# Jordan Discovery

The sweeping desert and echoing formations of Wadi Rum, the hidden, hand-hewn facades of Petra and the ancient Roman ruins at Jerash all make Jordan a true adventurer’s paradise. With its sole focus on Jordan, this an inspiring Middle Eastern journey.

## Overview & Itinerary

**Start & Finish:** Amman, Jordan

This trip can be enjoyed by just about anyone with a reasonable level of fitness.

There is quite a bit of walking involved in visiting Jordan's historic sites, especially in Petra and Wadi Rum, so a reasonable level of fitness is required. Most of the time there is no shade so remember to bring a hat, sun protection, and sturdy, comfortable walking shoes.

In Wadi Rum we stay in a permanent tented camp with shared bathroom facilities. Please be aware that while the desert may be very hot during the day, it will still be cool at night and warm clothes and a sleeping bag is highly recommended when travelling outside of the summer months.

### Physical rating

Despite the 'off-road' nature of this trip, it can be enjoyed by anyone who is reasonably fit. Please be aware that any visit to Petra requires a fair amount of walking. The amount of energy you expend there is largely up to you. The program in Wadi Rum involves a mixture of camel riding and a jeep safari.

# Itinerary

## Day 1: Amman

Ahlan Wa Sahlan! Welcome to Jordan, cosmopolitan and contemporary, yet steeped in biblical history. On arrival at Amman's Queen Alia International Airport, you will be met by our representative and transferred to your hotel. This is simply an arrival day so you may arrive in Amman at any time. Note that hotel rooms are generally only available after midday. Your adventure begins with a Welcome Meeting at 6pm on Day 1. Please look for a note in the hotel lobby or ask the hotel reception where it will take place. If you're going to be late, please inform the hotel reception. We'll be collecting your insurance details and next of kin information at this meeting, so please have these on hand.

As there's not much time spent in Amman on this itinerary, it's worth arriving a day or two early to explore the sights. If you do then the highlights are ***The Citadel*** with its amazing sweeping views of Amman, the ***Jordan Museum*** – home to the Dead Sea Scrolls – or the ***Roman Theatre***, right in the middle of downtown Amman. Either way, this evening, get out on to the streets, where you’ll soon hear “Welcome to Jordan” from the locals, and maybe pick up a coffee from one of the cafés and partner it with an *ara’yes*, a toastie filled with spicy mincemeat.

### Accommodation: Hotel (1 night)

### Meals Included: There are no meals included on this day.

### Special Information

An airport arrival transfer is included. This transfer is only valid if arriving on day 1 or if you have booked pre-trip accommodation through Sojourn. Please provide your flight details at the time of booking, or at a minimum 15 days prior to travel (note - we may not be able confirm request made within 15 days of travel). Once you have provided your details a transfer representative will be booked to meet you at the airport and transfer you to your hotel.

## Day 2: Aqaba

After breakfast today, you’ll leave the Jordanian capital of Amman and journey down the Desert Highway, with the beach resort of Aqaba as your destination (approximately 4 hours). On arrival you will be met and transferred to your hotel. Aqaba is the only port city in the country, lying at the very northern tip of the Red Sea, and you will have the rest of the day free to explore the town and port. The small Ottoman Mamluk Fort, dating from the 14th century and from where Lawrence of Arabia rode to Cairo, is worth a look. Otherwise, most of the fun is to be found in the water. Acquaint yourself with the hotel's pool, or head to the beach – some of the best snorkelling in the world can be found around the untouched coral reefs just south of the town.

### Accommodation: Hotel (1 night)

### Meals Included: Breakfast

## Day 3: Wadi Rum

This morning, take a brief orientation walk of Aqaba with your guide, visiting the old castle if time permits, before driving to Wadi Rum. See the contrast between the sparkling waters of the Red Sea and an ochre sea of desert on the way to spellbinding Wadi Rum. Drive approximately 1 hour into this landscape of rugged sandstone mountains, desolate yet achingly romantic, the way the locals do – in rather old, rickety (but reliable) jeeps operated by the local Bedouin Community.

After lunch (not included) in the small village of Rum, enjoy a browse around the excellent and informative visitor's centre. Then visit some of the most stunning desert scenery you will ever witness. Wadi Rum is a truly beautiful place, where great gouts of rock have been eroded by wind and ancient water into fantastical gnarled shapes; watch them change colour throughout the day, and soak in the vast silence of this lunar-like landscape. Wadi Rum is probably best known for its connection with the enigmatic British officer T.E. Lawrence, who was based here during the Great Arab Revolt of 1917-18. The landscape is often used in movies, such as The Martian, to depict the surface of Mars.

Today you will also meet your new Bedouin Friends, the backbone of Jordan. Ride through sweeping swathes of desert, wondering how this place could be liveable until you soon get your answer – a group of dark tents low-pitched to the ground: a Bedouin camp. In traditional Bedouin culture, a huge onus is placed on taking in and feeding any visitor, and so a very warm welcome is assured on your arrival. Spend the night in this incredible location, deep in Wadi Rum and under a huge expanse of stars.

### Accommodation: Desert camp (1 night)

### Included Activities

Wadi Rum - Desert Jeep tour

Wadi Rum - Camel ride (30 min.)

### Meals Included: Breakfast, Dinner

## Day 4: Petra

After waking up in the unique surrounds of the Bedouin camp this morning, you will enjoy a walk around the area (the length of the walk will depend on how energetic you are feeling) before scaling one of the large dunes to enjoy sensational views of the surrounding area. Keen photographers will be delighted. You will then take 4WDs from your camp back to the main entrance, which is opposite the Seven Pillars of Wisdom, the mountain named after Lawrence of Arabia’s book. The visitor's centre here is also a great spot to buy some jewellery and handicrafts, mostly made by a women's co-operative that is aimed at supporting traditional local industries. You will then continue your journey to the fabled city of Petra (approximately 2.5 hours). On arrival there is time in the afternoon to check out the town that has grown up around the site, and to just relax… ready for a big day of exploring Petra tomorrow.

### Accommodation: Hotel (1 night)

### Meals Included: Breakfast, Dinner

## Day 5: Petra

Petra is justifiably on most people’s list of ‘must-visit’ places. It’s regularly cited as the world’s ‘8th Wonder’, and in fact made the list of ‘New 7 Wonders of the World’. Petra is the jewel of Jordan, the lost city of the biblical Nabateans, an impressive series of tombs and dwellings hidden behind ornate façades carved directly into the rock.

Dating back to the 6th century BC, the site was lost to Western minds until it was rediscovered in 1812 by a Swiss explorer. The iconic Petra view – the Treasury's glorious façade, glimpsed from the narrow cleft known as the Siq – is arguably the single most striking sight of the entire region. The Siq leads through the rock and is sometimes only a few metres wide, with walls soaring up to 180 metres on either side, and it is impossible not to imagine the armies and traders who made their way down here in the ancient times. Petra's greatest surprise, however, is its size. With your guide you will explore the old Roman road, amphitheatre and several old tombs.

You will also climb up to the Monastery – carved from a mountain summit and the site's second beautiful façade – from where you will have a magnificent view of the entire site. This is a memorable day exploring a truly extraordinary destination and is sure to be one of the highlights of your trip. There is a cafeteria on the site, where you can enjoy a light lunch. In the mid-afternoon you will return to your hotel, and it won't take much convincing for you to try a soothing traditional Turkish bath.

### Accommodation: Hotel (1 night)

### Included Activities

Petra - Guided tour

### Meals Included: Breakfast, Dinner

## Day 6: Petra/Shobak/Madaba/Amman

Petra is an incredible site and almost demands more than one visit. If you want to see more, then get up early to soak in the dramatic setting, walk to extra sites like the High Place of Sacrifice, and just try to comprehend the history and life of a city that was once able to challenge the might of Rome. Later, the ancient Crusader castle at Shobak makes as imposing sight as you make the short drive up to it. It was originally built to protect the eastern flank of the Latin Kingdom and its trade routes to the sea, before it fell to Saladin in 1189. Stroll the site and discover a small chapel, original gatehouse, and find out where a long, dark secret passage leads. Continue half an hour to the ancient village at Dana, on the edge of the Dana Biosphere Reserve, where local artisans sell attractive silver jewellery and charms. Drive on to Madaba (approximately 3 hours), home to several fine Byzantine mosaics. Visit the Greek Orthodox Church of St. George and see an impressive mosaic map of the Holy Land that clearly depicts Palestine and Lower Egypt around 550 AD. You will arrive in Amman in the late afternoon, where you can spend the evening in one of its several fine restaurants.

### Accommodation: Hotel (1 night)

### Included Activities

Shobak - Shobak Castle

Dana - Ancient Village Visit

Madaba - St Georges Church

### Meals Included: Breakfast

## Day 7: Jerash/Dead Sea/Amman

Today you will leave Amman for a short drive north (approximately 1 hour) to Jerash, once one of the grandest ancient Roman cities in the world. These are some of the best Greco-Roman ruins around. Reaching its zenith as a favourite of the emperor Hadrian, it has a striking collection of archways and theatres, baths, public buildings and colonnaded streets, and is a beautiful place to spend a morning exploring. Grand ionic columns encircle the city's centrepiece, the Oval Plaza, a wonderfully atmospheric place to linger after exploring Jerash's riches. Then, you’d better have brought your swim gear as you can wash off the dust from exploring with a dip like no other. Drive approximately 1.5 hours to the shores of the Dead Sea, the lowest point on Earth (420 metres below sea level). This isn’t actually a sea but a super-salty lake (dead because of the lack of life in it) where the density of the water means you’ll go for a float, not a swim. Spend some time relaxing here and get some classic floating pictures. The mud here is supposed to have healing properties, so why not cover yourself from head to toe for a nutrient-rich natural mineral mud bath. Afterwards you will return to Amman for the evening (approximately 1 hour). Maybe spend your final night at one of the many bars and restaurants in West Amman, or ask your leader about the traditional cafes dotted around the city where locals spend their evenings.



### Accommodation: Hotel (1 night)

### Included Activities

Dead Sea - Visit including lunch

Jerash - Roman ruins

### Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch

## Day 8: Amman

Your trip will end today after breakfast. Check-out time is usually around 12 noon and you are free to leave at any time. If you have arranged a private airport transfer you will be advised of the pick-up time. Additional accommodation can be pre-booked if you wish to spend more time exploring Amman.

### Meals Included: Breakfast

# Itinerary disclaimer

#### Itinerary Changes

Occasionally our itineraries are updated during the year to incorporate improvements stemming from past travellers' comments and our own research. The information given in this itinerary may be slightly different to that in the brochure. It's very important that you print and review a final copy of your Trip Notes a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans.

If you have any queries, please contact your travel agent or our staff. We are here to help you! Please note that while we operate successful trips in this region throughout the year, some changes may occur in our itineraries due to inclement weather and common seasonal changes to timetables and transport routes. This can happen with little notice so please be prepared for modifications to the route. The order and timing of included activities in each location may also vary from time to time.

#### Optional Activities

Optional activities are listed in the day-to-day itinerary. This isn't an exhaustive list and should be used as a guide only. Prices are approximate and are for entrance only and don’t include transport to and from the sites or local guides unless indicated. All activities are subject to availability and it may not be possible to do all the activities listed in the time available at each destination.

Where activities are considered medium or high risk, we work with operators whose safety and credentials we have sighted and assessed. This means that it is possible that you may find the same activity cheaper with another operator on the ground, however we cannot vouch for the safety or quality of that operator. Activities not listed above have not been assessed by us and as such our staff and leaders are unable to assist you with booking these activities. The decision to partake in any activity not listed is at your own discretion and risk.