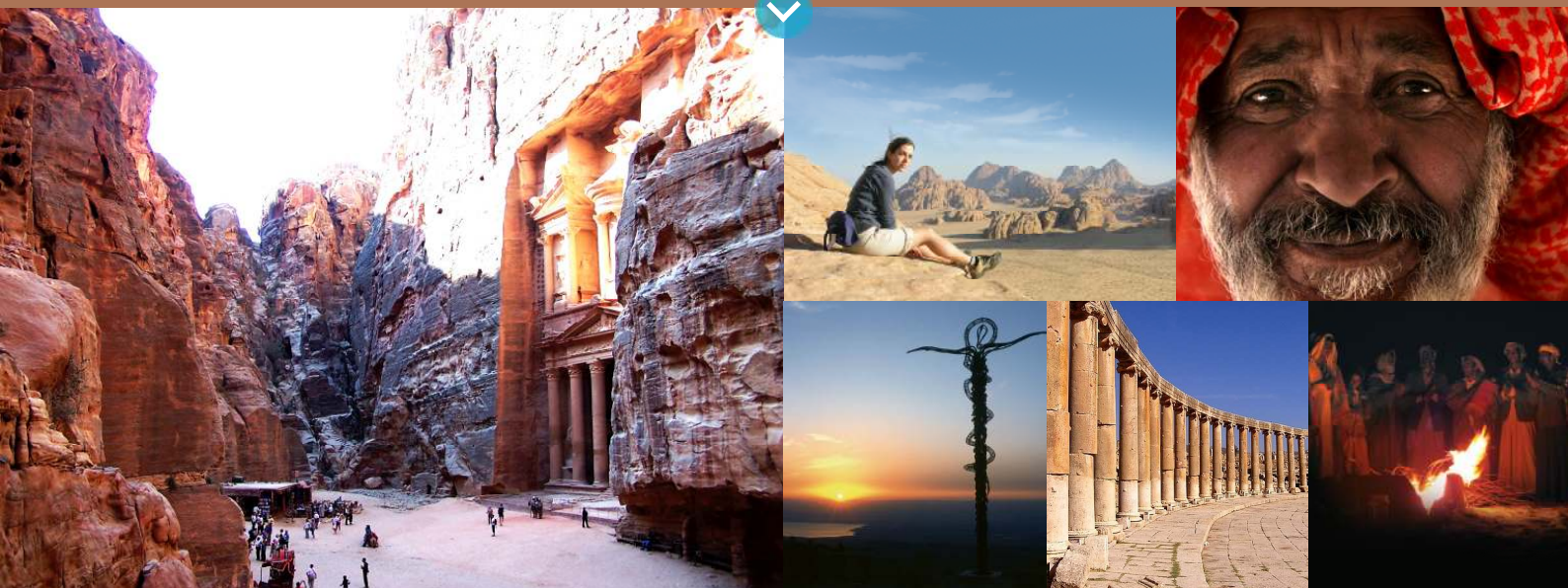


# Jordan

## Deserts, Petra & Crusaders



This journey takes us deep into the heart of this remarkable country, connecting us with ancient peoples and civilisations whose caravan routes crossed this region. We first head north on the Desert Highway to see amazing Roman remains before returning to explore the city of Amman. Then we journey south to reach the rugged desert landscape of Wadi Rum. The scenery here is awe-inspiring as we wind through the impressive rock canyons and across golden desert sands to reach our camp. Camping in Bedouin goat-hair tents, as the camel caravans that passed through 2000 years ago would have done, only adds to this unique experience. As we explore this amazing landscape we can understand why Lawrence of Arabia found it so inspiring and so humbling. We then travel to discover the true magic of the vast ancient city of Petra. Leaving Petra we journey to a nature reserve in a village where endangered natural species are protected and where timeless traditions are still practised. Then we are once again bowled over by scenery at Kerak and the formidable Crusader Castle that overlooks the road to the Dead Sea. We conclude with a visit to Mount Nebo and a walk in Moses' footsteps.



### Recommended itinerary:

#### Day 1 Fly UK – Amman

You will be met on arrival and transferred to your hotel.

#### Day 2 Jerash & Amman

Today we head 50km north to Jerash, one of the finest examples of a provincial Roman town. The extraordinarily complete remains include a forum, a nymphaeum, hippodrome, two theatres, several temples and the famous Colonnaded Street. On our return to Amman we visit some of the city sights, including the Citadel, and see how the modern city has been developed out of its ancient roots.

#### Day 3 Wadi Rum

Today we travel south along the Desert Highway to Wadi Rum and the extraordinary desert scenery. Wadi Rum is one of the most evocative places in the Middle East, the legend of Lawrence of Arabia and his Arab revolt lives strong here and scenes from the famous film were shot deep in the fabulous purple-black and yellow mountains that rise from the sands of the desert. Here we transfer to 4WD vehicles and head off to explore the stunning desert environment of Wadi Rum. We camp at the edge of the Wadi Rum protected area, with a backdrop of high mountains and sand dunes and in true desert fashion we sleep in a traditional Bedouin tent or under the stars. As the sun sets on the rocky outcrops, an astonishing transformation takes place - the sandstone changes hue, passing through a spectrum of yellow, gold, orange, red and finally purple, as the shadows lengthen and the stars come out - the skies will hopefully be clear allowing the stars to stand out brightly. The Milky Way, satellites and shooting stars can be clearly seen - the perfect opportunity for star-gazing. Tonight we sleep in a traditional Bedouin tent (communal sleeping arrangement) or under the stars.

Culture shock rating:



Physical rating:



#### Day 4 Wadi Rum, Aqaba, drive to Petra

This morning, travelling by 4WD, we see how the desert environment has been shaped by natural forces. We then follow the Kings Highway onto the port town of Aqaba on the Red Sea. Our afternoon is free for swimming or we can organise an optional boat trip. Late afternoon we head back north to Wadi Musa, more commonly known as Petra, to be ready for our full day in Petra tomorrow.

#### Day 5 Explore Petra

Today we walk into the fabled and well-concealed city of Petra where a full day allows us to explore the Treasury, Monastery and the many other amphitheatres for which this amazing site is famed. This is an active day and we need to be prepared for a lot of walking, but the huge tombs - all hand carved out of the towering cliff face - are simply incredible and it will without doubt be a highlight of the trip.

The 800 steps which lead to the Monastery are a small price to pay for a view of the vast structure rivalling even the Treasury and boasting fantastic views stretching out over the valley below. If we have any energy left, there should also be time to climb to one of the High Places, the mountain-top altars where ritual sacrifices were made; from here there are spectacular views of the mountains, valleys and canyons below.

#### Day 6 Dana Nature Reserve & Crusader Castles

The recently developed nature reserve around Dana village aims to protect some of Jordan's endangered species, and has also managed to preserve the timeless traditions still practised in the village. We then travel onto Kerak where a formidable Crusader castle overlooks a long, winding road down to the Dead Sea. Finally we visit Madaba famous for its 6th century mosaics.

#### Day 7 Dead Sea

We spend time in Madaba then head to the biblical site of Mt Nebo. The Bible tells us that this is the final resting place of Moses. From Mt Nebo Moses looked out onto the Promised Land. We continue to the Dead Sea which, at 400 metres below sea level, is the lowest place on earth. There will be time to swim (or rather float!) before the short journey back to Amman.

#### Day 8 Fly UK

Transfer to Amman by road for your flight home.

#### Important information:

It is important to realise that the itinerary needs to be flexible. While every effort will be made to follow the above schedule, in the event of political problems, airline schedule changes or natural events, we will do our best to make your trip as enjoyable and hassle-free as possible, but it is important to EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED and be prepared to accept some slight changes. Relax and have faith in your guides.



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