



bolt on spotlight

what you see

- Damascus - the oldest inhabited city on earth.
- National Museum and its 2nd century synagogue.
- Handicraft Market and Souk al-Hamidayya
- Umayyad Mosque - a sacred site from 2000 BC
- The Tomb of Saladin
- 18th century Azem palace
- Straight street,
- St. Ananias' Church and St Paul window
- Panoramic views from Mt Qassioun
- Ancient Roman town - Bosra
- Optional tours to Palmyra OR Ma'alula and Krac des Chevaliers

what you get

- Breakfast daily
- 3 nights - 2 star hotels
- Return transfers from Madaba to Damascus
- English speaking guide
- All relevant transfers and transportation
- Full day sightseeing tour of Damascus
- Touring of Bosra
- Syrian Tourist visa. (excl service fee - USD\$10). Excludes USA passport holders. See note over page.

Note: this bolt on requires a minimum of two passengers to run



on location

Your guide to on the ground...

visa requirements

On the go are able to arrange a visa for nationalities of Europe, Americas and Australasia and South Africa, other nationalities should check with their embassy. Please provide us with the following information, at least 1 MONTH BEFORE DEPARTURE.

- Visa Declaration form, (3rd page of this go guide)
 - Scan/photocopy of your passport info page
- Please be advised that if you have any Israeli stamps in your passport, you'll be denied entry into Syria. You would need to apply for a new passport in advance

of travel. Visa requirements are subject to change. It is your responsibility to provide us with the correct information in a timely manner

Upon exiting Syria, you will be required to pay a departure tax. If exiting via a land border you will be required to hand over, approximately USD\$12, though be aware that the amount can only be paid in Syrian Lira. If departing via a Syrian Airport, the cost is approximately USD\$34 and again only payable in Syrian Lira.

climate

Syria has a Mediterranean climate with hot dry summers and mild wet winters close to the coast Summer (May to September) temperatures in Syria are generally high, and sometimes very high (46 C) so do bring sunscreen and a

hat. In winter (December to February) temperatures can range from 0 C - just 12 C.

time - Syria is 2 hours ahead of GMT.

money

1 GBP = 68 SYP 1 USD = 46 SYP 1 EUR = 62 SYP 1 AUD = 41 SYP (subject to fluctuation). Exchange is available at banks and private exchange places. ATMS can be hard to find and unreliable but credit cards are accepted at many hotels and restaurants but are subject to a high fee.

health requirements

It is recommended that you be vaccinated for Diphtheria, Tetanus Polio and Hepatitis A. You may also need typhoid. Please check with your health professional.

how much?

- **ENTRANCE FEES**
Entrance fees in Damascus USD10-15
- **TIPPING**
The decision to tip is a purely personal gesture though recommended if you feel you have received good service
Your guide (suggested amount) USD15
Driver (suggested amount) USD10
- Mineral water (local brand, 500ml or 1L) SYP15-25
- Fresh fruit juice SYP40-50
- Beer (local brew - 500ml approx) SYP50-100
- Meal for 2 (entree, main, a beer, local restaurant) SYP350-650

things to bring

- Light cotton clothing is ideally suited to the climate, and bring sunscreen and a hat if visiting in summer
- If visiting in winter, pack warm clothes.
- Comfortable shoes for exploring the ruins
- DEET-based industrial strength mosquito and insect repellent.
- Tour voucher and a copy of your travel insurance
- Two spare passport photos & a photocopy of your passport

top experiences

- Relive childhood fantasies in the beautiful Krac des Chevaliers crusader castle
- Shop til you drop in the fascinating souqs of Damascus
- Relax thoroughly in a Turkish Hamman
- Explore and marvel at the well preserved city of Bosra
- Wander round the amazing ruins of Palmyra
- Watch the world go by from one of the many coffee shops and enjoy smoking a nargila (shisha pipe)





downtown damascus: itinerary

day 1 - damascus

You'll be picked up from Madaba at about 3pm and taken over the border. (Groups of less than 3 will take be taken to the public bus station, where they will travel independently and be met at the border in Damascus). Welcome to Syria and the start of your city stay in the nation's ancient capital! Upon arrival in Damascus you will be transferred your hotel where you will spend the next three nights.

Overnight Damascus.

day 2 - full day city tour

Damascus - breakfast. Damascus (Ash-Sham to the locals) is the capital city of Syria and also the largest, with a population of about six million people. Today take a full days tour of reputedly the oldest continuously 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! There was an urban settlement here at about 5000BC and since then has been inhabited by the Persians, then Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Mongols before passing to the French and then finally becoming independent.

In the centre of the city is Martyrs Square (known locally as Al-Merjeh). In the side streets just off the square, there are lots of eateries serving shawarma 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. The Old City is 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.

Just beyond the Citadel (which is closed to the public) 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. There's a small garden north of the Mosque which contains the Mausoleum of Saladin (Salah ah-Din - meaning 'restorer of the faith') who is one of the greatest heros in Arab history. South of the mosque is the beautiful Azem Palace, built in the 18th century, it is considered a great example of Damascene houses. The building is made with striped stonework, achieved by using alternate layers of black basalt and limestone. Inside the rooms are wonderfully decorated with amazing painted ceilings.

We finish our tour of Damascus at Mt Qassioun, where you can soak up the incredible views. This evening, consider a traditional hammam at a Damascene bath house. Overnight - Damascus.

day 3 - free day

Damascus - breakfast. Free day to explore Damascus independently or perhaps take one of two optional day trips payable locally. You could head north to visit the ancient town of Ma'alula the small, richly historic and biblical village. The people are predominantly Christian with a population of about 2,000, who still speak Aramaic - the language of Jesus. Home of two ancient Christian monasteries (Mar Sarkis and Mar Taqla) you can explore the area and often encounter faithful Christian and Muslim pilgrims seeking blessing within this holy village. Afterwards visit nearby Krac des Chevaliers - a remarkably beautiful and well preserved crusader castle of epic proportions, that stands 650 metres above sea level and commands the strategic valley between Homs and Tripoli.

Author Paul Theroux described Krac des Chevaliers (French for 'Fortress of Knights') in Syria as the epitome of the dream castle of childhood fantasies. T.E. Lawrence simply called it 'the finest castle in the world'. The

UNESCO Listed castle looks almost exactly as it would have 800 years ago. It guards the only major pass between Antalya in Turkey and Beirut in Lebanon; it was built and expanded between 1150 and 1250 and eventually housed a garrison of 2000. Withstanding continual attack throughout the period, the castle finally fell to Mamluk Sultan Beybar in 1271.

Alternatively you can visit the incredible ruins of Palmyra which include the beautiful Temple of Bel, tombs, the baths, a theatre and museum.

If you decide to remain in Damascus for the day, You may wish to visit the fascinating National Museum or do some shopping in one of the many bazaars. With so many wonderful ancient sites to visit perhaps consider extending your stay! Overnight - Damascus.

day 4 - damascus

Damascus - breakfast. Check out of the hotel at approx 9am to visit the ancient Roman Decapolis city of Bosra, which boasts possibly the best preserved Roman theatre in the Middle East. You'll then be transferred to Madaba, arriving mid afternoon. End of arrangements.

NOTE: We recommend that your onward flight departs no earlier than 7pm.

usa passport holders

As of 23 May 2010, it is no longer possible for USA passport holders to enter Syria via the 'Group Tour Visa' scheme.

The Syrian Department of Immigration have advised that all USA passport holders should obtain a 'Single Entry Tourist visa' in advance of arrival from the respective Syrian embassy abroad.

In accordance with the above on the go are no longer able to organise an entry visa on your behalf, though are able to assist in providing documentation relating to your travel if required.

*The go guide & information contained herein has been compiled with care and in good faith. It is as accurate an illustration as can be given with regard to the proposed itinerary. Circumstances beyond our control such as inclement weather or local conditions could force us to amend the proposed itinerary. This document does not form part of a contract between the client and on the go and their affiliates. Any costs shown may be subject to change but are an accurate reflection of costs at the time of writing this go guide. Please also be advised that visa requirements are subject to change and remain the responsibility of the traveller and not that of on the go.



68 north end road, west kensington, london, W14 9EP • 020 7371 1113 • info@onthegotours.com
3/690 brunswick street, new farm, brisbane, QLD, australia 4005 • 1300 855 684 • aus-info@onthegotours.com

updated 24 May 2010



SYRIA VISA DECLARATION FORM

The regulations governing this visa type are very strict and each passenger must be vigilant in providing all necessary and factually correct information to **on the go** at least 1 MONTH PRIOR TO DEPARTURE. This visa is for single entry into Syria, via any border point or Syrian airport. **Please enclose a photocopy of your passport info page with this form.**

Note: A Group Tour Visa is not available to USA passport holders.

INSUFFICIENT OR INCORRECT INFORMATION WILL RESULT IN BEING REFUSED ENTRY INTO SYRIA

IMPORTANT: Your passport must be valid for six months on submission, have at least two blank pages & should not bear any Israeli stamps .

Passport holder of the following countries do not require a Syrian visa: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, UAE and Yemen. Citizens of Europe, the Americas, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa are eligible for this visa. All other nationalities should check with their embassy and with on the go.

Full Name (As per Passport) _____
 Father's Name: _____
 Mother's Name: _____
 Original Nationality: _____
 Present Nationality: _____

Address: _____

Post Code: _____

Occupation: _____
 Employer's Name: _____
 Employer's Address: _____

Have You Visited Occupied Palestine Yes No (please circle answer)

Purpose of Travel: _____
 Visa starting date: _____
 Duration of Stay: ___ Day(s) ___ Month(s)
 Point of Entry to Syria: _____
 Point of Exit from Syria: _____

I declare the information above and enclosed is correct.

Signed _____ Date _____

