

Jordan in Focus (12 Days)

TRIP FACTS

Starts in: Amman **Ends in:** Damascus
Grade: CULTURE & DISCOVERY

COUNTRIES VISITED

Jordan, Syria

TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

Amman, Jerash, Dead Sea, Madaba, Dana, Bedouin Desert Camp, Petra, Wadi Rum, Camel/Jeep Safari, Shobak Castle, Bosra, Damascus, Omayyad Mosque, Souq al-Hamidiyya



Jordan is a fantastic country, with spectacular old cities, Crusader castles and a sophisticated, cosmopolitan capital - Amman. But away from the more popular areas we discover the home of the Bedouin, as we explore landscapes of stark and dramatic beauty including rocky escarpments, high fertile plateaus and spectacular desert scenery. We explore the major sights, including visits to Jerash, the Dead Sea and Shobak Castle, and enjoy plenty of time in Wadi Rum, exploring by camel and foot and staying overnight in a Bedouin camp. Of course no trip to Jordan is complete without a exploring the amazing city of Petra. In Damascus there is also much to see including the celebrated Umayyad Mosque and the historic bazaars and alleyways of the old city - a great place to finish our outstanding adventure!



DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

Day 1 / Amman

On arrival at Amman's Queen Alia International Airport, you are met by our local representative and transferred to your hotel. This is simply an arrival day, so you may arrive in Amman at any time. Please note that hotel rooms are generally available for check-in only after midday. The rest of your day is free to explore your surroundings. In the evening you meet your tour leader and the other members of your group for a pre-tour briefing. Please check the notice board at the hotel reception for confirmation of the exact time and place of the meeting. This meeting is generally followed by an optional group dinner at a nearby restaurant.

Day 2 / Amman

After breakfast we enjoy a morning orientation tour of Jordan's fascinating and hilly capital. Known as Rabbath Ammon during prehistoric periods and later as Philadelphia, this ancient city, once part of the Decapolis League, now boasts a population of around 1.5 million people. The most impressive sight is probably the Roman Theatre which is located in the heart of the city. After lunch we visit the old market, a great place for photo opportunities, especially in the afternoon. Tonight we enjoy dinner at Kan Zaman Restaurant, which is a favourite with locals. Meals included: 1 breakfast

Day 3 / Jerash - Dead Sea - Amman

The Roman city of Jerash is extremely well preserved. Founded in the time of Alexander the Great, it had become a centre of considerable importance by the 3rd century AD. Today it is one of the grandest ancient cities in the world, with an imposing collection of archways, theatres, baths, public buildings and colonnaded streets. We explore the site in the morning before driving down to the Dead Sea. The afternoon is at leisure and we have a chance to experience floating in the warm waters, which have an unusually high saline content, or simply relaxing on the shore. We return to Amman for the night.

Meals included: 1 breakfast

Day 4 / Madaba - Mount Nebo - Dana

This morning we drive to Madaba, where we visit the Greek Orthodox church of St George that houses a 6th century mosaic map depicting the old city of Jerusalem. This is of particular interest, as it clearly depicts Palestine and Lower Egypt around 550 AD. We continue on to Mount Nebo, where a monastery believed to be the burial place of Moses is located on a hill overlooking the Holy Land. The custodians of this monastery are Franciscan monks and it also contains some of the most impressive mosaics in the world. We then travel to Dana, where we stroll through the ancient village. Recent finds have revealed evidence of Palaeolithic, Egyptian, Edomite, Assyrian, Nabataean and Roman civilisations. We visit workshops where local artisans sell attractive silver jewellery and charms to support their families and their local community. We enjoy dinner tonight at our accommodation, Dana Guesthouse.

Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 dinner

Day 5 / Dana Nature Reserve - Beida

Today we are escorted on full-day tour of Dana Nature Reserve. This reserve encompasses some of Jordan's most breathtaking scenery and stretches from the 1800-metre-high Sharaa Mountains in the east down to the dunes at Wadi Araba, located at sea level. Dana protects various species of wildlife, including endangered species such as ibex, from hunters. It is host to a wide variety of other animals such as mountain gazelle, fox, badger, porcupine, wolf, striped hyena and jackal. We also visit Feinan Lodge, an amazing eco-lodge that was built by Jordan's Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature and opened in the summer of 2005. It is set among the arid mountains of Wadi Feynan, located on the western boarder of Dana Nature Reserve. It is an interesting piece of architecture, built entirely of local materials and designed by a local architect. The staff are all from the local Bedouin community and the project is an important overall asset for this remote area. We then proceed to Beida, where we stay overnight at Ammarin Camp.

Meals included: 1 breakfast

Day 6 / Petra

For most people, the most vivid image of Petra is of a narrow chasm with glimpses of the Treasury building in the distance. The size of this ancient city is quite surprising. With our guide we enter the site from the back, thus avoiding the crowds. Our starting point, the Monastery, also gives us fine views of the entire site. Petra is now a UNESCO World Heritage-listed site that enchants visitors from all corners of the globe. Much of its appeal comes from its spectacular setting deep inside a narrow desert gorge. A visit to Petra is certainly memorable and sure to be one of the highlights of our trip. The photo opportunities are endless, so please come prepared with plenty of battery power for your camera. Tonight we enjoy dining at the Petra Kitchen.

Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 dinner

Day 7 / Petra - Wadi Rum

We rise early and enter through the narrow Siq and visit the numerous tombs, temples and public buildings, as well as the impressive rock-hewn amphitheatre. We have a couple of hours to take our photos before the crowds of tourists arrive. We continue to Wadi Rum, where we have lunch in the small village of Rum. Here we browse the new (and very good) visitor's centre, before we meet our Bedouin friends and ride camels to our traditional Bedouin tent, deep within Wadi Rum. There's plenty of time to explore our surroundings and enjoy a memorable sunset. Wadi Rum is a truly beautiful place with towering sandstone mountains rising from the desert. It fully deserves the amount of time we spend here, with the wind-sculpted rock formations changing hue throughout the day from sunrise to sunset. Wadi Rum is home to Bedouin tribes who live in scattered camps throughout the area. We enjoy an evening with our friend Mzied in his Bedouin camp, which is set in an amazing location. Wadi Rum is probably best known because of its connection with the enigmatic British officer T.E. Lawrence, who was based here during the Great Arab Revolt of 1917-18. Much of David Lean's movie, 'Lawrence of Arabia', was filmed in Wadi Rum.

Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 dinner

Day 8 / Wadi Rum

It's well worth rising early and watching the cliffs change colour as the sun comes up. We enjoy a walk in the morning (the length of the walk will depend on how energetic you are feeling!), and scaling one of the large dunes affords sensational views of the surrounding area. Keen photographers will certainly be delighted!

Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 dinner

Day 9 / Wadi Rum - Shobak Castle - Amman

We then take 4WDs from our camp back to the main entrance. The visitor's centre is a great spot to buy some well made jewellery and knick-knacks – most are made by a women's co-operative, which aims to support traditional industry. We continue along the King's Highway, a road that dates back to the time of the Old Testament and beyond and reach Shobak Castle, originally built to protect the eastern flank of the Latin Kingdom and its trade routes to the sea, before falling to Saladin in 1189. After enjoying a walk through the site we return to our vehicle

and drive back to Amman, arriving there in the early afternoon. This evening we have dinner in the very traditional Hashem Restaurant.

Meals included: 1 breakfast

Day 10 / Amman - Bosra - Damascus

Today we drive north into Syria, where we meet our Syrian tour leader/guide. Our first stop is Bosra, where we visit the 2nd century theatre. It has been extensively restored and the result is a fine example of Roman craftsmanship. We then head to the Old City, where we visit Umayyad Mosque. Built on the site of an ancient Roman temple, it is an adaptation of a Christian cathedral and is the fourth most holy Muslim site after Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem's Dome of the Rock. For those lucky enough to visit, it is a place of remarkable beauty and calm - a transcendent aesthetic experience. The courtyard is particularly beautiful, with its monumental arcades and brightly-coloured mosaics. We then walk through winding streets to Souq al-Hamidiyya, a grand covered arcade of shops and one of the most atmospheric places in the Middle East, where traders have sold their wares for hundreds of years. This area is fantastic for photography, especially with the afternoon light. Tonight we enjoy dinner (optional) in a traditional restaurant, with a performance given by dancing Whirling Dervishes. The restaurant building is a converted traditional home that houses lots of antiques.

Meals included: 1 breakfast

Day 11 / Damascus

After breakfast we head into the old city once again. Damascus has a long and colourful history. Once a Persian capital, it fell to Alexander the Great and became an important Greek city and later a keystone of the Byzantine Empire. In the 7th century it fell to the Muslims and then had a chequered history before becoming part of the Ottoman Empire. Today it is a marvellous jumble of architectural styles and we are sure to be captivated by its spell. The rest of the afternoon is at leisure to explore more of this intriguing city. Maybe revisit Souq al-Hamidiyya (main bazaar) or take in the sights and sounds of central Damascus after dark. There are lots of cheap local restaurants and nearby shops for some last-minute purchases.

Meals included: 1 breakfast

Day 12 / Damascus

Our trip ends today after breakfast. If you have arranged a private airport transfer, you will be advised of the pick-up time.

Meals included: 1 breakfast

About Peregrine

Peregrine has been operating adventure holidays since 1977. Today we can help you discover all four corners of the globe, from the Polar regions, to Africa, Latin America, Asia, Europe, the Middle East and beyond. We offer high-quality, excellent-value, small-group adventures to interesting areas of the world, in harmony with the local people and the environment.

Trip grade

CULTURE & DISCOVERY

Historical sites, regional culture and meeting the local characters are the highlights of these trips. They are not physically demanding and there's a comfortable hotel each night at which to relax.

Included

Photographic guide, Peregrine tour leader, local guides, arrival transfer, transport, sightseeing and entrance fees, meals (mainly breakfasts) as indicated in Trip Notes.

Accommodation: 7 nights comfortable hotel, 1 night local guesthouse, 3 nights Bedouin camp

Meals: 11 breakfasts, 4 dinners

Transport: camel, jeep, public aircon coach

Not included

Flights, meals not listed in Trip Notes including all lunches and most dinners, drinks, departure taxes, visas, travel insurance, tips (see below), spending of a personal nature, optional sightseeing, departure transfer.

Additional accommodation

Extend your holiday by booking some pre or post tour accommodation - ask us or your travel agent.

Optional Excursions

* prices below are a guide only.

Petra

- Petra by Night - US\$17
- Turkish Bath - JD15

Other information

Camera Equipment recommended

For digital cameras smaller memory cards are best in case one corrupts. 2Gig cards are good. Bring a laptop and back up to disk at night, CD or DVD.

For film cameras - use Fuji Velvia, a mix of speeds but 100 ISO and 400 ISO tends to be best.

A small light tripod

Various lenses

A flash that can detach from your camera to enable you to do some great bounce effects.

Dry bags to keep all camera equipment dry.

Travelling responsibly

We care about the places and people that we meet on our journeys, and we try to ensure that we give something back, as well as taking away so many incredible memories. For more information on our commitment to responsible tourism, visit www.peregrineadventures.com/rt

Peregrine Community Trust

The Peregrine Community Trust, a division of Peregrine Adventures, provides funds for local community projects and initiatives that promote responsible and sustainable tourism development in the destinations in which we operate. First and foremost, but not exclusively, the Trust supports projects and initiatives that advance education and employment within the tourism and hospitality industry. The Trust operates on a not-for-profit basis, with funds donated by us, our staff and our travellers, with every cent going to the nominated projects.

By donating to one of the projects supported by The Peregrine Community Trust you will help promote responsible and sustainable tourism and make a positive difference for communities and travellers right now, and for the future. For online donations go to: www.peregrineadventures.com/trust

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Passport

Well before travelling, please ensure that you have a current passport, with an accurate photo, that is valid for at least six months after your scheduled return home. Also check that your airline tickets are in exactly the same name as your passport. Some countries may require that you have a return air ticket, or have sufficient funds to purchase such a ticket.

Insurance

On all our holidays you must have comprehensive travel insurance. Your own domestic government medical insurance and private health schemes will not cover you in most overseas countries. We are able to recommend a policy designed to cover participants in our programmes. You may take other cover, of course, but we require you to be adequately insured before we can allow you to participate on our tours. Should you commence a tour without adequate insurance you will be asked to arrange cover immediately before continuing with your holiday - and this may be difficult to arrange locally. For Group Tours your local leader will need 2 copies of your policy. The Tour Leader and our Ground Operator will keep one copy each in the unlikely event of an emergency. The copies must show the policy number and the emergency hotline phone number. Please bring these along to the tour briefing.

If you are covered by a policy arranged through your credit card company you will be asked to provide evidence of this cover, as well as a 24-hour emergency contact number. Many credit card companies do not provide an insurance policy number. In this instance, the tour leader will need to record your credit card number, as this is required to activate any request for emergency assistance. You should also bring along the travel insurance information booklet provided by your credit card company. It is your responsibility to ensure that you meet the requirements set out by your credit card company in order to be effectively covered and that the cover offered is of a suitable standard.

For Independent Tours, we recommend you leave a copy of your Travel Insurance policy with your Emergency Contact.

Visas

Visas

Jordan: Australians, Americans, British, Canadian and New Zealanders currently require a visa for Jordan. For all other nationalities please reconfirm your visa requirements with your travel agent.

Many nationalities can obtain a visa on arrival at Amman Airport, at a cost of 10JD (approx US\$15) however this can be time consuming and it is often easier to organise the visa before you leave home. If purchasing a visa upon arrival in Jordan this must be paid in US dollars CASH ONLY.

There is a departure tax of JOD5 (approx US\$8) for all travellers departing Jordan overland (ie. by road to Syria or on a ferry to Egypt) and this must be paid in Jordanian Dinars.

Australians, Americans, British, Canadian and New Zealanders currently require a visa for Syria. For all other nationalities please reconfirm your visa requirements with your travel agent.

Please arrange visas prior to arrival into Syria. It is possible in an emergency to obtain one on arrival but it can be a real hassle and will delay the group.

If there is any evidence of your having visited Israel you will be refused entry into Syria. Evidence includes Jordanian departure stamps at the King Hussein/Allenby Bridge land border.

It is your responsibility to ensure you have all required visas for your trip. Rules and regulations governing the issuance of visas are constantly changing, and vary for different nationalities and you should check visa requirements with your travel agent or relevant consular authority well before travel.

Vaccinations

Vaccinations may be required for this trip. Please consult your doctor or a travel health specialist. The choice of vaccinations can depend on a range of issues including the specific destination, the duration of the trip, your personal health and of course what vaccines you have had before.

Compulsory vaccines: These days the only compulsory vaccine is for yellow fever, which is required for many countries in Africa and South America. It should be done at least 10 days before travel and must be recorded in an official certificate book. Please note that very often you may not need to show this certificate book when entering these countries, but you will need to produce it to immigration/customs on returning to your home country.

Routine Background Vaccines: We strongly endorse current public health recommendations that all travellers should be up-to-date with their routine vaccines such as tetanus, diphtheria, measles/mumps/rubella, polio and influenza, and paediatric vaccinations for children.

Travel Vaccinations: While the food and water-borne diseases such as hepatitis A and typhoid will apply to most of our travellers, other travel vaccines such as hepatitis B, rabies, meningitis, Japanese encephalitis and cholera may apply to select travellers, especially long-term travel. Travel health experts can advise on what is required and also what is not required!

Malaria: There is no vaccination against malaria, which is transmitted by mosquito bites and is a risk in many less-developed tropical areas, particularly in Central, East and West Africa, Melanesia (especially Papua New Guinea) and the Amazon region. In Asia (particularly India) and Central America it may be a problem in rural areas. Protection against mosquito bites is essential and where the risk is considered high, anti-malarial medications are recommended. Anti-malarial medications should be discussed with experts as there are different medications available and not all medications suit all people or all destinations. We prefer that trekkers to altitude try to avoid the use of mefloquine (Lariam) if possible.

For travellers from Australia and New Zealand, we strongly recommend Travel Doctor-TMVC clinics to obtain the most up-to-date advice on health risks and vaccinations (see www.traveldoctor.com.au for locations and detailed vaccine information or phone 1300 658 844 for an appointment in Australia). Some vaccines require more than one dose, so arrange for your visit at least 4-6 weeks before you travel. Travellers living outside Australia and New Zealand will need to consult a similar organisation in their own country (please ask your travel agent for recommendations), but can still access the following link for information:

www.traveldoctor.com.au/travelreport.asp?UngID=0.4630191&PageID=10&nav=personal-traveller

About this information

It is important that you should read these notes in conjunction with the detailed trip specific **Pre Departure Information**. This information is supplied to you at the time of booking and contains extensive information about subjects such as climate, clothing and gear, medical and visa matters, currencies, and other information about the countries visited.

The information provided here is given in good faith and has been compiled with all reasonable care. However, things change and some of the information may become out of date. Please keep this in mind when you read it and check with us if you want to be sure about something. The document was correct at time of printing, but you can check online for the most up to date version. If you have any queries, please contact your travel agent or our staff in Australia. We are here to help you!