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The Dakar Rally

The Dakar Rally (or simply "The Dakar"; formerly known as the "Paris–Dakar Rally") is an annual rally raid organised by the Amaury Sport Organisation. Most events since the inception in 1978 were staged from Paris, France, to Dakar, Senegal, but due to security threats in Mauritania, which led to the cancellation of the 2008 rally, events from 2009 to 2019 were held in South America. Since 2020, the rally has been held in Saudi Arabia. The event is open to amateur and professional entries, amateurs typically making up about eighty percent of the participants.

The rally is an off-road endurance event. The terrain that the competitors traverse is much tougher than that used in conventional rallying, and the vehicles used are typically true off-road vehicles and motorcycles, rather than modified on-road vehicles. Most of the competitive special sections are off-road, crossing dunes, mud, camel grass, rocks, and erg among others. The distances of each stage covered vary from short distances up to 800–900 kilometres per day.

The race originated in December 1977, a year after Thierry Sabine got lost in the Ténéré desert whilst competing in the 1975 "Cote-Cote" Abidjan-Nice rally and decided that the desert would be a good location for a regular rally, on the lines of the 1974 London–Sahara–Munich World Cup Rally, the first automobile race to cross the Sahara Desert.