorade’ or ‘Powerade’ – you can mix this with water – it is easier to carry and will help with energy levels especially if you intend to do the walking Hajj (m) Re-hydrate in sachet form (n) multi-blade pocket knife, nail clipper, small scissors; Aside of your normal toiletries Chapstick, small Vaseline, toothpicks, small mirror. Small containers for shampoo, soap for 5 days of Hajj – you will not want to carry larger bottles of these! (n) Sun-glasses; trainers; folding white umbrella (if you do not have it you can buy this in Makkah for about 3-5 Riyals); travel alarm clock; Small Massalah; Compass (for prayer direction); Small travel torch; Baseball cap(s); Shoe bags; Comfortable sandals – don’t buy the flip-flops that fit between your big toe and the second toe – you will pay a heavy price in blisters and pain! (p) Small Qur’aan, pencil, pen, notebook, tasbeeh! (q) Medium sized towels adequate for a shower (Mina) (r) Plastic money bags – the ones you get in the bank for coins. You will need these to collect your stones in Muzdillifah! (s) Ihraam (I would take 2 Ihraams as in Mina you will want to change it – it is not comfortable to wear the same Ihraam for 5 days; Inflatable pillow if you want to sleep in Mina! (t) Blister plasters – **very, very important** – I would suggest about 20 or so! Once you have a blister you will understand the necessity of having this with you – especially in Mina! (u) Take good quality locks for your suitcases and take a spare lock for each item of luggage (v) Take a credit card each for emergencies! (w) A camera – useful for Ziyarats – be careful though if you take it to the Masjid it can be confiscated and you will in all probability never see it again! Many people use their mobiles in the Masjid for taking photos but be aware there are ‘plain clothed’ Masjid police who have the power to make you feel very uncomfortable and of course they can confiscate this too! (x) If you wear spectacles or lenses make sure you have a spare set and carry this with you! Ensure you have enough fluids and other materials for your lenses (y) Take small zipper bags for the limited toiletries you will use in Mina (z) Hydrocortisone cream – The man will need this when wearing the two pieces of white clothe – chaffing between the thighs especially over the 5 days of Hajj (aa) ***If you can find some leather socks which are permissible to wear for Tawaaf and Sai. It will save your feet from cracking and dry skin on the cold marble and also prevent infections!***

2. **Things NOT to take with you:** (a) Food – apart from the travel snacks you do not need to take food with you. Practically everything you could want is available in Makkah and Madinah. Remember that there is no rationale as to how the ‘rules’ are applied at the airport. You may find that one customs officer will allow perishables and the other will simply throw it away! Another reason for not taking perishable food with you! So if you want to take food make sure it is packed in a manner that looks hygienic, appealing and safe – but still there are no guarantees that it will not be confiscated (b) Flip-flops that fit between your toes; (c) Shoes (d) Take the books you will read and not all the books you *think* you will read. Time is at a premium and although you may feel you have ‘a lot of time’ – weeks and weeks - you will be surprised how long it takes just to do the very basics such as attending the Masjid 5 times a day and making your way there and back; As you get closer to Hajj the volume of people grows exponentially and so the corresponding time to do the things you need to do (the basics) also increases exponentially! (e) A bad attitude! Just remember that you will need at least 10 suitcases of patience for every day that you are there. Try not to use it to readily!

### **(b) The Journey**

1. Remember the journey is as important as the destination. I am sure you have been told of all the duas you can and or should read. You should however be aware that each step of the journey also represents a test for you. If you have prepared well, you will not have bags that weigh a tonne and will cost you an arm and a leg to travel with. The normal rule I would suggest is that you pack everything you need and then remove half of it! You should be in the ballpark of what you will actually need!
2. Being in the state of Ihraam. This will depend on whether you are travelling to Makkah first or to Madinah. If you are travelling to Madinah you do not need to be in a state of Ihraam. If you are travelling to Makkah first you have a choice. You can adorn and enter the state of Ihraam from your home. Alternatively, you can board the aircraft in your normal state of Wahdu having made your Ghusal at home and enter the state of Ihraam when the captain or crew make an announcement that you are approaching the Miqaat (boundary) from which you should be in the state of Ihraam. You can now make your intention and enter the state of Ihraam and for a man this means changing from his normal clothes to two pieces of un-sewn whit cloth. For a woman she does not have to change from her normal Islamic dressing. Many people will pray on board the aircraft. This is not necessary (to my understanding) as you can pray when you arrive in Jeddah. It is entirely up to you although some scholars say that you should pray immediately you enter the state of Ihraam.
3. Arriving at Jeddah Hajj Terminal. This is not an ordinary airport. It is a specially designated area and some 10-15 km from the main civilian airport. After you have disembarked you will enter one of many rooms with wooden benches. You will be told to sit and wait. Depending on what time you actually arrive this ‘processing’ can take an hour or several hours! Be prepared. There is no access to food or water here. You will slowly be called

through to have your documents checked. Someone may or may not (it varies greatly) come and place a sticker on your visa. Please make sure the sticker is complete and that parts of it have not been taken off. This will be the sticker that will identify you on their computer system and link you with your group. It will also be the sticker from which other services for your Hajj will be provided. Once you have gone through the passport / visa / vaccination check you will enter a hall where your luggage should be waiting for you! If you have tagged your bags with a coloured ribbon it will be easier to identify. You will then go through customs once you have your entire luggage. Depending on the mood of the officer your luggage may be gone through with a toothcomb or simply marked with a letter in chalk without any checking! It varies greatly! Whatever the process be patient! The area around customs is organised chaos! You will need to be patient. People will push in and generally behave in a manner you would not expect. Therefore simply expect the worse and you will not be disappointed.

4. Once you have passed through customs you will have to queue again for your Hajj documents and Hajj Draft payment. If your agent has been efficient they will have organised staff to take your luggage and load it on trolleys to go to the busses that will take you to Makkah. However, you will need to complete the Hajj registration process and have your documents stamped. The sticker you were given in the first hall will have several portions to it and one portion will be taken here. The lines are chaotic and given that everyone is tired, hungry and on edge you can imagine how easily tempers will fray! Husbands should take their wife's documents, as this will avoid unnecessary problems! You will also be given 'Hajj Guidance' booklets and a Qur'aan. The booklets will prove invaluable and you should find almost everything you need to know! It is worth reading at the earliest opportunity!
5. On the completion of this process your agent or their staff will guide you to a waiting area or a place where your busses will arrive. This can take more time. The area is vast and so it is wise to ensure you know where you should be going and keep a hold of your documents in a safe manner. Remember you will be very tired and you have only just started!
6. Once you are on the bus your passport will be collected from you and placed in a bag with the driver. If you are going to Madinah by bus then the journey will take +/- 8-10 hours from the time of your departure (as a guide the normal journey time off peak is about 5 hours). It has been known to take as much as 16 hours! Be prepared! If Madinah is your destination make sure you have enough snacks and drinks (especially water) for the journey. If you are going to Makkah the journey will take between 2-3 hours (the normal off peak journey time is 45-50 minutes).
7. The bus will make several stops including checks on the road and finally when you will arrive in Makkah the bus will first go to the "Moassasas" (Government Office – for your continent, country or region). Here you will wait for the registration process! It can take anything from 15 minutes to an hour or more depending on the number of people, the time of day, and the efficiency or the lack thereof of the 'volunteers'. Yes, the office is allegedly

run by volunteers, but with your money! A part of your Hajj draft charge is allocated to them! They are responsible for you. If you have a complaint about your agent they can deal with it and if you have issues about your documents loss etc. they can help you. Just don't expect too much help! At the end of the registration process they will give you a band and some other leaflet telling you about their services and how to contact them! The wristband is important! It identifies the country you have originated from and where your passport is kept whilst you are in Makkah / Madinah. The wristbands are different colours for different regions!

8. Once you have been given these bands the bus will leave for your hotel in Makkah / Madinah.
9. If you travelling first to Makkah you will still be in your Ihraam. Assuming all has gone relatively smoothly (a big assumption) you will be united with your luggage and expected to take it from the bus to the hotel (unless you have a well organised travel agent who will make sure they have people there to help you – just don't bank on it!).
10. Once you have settled in – it will be up to you whether you decide to perform your Umrah straight away or later; As a couple or with a group! My best advice is that if you have read your Hajj / Umrah books you should be able to perform your Umrah by yourselves! Also remember you will need to read all your outstanding Salah which you may have missed on your journey (if any) before you perform Umrah. Bear in mind there is no obligation to perform Umrah immediately. You can take a shower, relax, sleep and perform Umrah when you are ready! Many people rush to perform their Umrah and consequently find that the rites are quite difficult and tiring and so they do not make the most of this wonderful opportunity! It is up to you to decide.

### **(c) Performing Umrah**

1. I assume you have the books to guide you. Try to take one book between the two of you. The 'Green' book called: "Hajj & Umrah Made easy" given to you by SAHUC is as good as any you will require.
2. If you have leather socks it is strongly advised that you wear these. (NB.NOT ALLOWED IN IHRAAM )
3. Just remember it is not a race but a spiritual awakening.
4. You will need a small pair of scissors to clip you hair on the completion on Sai.
5. You can have the head shaven (males) if you want – there are a number of barbershops.. They charge about Riyal 10-15. Best to have some small denomination notes with you!
6. After Umrah the small change will come in useful if you want a cup of tea! Cost one Riyal per cup!

7. Once you have shaved or cut your hair you are now out of the state of Ihraam.

#### (d) Time in Makkah

1. Depending on what arrangements you have with your travel agent you may be on full board or half board or bed and breakfast only. Nonetheless, there are a number of good places to eat! Most South Africans will gather in and around the Hilton. On the first floor there is a 'food court' and you will find all the types of snacks, burgers, steaks, chicken etc that you may appreciate!
2. Make sure that you do take a Ziyarat (visit) but with someone who is knowledgeable and can contextually explain the various sites! You should not be surprised that the Saudi authorities have paid little or no attention to preserving the historic places. The Prophet (SAW) house and other places are not preserved as we would have expected. Even the climb to Mount Noor (Cave of Hira) which is recommended if you are reasonably fit, has not been made easy and the site is not well preserved or protected.
3. Shopping! I am sure no one goes to Makkah to shop! However, I am also sure that you will want to buy things for yourself and for family and friends. The best advice I can give you is to keep it simple. Yes, there are Rolex watches and gold and jewellery to melt your hearts if not your pockets but remember that you will have to look after what you buy, carry it back home, pay customs duty when you arrive and deal with all the hassles that attend such purchases. You can decide. The most 'acceptable' goods to Western standards you will find in and around the Hilton. If you are looking specifically for gold and jewellery then you should go to the gold market – see map link. The best advice I can give you is make a list of what you need to buy and for whom and try and do it in one evening as early as you can in your stay in Makkah or Madinah. The longer you leave it the greater the number of people and the more problematic it will be! There is also a tendency for prices to rise closer to Hajj. Remember that shops close at normal times – usually an hour or so after Esha Salah. Closer to Hajj they will stay open later. Food and eating places stay open later.
4. If you want an English newspaper – go to Bin Dawood Supermarket , the grocery store in the Hilton! You need to be quick they sell out fast. You can buy the Arab News or Saudi Gazette.
5. Map link for Makkah: You can print this out by copying and pasting!  
<http://www.sacred-destinations.com/saudi-arabia/mecca-map.htm>
6. Security: Please ensure that you *do not* leave your common sense at home! Yes, these are the most sacred places in Islam. Yes, people come for spiritual upliftment and the fulfilment of the fifth pillar of Islam. Yet, people also come here to beg, steal and cheat. I would ask you to download this link – it is an interesting and amusing observation of what you will experience:  
<http://www.myiwc.com/forums/showpost.php?p=12210&postcount=1> You should also know that carrying large amounts of money is not a clever thing to

- do. If you are staying in a hotel that has a safe or safe facilities use it (NB DONOT USE YOUR PHONE NOs on YOUR LUGGAGE AS A CODE FOR SAFE ALSO AVOID 786 COMBINATIONS ETC USE COMMON SENSE .) If it were not necessary they would not provide it! If you have travellers cheques or cash dollars and you want to exchange them then there are many place in and around the Harem Shariff. The exchange rate is NOT all the same so you should check before you exchange! Remember that carrying money inside the Masgid whilst making Tawaaf will expose you the ‘ nail knife brigade’. These are people with a blade on their nails and they can cut through your Burkah or Tobe and let your wallet drop out for an accomplice to pick up!
7. Prayer time. It will seem that you always have enough time to make the trip to and from the Masgid for the five prayers. Do not fool yourself. You find that the time flies and as the volume of people enters the Masgid grows exponentially from day to day the entry and exit require some forethought and planning.
  8. If you are separated from your spouse you should have a pre-arranged meeting point. Usually the KFC outside the Hilton is an easily the best meeting point. Remember men and women are generally separated during prayer times and within the Masgid but you should agree between yourselves where you can meet.(NB WOMEN ARE GENERALLY ALLOCATED THE AREA TO YOUR LEFT HAND SIDE OF THE ENTRANCE TO THE MUSJID OF MOST MAIN ENTRANCES )
  9. There are Wadhu facilities within the main part of the Masgid know where these are it will help in an emergency!
  10. You will find as everywhere in the world people stick with those they know. There is usually a large South African contingent in and around King Abdul Aziz Gate (GATE DOOR no1 )– ALSO BE WARNED THIS GATE/ENTRANCE IS USUALLY USED FOR THE JANAZAAH BEING CARRIED OUT AFTER THE FARD SALAAH PLEASE BE CO-OPERATIVE DO NOT BLOCK THE ENTRANCE RATHER READ 3X QULHU ALLAH HU AHAD & PASS THE REWARD TO ALL MAHROOMS/DECEASED.
  11. In the Masjid you will be pestered by people begging or pleading poverty or a loss of money from time to time (see link above), just ask yourself how could they afford to travel from India or Pakistan or Nigeria without money? How did they apply for the visa without a Hajj Draft? And how is it that the Saudi government having provided ‘free’ support are not approached for help? They do target the South African as they stand out like a sore thumb in their colour co-ordinated dress code and their designer headgear☺
  12. Try and get in as many Tawaafs as possible in the early days that you are in Makkah. Usually the best time for Tawaaf is when people go to eat or rest – between 23.00 and 02.00. The closer you get to Hajj the harder it will be as there is really no ‘off-peak’ period!

13. There are many police in plain clothes in the Masjid as well as uniformed police. Some may speak English. Often the best police to speak to are in blue uniforms with an Indian flag on their lapel! They generally speak English!
14. Lost property is at Gate 65– first floor/door13 ground floor. If you have lost something valuable don't expect to find it! But you never know☺
15. Take your shoes in a shoe bag and place it in front of you when you are praying. Always take your own Musallah (prayer mat) as during Hajj all the carpets are removed and you will sit on cold marble! Not very nice experience at the best of times and much more painful if you have....☺
16. Please download the map (above) and make a note of where the hospital and other medical facilities are relative to your hotel. You may not need it but if you do at least you will know where to go. As a guide the nearest clinic is opposite Door no. 1 (Ajyad area) on the left side of the Hilton. Women and men have different entrances and they will not allow husbands to accompany wives and vice versa!
17. Try and get enough sleep especially as Hajj approaches. It is physically and mentally exhausting and your body will easily be compromised if you 'overdo' it! There are millions of bugs from the four corners of the world that would gladly incubate inside you if your immune system is down!(DONOT COVER YOUR FACE WITH A SURGICAL MASK WHILE IN THE STATE OF IHRAAM)
18. Remember you are the GUEST ,YOUR WELL-BEING is taken careoff by ALLAH (swt)
19. Pharmacies are available just about everywhere and you can buy virtually anything you want – almost☺
20. If you are intending to do the walking Hajj then one item you should add to your shopping list is a comfortable shoe that is religiously acceptable! Not such an easy feat as you may imagine! If you have not brought a white folding umbrella now is the time to buy it!
21. As absurd as it sounds you do not need to “buy” your Zam-Zam water till Madinah or if you have time after Hajj – then buy it just before you leave. Of course you do not have to buy it at all! You can simply buy the filling plastic carriers and fill it up yourself. It is easier to do this in Madinah than in Makkah. In Madinah the Zam-Zam outlet is located directly opposite the Movenpick Hotel.
22. If you are planning to go to Jeddah you can take a taxi from the main Taxi area. It is about 100-300 riyal ,please bargain & PAY ON ARRIVAL AT DESTINATION. Make sure you have your documents. It is better to travel with your group, as they will have made the arrangements. Remember you do not have your passport and without it you may not be allowed to re-enter Makkah. It is rare, but it does happen!



23. Drinking Zam-Zam water is a wonderful blessing, however, if you want to avoid getting sick and losing your voice I would suggest you AVOID drinking cold Zam-Zam water. You will see that the water barrels are labelled in green/BLUE where the Zam-Zam water is at room temperature. No matter how hot it is outside I strongly recommend that you avoid iced water and iced Zam-Zam at all cost!

**(e) Time In Madinah**

1. Depending on what you have agreed with your travel agent most people leave for Madinah about 8 days before Hajj./OR you visit Madinah before coming to Makkah .You should carefully check your arrival and departure times and your movements between the cities.
2. Map link for Madinah: You can print this out by copying and pasting!  
<http://www.sacred-destinations.com/saudi-arabia/medina-map.htm>
3. Madinah will be the most restful period of your trip and you will feel this when you enter the city. If you are travelling to Madinah directly from Jeddah airport your trip will have been anything up to 16 hours. If you are arriving from Makkah it will be between 8-10 hours. You will make the usual stops along the way to collect your passports and drop them off again when you arrive in Madinah.
4. The main thing here is to find out the time that women are allowed to visit the Prophet (SAW) resting place. It is usually between ½ hr after ISHRAAQ 7.30a.m to approx 11.15 a.m and 1.30p.m to approx 15.00p.m (Between Zohr and Asr),at night after esha from 9.30p.m to 11.40 pm. NB times may vary according to season (winter ,summer /Ramadaan /Hajj ) Please be careful. Because of the limited time women tend to push and shove like there is no tomorrow & make a huge noise thus DISTURBING NABI (S.A.W.). Last year for example a woman came with her baby and in the crush the baby was killed. It is not the first time and it certainly will not be the last time. But it does open your eyes. From an Islamic perspective you make Salaam from anywhere within the Masgid though people feel the ‘need’ to go to the old part of the Masgid. Perhaps the best is to go once and then for the rest of the time make Salaam and read Darood Shariff from wherever you are in the Masgid! NB SWITCH OFF YOUR CELLPHONE & REMOVE MUSICAL TONES & OBSCENE MESSAGES /PICTURES PLEASE.,PLEASE????
5. In Madinah the men and women are absolutely separated. Not like in Makkah where the separation is less formal. The Masgid is vast so once you have decided upon where it is convenient for you to read your Salah relative to your hotel then you should agree a place to meet in case you are lost of separated.
6. In Madinah the Zam-Zam outlet is located directly opposite the Movenpick Hotel.

7. Drinking Zam-Zam water is a wonderful blessing, however, if you want to avoid getting sick and losing your voice I would suggest you AVOID drinking cold Zam-Zam water. You will see that the water barrels are labelled in green where the Zam-Zam water is at room temperature – this is the best to drink or at the least mix the cold and the room temperature water. No matter how hot it is outside I strongly recommend that you avoid iced water and iced Zam-Zam at all cost!
8. Shopping: Date market is interesting and you can buy all what you need to take with you. Go early and buy what you need. Don't be tempted to overload – remember you will have to carry it!
9. Here you can buy your vouchers for the 'Qurbani' (DAMM E SHUKR) for Hajj. If you have made the arrangements with your agents you will have to wait for them to confirm what time the slaughter was completed otherwise you will have to remain in Ihraam in Mina (see later). Here you will be given a latest time by which the animal will be slaughtered so you are sure! Or RATHER GET CONFIRMATION VIA SMS OR CELLPHONE .DONOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES TAKE THINGS FOR GRANTED YOU MAY END UP VIOLATING YOUR IHRAAM, NECESSATING A FURTHER SACRIFICE (TIME & MONEY)
10. As in Makkah a map will guide you to places of interest and you can choose. You will have more time on your hands than you did in Makkah. You will need this before you return to Makkah for the start of Hajj.
11. There is a Ministry of Hajj building in front of the Taiba Intercontinental Hotel should you need help!(please check as things change)
12. If you have come to Madinah after Makkah you will need to decide the type of Hajj you wish to perform as you now have the opportunity to perform Umrah again on your return to Makkah. This will impinge on your return trip to Makkah and when you enter into the state of Ihraam at the Miqaat (Boundary). The reason why it is possible to perform Umrah again is that Madinah is outside of the Miqaat for Hajj and so you have the opportunity to earn more blessings!
13. Note when you leave from Madinah to Makkah the journey can take 12-16 hours depending on the date of travel. The closer to the date for Hajj the longer the time it will take – simply the volume of people moving from Madinah to Makkah. There is also a cut of time and your agent will know about this by which you have to be in Makkah in order to perform Hajj.
14. If you will be moving to Azizia from Madinah be aware that it is still some distance (about 2 km) from Mina and some 3 km from Makkah. So if you intend to make Umrah on returning from Madinah you will need to make your way back to Azizia thereafter! You will also have to be in Makkah if you are intending to do the walking Hajj.

15. Please speak with your travel agents and their Saudi counterparts to know exactly how they intend to guide you through the process!

**(f) The Five Days of Hajj**

1. If you are doing the ‘walking Hajj’ you must leave from Makkah. Therefore you will need to be in Makkah for Fajr on the 1<sup>st</sup> day and leave from there to Mina or from Azzizia to Mina. As a guide the distances are approximately as follows: Makkah to Mina 5 km; Mina to Arafat 14 km; Arafat to Muzdalifah 11 km; Muzdalifah to Mina 3 km; Mina to Makkah 5 km (you will have to go to make Tawaaf and or Sai); Makkah to Mina 5 km. Total 43 km.
2. Travel light. Pack a small bag each as you will be in separate tents or divided tents. Leave all your stuff under lock and key and ensure that you have all your documents you will need including your cards which were given to you by the Mutawwif and these will allow you in to your tent area. Things you **must** have include: small torch; medication (hydrocortisone cream /Vaseline to beput between thighs to avoid chaffing /friction– for men a must); blister plasters; water; biscuits; ‘high energy’ foods yoghurt bars; chocolates; coin bags etc. It will largely depend on what your agent has arranged for you in Mina as to what you actually need to take! Water is a must! **ALSO CARRY +/- 350 riyaal per person small denominations for feeding others transport to Makkah etc. BE PREPARED ANY THING CAN HAPPEN .**
3. If you are taking the busses you will travel from Azizia to Mina. It is easier to walk even if you are not doing the walking Hajj, as this part of it is not far! But you should know the location of where your tent is (COLOUR CODED & NUMBERED eg. 2/156. and where to find people from your group.
4. If you are doing the walking Hajj you should still know where your group’s tent is as when you return from Muzdalifah you will need to come to the tent and rest, shower etc.
5. If you are going by bus be sure you know where and when. Be early. Don’t take it for granted that they will wait for you! They will not!
6. I would recommend that if you are fit you should walk. It will be faster, less stressful and more rewarding. However, it means you will not have the support of your group if needed! Nonetheless, you should know the Saudi’s are well organised and support those who are walking all the way! You will have water, fruit and other food item given to you en-route. You will also find it easier to use toilets and other facilities, as you will be on a different route to that used by the busses. The bus drivers tend to get lost in any case as they are non-Saudi’s with little training and support!
7. When you arrive in Mina on the 8th, familiarize yourself with the area around your camp – you will be surprised by the great poverty and the difference between the haves and the have-nots! Don’t get lost!
8. Maps to help you: <http://www.ummah.net/hajj/maps/index.html>

9. If you are doing the walking Hajj give up all notion of meeting your group in Arafat or Muzdalifah. You simply will not! Also you need to spend your time in dua and Ibadah so don't worry. Simply perform the Hajj as you wish. On leaving Mina by foot after Fajr (06.00) you will arrive in Arafat by around 09.00. You will easily find place in the Masjid Nimra. There are reasonable toilet facilities and food facilities if you require. I would suggest you keep a bottle of water with you all the time as if you need to make Wadhu you can do so without queuing! Observe the period of Waqf. It is better to leave the Masjid after the prayers and spend time on the plains of Arafat. This is where we shall all meet one day!
10. All along the way you will find food, water and toilet facilities. May be not the cleanest but sufficient! There is also provision for medical help including for blistered feet! If you have bought the right shoes this should not be a big problem for you!
11. You will leave Arafat by Magrib time and walk to Muzdalifah. If you leave around 17.30 you should be in Muzdalifah by 21.00. Find somewhere to rest, refresh, pray (join Magrib and Eisha). Use torch to collect pebbles(+75) and place them in the bank coin plastic bags. Collect an extra bag of stones than is actually required – it may come in useful!
12. Sleep! If you can supplicate as much as is possible and then try and rest. Sleep if possible would be helpful.
13. You will leave after Fajr. When you arrive in Mina find your tent and go and rest, shower and sleep if need be! You now need to go stoning (Ramy of the Jamarat).
14. I would recommend that you get your husband to throw for you if incapacitated , if not do it together but by yourself it is after all your HAJJ. It can be mayhem and most people are filled with fear here, if there is a stampede, remember ALLAH (S,W,T) takes care of you ,for EASE & COMFORT READ ABUNDANT DUROOD. Do not take anything with you besides the pebbles and some water!
15. Depending on the arrangements for Qurbani (DUMM –E-SHUKR ) once you have the confirmation you can shave your head – you are now out of Ihraam and can perform Tawaaf and or Sai (if you haven't performed this before you should make Sai now – your agent's scholars will help you to decide when is the best time). Eid Mubarak!
16. If you are doing the walking Hajj you will walk to Makkah to perform the rites in point 15. If you are not up to it you can take a bus or a taxi. I am sure you will find it easier to walk!
17. On completion of Tawaaf and or Sai you will return to Mina. Best time for Tawaaf and or Sai is between 23.00 and 03.00 on the top floor of the Masjid! You should be back before Fajr!

18. You have 2 more days of stoning (Ramy). The second of the three days is relatively easier and if you both want to try you can. The third day is probably the more daunting / dangerous. People are keen to throw and leave Mina for Makkah and are on their way home. So they will be carrying things and stoning and everyone of the 2 million Hujjaj have to do this on the same day! Probably the worst time is between before Zohr and Asr ! I would suggest you stone after Asr. Then make your way to your hotel in Azizia.

Thereafter it will depend on the arrangements you have with your travel agents. Remember the following:

1. It will take as long to leave as it took to arrive but by now you are Alhumdollilah a Hujjaj but a very tired and in all probability not 100% healthy! Nonetheless you will still have to keep your wits about you. All the issues of security and common sense still apply!
2. If you are staying an extra day in Jeddah before you fly out make sure you have all the details including the time to be at the airport and where and when the transport will arrive.
3. You should be given your passports back as you leave Makkah. Check your coupons, **UNUSED COUPONS MAY BE REDEEMED AT THE UNITED AGENTS BOARD OFFICE AT THE AIRPORT ,ASK YOUR AGENT ABOUT THIS AS THESE FUNDS BELONG TO YOU ,SOME UNSCRUPULOUS OFFICIALS /AGENTS CASH THESE ,SURELY ALLAH (S.W.T.) KNOWS BEST.** If you have done the walking Hajj there should be coupons that you have not used, and ditto if you have stayed in a private tent. You can cash these in at the airport. It will take some time – about 30-40 minutes but you will get back some money – approximately RIYAALS \$70-100. Most people do not do this and travel agents will collect the money for themselves!

INSHA-ALLAH the above will help you with some practicalities. I apologies if there any inaccuracies! If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us. +27118368451 / +27827402312 / yusuf.h.patel@gmail.com

Please remember us (every person that contributed in any way) in your duas (donot forget the UMMAH ) and convey our Salaams to the Prophet (SAW), if you remember. May Allah (SWT) make it easy for you and accept your HAJJ & AND ALL YOUR IBADAAH & MAKE THIS SACRED JOURNEY A MEANS OF REFORMATION FOR ALL OF US . Ameen.

Salaams Ayoub ,Yusuf & families.