

LAND OF THE BEDOUINS



TOUR DETAILS	Duration 11 days
HIGHLIGHTS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Petra - stunning carvings and landscape• A night under the desert sky• The ancient ruins of Jerash• Float in the Dead Sea - the lowest point on Earth• Madaba`s famous mosaics• Dana Biosphere Reserve - amazing natural beauty	
Off The Beaten Track Rating ●●●	Activity Rating ★★

ITINERARY

DAY 1 Arrive into Amman airport where you will be met by a Travel The Unknown representative and transferred to your hotel. Overnight in comfortable hotel in Amman. Meal plan: n/a

DAY 2 After breakfast you will board private transport and drive through the old part of the city of Amman, visiting the Citadel and the Roman Amphitheatre. Drive through the old souk before stopping for a typical Lebanese mezze lunch in a local restaurant. After lunch drive to the ancient city of Salt, the first capital of Jordan. It houses the tomb of the biblical Job, a wealthy, righteous man from the Land of Uz as well as the tomb of prophet Jethro, who was Moses' father-in-law. Take a walk through the streets of the old city of Salt where you will be surrounded by splendid yellow sandstone buildings incorporating a variety of local and European styles - typically with domed roofs, interior courtyards, and characteristic tall arched windows. Return to Amman for overnight. Meal plan: B, L

DAY 3 Drive to Umm Qais. Here you will find the site of the ancient Greco-Roman town of Gadara, one of the cities of the Decapolis and, according to the Bible, the place where Jesus cast out the devil from two men into a herd of pigs (Matthew 8: 28-34). Rising 518 meters above sea level with views of Lake Tiberias and the Golan Heights, there is no better vantage point in northern Jordan than Umm Qais. Gadara was renowned for its cosmopolitan atmosphere, attracting an array of writers, artists, philosophers and poets. It also served as a resort for Romans vacationing in the nearby al-Hemma hot springs. Like Pella, its sister Decapolis city, Gadara was blessed with fertile soil, abundant water, and a location astride a number of key trading routes connecting Asia and Europe.

Afterwards head to Jerash to have a traditional lunch in a local restaurant located near the entrance to the archaeological site of Jerash. After lunch visit the site of Jerash, one of the biggest preserved Roman cities outside of Italy. Its colonnaded streets, baths, theatres, plazas and arches remain in exceptional condition. The history of Jerash is a blend of the Greco-Roman world of the Mediterranean basin and the ancient traditions of the Arab Orient. Archaeological findings indicate human occupation at this location for more than 6,500 years. Overnight in a hotel in Jerash. Meal plan: B, L, D

DAY 4 Drive to Ajloun to visit Qala'at ar-Rabad and Ajloun reserve which is located in the Ajloun highlands. It is a Mediterranean-like hill country, dominated by open woodlands of oak, pistachio, pine, carob, and wild strawberry trees. The reserve was first established in 1988 when a captive-breeding program for Roe Deer was initiated. The reserve is a 13 square kilometre protected area of outstanding beauty and varied wildlife. Afterwards drive to Pella, which is one of the most ancient sites in Jordan and a favourite of archaeologists, being exceptionally rich in antiquities. It is perfectly situated, for there is a spring here which issues into a small river and never runs dry. The tell itself seems to have been continuously occupied since Neolithic times for some flints from this period have been found there; and some recent finds 2 km north of the tell even date to Paleolithic times, around 100,000 years ago. We will stop for lunch en route before heading to Bethany beyond the Jordan where it is believed Jesus Christ was baptized in the River Jordan. The site includes the remains of churches and several baptism pools. Pope John Paul II said an open air mass at the site in 2000. The site visit takes around 2hrs. After the visit we continue to Madaba for overnight in a hotel. Meal plan: B, L

LAND OF THE BEDOUINS

DAY 5 Early in the morning We will take a tour of Madaba visiting the Church of St. George in the middle of town. The church is the home of the Mosaic Map of Palestine, which represents the Holy Land and its surrounding regions. The mosaic was made around 560, originally composed of over 2.3 million pieces, and measured a staggering 25 by 5 meters. We will also visit the Church of Apostles and the Archaeological Museum. Then we head to Mount Nebo, known as Pisgah in the Bible. According to the Bible this is where Moses lived out his remaining days, able to see the Promised Land but never to enter (Deuteronomy 34: 1-8). Mt. Nebo offers a fantastic view westward, with a vista that includes the Dead Sea, the West Bank, the Jordan River, and, on a clear day, Bethlehem and Jerusalem.

We then will be transported to Um ar-Rasas which is a UNESCO World Heritage site located south of Madaba off the Kings Highway. The site contains Roman, Byzantine and Muslim ruins including churches and a military camp. The church of Stephen has the largest perfectly preserved mosaic floor in Jordan. This mosaic depicts hunting and fishing scenes, and the most important cities of the region (including Kastron Mefaa, Philadelphia, Madaba, Esbounta, Belemounta, Areopolis, Charac Moaba, Jerusalem, Nablus, Caesarea and Gaza).

Later, we take the Kings Highway south. The highway twists and winds its way through the heart of Jordan, connecting Madaba, Karak, Tafileh, Shobak and Petra. The King's Highway is the world's oldest continuously used communication route. This Royal route will lead us to Karak which lies on the ancient caravan routes that used to connect Egypt to Syria and its commanding position almost 1000 meters above the Dead Sea Valley made it a strategic asset of great importance. The city was the ancient capital of Moab, and was also used by the Greeks and Romans. Karak reached its full splendour in the 12th century with the arrival of the Crusaders. The major attraction at Karak is the magnificent Crusader fortress of Karak, which made Karak the new capital of the province; superbly situated on the King's Highway where it could control all traffic from north and south and grow rich by the imposition of road-tolls. This castle soars above its valleys and hills like a great ship riding waves of rock; an excellent example of the Crusaders' architectural military genius. We then will drive towards Dana Biosphere Reserve where we will be spending the night. Overnight in the Guesthouse in Dana. Meal plan: B, L, D

DAY 6 Free day in Dana Biosphere Reserve. Optional hiking - from a 1 hour gentle walk to a full day strenuous trek. Overnight in Dana. Meal plan: B, D (Optional packed lunch available).

Dana Biosphere Reserve, Jordan's most impressive eco-project, ranges in elevation from sandstone cliffs of over 1500m to the Wadi Arabi desert at 50m below sea level. Home to many species of plants and animals, the park is the perfect place to go hiking or just to relax away from it all.

DAY 7 Drive to Shobak castle which is known as Mont Realis (Montreal), yet another castle in the great chain of Crusader fortresses which stretches across Jordan. It was constructed in 1115 by Baldwin I (French: Baudouin de Boulogne), one of the leaders of the First Crusade, who became the first to win the title of King of Jerusalem. It suffered numerous assaults by Salah Eddin (Saladin) before it finally fell to him in 1189. Shobak Castle was then restored by the Mamluks in the 14th century. The castle is perched on top of a small hill northeast of the town of Shobak. Inside the fortress there are two churches, the first of which is to the left of the entrance and up the stairs. There are ruins of baths, cisterns and rainwater pipes, in addition to millstones for pressing olives, a few archways and other works which have stood the test of time. Continue to Wadi Musa. Afternoon free. Enjoy Petra in a unique way on a *Petra by Night* tour where you will walk through the candle-lit Siq and reach the Treasury where Bedouin music is played and a cup of tea will be ready to warm you up. Learn about Petra and the Nabataeans, before returning back through the Siq. Overnight in Wadi Musa. Meal plan: B

Note: Petra By Night visit is available on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays only

DAY 8 On this day you will be touring Petra. Walking into Petra you will quickly realize why this ancient city is one of the world's wonders. The Victorian traveller and poet Dean Burgon gave Petra a description which holds to this day - "Match me such a marvel save in Eastern clime, a rose-red city half as old as time." Yet words can hardly do justice to the magnificence that is Petra. Overnight in a hotel in Petra. Meal plan: B

Petra is one of the world's greatest heritage sites and one of the world's seven New Wonder - an ancient rock city that was the capital of the Nabatean Kingdom. Built around 2,300 years ago, the imposing rose-stone palaces are an impressive testament to the power and influence of the Nabateans, who controlled trade around the area in the 3rd century BC. Petra is surrounded by hills in which tombs have been carved into the pink sandstone. The site includes some 800 structures.

LAND OF THE BEDOUINS

DAY 9 After breakfast we head to Wadi Rum where you will meet your Bedouin host at Rum village. You will take a jeep tour to get acquainted with the surroundings. We will stop for lunch at the foot of the Khazaali Mountain before continuing our desert exploration by jeep. Some of the major attractions include Lawrence Spring, Thamodian Script, the remains of Lawrence House, a Nabatean Temple, Al Khazaali Canyon and Rakabat Um Ishreen. After watching a beautiful sunset we return to our Bedouin camp in the heart of the desert for a feast of *Zarb* - a traditional Bedouin dish of meat and vegetables cooked underneath the desert's sand, and a night under the Milky Way. Your Bedouin camp for the night is a Bedouin tent made of goat hair. It is built in the heart of Wadi Rum in a secluded area. Facilities are simple. Your host is a local Bedouin native of Wadi Rum. Overnight in a Bedouin camp in Wadi Rum. Meal plan: B, L, D

Wadi Rum is a valley cut into the sandstone and granite rock in south-west Jordan. It has been inhabited by many human cultures since prehistoric times and is dotted with massive rock formations. It is virtually untouched by humanity and its destructive forces. Here, it is the weather and winds that have carved the imposing, towering skyscrapers, so elegantly described by T.E. Lawrence as "vast, echoing and god-like". Much of David Lean's Lawrence of Arabia was filmed in Wadi Rum.

DAY 10 In the morning we will be leaving Wadi Rum towards the Dead Sea. Visiting the Dead Sea, the lowest spot on earth, will give us the opportunity to indulge in a unique floating experience in the salty and warm waters of the Dead Sea. Why not try a mud bath believed to have curative powers? Overnight in a hotel at the Dead Sea. Meal plan: B, L

DAY 11 Early start and transfer to Amman airport for onward flight. Meal plan: B

PRICE INCLUDES

Airport pick-up & drop-off
Ground transport
Accommodation

Entrance fees to sites
Breakfasts and most other meals
(refer to itinerary for meal plan)

Drivers and guides
Climate Care contribution

ABOUT OUR TRIPS

In addition to our scheduled group departures, **private and tailor-made trips** can be arranged that include some or all of the places on this itinerary. Please contact us with your requirements (e: info@traveltheunknown.com, t: 0845 053 0352) and we will happily put together an itinerary for you and your group. No trip is too long or too short.