

Xmas in Petra - 8 Days

go guide

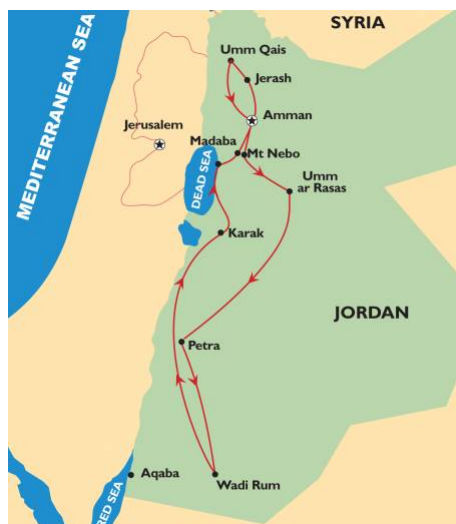
don't leave home without it



A World Of Discovery



Packing in Roman ruins, Crusader castles and views of the Promised Land. Go for a dip in the Dead Sea, camp out in Wadi Rum and enjoy a tasty Christmas dinner in the legendary Rose City of Petra. Guaranteed to be a Christmas cracker!



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
- Umm ar-Rasas - ancient walled city on the caravan trading route
- Mt Nebo - views across the Promised Land
- Madaba - Christian market town, Church of St George, Jordan's finest Byzantine mosaics

What's Included

- Breakfast daily, 3 dinners including a Christmas Feast at the Petra Kitchen and Bedouin dinner at Wadi Rum
- 6 nights - 3 star hotels, 1 night - Wadi Rum deluxe desert camp
- Wadi Rum 4 x 4 desert safari
- Dead Sea - free time, swim and detox.
- Airport arrival and departure transfer on day 1 and day 8
- Touring of Amman, Jerash, Dead Sea, Petra, Wadi Rum, Umm ar-Rasas, Mt Nebo and Madaba
- Escorted by a qualified Jordanian tour guide
- All relevant transfers and transportation in private modern air-conditioned vehicles

What's Not Included

- Tipping Kitty: \$40-50 USD
- Entrance Fees: \$130-150 USD
- International flights and visa
- Laundry, drinks and items of a personal nature

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 : Amman

Welcome to Jordan and the start of your holiday! Arrive Amman, included transfer to hotel. **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 awesome Roman ruins of Jerash. Second only to Petra in touristic appeal, the 2,000 year-old Graeco-Roman ruins of Jerash are recognised as one of the best-preserved member cities of the Decapolis, a confederation of 10 Graeco-Roman cities. When Emperor Hadrian paid a visit in 129 AD, the place was buzzing. The citizens threw up a Triumphal Arch for him which still stands today. Exemplifying the finesse of Roman urban life, the town boasts

a hippodrome, the old sports field that once held 15,000 spectators, a stunning amphitheatre with amazing acoustic abilities, the forum which gracefully links the main north-south axis of Jerash, a colonnaded street paved with original stones and the rut marks of chariots, a nymphaeum replete with ancient fountains trimmed with dolphins and various temples.

From here, we travel to the modern town of Umm Qais, which is the site of the ancient Graeco-Roman town of Gadara, one of the cities of the Decapolis with panoramic views over the Sea of Galilee and the Golan Heights. 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. Gadara was blessed with fertile soil, abundant water and a location astride a number of key trading routes connecting Asia and Europe.

The city thrived until the Byzantine era which witnessed the decline of Gadara into relative obscurity. Earthquakes destroyed many buildings, and by the dawn of the Islamic era Gadara had become just another village. The town became known by the Arabic name Umm Qais during the Middle Ages. Today, a considerable portion of the original Roman amphitheatre has survived. The seats face west, and are brought to life at sunset. Next to the theatre is a colonnaded street that once probably was the town's commercial heart. Also near the black basalt theatre are the columns of the great Basilica of Gadara. Further west along the colonnaded street are a mausoleum and public baths. **Overnight - Amman (B)**

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Day 3 : Mt Nebo & the Promised Lands



Amman - Mt Nebo - Umm ar Rasas - Petra. This morning, we tour the citadel of Amman, Archaeological Museum and enjoy free time shopping in the local souq, before visiting Mt Nebo - the single most important biblical site in Jordan. Having led the Israelites for 40 years through the wilderness, Moses finally saw, from this awesome vantage point, the Promised Land, that God forbid him to set foot in. We too can enjoy the excellent views offered of the Jordan River, Jericho and on clear days the towers on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem.

Later we visit Umm ar Rasas, a haunted city on the ancient caravan routes, important during the Byzantine and Umayyad periods. Large mosaic floors from two of its dozen or more churches have been painstakingly cleaned and protected. 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, Philadelphia (modern day Amman), Madaba and Karak. **Overnight - Petra (B)**

Day 4 : Xmas in the Rose City



Wadi Musa (Petra). Merry Christmas! Chief among Jordan's many archaeological riches is the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Rose City of Petra. The city was first settled around the 6th century BC by the Nabataean tribe from Western Arabia. A succession of habitation, leadership and further development followed, but as the caravan trade routes were gradually displaced by the advent of sea trade routes, the city's importance gradually declined and Petra passed into obscurity.

Rediscovered in 1812 by the young Swiss explorer Jean Louis Burckhardt, it remains on the list of many travellers. The approach to Petra is very undulating. The town itself is set across some rather steep hills that wend downwards to the star attraction, the Rose City. We access the hidden archaeological treasures of the Rose City on a walk through a narrow, deep siq, where the rocks finally give way to reveal the famous facade of the 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 Indy so coveted. As the Treasury is passed, the hidden valley widens to reveal the remains of the city proper. Continuing our walk, we'll then go on to explore chunks of this fantastic once-lost city.

In all, there are some 800 registered sites in Petra, including some 500 tombs. Just as fascinating as the rock-carved monuments are the rocks themselves. Petra is an erosion-hewn masterpiece. Sandstone shot with minerals burst into colour giving off blue, red, orange and green hues. Amongst the rocky and sometimes jagged scenery, it's sometimes hard to know what is man-made and what is the result of pure nature. Our exploration takes us past many tombs, temples, an impressive amphitheatre and a Roman colonnaded street. Concluding the guided aspect of the tour, you're free to head off and further explore. The intrepid can ascend the hundreds of rockcut steps to Ad-Deir. Better known as the Monastery, Ad-Deir has a similar facade to that of the Treasury, but is far bigger and the views from the nearby cliff-tops are awesome. Returning to the modern town of Wadi Musa, we'll enjoy a Jordanian feast at the Petra Kitchen, with wine and cheer! **Overnight - Petra (B, D)**

Day 5 : Wadi Rum



Wadi Musa (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 rock formations known as jebels that rise from the desert floor, the desertscape of Wadi Rum represents some of the most stunning countryside on the planet. The world's mountain climbers and hikers, attracted by it's many as yet unscaled peaks, have recently discovered Wadi Rum's spectacular natural scenery and comfortable year round climate.

Wadi Rum possesses unspoiled natural beauty forged by millions of years of geological formation, erosion and evolution. The region is also home to

the semi - nomadic Bedouin living in their great goat's hair tents, tending their herds of sheep and goat and preserving an ancient lifestyle that has been practiced in the Arabian desert for thousands of years. Boarding 4 x 4s, we can get up close and personal to the surrounding scenery. Tonight, we enjoy a Jordanian dinner and camp in desert tents. **Overnight - Wadi Rum (B, D)**

Day 6 : Karak Castle & the Dead Sea



Wadi Rum - Karak - Dead Sea - Madaba. This morning, we explore the vast well preserved 12th century crusader castle of Al Karak. It took the Crusaders some twenty years to erect their fortified stronghold, which through the preceding centuries withstood countless attack and siege. Once finished in 1161, it became the residence of the lord of Transjordan, by then the most important fief of the Crusader kingdom, rich in produce and tax revenues.

Note: Shobak crusader castle maybe visited as an alternative to Karak, depending upon weather and opening times.

Descending some 1300 metres to the lowest point on the earth's surface we arrive at the Dead Sea. Sitting at 422 metres below sea level we spend the afternoon swimming, lathering up with a detoxifying mud bath and bobbing about in the ever warm mineral-rich body of water. After we drive onward to the bustling Muslim/Christian market town of Madaba. **Overnight - Madaba (B, D)**

Day 7 : Mosaics of Madaba



Madaba. Enjoy a free day to explore Madaba on foot, admire the mosaics and perhaps indulge in a little retail therapy in the little shops. **Overnight - Madaba (B)**

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Day 8 :

Madaba - Airport. Hotel check-out and included onward transfer to Amman airport.

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.

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