



Sample Jordan Itinerary:

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Date: 16 February 2009

Please find below a sample 8-night itinerary for a holiday to Jordan. As we tailor holidays to suit, I can amend this in any way, but it does act as a starting point for planning a holiday to this wonderful country.

Although a small country in the Middle East, Jordan is widely regarded as the cradle of civilisation. Jordan has a history dating back thousands of years, being at the crossroads between Christianity and Muslim religions and was used as the 'caravan trading route' by traders through the ages taking their wares from East to West. Through time this small country has been called 'home' by many different civilisations; the Greeks, Romans and Nabataeans to name a few, each leaving their own piece of history.

Naturally Petra is a major reason to visit Jordan – it is truly an amazing site. However, Jordan is so much more – diving or snorkelling on the Red Sea, floating effortlessly in the Dead Sea, star gazing under the skies of Wadi Rum and where else in the World can you journey along the oldest highway still in use – tread the same route as biblical figures or visit Crusader Castles high on hilltops.

An extremely safe and friendly country, you'll find the locals want to engage in conversation and are very proud of their country. National flags fly from every official building and pictures of the King and Royal Family adorn the walls of shops and hotels.

International Flights

There are daily direct flights to Jordan from London Heathrow to the capital Amman with either British Midland or Royal Jordanian. The Queen Alia Airport is situated about 45 minutes South of the City making it easy to reach from both the Dead Sea and Madaba.

If you would prefer to fly to Jordan from your local airport, the best routing is via Paris with Air France. As with most flights, it is often easier and cheaper to book these online and if you'd rather do this, I can ensure your itinerary is organised to fit in with your flight schedule.

Itinerary

Day 1: London – Amman

On arrival at Queen Alia Airport, you will be met by our representative and, after obtaining the relevant tourist visa, transfer to Amman for overnight.

The capital city of Jordan is **Amman** and is one of the oldest continually inhabited cities in the World. Built over 7 hills, Amman has several ancient ruins and museums that are worth a visit but can generally be seen in one day. The City is divided into two halves – downtown and up town. About 40 minutes from the airport, Amman is worth visiting for the atmosphere of its souks, bazaars and traditional coffee houses and for the superb modern shopping malls and traditional stores.

Overnight Kempinski Amman Hotel, 5*

Just two years old this modern city centre hotel has superb facilities. Excellently situated in the city for visiting restaurants and bars, the hotel has both indoor and outdoor swimming pool, 24 hour gym with aerobics room and salsa classes (!), business centre, full leisure centre with bowling, cinema and shopping. Also available is a sauna, steam room and Jacuzzi open daily from 7am-10pm.

The hotel rooms are well furnished and very comfortable with great views across the city. All rooms have en-suite facilities, internet access, hairdryers. In addition to standard rooms, there are a number of suites with a separate 'dining/lounge' area and adjoining rooms ideal for families.

Day 2: Umm Qais & Jerash

En-route to the Roman city of Jerash, you'll visit the tranquil town of Umm Qais. Established as a strategic trading town, Umm Qais overlooks the Syrian Golan Heights, Sea of Galilee and the North Jordan Valley. These are impressive ancient remains and there is a small resthouse that used to be an old Ottoman schoolhouse where you can enjoy a drink whilst overlooking the wonderful views.

Next onto Jerash, situated in the North of Jordan – about 45 minutes from the Capital. An ancient Roman city that, it is said, is the best preserved Roman ruins outside of Italy. Jerash can boast an unbroken chain of human occupation dating back more than 6,500 years.

Jerash came under Roman rule after being conquered in 63BC and was widely regarded as one of the great ten Roman cities.

Originally known as Gerasa, the city was hidden for centuries under sand before excavations started just 70 years ago. There is still so much more left to discover but what has been found and restored to date will take your breath away. Grand, formal Roman streets, beautiful theatres, large open plazas, baths and fountains – you can almost picture what life was like all those years ago. On visiting one of the amphitheatres, stand in the very middle square (you'll see it is more worn than the others) and see how your voice is carried as if using a microphone!

The modern city of Jerash can be found to the east of the ruins. While the old and new share a city wall, careful preservation and planning has seen the city itself develop well away from the ruins so there is no encroachment on the sites of old.

Overnight Kempinski Hotel, Amman, 5*BB

Day 3: Amman – Petra

On arrival in Petra, you'll make your way to the ancient city.

Much has been written about Petra but on actually seeing it for the first time, it really does take your breath away. Carved from the soft sandstone rock over 2000 years ago, you enter

the site by walking through a huge crack in the rock – called a Siq, and for over 1km you'll pass by carvings in the walls, see how the ancient Arab settlers got water to their city via a series of jars connected together and marvel at the different colours and rock formations along the way. When you turn the last corner and see The Treasury through the gap in the rock, it is a sight that stays with you.

Now officially one of the seven Wonders of the World, Petra is a vast, unique city, carved into the sheer rock face by the Nabataeans, an industrious Arab people who settled here more than 2000 years ago, turning it into an important junction for the silk, spice and other trade routes that linked China, India and southern Arabia with Egypt, Syria, Greece and Rome.

You can easily spend three or four days exploring Petra. As you enter the Petra valley, you will be overwhelmed by the natural beauty of this place and the sheer history of the city. There are hundreds of elaborate rock-cut tombs with intricate carvings - unlike the houses, which were destroyed mostly by earthquakes, the tombs were carved to last throughout the afterlife and 500 have survived, empty but bewitching as you file past their dark openings. Here also is a massive Nabataean-built Amphitheatre and much evidence of Roman occupation.

Another high point – literally, is The Monastery. Reached by walking over 900 steps up through a gap in the rocks, The Monastery was used as a place of worship by the Nabataeans. Whilst we puffed and panted up to this wonderful sight, we did spare a thought for the present day Bedouins who did this climb at least twice daily! It is best to climb the steps to the Monastery in the afternoon when it is mostly shaded.

Overnight Movenpick Hotel, Petra, 5*BB

The Movenpick Hotels are a Swiss chain and, as you would expect, offer excellent service and facilities throughout their hotels. The Movenpick Petra is no exception. The lobby is decorated in an Arabian style with huge lanterns and water feature. The only 5* hotel in Petra, the hotel has standard rooms, superior rooms with balcony, interconnecting rooms and a Royal and Presidential Suite. Breakfast, lunch and dinner is buffet style but there is also an a la carte restaurant. The hotel boasts a roof garden, swimming pool and gym and steam room.

This hotel is the nearest to the entrance of the ancient city of Petra.

Day 4: Petra

Second day full touring in Petra entering the city via an alternative route 'Al Madras'. During the day you'll visit the High Place of Sacrifice, Wadi Farasa, Great Temple and the Royal Tombs. Excavation is an on-going process at Petra and recent excavations at the Great Temple uncovered dozens of papyrus scrolls; the only known written documents of Nabataean history in Petra. The scrolls documented land ownership and dispute settlements in the time of the Nabataeans and are considered to be as important as the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Overnight Movenpick Hotel, Petra, 5*BB

Day 5: Petra

Today you will see a completely different Petra. Siq al Barid – or Little Petra as it is referred to, is the northern Nabataean customs point outside the city of Petra. Just ten minutes by car from Petra, Little Petra was located at the junction of ancient caravan routes that linked Petra with the Wadi Araba/Dead Sea region, Gaza, the Palestinian coast and Egypt. It has been said that Little Petra was the easiest place to collect taxes from passing caravans so travellers wouldn't discover the real Petra.

During the day you'll also visit Baidha Neolithic site – one of man's earliest known agricultural settlements at over 9000 years old. Continue on cross-country to arrive at Petra's 'back door' ad-Deir (the Monastery) and Petra's largest carved façade.

Overnight Movenpick Hotel, Petra, 5*BB

Day 6: Petra – Dead Sea

Leave Petra and travel towards the Dead Sea. Enroute, you'll visit Madaba, known as the "City of Mosaics".

Situated in the centre of the town, St. George's Greek Orthodox Church contains a remarkable mosaic map that portrays the entire ancient Holy Land dating from 560 AD. The map depicts the Phoenician cities of Tyre and Sidon in the north, to Egypt to the south, and from the Mediterranean Sea in the west to the Arabian Desert in the east. The mosaic was only discovered in 1897 when a flat area on a hill was chosen on which to build a church.

Jerusalem, and all its major features, is the most important city and is placed in the centre of the map. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is clearly shown as well as the Cardo Maximus, a colonnaded main street that ran east/west through the centre of the Old City. There are 157 Greek captions that label most of the important towns and features of the Holy Land at that time. The mosaic also includes the Jordanian towns of Karak and Madaba.

There are several theories as to why Madaba's map of the Holy Land was depicted in mosaic on the floor of a Christian building in a remote provincial town of the Roman Empire. Some have suggested that the map may have been useful to pilgrims, to help them find their way from one holy place to another.

Others believe that, because it is close to Mount Nebo, it may represent the vision that Moses had of the Promised Land, from the place of his death. Incredibly, the Mosaic is left uncovered most of the time, with only a carpet being laid to protect it during church services.

Close to Madaba is Mount Nebo and the single most biblical site in Jordan. Mount Nebo offers excellent views across the Jordan River Valley and Jericho on the opposite bank and (on a clear day) the towers on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. It is said that Moses was buried somewhere on Mount Nebo. From Mount Nebo, you'll stop briefly at Karak Castle before heading onto your hotel at the Dead Sea.

At the lowest point on earth you'll find the **Dead Sea**. At over 400m below sea level the Dead Sea has a salt content so high, it is impossible for any creature or plant to live in its waters. However, by actually bathing in the water and covering yourself head to toe in the mud from the sea floor, it is said to be extremely good for the skin.

It is actually very difficult to swim in the Dead Sea. In fact, the moment you take your feet off the bottom, you bob to the surface like a cork. With mountains to the east and the rolling hills of Jerusalem to the west, the Dead Sea has a peaceful beauty about it. Although sparsely populated and visited mainly by tourists now, the area is believed to have been home to five Biblical cities: Sodom, Gomorrah, Adman, Zebouin and Zoar.

3 nights Movenpick Dead Sea Hotel, 5*BB

Situated right on the banks of the Dead Sea, this hotel offers excellent facilities and supreme comfort. Walking through the main foyer you can see views across the Dead Sea. The rooms are built in the style of a Bedouin Village and the gardens are full of fragrant plants and flowers.

With a choice of 9 café bars and restaurants there is something on offer to suit all tastebuds and 6 different swimming pools, including an infinity pool and a children's pool. The hotel has an excellent Spa, Zara Spa, that offers many different treatments. The Spa even has its own 'Dead Sea Pool' with the same water/salt ratio as the actual sea.

The standard rooms in the main building have either a sea view or mountain view and the rooms within the 'Village' are either superior or deluxe suites. Friday night is Jordanian night with authentic food and music.

As the hotel covers quite a large area, there is the use of golf buggies to enable customers to get around.

Day 9: Dead Sea – Amman Airport

Transfer to Queen Alia airport for your international flight.

From £1400pp + flights