

Deserts, Ruins and Reefs - Group Tour

A ten night group tour to explore all the wonderful sights and sounds Jordan has to offer.

Day 1: Amman

Welcome to Jordan and the start of your holiday! Arrive Amman and included onward transfer to our hotel. **Overnight - Amman**

Day 2: Roman Cities, Roman Ruins

Amman - Jerash - Umm Qais - Amman - breakfast. 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. **Overnight - Amman**

Day 3: Take a dip in the Dead Sea

Amman - Dead Sea - Petra - breakfast. Descending from the elevation of Amman, we visit the Dead Sea. Straddling the border between Israel and Jordan, the Dead Sea is the lowest spot on the Earth's surface. The mineral content of this 75km long and 10km wide saltwater lake tops out at 33%. Think of a glass of water a third full of salt! Opt for a dip, no life rings needed here! Leaving the Dead Sea region, we continue south to Petra via the crusader castle of either Karak or Shobak. **Overnight - Petra.**

Day 4: Explore Petra

Petra - breakfast. Chief among Jordan's many archaeological riches is the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Rose City of Petra. Rediscovered in 1812 by the young Swiss explorer Jean Louis Burckhardt, it remains on the list of many travellers. 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 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. Petra is an erosion-hewn masterpiece. Sandstone shot with minerals burst into colour giving off blue, red, orange and green hues. The intrepid can ascend the hundreds of rock-cut 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. Want to learn how to cook Middle Eastern food? Consider opting for our Petra Kitchen bolt-on tonight! **Overnight - Petra.**

Day 5: The sand dunes of Wadi Rum

Petra - Wadi Rum - breakfast. This morning return to Petra for further exploration before we depart for 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. Wadi Rum possesses unspoiled natural beauty forged by millions of years of geological formation, erosion and evolution. Tonight, we enjoy a Jordanian dinner. Camp under the stars or in permanent tents. **Dinner and overnight - Wadi Rum desert camp**

Days 6 - 8: Red Sea, Aqaba!

Wadi Rum - Aqaba - breakfast. Boarding 4 x 4s this morning, we can get up close and personal to the surrounding scenery at Wadi Rum. Leaving Wadi Rum we drive to Aqaba on the Gulf of Aqaba for a 3 night stay. Swim, snorkel, dive, relax and take it all in at Jordan's premier seaside town. Azure blue waters brimming with kaleidoscopic marine life are a real attraction here at Aqaba. Why not undertake some scuba diving? **Overnight (3) - Aqaba**

Day 9: Umm ar-Rasas and Mt Nebo

Aqaba - Umm ar Rasas - Mt Nebo - Madaba - breakfast. En route to Madaba we drive via Umm ar-Rasas. Roam the ruined city and the impressive church of St Stephen with its huge and beautifully preserved mosaic, then admire the panoramic views of the Promised Land from Mt Nebo. **Overnight - Madaba**

Day 10: Madaba's mosaics

Madaba - breakfast. Today we explore! Mentioned in the Old Testament, the prime attractions of the venerable town of Madaba are its many 6th-century Byzantine mosaics. Perhaps the most impressive of these is an enormous 6th-century map of Palestine and Egypt that is located in St. George's Greek Orthodox Church. **Overnight - Madaba**

Day 11: Amman

Madaba - Airport - breakfast. Our tour concludes after breakfast, bid farewell to Jordan and onward departure transfer to the airport.