

Arabian Highway - 11 days

go guide

don't leave home without it



Chocful of eastern promise, this trip combines Jordan and Syria in 11 remarkable days. Explore crusader castles, legendary cities of the mighty Roman Decapolis such as Jerash, Umm Qais, Bosra and the Rose City of Petra, bob around in the Dead Sea and explore ancient Damascus.

- Mt Nebo - views across the Promised Land
- Damascus (Syria) Martyrs Square, the Old City, Souk al-Hamidiyya, Umayyad Mosque and Saladin's Tomb
- Bosra - Roman Decapolis city
- Optional - Palmyra or Krac des Chevaliers
- Shobak or Karak Crusader Castle

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 : Amman

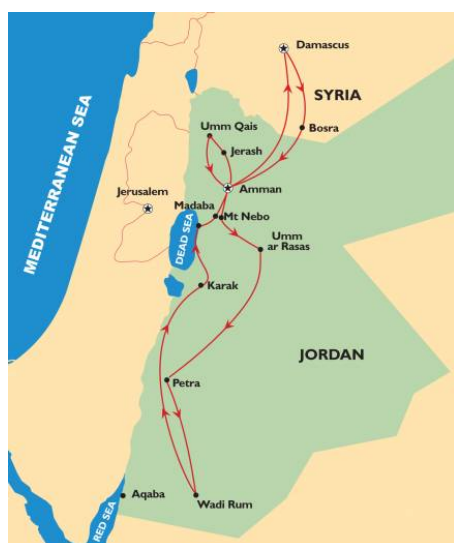
Saturday. Welcome to Jordan and the start of your holiday! Arrive Amman, included transfer to hotel and overnight. **Overnight - Amman**

Day 2 : Jerash & Umm Qais



Amman - Jerash - Umm Qais - Amman. Your tour leader will usually be at your hotel at approximately 7.30am for your welcome meeting. Driving north, we visit the Roman ruins of Jerash. Recognised as one of the best-preserved member cities of the Decapolis, a confederation of 10 Graeco-Roman cities, Jerash is deservedly one of Jordan's major attractions. Excavations began in the 1920s, though it is estimated that 90% of this city built in the 2nd century BC remains unexcavated. Exemplifying the finesse of Roman urban life, its hundreds of columns, temples and streets are worthy of exploration. Among the ancient attractions are mosaics, a triple-arched gateway, an ovalshaped forum, Roman baths and nymphaeum replete with ancient fountains trimmed with dolphins. The traditional Roman street is very impressive and still boasts chariot ruts, whilst the well-preserved South Theatre boasts astonishing ancient amplification.

We continue to Umm Qais (Gadara), a dramatic black-basalt Roman city of the Decapolis with panoramic views over the Sea of Galilee and the Golan Heights. **Overnight - Amman (B)**



WHAT YOU SEE AND WHAT YOU GET

Trip Highlights

- Amman - Citadel, Archaeological Museum and souq
- Jerash - Ruins of ancient Roman city
- Umm Qais - Roman Decapolis city
- Dead Sea - opt for a dip
- Petra - Nabataean Rose City
- Wadi Rum desert and nature reserve
- Umm ar-Rasas - ancient city on the caravan route
- Madaba - Christian market town, Church of St George, Jordan's finest Byzantine mosaics

What's Included

- Breakfast daily, 2 dinners
- 6 nights - 3 star hotels, 3 nights 2 star hotels (Damascus)
- 1 night - Wadi Rum deluxe desert camp
- 4x4 desert safari through the sand dunes of Wadi Rum
- Dead Sea - free time, swim & detox
- Hammam bath experience - Damascus
- Mt Qassioun (Damascus) - sunset
- Touring of Amman, Jerash, Dead Sea, Petra, Wadi Rum, Umm ar-Rasas, Mt Nebo, Madaba, Damascus and Bosra
- Escorted by licensed Jordanian tour Guide (in Jordan)
- Escorted by qualified Syrian Tour Guide at sights of antiquity (in Syria)
- Airport arrival and departure transfer day 1 and day 11
- All transfers and transportation in private air-conditioned vehicles
- Syrian Tourist Visa, (excluding service fee - USD\$10)and excluding USA passport holders. See our tour go guide for more info.
- Option to end your tour in Amman or Damascus

What's Not Included

- Tipping Kitty: \$40-50 USD
- Entrance Fees: \$150-180 USD
- International flights and visa
- Laundry, drinks and items of a personal nature
- Tip for your tour guides in Jordan and Syria. We recommend you allow \$3 - 5 USD per day, per traveller. Tipping your tour guide is an entirely personal gesture

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This Go Guide has been compiled with care and good faith. It gives an accurate illustration of the proposed arrangements for this holiday. Circumstances beyond our control such as changes in local conditions, inclement weather or other reasons could force us to make changes to this itinerary. This document does not form part of a contract between the traveller and on the go and their affiliates. Any costs shown are subject to change though are an accurate reflection of costs at time of writing. Please also note that visa requirements are subject to change and are the responsibility of the traveller and not that of on the go

updated on 11-01-2012



Day 3 : Mt Nebo & the Promised Lands



Amman - Mt Nebo - Umm ar Rasas - Petra. Today, we tour the citadel, Archaeological Museum and enjoy free time shopping in the local souq before arriving at Mt Nebo to take in panoramic views across the Promised Lands. Later we explore the deserted Roman garrison town on the ancient caravan route and beautiful mosaics of Umm ar Rasas. **Overnight - Petra (B)**

Day 4 : Petra

Wadi Musa (Petra). The jewel in Jordan's glittering archaeological crown is Petra, one of the New Seven Wonders of the World. Accessed on a walk through a penetrative, narrow, deep siq, the end prize is the hidden valley where the Rose City of Petra lies.

As you reach the end of the Siq, you'll come across the spectacular façade of Al-Kazneh – the Treasury of Petra. It's natural to was this building that served as the Holy Grail's resting place and the prize that Indy so coveted. As the Treasury is passed, the hidden valley widens to reveal the remains of the city proper. An erosion-hewn masterpiece all but lost to the modern world until 1812 when a Swiss explorer rediscovered it, Petra is full of ancient tombs and ruins ripe for modern day discoverers like us! The intrepid or should we say, very fit, can ascend the myriad stone steps to Ad-Deir, better known as the Monastery.

Want to learn how to cook Middle Eastern food? Consider opting for our Petra Kitchen bolt-on tonight! See our brochure or website. **Overnight - Petra (B)**

Days 5-6 : Wadi Rum & the Dead Sea



Petra - Wadi Rum. A chance to revisit Petra before our afternoon drive to Wadi Rum. A vast, silent landscape of ancient riverbeds, pastel coloured stretches of sandy desert and amazing eroded rock formations known as jebels that rise from the desert floor, the desertscape of Wadi Rum represents some of the most stunning and unspoilt countryside on the planet. The region is also home to semi-nomadic Bedouin living in their great goat hair tents, tending their herds of sheep and goat and preserving a lifestyle that has been practised here in the desert for centuries. Tonight, we enjoy a Jordanian dinner.

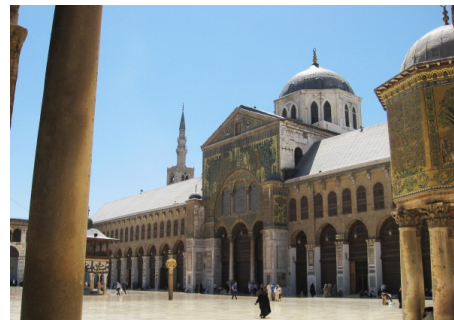
Day 6: Wadi Rum - Madaba. On the morning of day 6, we explore the 12th century crusader castle of Karak (or Shobak Castle) before descending to the lowest point on the earth's surface - the Dead Sea. The intense salinity of the mineral rich water creates an unusually high degree of buoyancy. Opt for a dip, without any effort at all. A short drive leads us to the ancient Christian-Muslim market town of Madaba. **Overnight - Wadi Rum (1) Madaba (1) (B:2, D:2)**

Day 7 : Madaba's Mosaics

Madaba - Damascus (Syria). Famed for its Byzantine mosaics, including the fascinating map of the Holy Land made in the 6th century out of two million stone pieces and now housed in the Greek Orthodox Church of St. George, Madaba - the most important Christian centre in Jordan, its mosaics, little shops and restaurants offers us gentle respite.

Travel onward to Damascus. After attending to immigration formalities at the boarder, the coach continues to Syria's charming capital. Our representative will be waiting for you as the coach pulls in, transfer to hotel and evening at leisure. **Overnight - Damascus (B)**

Day 8 : Damascus



Damascus. Today, we take a tour of reputedly the oldest continuously inhabited city on earth. Thoroughly charming, compact and bustling Damascus is studded with rich examples of Islamic and Ottoman architecture. The heart of the city is Martyrs Square. In the side streets just off the square, there are lots of eateries serving shwarma and falafel and pastry shops serving sweetmeats. However, just east is probably the real beating heart of Damascus - the Old City. Surrounded by what was once a Roman wall and rebuilt several times over the last 2000 years, the Old City boasts a main thoroughfare, Straight Street which has been here since Graeco-Roman times. Just beyond the

Citadel is the colourful Souk al-Hamidiyya, whilst just a stone's throw from here is the Umayyad Mosque. Built in 705AD, the facades around the central courtyard are adorned with golden mosaics. South of the mosque is Azem Palace.

This evening, enjoy a hamam experience at a Damascene bath house before soaking up the views and a drink on Mt Qassioun. **Overnight - Damascus (B)**

Day 9 : Palmyra or Krac des Chevaliers



Damascus. Free day to enjoy Damascus or book our optional excursion to Ma' alula, an ancient town where the locals still speak Aramaic - the language of Christ & Krac des Chevaliers, a crusader castle of epic proportion OR the spectacular ruins of Palmyra – perhaps Syria's number one sight! See below for further details (payable locally). **Overnight - Damascus (B)**

Day 10 : Bosra & Madaba



Damascus - Bosra - Madaba. Bidding Damascus farewell, we travel south to Bosra, a city of the ancient Roman Decapolis, which boasts possibly the best preserved Roman theatre in the Middle East. Leaving Bosra, we continue south to the frontier, where we attend to customs formalities, including the payment of a Syrian departure tax. Cost is currently 500 SYL (approximately USD\$12) and can only be paid in Syrian Lira (cash). Be sure to have kept this money aside, in advance as exchange facilities can not be relied upon at the border. Crossing over to Jordan and continuing to Madaba, remainder of the evening at leisure. **Overnight - Madaba (B)**



Day 11 : Madaba

Tuesday. Madaba - Amman. Spend the morning at leisure before hotel check-out and included onward transfer to Amman's Queen Alia airport.

NOTE: If more than 4 persons, the group will travel with a driver (not a tour guide) from Madaba - Damascus and from Bosra to Madaba. Our driver will attend to all immigration formalities for passengers and vehicles. If less than 4 persons, public transport will be used on the journey from Madaba Damascus, with representation at the Syrian border.(B)

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Wadi Rum Desert Camp

Most of our tours include a night in the Wadi Rum desert where you can choose to camp under the stars or in tents at our remote Bedouin camp. Our camp is set amongst towering weathered sandstone rocks and rolling red sand dunes. It has permanent tents with twin beds (raised off the ground), proper toilets and a cold water showers. There is a large communal tent, roughly 10m x 6m with proper seating for dining and another area with low tables and cushions scattered about where we gather at night. Each evening traditional Bedouin food is served and there is often a little light entertainment around the campfire. Desert camping, although basic, is fun and it's the best way to experience Wadi Rum.

Bedding is provided at our camp, though you are best advised to bring your own sleep sheet. If visiting in winter (Nov - Mar) bring your own winterweight sleeping bag as temperatures can be very cold.

Visas

A Jordan visa is required by all visitors to Jordan. These are issued at both the border and airport upon arrival. Visas for UK, EU, AUS, NZ, CAN and USA passport holders are issued at Amman International Airport, where the cost is currently 20JD (USD\$30) for single entry. It is no longer possible to get a multiple entry visa for Jordan.

If planning to leave for Syria, Egypt or Israel and reenter you will need to purchase a second visa (with the exception of crossing at the King Hussein/Allenby Bridge whereby a second visa is not required), which will be easily obtainable at the border.

If arriving to Jordan via Aqaba Seaport (the port of entry if arriving from Egypt) a visa is issued free of charge.

Note: all RSA passport holders and passport holders other than those listed above, must obtain their Jordanian visa prior to departure. Please note that visa requirements are subject to change. Visa procurement is solely the responsibility of the traveller and not of On The Go Tours.

Departure tax

If departing via Queen Alia International Airport there is no departure tax as this has been included in the cost of your departing flight ticket.

If departing Jordan via land or sea, a 5JD departure tax must be paid at the point of exit.

Climate

The maximum daily temperature in Amman ranges from 12°C in January to 32°C in August. The weather in the Jordan Valley (Petra) and south of the country is very hot during the summer months of April through to September. Where here, daytime temperatures can exceed 38°C and increase to as high as 49°C. The sun can be fierce so it is advised to apply plenty of sunscreen, especially at the Dead Sea.

In winter (December to February) temperatures can range from 0°C to 12°C. If visiting during winter, you will need to pack warm clothes for sightseeing, although the Dead Sea region will still be quite warm. If your holiday includes a stay in the Wadi Rum desert, winter wear items such as hat, scarf and gloves are also advised.

Health Requirements

It is recommended that you be vaccinated for Tetanus and Polio, if you haven't had a booster in the last ten years. Food and waterborne diseases are more common, so we recommend vaccinations for typhoid (valid 3 years) and Hepatitis A (validity varies). Vaccination requirements can change so please check with your local health care provider before travel.

Currency

Pounds Sterling, US Dollars and Euros are easily exchanged in Jordan. You can obtain Jordanian Dinar (JD) at any major bank or your hotel.
USD 1 = 0.71JD
GBP 1 = 1.09JD
EURO 1 = 1.0JD
AUD 1 = 0.75JD
Exchange rates are subject to fluctuations.

Funds collected in Jordan for entrance fees or optional excursion that you may wish to undertake are payable in local currency (JD).

Time

Time Zone - Jordan is two hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time

Essential Packing

- Camping at Wadi Rum - Bedding is provided at our Bedouin camp, though please bring your own sleeping bag liner. If visiting in winter (Nov - Mar) bring your own winter weight sleeping bag as temperatures can be very cold. You will also need to pack Insect repellent and a torch/ headlamp would be very useful
- If visiting in winter, pack warm clothes and an umbrella.
- If summer bring lightweight clothing, sunscreen & a hat.

- 2 pin (European) and 3 pin (UK) electrical adaptors as the sockets vary from one hotel to another.
- Tour voucher and a copy of your travel insurance
- Two spare passport photos & a photocopy of your passport
- Proper walking shoes (joggers/ trainers) for sightseeing in Petra

Arrival Transfer

Upon arrival at Queen Alia airport in Amman our representative will meet you prior to immigration. He will be standing prior to the queue for immigration, holding an On The Go Tours logo signboard. Our representative will accompany you through immigration to the baggage area and arrival hall. Here, he will introduce you to our driver who will transfer you to your hotel. Please have your tour voucher handy and make it available to our representative and driver.

If for any reason you have trouble locating our representative (after waiting 20 minutes at immigration) or your flight to Jordan is delayed, please call or send a text message to emergency contact number as stated on your tour voucher.

Petra Park Services Charge

In addition to the entrance fee required to visit the archeological site of Petra, there is a compulsory Petra Park Services Charge. The service charge (currently 29 JD) supports the local Bedouin community and also allows you to ride an Arabian Horse inside Petra. As you have paid this obligatory charge, you are entitled to ride a horse 800m down to the entrance gate. IMPORTANTLY - On The Go Tours only recommends that you do so if you are an experienced rider. Through experience we have observed that some of the horses can be uncontrollable and very fiery and if the Bedouin riders race past you, your horse may take flight and follow suit. You'll also need to tip the horse handler an extra 2JD. The decision to ride a horse is a personal one.