

## Best of Jordan

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**Country(ies):** Jordan

**Tour type:** Shoestring

**Transport:** A/C minivan/minibus/coach & Bedouin jeeps in Wadi Rum

**Group size:** Min: 2 | Max: 32

**Days:** 7 Days

**Start location:** Amman, Jordan

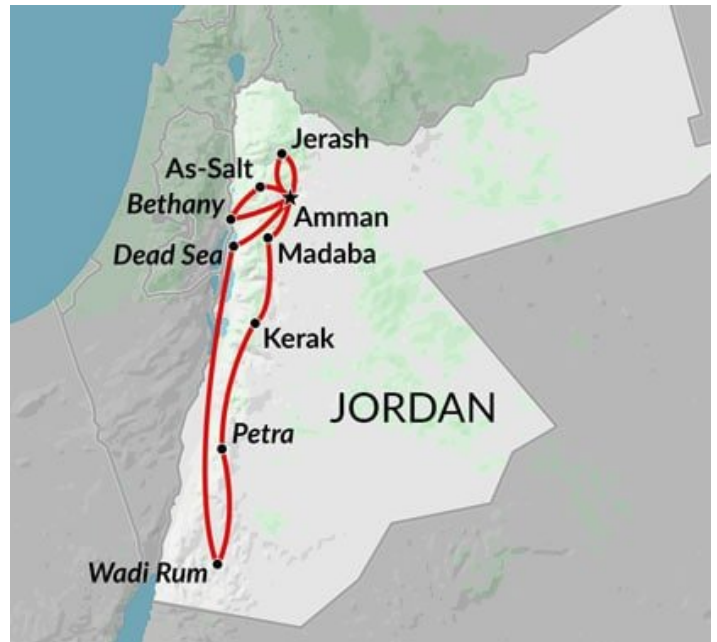
**End location:** Amman, Jordan

**Departs On:** Sunday

**Meals:** Breakfasts - 6, Lunches - 1, Dinners - 1

**Highlights:** Amman, Bethany Baptism Site, As-Salt Harmony Trail, Jerash Roman ruins, Madaba mosaics, Mt Nebo views, scenic King's Highway, Kerak crusader castle, Full day in Petra, Wadi Rum jeep safari & Bedouin camp.

**Places Visited:** Amman, As-Salt, Bethany, Jerash, Madaba, Mt. Nebo, Kerak, Petra, Wadi Rum & Desert Castles



# Itinerary

## Day 1: Welcome to Jordan! Hotel transfers included

Your Jordanian adventure starts in the busy capital city of Amman. We'll be there to meet and greet you at the airport before we transfer you to your hotel in the city. You have the rest of the day free to explore Amman on your own.

**OVERNIGHT:** Amman hotel

**MEALS:** None

**EXTRAS:** Extra day in Amman - pre tour || Superior hotel upgrade (JOSHWJ) || Single room supplement (JOSHWJ)

## Day 2: Exploring the Harmony Trail & the Baptism site at Bethany

We start the day with a visit to the hilltop town of As-Salt, which once served as a trading link between the Jordan Valley and the Eastern Desert. As-Salt is known for its impressive old Islamic architecture which was built using yellow limestone.

Today, the town serves as an example of the religious and cultural friendship between the local Muslim & Christian population. To learn more about As-Salt, we'll head out on a walking tour of its 'Harmony Trail', which will give you greater insight into the lives of the locals.

We'll have lunch with a local family today, giving you your first taste of Jordanian cuisine (this is group size dependent, if the group is too large, we will head to a local restaurant).

After lunch, we make our way to the Baptism site at Bethany, which is an excavated site believed to be the place where John baptised Jesus Christ. Many churches, caves and pools dating back to Roman & Byzantine periods have been found here. We'll also visit three of its most important sites: Tell Mar Elias, the Baptism Pools and John the Baptist's Church.

We'll return to our hotel in Amman where we'll spend the night.

**OVERNIGHT:** Amman hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 3: Amman & Jerash

Today we head out on a city tour of Amman, taking in its rich history which dates back many millennia. We'll start with a visit to the Citadel - the former home of the ancient temple of Hercules, the Umayyad Palace, Byzantine Church and the ancient Roman theatre, which is still being used today to host various cultural events.

Next, we make our way to Jerash, one of the most well-preserved Roman architecture sites on the planet. Jerash was hidden underneath sand for centuries and over the past 70 years, archaeological work has uncovered that Jerash was once a fine example of Roman urbanism, boasting paved and colonnaded streets, hilltop temples, public squares and plazas.

**OVERNIGHT:** Amman hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** Amman evening food tasting tour

## Day 4: Travel to Petra

We leave Amman today, driving along the scenic King's Highway to Petra. We'll drive slowly, giving you time to take in the beauty of your surroundings as we pass through deep wadis, olive groves and rural villages.

We'll stop at Madaba to see the Greek Orthodox Church of St. George, which is famed for its 6th century-old Byzantine mosaic map of the Holy Land. We'll also visit Mount Nebo, which is known to be the burial place of Moses.

Next, we'll stop at the Kerak Castle, which is one of a few Crusader Fortresses spread across Jordan. The castle was built in the 12th century and provides breath-taking views of the surrounding hills and plains.

There is an option available tonight to get a first taste of the rose-red city by booking the Petra by Candlelight tour. If this is something you would like to experience, please chat to your travel consultant.

**OVERNIGHT:** Petra hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:**

## Day 5: Exploring Petra

We spend most of the day exploring the famous Nabatean site of Petra, which is situated at the edge of Wadi Aruba. One of the best ways to get to Petra is by travelling through the Siq - a narrow gorge which cuts through its towering canyon walls and surrounding hills.

Once we get to Petra, you will notice that there are few freestanding buildings. The Nabateans preferred to carve their homes into the sandstone cliffs.

We'll head out on a guided tour of Petra, before you get some time to do some exploring on your own. We'll take you through the Siq until we reach the Khazneh, one of Petra's most spectacular temples. You'll also get insight into the lives of the Nabateans and find out how they carved their homes into the sandstone rock faces.

Next, we visit the ancient ruined Roman Amphitheatre and explore Petra's colonnaded streets before you're given time to explore on your own. Be sure to visit the Monastery - Petra's largest carved monument. The walk to the Monastery is tiring, but the views are rewarding. If you still have enough energy, you can also hike up to the High Place of Sacrifice and the Lion Fountain.

We say goodbye to Petra today as we make our way into the Wadi Rum Desert, where we'll be staying in a Bedouin Camp, taking in the beauty of the towering rocks and cliffs around us. We'll enjoy a traditional Jordanian meal here as we relax and marvel at the starry skies above us.

**OVERNIGHT:** Bedouin camp in Wadi Rum

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 6: Wadi Rum Jeep safari & visiting the Dead Sea

We start the day with a jeep safari, exploring the rugged desert scenery of Wadi Rum. Look out for the copper-coloured rocky jebels, which mesmerised TE Lawrence during his visit to the desert during the Arab Revolt and was later featured in the movie, Lawrence of Arabia.

We leave Wadi Rum later today and make our way towards the Dead Sea, which is the lowest point on earth coming in at 400 metres below sea level. The Dead Sea is also one of the world's most spiritual landscapes, filled with dramatic, natural wonders.

Numerous rivers run into the Dead Sea, including the River Jordan. Once the water reaches the Dead Sea, they become land-locked and eventually evaporates, leaving a dense, rich mixture of salt and minerals behind.

We'll stop to enjoy a 'swim' in the Dead Sea's salty waters, which will be a unique experience as the salinity makes it virtually impossible to swim but rather to float or sit in its waters. We finish the day back at our hotel in Amman.

**OVERNIGHT:** Amman hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** Amman evening food tasting tour

## Day 7: Free time in Amman, airport transfer included

You have the day free to explore Amman before being transferred to the airport.

If you would like to squeeze in some more sightseeing, we can assist with optional day trips such as a visit to Aljoun Castle.

If you wish to extend the tour, we can arrange a transfer to Tel Aviv either by flight or overland for people wanting to connect this tour with our Biblical Israel tour departure which starts on Sunday. Extensions to spend time at a resort in the Red Sea town or Aqaba are also available.

**Note:** options and extensions are subject to flight departure times and may require extra days adding to your tour.

**OVERNIGHT:** N/A

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** Pella and Umm Qais || Extra day in Amman - post-tour || Aqaba extension

## Included

- Accommodation in 3-star hotels (upgrades available)
- 1 night in a comfortable Bedouin camp in Wadi Rum
- All transport and transfers in AC minibus/coach
- 24-hour airport arrival & departure transfer service
- Professional local tour guide escorts groups of all sizes
- 4x4 jeep safari in Wadi Rum
- Entrance to Dead Sea beach with towel & showers
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary (all breakfasts, one lunch & one dinner)

## Excluded

- International flights (available on request)
- Visa fees (free visa included as part of your Jordan Pass)
- Entrance fees (included with your Jordan Pass, obtained in advance for JD70, approx. USD99)
- Travel insurance (compulsory, [available from Encounters Travel](#))
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Hotel gala dinner supplements if applicable (24 & 31 Dec)
- Drinks, snacks and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Tips

- Any other items not mentioned above

# Options

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Our tours are designed to include all that you need to enjoy a really special time in the destination you're visiting.

However, we do also offer some extra options to complement the tour and add some additional sightseeing or activities, or some extra time at either end of the tour.

All accommodation based options (e.g. Single supplements, extra nights, cruise upgrades) should be booked and paid for in advance so that we can make the appropriate arrangements.

Other options may either be booked and paid for in advance or while you are on the tour, though we recommend booking in advance to ensure there are no issues with availability.

Many options are priced the same throughout the year, but some may incur single or high season supplements - full details are given on the tour reservation form or on request.

## Petra by night

**Min numbers:** 1 person

**Price:** \$29.00

This magical experience takes you in through the narrow and winding Siq to the Treasury at the entrance to Petra. The whole route and the sand in front of the Treasury is lit up by numerous candles creating a beautiful and atmospheric sight. While at the Treasury you'll also enjoy some traditional Bedouin music and tea.

Pricing includes your entrance ticket and any transfers required to and from your hotel. Please bring a flashlight/torch with you for this trip as the path through the Siq is rough underfoot in places and while there are candles all the way, a torch provides extra assurance against mis-stepping.

## Extra day in Amman - post-tour

**Min numbers:** 1 person

**Price:** \$29.00

This option adds an extra day to the end of your tour, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (subject to availability). Your airport departure transfer is still included. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing.

**Note:** Single room and peak season supplements apply.

## Extra day in Amman - pre-tour

**Min numbers:** 1 person

**Price:** \$59.00

This option adds an extra day to the start of your tour, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (subject to availability). Your airport arrival transfer is still included. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing.

**Note:** Single room and peak season supplements apply.

## **Amman evening food tasting tour**

**Min numbers:** 1 person

**Price:** \$70.00

This evening tour of Amman provides a great taste of traditional Jordanian food. We take a walk down Rainbow Street and through Downtown Amman, checking out the various local restaurants and street food available. Your guide will give you plenty of explanations of what is on offer, and what are the local favourites.

During the tour we'll try several different dishes, starting with a snack of either Manakish (with its various toppings of egg, white cheese or za'atar) or a classic falafel sandwich. Then in Downtown Amman we'll try a main meal, perhaps the Jordanian national dish of Mansaf, slow cooked lamb with rice and yoghurt sauce. Finally we'll try one of the cities famous desserts like Knafeh from one of the popular local sweet shops. All 3 dishes are included in the price of the tour, plus transfers to and from your hotel, but you'll need to pay for your own drinks.

A supplement will apply if there is only one person on the tour. The tour can also be booked locally, subject to availability of guides & transport.

## **Desert Castles and Nature Reserves tour**

**Min numbers:** 1 person

**Price:** \$110.00

After breakfast we leave Amman and head east to visit several of Jordan's Desert Castles - a fantastic reminder of its early Islamic art and architecture. These 'castles' were located on the old trade routes created during the Umayyad era and are more a combination of forts, bath houses and palaces than true castles. You can still see some mosaics, frescoes, carvings and illustrations on show, moulded by Persian and Graeco-Roman traditions, giving an insight into life during the 8th century. We'll explore the desert castles of Qasr al-Kharrana, Qal'at al-Azraq and Qseirr Amra and also visit two important nature reserves run by the Jordanian Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN). The Aqraq Wetland Reserve is a uniquely precious oasis located in the heart of Jordan's eastern desert, between a limestone desert in the west and a basalt desert in the east. The reserve features lush marshland, and glittering pools and streams that are a haven for migratory birds on the African-Eurasian flyway. The Shaumari Wildlife Reserve was initially created as a breeding and reintroduction centre for globally threatened and locally extinct wildlife, particularly the Arabian Oryx. These efforts continue and now a wide variety of rare animals make their home in the reserve, including Ostriches *Struthio camelus*, Goitered Gazelles, and Persian Onagers. Also found in the area are red foxes, wolves, striped hyenas, Caracals and wild cats, while bird sightings can include Imperial Eagles, Pallid Harriers and Egyptian vultures. There is a good visitor centre on site and guided safaris may be available into the reserve before we return to Amman depending on the time we have available and the reserve's current arrangements. For your last evening, why not head into Downtown Amman for a final taste of Jordanian food, perhaps giving Jordan's national dish of Mansaf a go, or the classic falafel and hummus, with a taste of Knafeh, a popular sweet desert to finish.

This optional tour runs on the last day of the main tour and will normally require an extra night in the hotel in Amman is added tour, unless you have a late evening/night departure. A supplement will apply if there is only one person on the tour.

## **Single room supplement (JOSHBJ)**

**Min numbers:**

**Price:** \$160.00

This option books a single room in all the accommodation throughout the tour. If you are a single traveller and would

be happy to share a room, let us know and we will see if we can pair you up with another single traveller of the same sex. If a room share is not available when you book then we will add the single room supplement to your booking and it will be payable with your balance payment unless we have arranged a room share for you by then. If a room share is arranged after you have paid the supplement then we will refund it to you. Room shares are arranged in order of booking.

## **Superior hotel upgrade (Best of Jordan)**

**Min numbers:** 1 person

**Price:** \$400.00

This option upgrades all your hotels on the tour from the local 3-star level up to 5-star. Your tent in Wadi Rum is upgraded to a private, deluxe en-suite tent (Pasha tents at Captains Desert Camp or similar if we are using a different camp on your departure). The specific hotels used may vary on different dates but include the Le Grand and Landmark hotels in Amman, and the Old Village or Hyatt Zaman in Petra.

Prices are based on 2 people sharing a twin/double room. Single room supplements apply - please check the website reservation form for prices to match your preferred dates.



# Tour Notes

## 1. Accommodation

We use good quality hotels rated at the Jordanian 3-star level on this tour. Accommodation is based on twin or double en-suite rooms with air conditioning. All couples will stay in a private double room.

An upgrade is also available to local 5-star hotels in Amman and Petra if you would like a more luxurious stay. These can be considered basic international 5-star level in Amman, and decent 4-star level in Petra. Typical hotels used are the Landmark or Le Grand in Amman, and the Old Village Resort or Hyatt Zaman in Petra.

In Wadi Rum we use a comfortable Bedouin camp located on the desert sands, against the cliffs. Accommodation is in permanent traditional goat hair tents with proper beds and all bedding provided. Bathrooms are separate, though en-suite tents are also available and upgrades are available if required. En-suite tents are included if you select the hotel upgrade option. You can also bring a sleeping bag if you wish, and find a sheltered spot on the rocks on the edge of the camp and sleep under the stars.

Single travellers may opt to share a same-sex twin room with another traveller on the tour or choose to pay a single room supplement to guarantee a single room throughout the tour. If a same-sex room share is not available at the time of booking, the single supplement will be added to your booking, but refunded or removed later if/when a room share can be arranged. Room shares are arranged in order of booking.

## 2. Transport

Our trips feature a mix of different transport options. We want you to feel like you're really experiencing the country you're travelling through, but at the same time we want you to finish journeys refreshed enough to enjoy the next stage of the tour. The small distances involved in Jordan mean that we use private vehicles throughout this tour. These will be minivans, minibuses or coaches, depending on the number of travellers in the group.

The jeeps used in Wadi Rum are provided by the local Bedouins we work with, and while suitable for your desert safari, they may fall below the normal safety and quality standards for vehicles we use during the rest of our tours.

## 3. Transfers

Your airport transfers are only included on the first and last day of the set tour itinerary, plus on any additional days if you book your hotel room with us. If you make your own arrangements for additional accommodation at either the beginning or the end of the tour then you will need to arrange your own airport transfers on these days.

On our Shoestring group tours we do offer optional hotel upgrades. This may mean that additional pick-up and drop-offs are required each day. We do endeavour to ensure that all hotels used are close to each other and to streamline and time arrangements to limit any extra driving time as much as possible.

## 4. Group Size/Tour Leaders/Guides

This is one of our Shoestring level tours, and as such is arranged and run slightly differently to our Small-Group tours. Our Shoestring tours are designed to make the exciting sites and scenery you can see throughout the country more accessible to those on a lower budget. As such they tend to have larger maximum group sizes and a slightly

lower level of accommodation. Hotel upgrades are available for people wanting a little more comfort, and this may require one or two hotel pick ups/drop offs each day. We may also share the group with some travellers booking through other operators. The average group size on this tour is normally 8-15 people, with a minimum of 2 and maximum of 32. Travellers on our Jordan on a Shoestring tour join this trip on Day 2.

This tour includes a fully trained, local English-speaking guide who will accompany you throughout the tour. At Encounters Travel we only use local Jordanian guides and reps. We feel this gives you the best experience of the country and the sites you are seeing.

## 5. Entrance Fees

The tour price does not include entrance fees to the sites visited on the tour.

We strongly recommend that you purchase a **Jordan Pass** prior to your travel to Jordan. This is a special package that has been designed by the Jordanian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities for tourists visiting Jordan. As well as including a discounted package of entrance fees covering all the sites in Jordan that you will visit on this tour (plus many others), the Jordan Pass also provides free downloadable digital brochures on each attraction, plus a free tourist visa for entering the country (40JD if obtained on arrival in Jordan).

The cost for the **Jordan Wanderer Pass** suitable for this tour is JD70 (approx. US\$99). Passes are available by completing a simple online form before you travel, taking care to make sure your passport details are entered correctly as this doubles as your visa application. Your Jordan Pass will then be emailed to you as a pdf document, which you should print out and bring with you. You will then need to show this print out at the immigration desk on arrival in Jordan to obtain your free entry visa, and also at each attraction where it will be scanned to confirm your entry. [Obtain your Jordan Pass here](#)

## 6. International Flights

We want to give you as much flexibility as possible when it comes to booking your holiday with us. So, to take account of people with varying travel plans, we don't include your international flights in the main tour price. We are however very happy to suggest flights to go with the tour. Please contact us with your preferred dates and departure airport and we'll give you a selection of airlines, times and fares to choose from.

Your airport arrival & departure transfers are included on the first and last days of the tour. Nearly all our Jordan tours start and finish at Amman airport (AMM).

## 7. Health and Vaccinations

You should ensure you are fully insured for medical emergencies including emergency evacuation and repatriation.

Recommended vaccinations and other health protection measures vary according to the country you are visiting and where you are travelling from. We recommend you contact your GP/medical practitioner or a travel clinic for current information on vaccinations needed for your destination. You should ensure that you are up to date with vaccines and boosters recommended for your normal life at home, including for example, vaccines required for occupational risk of exposure, lifestyle risks and underlying medical conditions.

In addition, additional courses or boosters normally recommended for the countries in this region are:

Egypt: Tetanus, Typhoid, Hepatitis A

Jordan: Tetanus, Hepatitis A

Israel: Hepatitis A, Poliomyelitis

Lebanon: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A

Malaria is not generally present unless it has been contracted abroad; you do not need to take malaria prophylactics.

More information is available here: [Egypt](#), [Jordan](#), [Israel](#), [Lebanon](#)

Note: We are aware of some places in Egypt using 'black henna' instead of pure brown henna. Black henna contains a chemical dye PPD (paraphenylenediamine) which can result in severe allergic reactions and resultant scarring. To be safe we recommend avoiding any henna tattoos while in Egypt unless you are certain they are using pure brown henna.

## 8. Passports and Visas - Jordan

Passports should be valid for at least six months after your departure from the country. Please do not bring an almost full or almost expired passport. Visa arrangements are the responsibility of the traveller, and requirements are subject to change by the local authorities.

To promote tourism to the country, the Jordanian government has designed the **Jordan Pass**. This provides adults of most nationalities with a free single entry Jordan visa (for stays of 3 nights or more), a discounted package of entrance fees, and free digital brochures for the various sites in Jordan. Please check the Jordan Pass tour note for more information.

Double or multi entry visas for Jordan are no longer available and you will need to arrange two visas if you are doing a combination tour (eg. with Egypt and/or Israel) that visits Jordan more than once. Exceptions may occur if you are crossing to and from Israel via the King Hussein Bridge - please contact us for details.

If you wish to arrange your visa separately in advance, or if your stay will be shorter than four days/3 nights, then a visa fee of 40JD (approx. USD 57) will be due.

Families with children under 12 are recommended not to purchase the Jordan Pass as entrance fees are not charged in Jordan for children under 12. Our Jordan Family tour prices include your entrance fees and we will also arrange a free visa for you on your arrival into Amman airport.

Other nationalities may require a visa prior to arrival and to obtain this in advance, please contact your local Jordanian embassy or consulate or a visa agency for details. In addition, if you plan to enter Jordan via the southern Wadi Araba crossing (Eilat-Aqaba) or the Allenby Bridge/King Hussein border with Israel in the north, you will need to obtain your Jordan visa in advance as these are not available on arrival at the border.

## 9. Time

The time in Egypt, Jordan, Israel and Lebanon is GMT plus 2 hours and in UAE GMT plus 3 hours. Daylight saving adjustments have historically been applied in some years but not others. At present it appears that there will be no daylight saving changes in Egypt 2016 and beyond, though this may change at short notice (with a resulting impact on flight times and schedules). In Jordan and Israel, daylight saving of one hour is generally applied between the end of March and the end of October, making it GMT plus 3 hours. Exact dates vary from year to year and sometimes the changes may be scrapped altogether.

## 10. Voltage

Sockets are two round pronged and 220 volts (Type C). Universal adaptors are available in most airport shops if you don't have one already. Standard European adapters will work fine, though sometimes they may feel a little loose in the sockets. All hotel rooms have electrical sockets where you can re-charge cameras, phones etc. Hair dryers are

normally available on request from the hotel reception if not in your room already.

If you have US appliances (110 volts) you will need a voltage converter as well as a plug adapter.

## 11. Money - Jordan

The local currency in Jordan is the Jordanian Dinar (JD). You do not need to arrange to bring any Jordanian Dinar with you to Jordan as exchange facilities are available in the international airports and in most hotels, banks and bureau de changes in major towns. You should try to obtain and keep hold of small denomination notes or coins on you during the tour as these are useful for toilets, tips and small purchases. ATMs are readily available in major towns and many local shops will accept VISA/Mastercard or Amex, but may charge fees of up to 10% - check before you pay. Travellers cheques are not recommended as they can not be changed in many places now, and can incur high fees.

While in Jordan you will need sufficient funds to cover meals not included in the itinerary, drinks, snacks, souvenirs and personal expenses such as laundry. These should generally all be paid for in Jordanian Dinar, though tips for guides and drivers may be paid in hard currency (GBP, USD, EUR).

It is difficult to recommend a level of personal spending money which will suit everyone as this can differ greatly, but as a guideline, we would suggest allowing USD 15-25 per person per day as a minimum. Allow more if you plan on doing lots of shopping, or buying many alcoholic drinks.

## 12. Tipping

Tipping for services provided is part of the local culture in Jordan, is often expected, and will be very gratefully received. While the amount you tip is subject to your satisfaction with the services provided and your personal budget, we are often asked for help and guidelines and can therefore suggest that you allow approx.:

Tour guides: US\$8-10 per person per day

Drivers: US\$3-5 per person per day

Restaurants: 10% or leave the change

Petra horse boys: US\$2-5 (we recommend against riding the horses for animal welfare and safety concerns, but the boys may still expect a tip)

## 13. What to take

**Luggage:** Suitcases, rucksacks or fabric holdalls are all fine to bring with you to Jordan. You should also bring a small daypack/bag to take out during the day. Your main luggage will normally be left in the hotel during your sightseeing trips - you will not need to carry it far, and there are nearly always hotel porters to assist.

**Luggage limits:** There is no luggage limit for this tour. However, most airlines restrict you to between 20kg and 25kg for your hold luggage and between 5kg and 10kg for hand luggage. Please check with your airline before travelling to the airport.

**Clothing:** The climate in Jordan varies widely from hot days in the summer to cool and sometimes wet days in the winter months. At night, especially in the deserts, the temperatures can drop quite dramatically. So you must pack for cool conditions. Formal dress (eg. suits & ties) is not required. Modesty rates highly in Jordan, especially for women, so to respect the local culture and people, please ensure all clothes are loose fitting and not revealing. Shorts (not hot-pants) are OK in tourist sites, as are T-shirts, but these should not show too much bare flesh (we suggest that your shoulders should remain covered). When visiting any mosques, legs and arms should be covered.

**Other items:** If your tour includes an overnight Bedouin camp then bedding is provided but we recommend bringing

a light sleeping sheet or sleeping bag liner for comfort all year round (even with the best efforts, sand does find its way pretty much everywhere). In the winter months, or if you think you would like to sleep under the stars instead of in your tent, then we recommend you bring a sleeping bag with you as it can get very cold at night. We also recommend you bring a sun hat, sunscreen, sunglasses, a basic first aid kit, toiletries, money belt, small torch, camera & charger.

## 14. Dates & Prices

We run regular departures on this tour starting on Sundays throughout the year. All departures are guaranteed to run with a minimum of 2 participants. Departure dates & prices are given on our website (please check the website for up-to-date prices & special offers). Note: On some dates the tour will start on a Saturday instead of the usual Sunday. On these dates the Desert Castles day trip will move from the end of the tour to the start of the trip. Everything else remains the same.

## 15. Booking & Payment

If you would like to book a place on this tour, please complete the online reservation form on our website (via the Dates & Prices tab on the tour page). You may make a deposit or full payment online, or just hold a reservation if you prefer (full payments are due 8 weeks before departure). We will then contact you with more details about how to complete your booking. Payments may be made by debit or credit card (subject to a card processing fee), or by making a bank transfer, or posting us a cheque/bank draft. Full details will be provided in your booking confirmation email. Please [contact us](#) if you would like any more information or have any questions before making a booking.

## 16. Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory on all of our tours and needs to cover personal accident & liability, medical expenses and repatriation, travel delay & abandonment. We also strongly recommend that you take out cover against cancellation and lost/stolen baggage. Personal medical insurance does not normally provide sufficient cover and is generally not suitable for travel on our tours. You will not be able to join your tour if you have not provided us with details of your insurance or if you arrive without cover in place (no refunds will be due in this event). [More information...](#)

You may arrange your own insurance, or you can take advantage of a comprehensive policy that we can arrange for you through Endsleigh Insurance which has been designed to be suitable for our tours. The policy is available to travellers of all nationalities and you do not need to live in the UK to take out the policy. For full details of cover provided, prices and to apply for one of our policies, please complete [travel insurance application form](#).

Note: Any country that borders the Mediterranean is considered as 'Europe' for the purposes of travel insurance (including Turkey, Israel, Egypt and Morocco). If you are doing a tour that visits one country in 'Europe' and one that is 'Worldwide' (for example, an Egypt and Jordan tour), then you need a 'Worldwide' policy. When completing the form you should enter your travel dates including any extra days involved in overnight flights or connecting travel between your home and the tour. Our policies are not able to cover any extra time or activities other than your tour and options booked with us and your travel to & from home.

Note - to comply with insurance sales regulations, our travel insurance policies are only available to customers booking directly with us. If you have booked through a travel agent you will need to arrange your own insurance.

If you plan to arrange a hot air balloon flight locally, or do some scuba diving during your tour, you should check the small print in your policy to make sure these are covered (these are covered in our policy). Please also check the maximum altitude that you will be reaching and that full cover including emergency evacuation is provided up to this altitude.

If you are taking expensive camera gear or other electronic equipment with you then please check the coverage and the fine print of your policy to ensure that you have sufficient cover.

*IMPORTANT: We must have your travel insurance details (policy number and type of insurance) before you depart or you may not be allowed to join the tour. If you haven't told us already, please let us know the details when you can. You should take a paper copy of your insurance policy with you as you may be asked to show this at the start of the tour.*

## 17. Financial Security

We are a UK registered company and an ABTA Member (Y4447) and you can be confident when booking with us that your money is safe and protected.

Financial failure insurance is also provided through Affirma to protect all customers for the land portion of your tour. Please see [our website](#) or [booking conditions](#) for more information.

## 18. Responsible Tourism

It is impossible not to have an impact on the local environment, cultures and eco-systems when you travel. However, it is very possible to try and ensure that these impacts are as limited, or positive as possible. We are committed to ensuring that we try to leave our host countries in a better state than we found them and encourage and assist our travellers to help us with this.

The following are a few simple tips that require very little effort on your part but which will help ensure that any effect you have on the locations you visit is positive rather than negative.

- Don't prejudge: Things in different countries will almost certainly be different. That doesn't make them worse or inferior, just different.
- Communicate: Don't expect locals to speak your language. Take the trouble to learn a few words or phrases of the local language. Don't worry about sounding silly. Most locals are patient and accommodating and appreciate you making the effort to communicate in their language.
- Conserve energy: Be careful not to waste valuable resources. Use local resources sparingly. Switch off lights, air-conditioning and fans when you leave the hotel room and don't waste water. Remove superfluous packaging. Many countries have far less efficient waste disposal systems than ours. Remove packaging from newly acquired items before leaving home.
- Don't litter: No matter how untidy or dirty the country you're travelling in may look to you, avoid littering, as there is no need to add to the environment's stress. Many of the countries we visit have a tough challenge dealing with rubbish and waste. Please consider taking home as much plastic waste as you can (e.g. water bottles).
- Choose environmentally friendly products: By using environmentally friendly (bio degradable) sun creams, shampoos and detergents you can help reduce pollution.
- Respect local customs and traditions: As you are a guest in these countries, you should also comply with the local customs. If you are friendly and well mannered, the locals will reciprocate and it will only enhance your experience. It's important to follow dress and behaviour guidelines especially when visiting religious or sacred sites (your tour leader will advise you how best to do this).
- If a client commits an illegal act the client may be excluded from the tour and Encounters Travel shall cease to have responsibility to/for them. No refund will be given for any unused services.

All porters are employed and equipped following guidelines set by the International Porter Protection Group (IPPG).

## 19. Follow Us Online

You can stay in touch with us online by following us on Facebook and Twitter. We post updates on relevant travel news in our destination countries, special offers and discounts and other interesting travel related news and information.

[www.facebook.com/encounterstravel](http://www.facebook.com/encounterstravel)

[www.twitter.com/encounterstravl](http://www.twitter.com/encounterstravl) (yes, without the 'e')

## 20. Before you travel

It is important when considering and preparing to travel anywhere in the world that you have a good understanding of the country you are visiting, its laws and customs, and the possible risks and situations that may occur. This includes specific risks related to your itinerary (eg. does it involve water & can you swim, are you fit enough for the activities included), as well as more general risks such as terrorism and natural disasters.

General details and links to more information about health risks, visa requirements, money, and travel insurance are given in these tour notes. We recommend that you re-read all these before your departure as well as the small print of your travel insurance policy so you know exactly what is covered and what is not.

You should take copies of your important travel documents with you and ideally also store them online securely as a backup. Make sure that you have given us your emergency contact details and told that person where and when you are travelling. Ensure you take enough money with you and that you have access to emergency funds.

Finally, you should read through and stay updated with the current [official government travel advice](#) for your destination. We are registered partners with the UK Foreign Office's ['Travel Aware' campaign](#) which provides further useful and invaluable information.



**Note:** Please [download an up-to-date copy](#) of these tour notes shortly before you travel as itineraries and information does change from time to time.

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