

Road to Damascus - 14 Days

go guide

don't leave home without it



A World Of Discovery



See the best of Jordan with a taste of Syria. Bob like a cork in the Dead Sea, range across ancient Roman Decapolis cities, discover the Rose City of Petra, explore Crusader castles and scrub up at a Damascus hamam.

- Optional trip to Karak Crusaders castle or Palmyra
- Aqaba - Red Sea resort town
- 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 hotel in Damascus, 3 nights 4 star hotel in Aqaba/Tala Bay
- 1 night - Wadi Rum deluxe desert camp
- 4x4 desert safari through the sand dunes of Wadi Rum
- Dead Sea - free time, swim & detox
- Aqaba - coastal bliss and colourful reefs
- Damascus - Hamam experience
- Mt Qassioun (Damascus) - amazing sunset and views across the city
- Airport arrival and departure transfer day 1 and day 14
- Touring of Amman, Jerash, Dead Sea, Petra, Wadi Rum, Aqaba, Madaba, Damascus and Bosra
- Escorted by a licenced Jordanian Tour Guide - throughout Jordan (excl free time in Aqaba days 10 - 12)
- Escorted by a qualified Syrian Tour Guide at sights of antiquity (Syria)
- All transfer and transportation in private modern air-conditioned vehicles
- Syrian Tourist Visa, (excluding service fee - USD\$10) and excluding USA passport holders. See our tour go guide for more info.

What's Not Included

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

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 : Roman Cities & Ruins

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 oval-shaped 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 blackbasalt 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 dunes
- Umm ar-Rasas - ancient city on the caravan route
- Mt Nebo - views of the Promised Land
- Damascus (Syria) Martyrs Square, the Old City, Souk al-Hamidiyya and Umayyad Mosque.
- Bosra - Roman Decapolis city

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updated on 11-01-2012



Day 3 : Dead Sea



Amman - Mt Nebo - Umm ar Rasas - Petra. Today, we tour the citadel, Archaeological Museum and enjoy free time in the local souq before visiting Mt Nebo to take in the views of the Promised Land. Later we explore the roman ruins and beautiful mosaics of Umm ar-Rasas. The mosaic floor of the Church of St Stephen dates to 785, over 150 years after Muslim rule was established in Jordan, and depicts the cities of the day including Jerusalem, with Palestinian cities below such as Nablus and Gaza. **Overnight - Petra (B)**

Day 4 : Petra

Petra. Possibly the jewel in Jordan's glittering archaeological crown, Petra should have been the Eighth Wonder. 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 have an Indiana Jones moment here as it 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 modernday 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 brochure or website for details. **Overnight - Petra/ Wadi Musa. Overnight - Petra (B)**

Day 5 : Wadi Rum



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. Boarding 4x4s we can get up close and personal to the picturesque scenery. **Overnight - Wadi Rum (B, D)**

Day 6 : Mt Nebo

Wadi Rum - Karak - Dead Sea - Madaba. En route to Madaba we explore the 12th century crusader castle of Karak (or Shobak castle) and visit the Dead Sea is the lowest spot on the earth's surface. The mineral content of this saltwater lake tops out at 33%. Think of a glass of water a third full of salt! Obviously, power boating is an impossibility but floating is very much a possibility! Whilst giving your skin the best detox it will ever have had thanks to the curative qualities of the water, the salt-rich waters will have you bobbing about just like a cork. **Overnight - Madaba (B, D)**

Day 7 : Madaba



Madaba - Damascus (Syria). A bustling Muslim-Christian market town, Madaba is renowned for its mosaics including the stunning 6th century Byzantine mosaic map depicting Jerusalem and other holy sites, located at the Greek Orthodox Church of St George. Small shops sell excellent copies of miniature mosaics. We head to the border for Syria and after attending to immigration formalities at the border, the coach continues to Syria's charming capital. **Overnight - Damascus (B)**

Day 8 : Damascus

Damascus. Today, we enjoy a tour of reputedly the oldest inhabited city on earth. Lying about 80 km inland from the Mediterranean Sea, Damascus has a wealth of historical sites dating back to many different periods of the city's history. Since the city has been built up with every passing occupation, it has become almost impossible to excavate all the ruins of Damascus that lie up to 8 feet below the modern level! Damascus is made up of a sizeable old city, divided into the market area, Muslim area, Christian area and the Jewish area. All three groups are still represented in Damascus, even if the

Jewish community now only counts a few thousand. Straight Street (Sharia Medhat Pasha), was one of the main streets of Roman Damascus and cutting a swathe through the Old City, still exists today. Studded with rich examples of Islamic and Ottoman architecture including the Umayyad Mosque - one of the largest mosques in the world, and one of the oldest sites of continuous prayer since the rise of Islam, Damascus is a charming city. This evening, enjoy a hamam experience at a Damascene bath house before enjoying the view 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 Krac des Chevaliers, a crusader castle of epic proportion OR the spectacular ruins of Palmyra – perhaps Syria's number one sight! See below or our website for further details (payable locally). **Overnight - Damascus (B)**

Day 10 : Damascus to the Red Sea

Damascus - Bosra - Aqaba/Tala Bay. Bidding Damascus farewell, we tour Bosra and see one of the most impressive theatres remaining from the Roman period. We then drive back to Jordan, and south to the Red Sea resort town of Aqaba (approx 8 hrs driving). A further 15km away and our home for the coming 3 days are the idyllic beaches of Tala Bay. Upon arrival we enjoy an included hotel buffet dinner this evening. **Overnight - Aqaba (B, D)**

Days 11-12 : Red Sea R&R



Wake up to some Red Sea relaxation with the following days offering free for you to independently explore, swim, snorkel, dive or simply relax. Azure blue waters brimming with kaleidoscopic marine life

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are a real attraction here on Jordan's Red Sea coast line. Why not undertake some scuba diving or snorkelling?

Travellers will be accommodated in a 4 star hotel with sea or pool view room. The resort complex of Tala Bay features a number of hotels, restaurants, 3 swimming pools, private marina, Gym and fitness centre, private beach (300m away) water sports, diving, and snorkelling. There is also a free shuttle service running three times daily allowing you to choose to spend the day by the beach/ pool or shopping, dining and or enjoying the nightlife of nearby Aqaba. **Overnight - Aqaba (B:2)**

Day 13 : Tala Bay to Amman

Aqaba/Tala Bay - Amman. Spend the day at the beach or pool. Alternatively head out for a last minute shopping and or souvenir hunting. Both Aqaba and Tala Bay are located within Jordan's a Duty Free Zone making this the ideal place to purchase alcohol, perfume, cosmetics and many other duty free items. Afternoon transfer to Amman and evening at leisure. **Overnight - Amman (B)**

Day 14 : Amman

Friday. Morning at leisure before hotel check-out and included onward departure 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 their 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.

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