Pilgrimage | The Haram at Mecca and the Ka’ba

'The Ka'ba is the qibla of Islam.'

The Ka'ba is the qibla (direction of prayer) of Islam. It is also at the heart of the Hajj and everyone who visits the Haram at Mecca has to circumvent the Ka'ba seven times as part of the prescribed pilgrimage ritual. The Ka'ba has many names in the Islamic tradition, among them: al-Masjid al-Haram (The Sacred Mosque, referring to the mosque within the precinct of the Ka'ba) and al-Bayt al-Atiq (the Ancient House). The Ka'ba is an almost square structure: 9.29 m on its north side, 12.15 m on its west, 10.25 m on its south side, and 11.88 m on its east side. It is 15 m high and has only one access door on the east face that is 2 m above ground level.

Name:
Ceramic tile panel

Dynasty:
Hegira 1087 / AD 1676 Ottoman

Details:
Museum of Islamic Art
Cairo, Egypt

Justification:
A tile panel showing a ground-plan for the Holy Mosque at Mecca with the Ka'ba in the centre.

Name:
Painting

Dynasty:
Hegira early 12th century / AD early 18th century Ottoman

Details:
Uppsala University Library
Uppsala, Sweden

Justification:
A topographical painting of the Haram shown with details of entrances, minarets and the surrounding sites.

Name:
Astronomical instrument: Qiblanuma

Dynasty:
Hegira 1151 / AD 1738 Ottoman

Details:
Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts
Sultanahmet, Istanbul, Turkey

Justification:
A compass (qiblanuma) that determined the direction of prayer (qibla) and the correct route to Mecca.

Name:
Prayer rug

Dynasty:
Hegira 1217 / AD 1802 Ottoman

Details:
Burrell Collection, Glasgow Museums
Glasgow, Scotland, United Kingdom

Justification:
Pilgrims traded prayer rugs while travelling, or offered them as votive gifts to mosques.

Name:
Prayer rug

Dynasty:
Hegira 12th century / AD 18th century Ottoman

Details:
Museum of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Antiquities (Medelhavsmuseet)
Stockholm, Sweden

Justification:
Pilgrims traded prayer rugs while travelling, or offered them as votive gifts to mosques.