

Jordan & Lebanon Express

Country(ies): Jordan , Lebanon

Tour type: Small Group

Transport: A/C minibus/coach, Bedouin jeeps

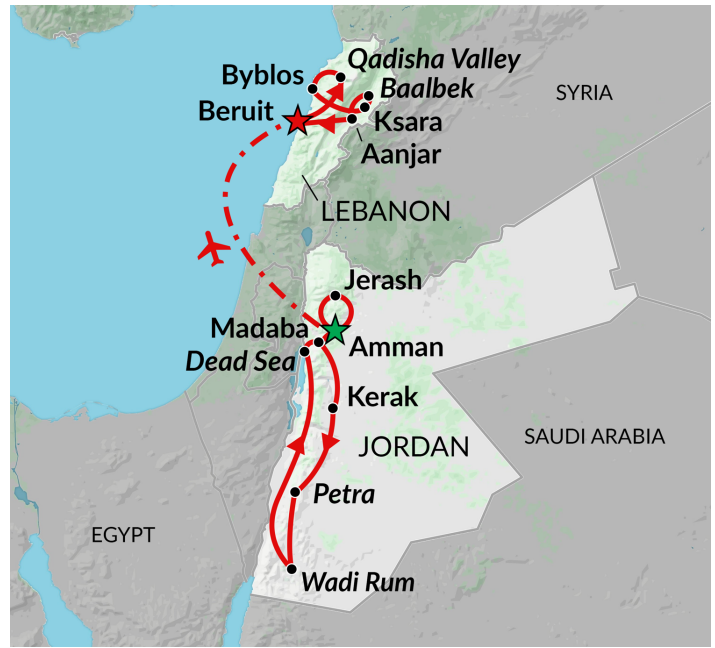
Group size: Min: 2 | Max: 18

Days: 11 days

Start Location: Amman, Jordan

End Location: Beirut, Lebanon

Meals: Breakfasts - 10, Lunches - 1, Dinners - 1



Highlights:

Bustling Amman, Roman ruins at Jerash, Amman Food Tasting, Wild Jordan Centre, Roman mosaics at Madaba, views over Israel from Mt. Nebo, scenic Kings Highway drive, Shobak crusader castle, Full day in Petra, Wadi Rum jeep safari & Bedouin camp, Dead Sea overnight stay, Beirut, Baalbek temple, Ksara wine tasting, Cedars, Qadisha Valley, Baatar Gorge, Byblos, Jeita Grotto

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive in Amman. Hotel transfers included

Once you've landed at the airport, we'll be there to meet you and transfer you to your hotel in Jordan's bustling capital city of Amman. After helping you check in and pointing you to any local shops, cafes or restaurants, you're free to explore Amman independently before our sightseeing starts tomorrow.

OVERNIGHT: Amman hotel

MEALS: None

EXTRAS: Extra day in Amman - pre tour Superior hotel upgrade (JOSHJS) As-Salt and Bethany tour

Day 2: Explore Ancient Jerash and Amman, Street Food Experience & evening visit to the Wild Jordan Centre

We begin our day travelling north from Amman to the nearby city of Jerash, home to one of the largest and best-preserved examples of Roman architecture outside of Italy. Often called the 'Jewel of the North', Jerash reveals an unbroken history of human settlement stretching back over 6,500 years. Hidden beneath sand for centuries, extensive excavations and restorations over the last 70 years have uncovered a remarkable example of the grand, formal Roman provincial urbanism typical throughout the Middle East.

Upon returning to Amman in the afternoon, we explore Jordan's capital, famously known as the 'white city' due to its abundance of white limestone buildings. Amman's history spans millennia, with archaeological work uncovering remains from the Neolithic period through the Hellenistic, late Roman, and Arab Islamic eras. Our tour includes the Citadel, the historic site of the Temple of Hercules, the Umayyad Palace, and the Byzantine Church. We will also visit the impressive 6,000-seat Roman Theatre, dating back to when the city was known as Philadelphia.

Following our exploration of the historical sites, we delve into the vibrant atmosphere of Downtown Amman with a street food tasting experience. You'll have the chance to sample local delicacies, which typically include sweet Kunefa, refreshing Sugar Cane Juice, and savoury Falafel, though specific offerings may vary based on availability during our visit.

Afterwards, there will be time to return to the hotel to refresh before our evening activity. To conclude our day, we'll enjoy an evening visit to the Wild Jordan Centre. This unique establishment is not only a fantastic spot to relax but also plays a crucial role in supporting Jordan's natural heritage and local communities. It serves as a hub for the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature's ecotourism and handicraft projects, promoting sustainability by generating income for rural communities living in and around Jordan's nature reserves and aiding conservation efforts. For those who would prefer a more relaxed evening, you are welcome to remain at the hotel instead.

OVERNIGHT: Amman hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 3: Kings Highway to Petra with stops in Madaba, Mount Nebo & Shobak Castle. Optional Petra by Night or Cookery Class

We leave Amman behind us today as we drive along the scenic King's Highway towards Petra. The drive itself is beautiful, crossing deep wadis, passing through olive groves, and navigating remote rural villages, offering you a unique insight into the daily lives of the local people.

Our first stop will be at Madaba, where we visit the Greek Orthodox Church of St. George, famed for its remarkable 6th-century Byzantine mosaic map depicting the Holy Land and other biblical sites. Next, we'll venture up Mount Nebo, a significant viewpoint offering breathtaking panoramic views over the Jordan Valley towards the Holy Land.

We'll hit the road once more, this time crossing the stunning Wadi al-Mujib gorge. The route winds through olive groves before climbing over the deep canyon until we reach Shobak Castle. Perched dramatically on a mountainside, Shobak is another impressive example of the Crusader castles built during the early 12th century to guard the vital trade routes between Egypt and Damascus.

Upon arrival in Petra, we'll check into our hotel. This evening offers two optional activities for you to choose from. You could opt for a magical first glimpse of Petra with the atmospheric Petra by Candlelight experience, walking through the Siq canyon to see the iconic Treasury illuminated solely by hundreds of candles. Alternatively, food enthusiasts might enjoy participating in a hands-on cooking class at the renowned Petra Kitchen, learning the secrets of preparing traditional Jordanian dishes. Please note that pre-booking is essential for the Petra Kitchen experience as it is very popular and spaces are limited.

OVERNIGHT: Petra hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: Petra by night (local payment) Petra Kitchen - Cooking Class

Day 4: Full day exploration of Petra, camping underneath the stars in Wadi Rum

Today is all about exploring the Nabataean site of Petra. It was once the ancient capital of the Nabataean commercial empire until the Romans finally took over in 106 AD. For a long period, Petra was forgotten – except by the local Bedouins – before it was rediscovered in 1812 by Swiss explorer Johann Ludwig Burckhardt. Petra is found at the edge of the Wadi Araba desert, where canyon walls and towering hills make it virtually inaccessible, except via a narrow cleft in the rock known as the Siq. There are very few free-standing buildings in Petra, as the Nabataeans chose to carve their dwellings into the multicoloured sandstone cliffs. Petra has become one of Jordan's main tourist attractions.

We have most of the day available today to explore this ancient city (a 2-3 hour guided tour, then free time to explore independently). We start by making our way through the Siq, which rises to 200 metres above us and narrows to just 2 metres wide in certain sections. Keep an eye out for the ancient Nabataean water channel still visible on one wall, and remnants of the terracotta pipes that brought water into the city are also present. We'll turn a corner and suddenly – one of the most familiar sights of Petra will be in front of you – The Khazneh (Treasury) comes into view. Our guide will explain how this, and the other buildings here, are mainly elaborate facades carved into the rock from the top down, and also discuss the spiritual significance of the building style.

From the Treasury, the valley opens out, and you'll see tombs carved into the rock on both sides. You'll get a glimpse of the ruined Roman amphitheatre and colonnaded streets. During your free time, you can walk up a steep and narrow winding gorge to the towering 'Monastery' – which is 50 metres high and 45 metres wide, providing breathtaking views of the Wadi Araba desert and the Jordan Valley. Another climb takes you to the High Place of Sacrifice and the Lion Fountain. All in all, this is a full and tiring, but hugely rewarding, day touring one of the world's most famous ancient sites.

Walking distances today are an absolute minimum of 3km through the Siq to the Treasury and back, plus distance to see a few tombs; 8km to take the trail on as far as the main basin; plus an additional few km to the

Monastery and back (over 800 steps up and down). For those with less mobility or who are worried about the distance golf buggies are available for around 25 USD per person one way 40 USD per person round trip to take you on the 1.2km journey through the Siq to the Treasury and back again at an agreed time. Horse carriages are also available but we recommend against using these due to animal welfare reasons.

Later in the afternoon, we leave Petra and drive into the spectacular desert scenery of Wadi Rum. Whilst staying in Wadi Rum, several optional activities are available to enhance your desert experience, such as taking a traditional camel ride through the sand dunes, soaring above the landscape on a hot air balloon flight (typically at dawn, weather permitting), or enjoying an adventurous desert quad biking excursion. Upon arrival at our camp, friendly Bedouin hosts will greet us at our comfortable site, nestled beneath towering rocks and cliffs. We spend the evening relaxing at the camp and enjoying a delicious traditional Jordanian meal. As night falls and the stars emerge, there is also an option to join a captivating astronomy experience, taking advantage of Wadi Rum's exceptionally clear desert skies and unique vantage point to observe stars, constellations, and planets in incredible detail.

OVERNIGHT: Wadi Rum Bedouin camp

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

EXTRAS: Camel Ride in Wadi Rum Wadi Rum Astronomy Experience Wadi Rum Hot Air Balloon Flight Wadi Rum Quad Bikes

Day 5: Wadi Rum Jeep Safari and overnight stay at the Dead Sea (optional excursion to Wadi Mujib)

We start the day early, exploring the beautiful desert and mountain scenery of Wadi Rum. Keep an eye out for the copper-coloured rocky 'jebels', which mesmerised T.E. Lawrence during his visits to the desert during the Arab Revolt and were later famed in the movie Lawrence of Arabia. We'll take a jeep safari through the stunning desert landscape, seeing more of the sheer cliffs and bizarre, weathered rock formations.

We say goodbye to Wadi Rum later in the morning and head north towards the Dead Sea, one of the planet's most spectacular natural and spiritual landscapes. Not only is it the lowest point on Earth, at approximately 400 metres below sea level, but it's also filled with dramatic, natural wonders.

The Dead Sea is fed by numerous rivers, including the River Jordan. Once the waters reach the Dead Sea, they are land-locked with no outlet, so they evaporate under the intense desert sun. This process leaves behind a dense, rich cocktail of salts and minerals, renowned worldwide and supplying the cosmetics, agriculture, and medicine industries with some of their finest raw products.

The Dead Sea is flanked by mountains to the east and the rolling hills towards Jerusalem to the west, giving it an almost otherworldly beauty. Although sparsely populated and serenely quiet now, the area is believed by some to have been home to five Biblical cities: Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Zoar (Bela).

Upon arrival at our hotel located on the shores of the Dead Sea, we will check in for our overnight stay. You'll have plenty of time this afternoon and the following morning to fully experience the buoyant waters, perhaps indulge in the therapeutic Dead Sea mud treatments, or enjoy other spa therapies available at the hotel. Normal swimming is near impossible; it's much easier (and certainly more photogenic!) simply to float effortlessly on the surface. Remember to avoid splashing water into your eyes, as the high salt concentration will cause stinging.

For the adventurous, and typically during the summer months (usually April to October, subject to local conditions and opening times), an optional excursion to the nearby Wadi Mujib Nature Reserve is available, offering a chance for an exciting siq trek through water-filled canyons.

OVERNIGHT: Dead Sea resort

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: Wadi Mujib Day Trip - Siq Trail

Day 6: Amman to Beirut. Hotel transfer included

We leave Jordan today and transfer you to Amman airport for your flight to Beirut. Once you arrive, we'll meet you at the airport, and then transfer you to your hotel for the start of your trip. We'll help you check in before giving you some free time to relax or explore Beirut independently.

Note: the Amman-Beirut flight is left out of the set tour price as it is often more cost effective for you to include this flight as part of your main international flight ticket. We are happy to book all your international flights, just this Amman-Beirut flight, or none of them at all, whichever works best for you. Direct flights are available with both Egypt Air and Middle Eastern Airlines. You can fly at any time during the day - all transfers in Amman and Beirut are included.

OVERNIGHT: Beirut hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 7: Jeita Grotto, Harissa cable car, Baatara Gorge

After leaving the capital city of Beirut behind this morning, we begin our journey north, making our first stop to explore the awe-inspiring Jeita Grotto. Here you'll get a chance to explore part of the system of limestone caves which span a total distance of almost 9km. The caves contain one of the worlds largest collections of stalactites and stalagmites and was one of the finalists in the New 7 Wonders of Nature competition; it's no wonder the caves are considered a symbol of Lebanon. Moving on, our next stop is Harissa, which is famous for the mountain top Christian shrine, dedicated to the Virgin Mary. We'll take the cable car up to visit the church and enjoy the stunning views of the coastline.

Our final stop of the day is the unique Baatara Gorge sinkhole, where in spring and after rainy periods a 255 meter waterfall cascades down into the enormous cavern. We'll have time for a short hike here and we'll also explore a nearby Douma Village, where a traditional lunch is included.

The day finishes with a short drive to the beautiful Qadisha Valley where we spend the night in the Monastery of St. Anthony, in a separate building with simple but comfortable en-suite accommodation (a nearby guesthouse will be used if the monastery is closed to visitors or unavailable).

OVERNIGHT: Qadisha Valley monastery or guesthouse

MEALS: Breakfast,Lunch

EXTRAS:

Day 8: Qadisha Valley, Cedars Ski Resort & Byblos

For those early risers, you have the opportunity to join the monks for their early morning prayers in the monastery. After breakfast, there will be time to explore some of the Qadisha Valley, another UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Qadisha Valley is known as the Holy Valley, and the Holy River, the Nahr Qadisha flows through it. There are many caverns to be found on its steep cliffs which were used for shelter during ancient times.

After leaving the valley behind, our first stop will be the village of Becharre, famous for being the birthplace of the iconic poet and novelist, Kahlil Gibran. In the village there is a small museum dedicated to him where you'll be able to see some of his paintings and manuscripts displayed.

Next, we'll visit the Cedars Ski Resort, famous as being one just a few ski resorts in the Middle East. The area often referred to as the Cedars of God is also found nearby, which contains some of the last groves of the cedar

forests which once thrived in this region. The Cedrus Libani, Cedars of Lebanon are even mentioned in the Old Testament and have become a national symbol of Lebanon.

Later today we arrive in Byblos, an ancient Phoenician city that is thought to have been inhabited for up to 7000 years. Locally, the city is known as Jbeil and is another UNESCO World Heritage site. Byblos is filled with significant historical and archaeological sites, and also features a lovely Phoenician harbour.

OVERNIGHT: Byblos hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 9: Free morning in Byblos, Ksara winery

This morning you'll have some free time to explore the markets and coastline of Byblos further before we head back in land to continue our journey.

Our destination today will be the village of Zahle, however we'll be making a stop along the way at the Ksara Winery which is possibly the oldest winery in Lebanon. The caves and tunnels have a total length of approximately 2 miles and have been used for generations as wine cellars. You'll have a guided tour of the caves and winery before sampling (and buying if you wish) some of the produce in a wine tasting session.

OVERNIGHT: Zahle guesthouse

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 10: Exploring Baalbek and Anjar

You're in for real a treat today as we'll be visiting the incredible site of Baalbek. Referred to as 'Heliopolis' or 'City of the Sun' by the Romans and Greeks, it is home to a sanctuary dedicated to worshipping the Heliopolitan triad of gods; Jupiter, Venus and Mercury. In ancient times, thousands of pilgrims would flock to the temple in order to venerate the triad. Today, the temple remains remarkably well preserved.

After leaving Baalbak we'll make a stop at the nearby Umayyad city of Anjar, located within the Bekaa Valley. Caliph Walid founded the city in the 8th century and what remains of the city today, gives great insight into the excellent town-planning which must have taken place. You'll see mosques, palaces and baths. There were also up to 600 shops within the city in ancient times, demonstrating how important of a trading post Anjar must once have been.

We end the day with a drive back to Beirut where we'll spend the night.

OVERNIGHT: Beirut hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 11: Beirut free time. Departure airport transfer

Today is the last day of the tour and your time is free to explore Beirut some more until you are transferred to the airport for your departing flight home.

OVERNIGHT: N/A

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Included:

- Accommodation for 7 nights in 4-star hotels (upgrades are available in Jordan)
- 1 night in a comfortable Bedouin camp in Wadi Rum
- 1 night in guesthouse/hotel in Zahle
- 1 night in monastery accommodation in Qadisha Valley
- All transport and transfers in AC vehicles
- 4x4 Bedouin jeep safari in Wadi Rum
- Dead Sea Overnight Stay
- Amman Food Tasting Experience
- Visit the Wild Jordan Centre supporting sustainability
- Wine tasting in Ksara Caves
- 24-hour airport arrival & departure transfer service
- Services of a specialist tour guide for all sightseeing tours
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary 10 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 1 dinner)

Excluded:

- International flights (available on request)
- Travel insurance (mandatory, [get quote here](#))
- Jordan visa & site entrance fees (see notes on the Jordan Pass - 70JD)
- Lebanon Visa fees (free on arrival for most nationalities)
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Drinks, snacks, tips and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Any other items not mentioned above

Options

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.

Extra day in Amman - pre-tour - Standard level

Min numbers: 1

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: This option is applicable to those who have booked the standard level of accommodation. If you have booked the superior accommodation package, please select the superior extra night option.

Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

Camel Ride in Wadi Rum

Min numbers: 1

This option adds on a fun sunset or sunrise camel ride through the Wadi Rum desert.

As-Salt and Bethany tour

Min numbers: 1

Our first visit today is to the hilltop town of As-Salt, around 40 minutes drive from Amman. As-Salt was an important trading link between the Jordan Valley and Eastern Desert, and once the capital of Amman. The town developed its old Islamic architecture using yellow limestone, which was the finest at the time and many impressive buildings can still be seen today, as well as tiny narrow streets packed with shops and stalls. Today the town provides an example of religious and cultural friendship between the local Muslim and Christian population and we take a walking tour on its self-designed 'Harmony Trail' to learn more about the town and local life in Jordan. We'll also take lunch with a local family for a first taste of Jordan's delicious cuisine (if groups are over 10 people or no families have availability that day we will eat in a local restaurant instead).

After lunch we descend out of the hills to the Baptism Site at Bethany. This is a relatively recently excavated site believed to be the biblical 'Bethany-beyond-the-Jordan' where John baptised Jesus Christ. Several churches, caves and pools dating from Roman and Byzantine periods have been discovered here. Both Pope John Paul II, and Pope Benedict XVI have visited. An electric minibus takes you from the visitor centre to the three sites: Tell Mar Elias, the Baptism Pools and John the Baptist's Church. After a busy day, we'll return to our hotel in Amman where we'll spend the night.

This tour runs on Day 1 of the tour, so an extra night needs to be added in the hotel in Amman before the tour starts. A supplement will apply if there is only one person on the tour.

Desert Castles and Nature Reserves tour

Min numbers: 1

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.

Extra day in Beirut - post-tour

Min numbers: 1

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) on a bed & breakfast basis. Your airport departure transfer is not included and will be charged as an additional supplement if required based on the number of people in your party. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing.

Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

Single Room Supplement (SSJOJL)

Min numbers: 1

The tour price is based on 2 people sharing twin/double rooms. 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.

Note: Single supplement prices may vary seasonally.

Wadi Mujib Day Trip - Siq Trail

Min numbers: 1

Escape the hustle and bustle of Amman for a real adventure, exploring the canyons of Wadi Mujib, following the famous Siq Trail.

Leaving Amman, we'll drive around 90 minutes to the shores of the Dead Sea where our journey along the Siq Trail begins from the Wadi Mujib visitors centre. Descending down into the gorge we enter the Wadi Mujib Nature Reserve where between months of April and October it's possible to take an exciting hike through the shallow waters that fill the gorge. Along the way you'll climb up small waterfalls where steps have been installed to make it easier, until eventually you'll reach the end of the gorge where you can relax beneath a large waterfall. The entire hike generally takes 2 to 3 hours roundtrip.

We highly recommend bringing along a dry-bag (so your camera or mobile phone don't get wet) and water shoes. It is possible to hire a dry bag at the visitors centre for around US\$7.00 and purchase water shoes for US\$7.00).

Note: On most tours it's necessary to add an extra night pre or post-tour to have enough time to take this tour. If you have a late departure on your final day however, it may be possible to visit Wadi Mujib on your departure day.

Petra by night (local payment)

Min numbers: 1

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.

Please Note: This is a local payment option, payment will be collected by your tour guide whilst in Jordan.

Petra Kitchen - Cooking Class

Min numbers: 1

Enhance your Petra experience with a delightful evening immersed in Jordanian culture and cuisine at the renowned Petra Kitchen. This popular optional activity offers a fantastic opportunity to participate in a hands-on cookery class, working alongside local chefs and women to prepare a range of traditional Jordanian dishes. You'll learn about local ingredients, master authentic techniques, and discover the secrets behind delicious regional specialities, typically culminating in enjoying the multi-course feast you've helped create together. It's a fun, interactive, and social way to spend an evening after exploring the wonders of Petra.

Please note that spaces for the Petra Kitchen Cookery Class are limited and it is exceptionally popular. Therefore, pre-booking is essential to guarantee your participation, and we strongly recommend securing your spot well in advance to avoid disappointment due to high demand.

Wadi Rum Astronomy Experience

Min numbers: 1

Venture into the heart of Wadi Rum's captivating desert landscape after nightfall and witness a celestial display like no other. Far from city lights, the vast, clear skies above this ancient valley reveal a breathtaking panorama of stars.

Join our optional astronomy tour and embark on a journey through the cosmos. Our expert guides will illuminate the constellations, planets, and deep-sky objects visible to the naked eye, sharing fascinating insights into their mythology and scientific significance.

Experience the profound silence and tranquillity of the desert night as you gaze upon the Milky Way's shimmering expanse. With the aid of powerful telescopes, you'll delve deeper into the universe, observing distant galaxies and nebulae with remarkable clarity. This is an unforgettable opportunity to connect with the cosmos and appreciate the sheer scale and beauty of the night sky in one of the world's most spectacular natural settings.

Wadi Rum Hot Air Balloon Flight

Min numbers: 1

Enhance your Wadi Rum visit with an optional hot air balloon flight. Experience a sunrise view of the 'Valley of the Moon' from above. Observe the desert landscape as the sun rises, providing unique photographic opportunities. Flights are early morning, conducted by professional pilots, and subject to weather conditions. Bookings are confirmed the evening before. A full refund is provided if the flight is cancelled due to adverse weather conditions.

Wadi Rum Quad Bikes

Min numbers: 1

Unleash your adventurous spirit and explore the magnificent desert landscapes of Wadi Rum on an exhilarating quad biking excursion. This optional activity puts you in control of your own All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV), allowing you to navigate the sandy plains and weave between the iconic towering rock formations under the guidance of local experts. 1 Feel the thrill as you power through the stunning scenery of the 'Valley of the Moon', accessing unique viewpoints and experiencing the vastness of the desert in a truly dynamic way. It's a perfect add-on for those seeking an adrenaline rush and a different perspective on Wadi Rum's breathtaking beauty.

1. Accommodation

Jordan:

We use good quality mid-range hotels 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 which are modern style hotels, and the Old Village Resort or Hyatt Zaman in Petra which are more traditional characterful properties.

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 their own bathroom, proper beds and all bedding provided. 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.

Lebanon:

This tour uses a mix of accommodation including good quality 4-star hotels in Beirut and Byblos, a comfortable guesthouse Zahle and rooms in a separate new block at Monastery of St. Anthony in Qozhaya. Rooms at the monastery are simple but comfortable and en-suite and you may join the monks for their morning prayers.

Accommodation is based on twin or double en-suite rooms with air conditioning. Please visit the accommodation tab of this tour for examples of the hotels normally used on this tour. These are subject to change to alternative properties of a similar standard. If you have any specific accommodation requests please let us know and we'll be happy to provide you with a customised quotation for a private tour.

Please check the Single Room Supplement option for details on room sharing options and charges for solo travellers on this tour.

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 and Lebanon 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. International Flights including Amman to Beirut

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.

This tour starts in Amman (AMM) and ends in Beirut (BEY). You will also need to arrange a flight between Amman and Beirut to link together the two sections of this tour. This can either be purchased as a single ticket (for example with Middle East Airlines), or as part of your overall international flight ticket. Your airport transfers are included at both ends and you may fly at any time during the day.

4. Entrance Fees & Jordan Pass

Lebanon:

The tour price includes entrance fees to all the tourist sites mentioned in the itinerary. If you visit any sites not mentioned in the itinerary then you will need to cover the entrance fee costs.

Jordan:

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

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](#)

5. Group Size/Tour Leaders/Guides

As one of our Small-Group tours, maximum group sizes are restricted to 18 people, though the tour is guaranteed to depart with a minimum of just 2.

A professional licensed guide accompanies all groups of 2 or more whilst in Lebanon and of 5 or more whilst in Jordan. For groups of 2-4 in Jordan, one of our experienced English speaking drivers will escort the group with specialist local site guides used for the tours in Jerash, Amman (Citadel), and Petra. At Encounters Travel we aim to only use local Jordanian guides and reps. We feel this gives you the best experience of the country and the sites you are seeing as well as supporting the local population and economy.

6. Tipping

Jordan:

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)

Lebanon:

Tipping is common practice in Lebanon, as a sign of appreciation for services provided. You may therefore wish to tip your guide and driver at the end of the tour. You should not feel obliged to tip any particular amount, and should consider your personal budget. We are often asked to provide a guide however, and can suggest that approx. GBP 5 / USD 8 per person per day would be appropriate.

7. Dates & Prices

We run regular small-group departures on this tour starting on Mondays throughout the year. All departures are guaranteed to run with a minimum of 2 participants. Departure dates & prices are on our website and in our

brochure (please check the website for up-to-date prices & special offers).

8. 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.

9. Financial Security

We are a UK registered company and are committed to providing our customers with financial protection to provide peace of mind and to allow you to book with confidence.

We have therefore partnered with Trust My Travel Ltd., which provides financial protection services to over 2000 partners around the world. Funds paid to us by our customers are protected via an Insurance policy held by Trust My Travel. Each traveller and the description of services sold is declared against Trust My Travel's insurance policy directly against our financial failure. In the event of our insolvency, you will be refunded for any unfulfilled products and/or repatriation to the UK (where applicable). Please see [our website](#) or [booking conditions](#) for more information.

10. 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).

11. 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

<https://x.com/encounterstravel> (yes, without the 'e')

12. 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).

Considering travel insurance for your trip? [World Nomads Travel Insurance](#) offers coverage for more than 150 adventure activities as well as emergency medical, lost luggage, trip cancellation and more.

If your tour includes car hire, or 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.

Covid-19

Before purchasing any travel insurance, please check the coverage provided for situations related to Covid-19, and for the rules about government travel advice. Your normal policy may not be suitable.

13. 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.



14. Reduce Plastic Waste with Water-to-Go Filter bottles

Traveling responsibly means minimizing plastic waste, but staying hydrated on the go is essential. At Encounters Travel we are committed to reducing single-use plastics, which is why we've partnered with Water-to-Go. Their portable filtration system removes over 99.9% of contaminants from any non-saltwater source, turning even questionable water sources into safe drinking water.

Given that tap water is un-safe to drink in many of the countries in which we operate, we recommend purchasing a Water-to-Go bottle prior to departure. This will help you avoid the use of single use plastic bottles and keep you hydrated on the go.

Save big! Get a huge 25% off your Water-to-Go bottle and other Water-to-Go products (such as filters, lids, and carriers). Use code **ENCOUNTERS25** at checkout (valid in the UK, USA and Canada).

How Water-to-Go Technology works:

- Their reusable, BPA free water bottles contain their own unique 3-in-1 filtration technology effectively providing clean safe drinking water from any non-salt water source around the world.
- Three different (1 traditional and 2 nano) technologies are combined in one filter cartridge to remove up to 99.9999% of microbiological contaminants in water.

The three technologies used in a Water-to-Go filter are:

- Mechanical filtration – A tiny pore size, so small contaminants can't fit through.
- Electrical – A positive charge reduces the pore size even further and attracts contaminants like a magnet, trapping them inside the filter.
- Activated Carbon – Unlike most carbon based filters, instead of using adhesives to glue the carbon particles together, (which vastly reduces the carbon's efficiency) it is contained within the membrane, helping to reduce contaminants whilst eliminating bad tastes and odours. Try filtering water from your tap at home and taste the difference!

Water-to-Go filter bottles deliver safe, healthy water worldwide

- Water-to-Go filters remove bacteria, viruses, waterborne disease, protozoa, heavy metals such as lead as well as harmful chemicals.
- Their filters remove Chlorine and Fluoride from tap water.
- The filter will eliminate harmful contaminants from the water but allow beneficial minerals such as sodium and magnesium to pass through leaving you with the healthiest water possible.
- Water-to-Go filters have been independently tested against internationally recognised standards by industry specialists including The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (UK), BCS Laboratories (USA), Bangalore Test House (India) and IMI (China).

Use Water-to-Go products and you'll be healthier, wealthier and helping to make the world a better place!

- Depending on filter size, each Water-to-Go filter is able to replace 260 or 400 single-use plastic water bottles!
- They ensure you have access to safe water anywhere in the world without ever having to buy environmentally damaging bottled water.

- Their water bottles deliver safe, clean drinking water at just 5p per litre.
 - The filter membrane is biodegradable and the shrouds are recyclable.
 - The water bottles are used and approved by everyone from backpackers to commuters, gym users to expecting mums. Perfect for everyday, outdoor and travel.
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15. Private & Tailor-made Tours

While our group departures offer a fantastic way to explore with like-minded travellers, we understand that some guests prefer a more exclusive experience. Most of our group tours can be booked on a private basis, allowing you to enjoy the same expert-led routes with your own dedicated party. The primary advantage of choosing a private arrangement is the flexibility it provides; we can easily customise the itinerary to include your preferred style of accommodation or adjust the pace to suit your needs. Private tours can be run on the same start days as our group tours, or on other dates. However, some activities within our trips are restricted to particular days of the week - we will advise you on anything like this that we need to work around. Pricing will be based on the number of travellers in your party, and any customisations you may like to make.

For those seeking something truly unique, our specialist sales team is available to collaborate with you on a completely tailor-made tour, designed from the ground up to match your specific interests, accommodation level and requirements.

To request a quotation for a private or tailor-made tour, please [contact us](#).

16. 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.

Please note that whilst the Jordan Pass is recommended for the vast majority of our Jordan Tours where entrance fees are not included, this is not recommended for our Petra & the Bedouin Trail tour as entrance fees to Petra and Wadi Rum are already included in the cost of this tour.

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 for the children as entrance fees are not charged in Jordan for children under 12. Instead, the adults should purchase a Jordan Pass and we will arrange a free visa for the children which you will receive when we meet you on 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.

17. 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.

18. 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.

19. 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.

20. 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.

21. Money - Lebanon

The local currency in Lebanon is the Lebanese Pound (called Lira). You do not need to arrange to bring any Lebanese currency with you 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 additional fees - check before you pay. Travellers cheques are not recommended as they can not be changed in many places now, and can incur high fees.

Due to the huge recent devaluation of the Lebanese currency, if you withdraw money from an ATM or pay for things with your credit card you will be charged the official bank exchange rate which is very different to the actual operating rate used locally. We therefore recommend that you bring enough US Dollars or Euros in cash with you to cover your required spending money during the tour and do not plan to use your credit card while in Lebanon. You can change this hard currency to Lebanese pounds at the current rates while you are there - please ask your guide for assistance on appropriate places to change your money.

While in Lebanon 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 local currency, 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 25-35 per person per day as a minimum. Allow more if you plan on doing lots of shopping, or buying many alcoholic drinks.

22. 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.

23. Passports and Visas - Lebanon

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.

For many nationalities visiting Lebanon a visa on arrival is possible at Beirut International Airport. This applies to most countries of the Commonwealth, European Union, Russia, Japan and the US continent. Even if you are eligible for a visa on arrival, it is prudent to check up to date requirements with your nearest Lebanese consulate.

Other nationalities may require a visa prior to arrival and to obtain this in advance, please contact your local Lebanese embassy or consulate or a visa agency for details.

IMPORTANT: The Government of Lebanon denies entry to Israeli passport holders, Israeli visa holders (valid or expired) and those with any evidence of travel to Israel within their passport.

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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.
