



Fairly Easy

# JORDAN: WADI RUM and PETRA



*This information should answer some of your questions about the trip and give you a better idea of what we do day-to-day. It doesn't hope to answer everything. If you have any questions please get in touch.*



*The Seven 'Pillars of Wisdom' Photo Duncan Walker*

- **Two full days exploring the magnificent rock temples of Petra**
- **Day walks with scrambles on 'grippy' sandstone in spectacular Wadi Rum**
- **4 nights Bedouin camping. Sleeping under the stars**
- **6 nights in comfortable hotels, most meals included**
- **Visits to Madaba, Mt Nebo, Dead Sea, Karak Crusader Castle and Gulf of Aqaba**

## **Jordan**

Jordan is a tiny country in the heart of the Middle East. Its people are amongst the most hospitable in the world and travel here is safe and rewarding. Around 80% of Jordan is desert, and in the north, much of this is undulating stony basalt terrain. In the south where there is sandstone and granite, there are some areas of quite outstanding scenery, none more so than Petra and Wadi Rum.

Our trip to Jordan combines desert and mountain hiking, easy grade scrambling and a camel riding experience in the valleys 'wadis' and towering sandstone mountains 'jebels' of Rum, with a two day walking/exploring opportunity around the breathtaking rock temples of Petra.

High Places has worked closely with the Bedouin guides of Wadi Rum over several exciting years. For this visit we camp in a variety of spectacular locations far into the desert and hike each day through wide and narrow canyons, often along seldom-used and unlikely-looking defiles and passages linking valley to valley. The journeys will occasionally be enlivened by

some easy grade scrambling, which will be enjoyed more if you have good balance and a reasonable head for heights.

The desert experience with our Bedouin friends is quite authentic. We eat communal meals served by an open fire. Soups, lamb, chicken, fish and vegetables served with rice and yoghurt are prepared daily.

Showers do not feature in the desert but there will always be enough water for washing and drinking. The pace of life slows down and the Bedouin way is to enjoy the time for talking together, sleeping, eating and relaxation.

Whilst tents are available, sleeping under the stars is often the highlight of the holiday for many people.

### **Accommodation**

In Amman or Madaba overnight, Wadi Musa (Petra) for three nights and Aqaba for two nights we use comfortable hotels offering rooms with private facilities. In Petra we are situated close to the visitor centre and main entrance. In Aqaba we stay in a centrally located hotel. The hotel has access to a beach club a few kms out of town offering easy access to a fringe reef with superb snorkelling and scuba diving. Facemasks, snorkels and flippers are available for hire from the beach club where there is also a restaurant and swimming pool making it an excellent place to spend your last day in Jordan.

### **Meals**

In Amman/Madaba and Aqaba we provide breakfast. In Petra and Wadi Rum we provide all meals. Vegetarians will be well catered for.



*Burdah Arch in Wadi Rum. Photo Duncan Walker*

### **Transport**

We use a 4-wheel drive truck in the desert and private buses or contract taxis for transfers.

### **Language**

The Bedouin speak their own Arabic dialect, but our local guide will speak reasonable English. A few words of Arabic such as 'shukran' meaning 'thank you' can soon be picked up. Arabic is a fun and poetic language and everyone appreciates the effort made in trying to speak it.

### **Baggage**

On trek, you will only carry what you need for the day, probably water, a light snack and your camera.

### **Climate**

Pleasantly warm and dry with plenty of sunshine in Spring and Autumn, with nights in the desert somewhat cooler.

In winter the nights can be cold with temperatures occasionally close to freezing. The days should still be pleasantly warm with plenty of sunshine, although rain showers, even brief snow showers have been known in winter.

**Health and hygiene**

Very few people who go to Jordan experience any kind of illness. This may be due in part to the sterile desert environment. Although water is at a premium in the desert we will always have enough for drinking and washing.

**Money**

The Jordanian Dinar seems to roughly follow the value of the US dollar. We recommend you obtain some dinars before departure. Travellers cheques can be useful although most ATM's recognise cards from other parts of the world. Hotel reception desks will change money but the usual charges will be incurred.



*Our guide Sabah Atieq plays traditional Bedouin music.  
Photo Jill Eaton-Evans*

## DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

*This itinerary describes our planned daily route. Local conditions may cause us to change this plan closer to your departure date, or even when we are there! All times and distances are approximate. (B,L,D) indicates the meals included in the trip cost, i.e. breakfast, lunch, dinner.*

**This trip is 11 days starting in Amman and ending in Aqaba. The first and last days refer to the days of arrival in Amman and departure from Aqaba and may not be the days you leave or return home.**

DAY 1 Arrive Amman airport, transfer to local Amman or Madaba hotel.

DAY 2 A short drive via Mt Nebo to Amman beach and an opportunity to experience floating in the salty waters of the Dead Sea. On to Al Karak to explore the crusader castle before completing our journey south to Wadi Musa. (B,D)

DAYS 3-4 **Petra:** the city of Petra was founded by the Nabataeans some time after they settled in Jordan at the end of the 7th century BC. Little is known about them, other than that they were originally merchant nomads. The site of Petra was at the

junction of the spice, silk and frankincense caravan trading routes between China, India and the Mediterranean. Set in a strategic position with good water supplies and protected by the surrounding mountains, it became a major trading centre. The Nabataean Empire was at the height of its wealth and power around the first century BC to the first century AD before the Roman annexation and some of the ruins date from this period. Over the centuries



*'The Monastery'*

the city became deserted, inhabited by a few local Bedouin and forgotten by the outside world. The Swiss explorer Burckhardt heard, on his travels, of a mysterious city hidden amongst impenetrable mountains and on finding it in 1812, became the first European to describe the marvels of Petra.

The site is approached from the town of Wadi Musa through a narrow gorge called 'The Siq'. In places the canyon walls are no more than 10 feet apart and tower overhead, seeming to almost meet. Quite suddenly the canyon opens out and you see the 'Treasury' one of the best preserved of the rock-carved tombs. There are too many other fine 'sites' to list here, around every corner it seems is another beautiful tomb or building. There are several 'High Places' worthy of the walk to them, notably the High Place of Sacrifice, the Monastery and the summit of Umm al-Biyara. Even if you are not really into ruins, the walking, sometimes up staircases hewn in the rock, and the scenery are just superb.

A full day walking tour around most of the main site is usually followed with a day of individual activities or more adventurous group exploration of the Petra area. The site is open from 6.30am until 5pm. Entrance fees approx 26JD (2 day ticket). (B,L,D)

## DAYS 5-9

**Wadi Rum:** The area of Wadi Rum lies in the south of Jordan, not far from the Gulf of Aqaba and the Saudi border. The name is taken from one valley, Wadi Rum and the mountain of Jebel Rum (1754m), which lies in the heart of this spectacular landscape. The mountains here are of sandstone, rising steeply from the sandy desert floor, and carved by the elements into towers and vertical walls of over a thousand feet split by echoing ravines and canyons.

The place made a deep impression on T.E. Lawrence, who was here as part of the Arab campaign in the First World War and he returned several times, finding solace, inspiration and peace. It is thought that the title of his book 'Seven Pillars of Wisdom' was drawn from the towers and pinnacles of Wadi Rum. The dramatic opening shots in the film 'Lawrence of Arabia' feature his camel 'army' marching through the main valley and being utterly dwarfed beneath the sheer rock walls of Wadi Rum.

We first arrive after a drive of two hours from Petra and enjoy the customary welcome tea or coffee in the Bedouin village. There is time to see some of the nearby sites of interest such as the Nabaetean Temple, the Police Fort, Wadi Shelaali, Lawrence's Spring and Wadi S'Bach. After lunch, we traverse Jebel um Ishrin, an exciting introduction to scrambling on the 'grippy' sandstone, to reach our first camp.

Each day we will walk for five to six hours, with a break for lunch and siesta, (a Bedouin speciality!) before arriving at a new camp in time for the evening meal and music and stories around the campfire (another Bedouin speciality!).

We will explore different, often remote, areas of the desert and mountains, including hiking and scrambling on Jebel Um Ishrin and Burdah Arch, a traverse of Jebel Hash and exploration of Wadi Geder. There will be some easy grade scrambling involved on most days. (B,L,D)



*Open space in Wadi Rum*

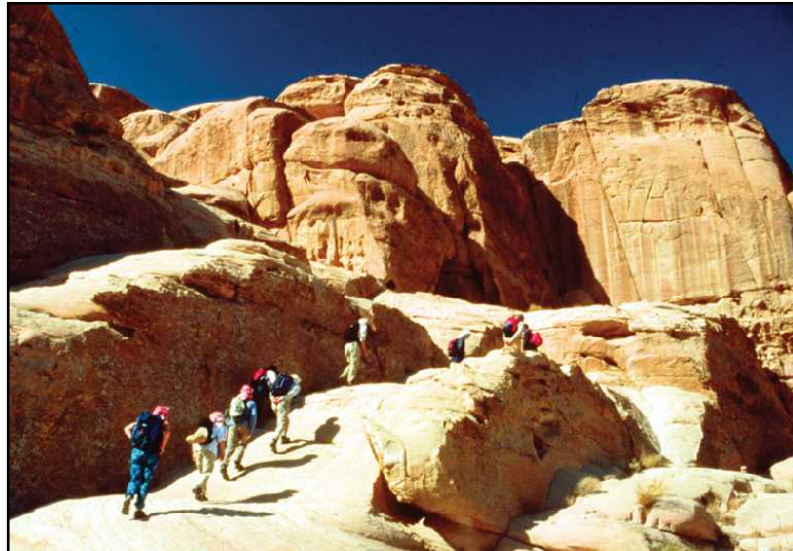
Note: The exact sequence of the trip, the route and the scrambling locations may vary with each departure. A prime factor will be the aptitude and scrambling abilities of each group. Bedouin culture also is not built around timetables or rigid plans. Please bear this in mind. Primarily the local guide will be acting in your best interests but things like an unexpected camel excursion, scrambling in a secret siq or even a spontaneous Bedouin concert can all come from this flexible approach.

DAY 9 A good desert walk in the morning, before returning to Wadi Rum Village after lunch by camel, an experience not to be missed! We arrive in Aqaba late in the afternoon. (B,L)

DAY 10 A free day in Aqaba. We can head to the Beach Club and snorkel along the fringe reef, marvelling at the colourful fish, sea anemones, sea urchins and coral or just wander into the town for souvenir shopping. We recommend as a perfect finish to the day, sitting on the beach in town at one of the tea stalls, feet lapped by the

balmy waters of the Gulf of Aqaba. From here you can watch the sun set over the Gulf and the rugged mountains of the Sinai Peninsula. (B)

DAY 11 Early departure to Aqaba Airport or continue with your own arrangements (B)



*An easy scrambling route in Wadi Rum*

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