

Directory

CONTENTS

Accommodation	285
Activities	288
Business Hours	292
Children	292
Climate Charts	293
Courses	293
Customs Regulations	293
Dangers & Annoyances	293
Discount Cards	294
Embassies & Consulates	294
Festivals & Events	295
Food	295
Gay & Lesbian Travellers	295
Holidays	295
Insurance	296
Internet Access	296
Legal Matters	297
Maps	297
Money	297
Photography & Video	298
Post	299
Shopping	299
Smoking	300
Solo Travellers	301
Telephone	301
Time	301
Toilets	301
Tourist Information	302
Travellers with Disabilities	302
Visas	302
Women Travellers	304
Work	305

ACCOMMODATION

Jordan has accommodation to suit most budgets, although away from the main tourist centres there's limited choice. Jordan is so compact, however, that most attractions can easily be visited in day trips from the main towns.

Prices are highest during the two peak seasons, which are from September to October and from March to mid-May. Holiday weekends are also peak times in Aqaba and at the Dead Sea resorts.

High inflation and increased tourism are contributing to escalating prices. Although

BOOK YOUR STAY ONLINE

For more accommodation reviews and recommendations by Lonely Planet authors, check out lonelyplanet.com/hotels. You'll find the true, insider lowdown on the best places to stay. Reviews are thorough and independent. Best of all, you can book online.

prices were accurate at the time of writing, expect increased prices.

Camping

For many people, spending a night under the stars – or at least under canvas – is a highlight of a trip to Jordan. One popular option is to sleep in a traditional 'house of hair' at a Bedouin camp in Wadi Rum. Facilities in these goat-wool tents are basic but it's a great experience – see p272 for details.

Another beautiful area for camping is Dana Nature Reserve (open March to November). Intended for those who are happy to pay extra to wake up in the wilds, the tents fill up quickly. Book in advance through Wild Jordan (p95).

Camping with your own tent is permitted in a few places in southern Jordan, especially in the desert surrounding Wadi Rum. Camping 'off piste' in the north is more problematic, not least because you'll have competition for the best spots from the Bedouin and it's surprisingly hard to find a secluded place to pitch a tent.

Bringing a tent to save money on accommodation isn't cost effective as camping is rarely possible without your own transport. Besides, cheap rooms are plentiful in areas close to the major sites of interest.

Hotels

From opulent pleasure palaces on the Dead Sea to eco-friendly lodges in the nature reserves, Jordan offers some interesting hotel accommodation. Reservations are recommended during peak seasons, especially at the Dead Sea Resorts, and for midrange and top-end hotels in Aqaba, Wadi Musa and the nature reserves.

PRACTICALITIES

- **Electricity** Jordan's electricity supply is 220V, 50 AC. Sockets are mostly of a local two-pronged variety, although some places use European two-pronged and British three-pronged sockets.
- **Newspapers & Magazines** There are several English-language papers available, including the daily *Jordan Times* (250 fils). Imported newspapers include *The Times* (JD4), *Guardian Weekly* (JD2), *Le Monde* (JD2.700) and *Le Figaro* (JD2.250). The *International Herald Tribune* (JD1.250) has a regional section from Lebanon's *Daily Star*. Magazines include *Time* (JD2.700) and *Newsweek* (JD2.900).
- **Radio** Radio Jordan is on 96.3 FM and the BBC World Service is on 1323AM. Try 99.6 FM for popular hits.
- **TV** Channel 2 of Jordan TV broadcasts programs in French and English. Satellite stations such as the BBC, CNN, MTV and Al-Jazeera can be found in most midrange and top-end hotels.
- **Weights & Measures** Jordan uses the metric system. See the inside front cover for a conversion table.

Accommodation prices in this book (see inside front cover) include breakfast, unless otherwise stated. Breakfast varies from a humble round of bread with a triangle of processed cheese in budget hotels to a delicious assortment of locally made yoghurt, hummus, *fuul* and olives in midrange hotels. The buffet-style breakfasts at top-end hotels can set a hungry hiker up for a week.

Hotels indicated as offering 'air-con' have both cooling and heating appliances available in at least some of their rooms.

BUDGET

Budget rooms are available in most towns and vary from stark and basic to simple and homely. Most are spotlessly clean.

Private rooms start from JD8/16 for singles/doubles, with less stark rooms with a private bathroom costing around JD20/25. Prices are negotiable, especially during quieter seasons. Dorm rooms are not common, but most budget places have 'triples'

(rooms with three beds), which you can ask to share with other travellers, cutting the cost of accommodation considerably. In summer you can even sleep on the roof in some places for about JD3 per person. There are no youth hostels in Jordan.

Some things to consider: many budget places are located above shops and cafés that can be noisy at night; avoid windowless rooms that are stifling hot in summer; and winter in Jordan is bitterly cold so ensure the heater is working before checking in.

Payment usually needs to be made in cash in Jordanian dinars.

MIDRANGE

Midrange hotels offer the best value for money in Jordan. They are often privately owned by families who take pride in welcoming their guests. The owners are a fount of local knowledge and can provide assistance in catching transport or advising on sights of interest. Some even organise their own tours. Most family-run hotels offer some kind of home cooking for breakfast and guests may even be asked to join the family if they have ordered an evening meal.

There is at least one midrange hotel in towns you're likely to visit, with a good selection in Amman, Madaba, Wadi Musa (near Petra) and Aqaba. Rooms in midrange hotels usually have colour TV (sometimes featuring satellite stations such as CNN), fridge, heater (essential in winter), telephone, reliable hot water and a private bathroom.

Prices start at about JD30/45 for singles/doubles. Negotiation is usually possible, especially if you're staying for several days. Many midrange hotels are starting to accept credit cards, but it's best to ask before checking in.

TOP END

There are some excellent top-end hotels in Amman, Wadi Musa (near Petra) and Aqaba (for the Dead Sea, see opposite). With liveried staff, welcome drinks on arrival, marble foyers and luxurious rooms, they live up to their counterparts in other parts of the Middle East. Most have a travel agency within their shopping arcades from where you can hire a car and organise hotel bookings for the next part of your trip.

Most of the top-end hotels are owned by international chains, but they invariably

reflect the local character of Jordan, with Arabian-style interior design, options for high-quality Middle Eastern dining, shops selling fine Jordanian handicrafts and bookshops with a selection of English language titles on Jordan.

Independent travellers can often negotiate a walk-in rate. Outside peak seasons and holidays (when booking is essential), you may find a world-class room for a mid-range price.

A tax and service charge of 26% (see p298) is added to the bill in top-end hotels, although it's worth checking to see if this has already been included in a discounted rate. Major credit cards are accepted in all top-end hotels.

Rental Accommodation

In Amman, the best places to check for apartments and houses to rent are the accommodation listings in the English-language newspapers, cultural centre noticeboards (p91), and the noticeboard at Books@café (p109). There is also a useful noticeboard in the office of the University of Jordan Language Center (p293). For longer stays, wander around the suburbs of Shmeisani, or between the 1st and 5th circles: signs

advertising places to rent are often displayed in residence or shop windows.

It costs about JD200 to JD400 per month for a furnished apartment in a reasonable area of Amman; a little less if it's unfurnished. A furnished apartment or small house in a less salubrious area is possible for as little as JD100 to JD200 per month, but for this price don't expect everything to work.

Short-term rentals are available in Aqaba, where prices for a furnished two-bedroom apartment with a kitchen start at JD15 per night in the low season and JD25 in the peak season. Most apartments in Aqaba can only be rented for a minimum of one week, however, and must be pre-booked in the peak season.

Resorts

If you have only one night's luxury during your visit to Jordan, plan to stay in one of the Dead Sea resorts (see p176). Not only are these state-of-the-art hotels worth a visit in their own right, but they also offer the best access to the Dead Sea – an area where there is next to no alternative accommodation. Residents of one resort can also use the facilities of the neighbouring hotels, which can take care of several nights'

TOP FIVE PLACES TO STAY

In Jordan, top beds don't necessarily cost top dollar. The following high five are drawn from all categories of accommodation and have been chosen because of the uniqueness of the experience they offer.

Bedouin camp, Wadi Rum (p272) The sky's the limit for those who stay in one of the Bedouin camps in Wadi Rum. Unfurl your mat under the stars and let singing youths, together with the snorts of grumbling camels and the whistle of mint tea over the fire, lull you to sleep.

Feinan Lodge, Dana (p210) Found at the end of a long, hard day's hike through the Dana Nature Reserve, this lodge is more grill than guesthouse. With its monastic appearance and vegetarian supper served by candlelight (electric lights are not used), this eco-lodge offers an experience that hovers on the sublime. If hiking is not your thing, you can always cheat and drive round the long way – at the risk of losing much of the magic.

Mövenpick Resort & Spa, Dead Sea (p176) While floating in one of the infinity pools, with a carrot cocktail in one hand and a jet of water massaging the other, it's easy to see why the spa at the heart of this resort is billed as the best in the Middle East. Begin in the primordial mud at the Dead Sea shore-side and work your way up to heaven in the hotel's spangled-ceiling bar.

Sofitel Taybet Zaman, Tayyibeh village (p241) With the rose-tinted sandstone typical of Petra's famous landscape spread beneath the lintels of this unusual hotel, you won't mind being a half-hour drive from the entrance to the site. Indeed, the sequestered nature of the accommodation, in renovated local village houses, is part of its unique appeal.

St George's Church Pilgrim House, Madaba (p189) For those who want their night's sleep to matter, there's no better place to head for than this ascetic guesthouse, located beside St George's Church, home of Madaba's famous mosaic map. If Father Innocent is in residence, he'll happily explain how the guesthouse profits are used to benefit local underprivileged boys.

worth of entertainment in an area with no local nightlife.

Apart from the Dead Sea, there are also resorts in and around Aqaba (p256) – including the flagship resorts of the Mövenpick and Intercontinental chains. With access to the calm waters of the Red Sea, multiple pools, gyms and a selection of top-notch restaurants, they are bringing a touch of class to Jordan's second city.

ACTIVITIES

Jordan offers some of the best outdoor activities in the Middle East, from hiking and climbing in stunning landscapes to painstakingly piecing together the past on an archaeological dig. Don't head home without trying at least a couple of these fantastic adventures. For information on scuba diving and snorkelling, see the Diving & Snorkelling chapter (p277).

Aero Sports

The **Royal Aero Sports Club of Jordan** (☎ 03-2058050; www.royalaeroclub.com) offers microlighting, skydiving, gliding, paragliding and even hot-air ballooning (by arrangement) over the dramatic scenery of Wadi Rum. Ballooning costs about JD130 per person for a minimum of two people and rides take from one to two hours depending on the weather.

Archaeological Digs

Real-life archaeological fieldwork is nothing like an Indiana Jones movie, though it can be an incredibly rewarding activity, especially if you uncover the material remains of the ancients. In Jordan, this is in fact a very real possibility as a significant number of sites across the country are in the process of being excavated. Even if you don't have an extensive background in archaeology, it's not too difficult to grab a spot on one of these digs.

If you're interested in conducting archaeological fieldwork, keep in mind two very important things: first, you will need to plan well ahead if you want to participate in an expedition; and second, you will most likely need to pay a fee for your volunteer placement. In order to gain access to sites, project leaders must obtain permits and complete security forms, which can take up to six months for all possible bureaucratic

niceties. Furthermore, while archaeologists are happy to support energetic and motivated amateurs, there are a limited number of volunteer positions available. However, if you are an aspiring archaeologist, or you simply want to gain exposure to this fascinating discipline, it's certainly worth the effort to join a dig.

For starters, do your homework and find out who is conducting which digs, and where and when they are taking place. To help facilitate your search, we've included a list below of various organisations involved in Jordanian archaeology. When you contact project leaders, be sure to sell yourself as there is strong competition for openings. If you have special skills (like photography or drafting), have travelled in the region or worked on other digs (or similar group projects), let them know – it'll certainly increase your chances of landing a spot.

American Center for Oriental Research (ACOR; www.bu.edu/acor) Prepares an extensive annual listing of field-work opportunities in Jordan and the Middle East.

American Schools of Oriental Research (www.asor.org) This organisation supports the study of the culture and history of the Near East.

JORDANIAN ARCHAEOLOGY ON THE WEB

- **East of the Jordan** (www.asor.org/pubs/macdonald.pdf) Has the full text of Burton MacDonald's book on the territories and sites of the Hebrew scriptures.
- **Franciscan Archaeological Institute** (<http://198.62.75.5/opt/xampp/custodia/01fa.php>) Presents exquisite detail on excavations in the Madaba and Mt Nebo regions.
- **Madaba Plains Project** (www.madabaplains.org/hesban) An overview of Andrews University's excavation at Tell Hesban on the Madaba Plains.
- **Petra: The Great Temple Excavation** (www.brown.edu/departments/anthropology/petra) The history of Brown University's excavation of the Great Temple of Petra.
- **Virtual Karak Resources Project** (www.vkrp.org) A comprehensive website dedicated to the archaeological and historical study of Karak Castle.

Archaeological Institute of America (AIA; www.archaeological.org) The largest and oldest archaeology organisation in America is a valuable resource for information.

Biblical Archaeological Society (www.bib-arch.org) Produces the magazine *Biblical Archaeological Review*, runs archaeological tours and lists volunteer openings.

Council for British Research in the Levant (CBRL; www.cbirl.org.uk) British Academy-sponsored institute with research centres in Amman & Jerusalem.

University of Jordan (Map p87; ☎ 06-5355000; www.ju.edu.jo) The archaeology department at this Amman-based university is a good contact point.

University of Sydney (www.arts.usyd.edu.au/departments/archaeology) This prestigious Australian university runs a highly reputable field project at Pella.

Camel Treks

The camel is no longer a common form of transport for Bedouin; most now prefer the ubiquitous pick-up truck – in fact, it's not unusual to see a Bedouin transporting a prized camel in the back of a Toyota. For visitors, however, one truly rewarding experience is a camel trek. This costs about JD30 for two hours: choose a mounted rather than a walking guide for a more authentic experience. Enterprising Bedouin are happy to take visitors on three- to six-night camel treks from Wadi Rum to Aqaba or Petra (see p269), as well as shorter trips.

Cycling

There are some great places to cycle in Jordan, but it's not what one could call a developed sport here. Most cycling involves bringing your own bicycle and spare parts, and sorting out a route along roads with few amenities that are too hot or too cold for comfort for half the year. If none of this fazes you, then contact the **Cycling Association** (www.cycling-jordan.com) for help with route-planning and see p315 for more information.

Dana Nature Reserve has a guided desert cycling trail and there are 10 mountain bikes for hire from Feinan Lodge (see Cycling, p209).

Hiking

Hiking is an exhilarating activity in Jordan, not least because of the pristine and varied quality of the landscape and the historical allusions that underlie almost every path. Don't expect an organised network of routes, with signposts and watering holes

en route: most hiking in Jordan is an unsophisticated, ad hoc affair passing through small villages where the welcome is often as warm as the weather.

Hikes in Jordan take longer, and take more out of you, than you'd imagine – walking in sand is not easy, nor is going uphill in the hot sun. Allow plenty of time to linger and enjoy the view, chat with passers-by or simply sit in the shade during the heat of the day.

Although finding reliable maps is a problem, there are some good books detailing the most popular routes (see Books, below). It's best to buy both maps and books abroad as their availability in Jordan is sporadic.

Most wadis are unsafe during winter (November to February) due to the danger of flash floods. Paths are often washed away and so routes change frequently. Bear in mind that Global Positioning System (GPS) units and mobile phones may not function between steep canyon walls.

The best places for hiking in Jordan are Ajloun Nature Reserve (p135), Dana Nature Reserve (p207) and Wadi Mujib Nature Reserve (p180) where most trails require a guide. For more DIY options, there are some exciting hikes in Petra (p230) and in Wadi Rum (p270). Bedouin guides also offer accompanied hikes along the old caravan routes that link these two spectacular places. Also see the boxed text, p12, for Jordan's top five-day hikes.

Several longer routes are also possible with a tent. In particular, Dana to Petra is an excellent four-day trek that takes you through Wadi Feinan, Wadi Ghuweir and Little Petra. Also see the boxed text, p290.

BOOKS

British climbers Tony Howard and Di Taylor have spent much of their lives exploring and mapping the hiking, trekking and rock-climbing possibilities in Jordan. Their books include the detailed *Treks & Climbs in Wadi Rum* and the more condensed *Walks & Scrambles in Wadi Rum*, published in Jordan by Al-Kutba. They have also produced the highly usable *Jordan: Walks, Treks, Caves, Climbs & Canyons*, published by Cicerone (published by Interlink in the USA as *Walking in Jordan*). These books are only sporadically available in Jordan.

WADI WALKING

Jordan's most exciting hikes are via the lush gorges, waterfalls, pools and palm trees of its dramatic wadis (seasonally dry riverbeds). You'll need some help arranging a hike in a wadi (see Tours, p314 and Hiking Agencies, below), largely because you need transport to drop you off at the beginning and pick you up at the end of your hike (generally a different location and accessed from different roads). Moreover, route-finding is difficult (there are no defined trails) and trails change year to year due to seasonal flooding. Hikes are only safe from late March or early April to early October, and you should always check the weather forecast for rain and get local advice before heading off on a hike.

The following are Jordan's best wadi options and the routes are fully described in Di Taylor and Tony Howard's *Jordan: Walks, Treks, Caves, Climbs, Canyons*.

Wadi bin Hammad A 10km day-hike from a set of hot springs to the Dead Sea Highway, 6km north of Mazra'a. The hot springs and upper (eastern) stretches are popular with day trippers, especially on Fridays. The full hike ends at the Dead Sea, or alternatively you can just do the first 90 minutes through the dramatic narrow gorge. It's a one-hour drive from the King's Highway to the start of the trail, but it's hard to find without a guide; the turn-off is 11km north of Karak.

Wadi Ghuweir This full-day hike (12km, 7hrs) from Mansoura (near Shobak) to Wadi Feinan takes you past dramatic geological formations. The trail is accessed from near Shobak via a steep downhill drive, or you can start from Dana Nature Reserve (p205).

Wadi Hasa This moderate two-day, 24km trek runs through one of the most beautiful wadis in Jordan. It's all downhill, often in water, through a water playground of pools and waterfalls (including a hot waterfall) and changing scenery. There is currently a police check along the road to the start of the trail. The full trek ends near Safi.

Wadi Numeira This wadi starts 10km north of Lot's Cave (p181) and quickly leads to a dramatic *siq* with pools and waterfalls. The upper wadi is only accessed via a 1.5m rope ladder.

Wadi Yabis This day-hike (12km, 6-7hrs) is accessed from Hallaweh village, 15km from Ishfateena, north of Ajloun. The trail descends 700m past a spring and 2000-year-old olive trees, down a canyon to a 50m waterfall and on to Wadi Rayyan dam. Spring brings wonderful wildflowers and is the best time to visit.

Wadi Zarqa Ma'in This hike (4km, 4hrs) runs from the hot-spring resort of Hammamat Ma'in to the Dead Sea. Check trail regulations at the Hammamat Ma'in spa.

Although it can be difficult to find, *Trekking & Canyoning in the Jordanian Dead Sea Rift* by Itai Haviv contains numerous trekking and canyoning routes in the wadis of Central Jordan; its cultural and environmental insights alone make it worth the trouble to find.

HIKING AGENCIES

The **Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature** (RSCN; Map p94; ☎ 06-4616523; www.rscn.org.jo; PO Box 1215, Amman 11941) offers a wide range of guided hikes in Jordan's nature reserves and can also arrange long-distance treks if given prior notice. Rates vary from JD15 for a two-hour guided hike up to JD85 for a full-day trek.

For individual or group adventure hikes that include abseiling and canyoning, **Terhaal Encounters** (☎ 06-5866607; www.terhaal.com) is recommended. Their aim is to make Jordan's natural wonders accessible while minimising environmental impact and bringing benefits to local communities.

Desert Guides Company (☎ 06-5527230; www.desertguidescompany.com) also specialises in adventure hikes, treks and climbs throughout Jordan.

The best way to organise a trek in Petra or Wadi Rum is to arrange one through the respective visitor centre (see p220 and p251). If you engage a Bedouin guide independently, make sure you understand exactly what services are on offer to avoid disappointment on either side. Rates vary (and are negotiable) between JD30 to JD100, depending on the skills required for each hike or scramble.

Yamaan Safady (☎ 077-7222101; www.adventurejordan.com) is of the best hiking guides. From March to October he leads weekly hiking trips for expats and locals to places such as Wadi Yabis, Wadi Hasa and beyond, as part of the Adventure Jordan Hiking Club. Costs for day hikes generally start at JD25 per person including transport and guide.

For a list of general agencies overseas, see p314.

WHAT TO BRING

Lightweight trousers and long-sleeved shirts are culturally sensitive and best for the terrain. Other essentials include a hat, sunscreen, water bottle, torch (flashlight) and insect repellent. Lightweight walking boots are ideal, together with hiking sandals and a watertight bag for wet wadi walks.

WHEN TO GO

The best time for hiking is the middle of spring (mid-March to late April), when it's not too hot, the rains have finished, flowers are blooming and wells are full. Always check local conditions before setting out as flash floods can occur throughout the spring and may make wadis impassable.

Another good time is from late September to mid-October when it's dry but not excessively hot.

Rain occurs from November to March, making it dangerous to hike or camp in narrow wadis as flash floods can sweep unheralded out of the hills. It's also very cold for camping.

Horse Riding

It's possible to explore the deserts around Wadi Rum on Arabian stallions, though this recommended for experienced riders only. **Rum Horses** (☎ 03-2033508, 077-7471960; www.desertguides.com) is a professional camel- and horse-trekking agency located on the approach road to Wadi Rum.

There are also opportunities to ride in the hills above Petra. Several of the Bedouin horse owners at Petra will saddle you up with a spirited horse, but again, prior knowledge of horse riding is necessary and don't expect a helmet (see p237).

Hot Springs

Jordan boasts dozens of thermal hot-water springs, where the water is usually about 35°C to 45°C. The water contains potassium, magnesium and calcium, among other minerals with reputed health benefits. The most popular spring is Hammamat Ma'in, near the Dead Sea (see p177). Other popular spots around Jordan include Hammamat Burbita and Hammamat Afra, west of the King's Highway near Tafila (see p205), and Al-Himma springs, close to the northern border with Israel and the Palestinian Territories (see p145).

Women are likely to feel most comfortable at Hammamat Ma'in, which has an area for families and unaccompanied women, and the public baths at Al-Himma, which allocates special times solely for ladies.

Rock Climbing

Wadi Rum offers some challenging and unique rock climbing. The most accessible and popular climbs are detailed in the excellent books written by Tony Howard and Di Taylor (see Books, p289). Guides are necessary, and you'll need to bring your own climbing gear. See p271 for more details.

For more information go to www.rumguides.com and www.wadirum.net.

Running

Long-distance runners can combine a trip to Jordan with the annual Dead Sea Marathon. Starting at the 7th Circle in Amman, it involves a 50km run (individually or in a relay) to the Dead Sea at Amman Beach, as well as a half marathon, a 10km fun run and a kids run of 4km. In case you think that this is the preserve of a few mad locals, bear in mind that around 1000 runners take part annually. The race generally takes place on the second Friday in April so if you fancy running below zero, check the official website (www.deadseamarathon.com) for details.

The local branch of the **Hash House Harriers** (<http://hashemitehkh.googlepages.com>), dubbed 'drinkers with a running problem' on their website, organise local runs each Monday from Amman.

Turkish Baths

A great antidote for aching muscles, the *hammam* is otherwise known as a Turkish bath. The best baths are in Amman, Madaba, Wadi Musa and Aqaba and prices are around JD20, including a massage. At the better places you'll sweat it out in a dry- or wet-steam bath and then be scrubbed with woollen gloves, soaped with olive-oil soap, massaged and laid to rest on a hot marble platform.

Women are welcome, usually at separate times to men; call ahead so that a female attendant can be organised. See the boxed texts, p292 and p103, for personal accounts by the authors!

BATHING WITH BRUIERS IN JORDAN'S HAMMANS *Jenny Walker*

If you thought you felt sore after a long day's hike, then just wait until you see what they do with you at the local *hammam* (Turkish bath). The large, muscular attendants (male or female, depending on your sex) could easily retrain as Sumo wrestlers and you can rely on them to find parts of the body you didn't know you had.

In fact, they'll remove parts of the body you didn't know you had, as the art of extreme exfoliation counts as one of their many talents.

Don't expect phrases like 'no' and 'please don't' – uttered in either Arabic or English – to help you: more often they invite an almost sadistic acceleration of pummelling, scrubbing and slapping, accompanied by snorts of laughter. In fact, a sense of humour seems to be a prerequisite on both sides of the fluffy white towels handed out so thoughtfully in the antechamber of the baths: in emergencies (as when a nose hair is plucked without warning or two ears are lifted independently of the scalp) these towels can be used as a flag of surrender by battered bathers to signal that enough is enough.

Don't try to strut off with attitude, though, nor look back in anger, as there is always enough soap on the polished marble tiles to make sure you aren't the one having the last laugh.

If, by now, the prospect of being bullied in the bath is putting you off the idea altogether, don't let it. The bizarre part about the experience is that the moment you step out of the steaming pools of indistinct water, the minute you expose your newly scraped and kneaded flesh to the outside air, you'll feel so rejuvenated that you'll be booking your next appointment before you leave.

BUSINESS HOURS

Opening times vary from town to town, and from office to office across the country, but the following table gives an idea of business hours in Jordan. Many sights, government departments and banks close earlier in winter.

During the month of Ramadan, working hours are greatly reduced.

OPENING TIMES

Place	Times	Days	Notes
Banks	8.30am-3pm	Sun-Thu	
Government departments	8am-3pm	Sat-Thu	Some close Sat
Money-changers	9pm-9pm	daily	
Post offices	8am-6pm	Sun-Thu	Some open Fri until 2pm
Shops & businesses	9am-8pm	Sat-Thu	Some close 2-4pm
<i>Souqs</i> (markets)	9am-8pm	daily	
Tourist offices	8am-3pm	Sat-Thu	
Visitor centres	8am-6pm	daily	See relevant destination

CHILDREN

In common with the rest of the Middle East, children are universally adored in Jordan.

Children are instant ice-breakers and they'll invite plenty of contact with local people – especially as so few visitors bring their youngsters here. People will go out of their way to help you or make your family feel welcome, especially on buses and in shops, hotels and restaurants.

A few precautions can help make travelling with children a success: avoid the extreme heat of summer, stick to bottled mineral water, avoid peeled fresh fruit and washed salads (the most likely source of stomach complaints), and check that fresh dairy products are made with pasteurised milk.

Powdered milk is available, but disposable nappies (diapers) are hard to find outside Amman and Aqaba.

Although there are very few designated attractions for children beyond playground swings, the novelty of floating in the Dead Sea, playing on the beach or hotel pools at Aqaba, snorkelling in the Red Sea, exploring castles at Karak, Shobak and Ajloun, riding a camel at Wadi Rum or donkey at Petra, and checking out the ostriches and

oryx at Shaumari Wildlife Reserve should keep most kids amused.

See also Amman for Children, p104, for activities in the capital city.

For more comprehensive advice about travelling with children, pick up a copy of Lonely Planet's *Travel with Children* by Cathy Lanigan.

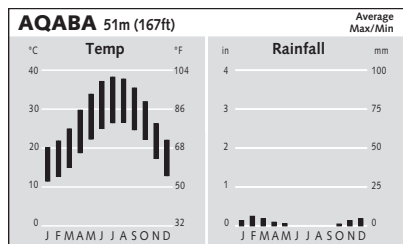
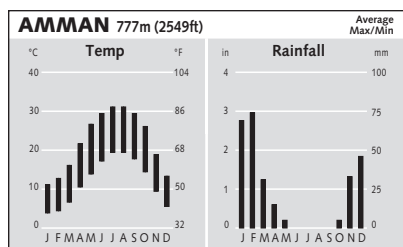
CLIMATE CHARTS

Spring (March to mid-May) is a wonderful time to visit Jordan as the climate in all parts of the country is clement, with the occasional shower, and the countryside is studded with wildflowers, including Jordan's famous black iris.

The other good time to visit is autumn (September to mid-November) when the temperature cools off after the heat of summer and the Dead Sea and Red Sea are pleasantly warm.

Climate in Jordan is conditioned partly by altitude, with the lowest areas such as the Jordan Valley and Gulf of Aqaba experiencing the most extreme summer heat and humidity (mid-May to August). The hilly central and northern areas, in contrast, can be very cold in winter (November to February) when snow often falls over the high ground.

Also see *When to Go*, p20, for more information on the best time to travel.



COURSES

Cooking
For details about the fun and worthwhile cooking course in Petra, see the boxed text, p84.

Language

For those enchanted enough by the Arab world to want to learn the language, there are some opportunities in Amman:

British Council (☎ 06-4636147; www.britishcouncil.org/jordan.htm) Can put individuals in touch with a private tutor.

University of Jordan Language Center (☎ 06-5355000, ext 2370; www.ju.edu.jo; University of Amman) Offers tailor-made courses with private instruction for individuals and small groups, geared to students' special interests. Rates are US\$50 per hour per group, for groups of one to six students.

CUSTOMS REGULATIONS

Drugs and weapons are prohibited, as are pornographic films, tapes (cassettes) and magazines.

Duty-free allowances for 'nonresidents' (tourists) are: 200 cigarettes or 25 cigars or 200g of tobacco (a charge of JD3.75 for each additional 200 cigarettes, up to a maximum of 2000); 1L of alcohol (a charge of JD2.91 for each additional litre, up to a maximum of 4L); a 'reasonable amount of perfume for personal use'; and gifts up to the value of JD50 or the equivalent of US\$150.

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Jordan is very safe to visit and, despite local dissatisfaction with Iraqi immigration, you are unlikely to feel any hint of the turmoil of neighbouring countries.

Two incidents in Amman in recent times (the 2005 Al-Qaeda suicide bombing of three hotels, and the 2007 shooting of tourists by a lone gunman – see p95) momentarily cast doubt over Jordan's peaceful reputation. With so much at stake in terms of revenue, however, every effort is being made by Jordanian authorities to ensure the safety of travellers within the country.

The best general advice for travellers is to be vigilant in the cities without being paranoid (by cooperating, for example, with security checks in hotel foyers). Conversations of a stridently political nature should also be avoided with casual acquaintances.

GOVERNMENT TRAVEL ADVICE

The following government websites offer travel advisories and information on current hot spots.

Australian Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade (☎ 1300 139 281; www.smarttraveller.gov.au)

British Foreign & Commonwealth Office (☎ 0845-850-2829; www.fco.gov.uk/countryadvice)

Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs & International Trade (☎ 800-267 6788; www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca)

US State Department (☎ 888-407 4747; <http://travel.state.gov>)

Minefields

A minefield comprising 86,756 mines along the Jordan–Syria border is well off the tourist trail, but if you're in the area take heed of warnings not to enter. It's hoped that Jordan will be mine free by May 2009, the 10-year anniversary of Jordan's signature of the UN mine-ban convention.

Public Disorder

During rare political or economic crises, occasional protests and acts of civil disobedience occur. There are also frequent demonstrations in support of the Palestinians. These usually take place in Karak, Tafila and Ma'an, and in the university areas of Irbid, Mu'tah and northern Amman. Foreigners are unlikely to be targeted during these protests, but it is best not to get involved.

The best sources of current information are the English-language newspapers published in Amman or your embassy/consulate in Jordan.

Sexual Harassment

Women who have travelled in other Middle Eastern countries, especially Turkey and Israel, will find that Jordan is comparatively relaxed and hassle free. Women who have not visited the region before, however, may be annoyed at the leering and harassment from local men. See p301 and p304 later in this chapter for more advice for solo and women travellers.

Theft & Crime

As with Arab Muslims across the region, Jordanians prize honesty and are anxious

to make visitors feel secure in their country. That said, given their relative poverty there is a great temptation for some people in tourist areas to make a quick buck either through scams or petty theft. One scam to be wary of is during taxi rides in Amman and other towns. The fare quoted on the meter is in fils, not in dinars, and visitors often misunderstand this when paying. Perhaps understandably, it is rare for a taxi driver to point out this mistake. Another minor scam is to claim something is genuinely locally crafted as part of a profit-share scheme, when in fact it is imported from abroad. Similarly, so-called 'ancient' oil lamps and coins are seldom what they seem.

Theft is less common, but it doesn't harm to take some simple precautions, like carrying wallets or purses in a front pocket, and avoiding carrying too much cash. A cotton money belt is a good idea and so is hiding some cash and a copy of your passport in a pair of socks in your luggage.

Leaving your bag under the watchful eye of a member of staff at a bus station or hotel is generally safe, but a shared hotel room is only as good as your fellow travellers: avoid jumping to conclusions about the hotel staff if something goes missing. Be careful late at night outside nightclubs in Amman: pick-pockets and muggers are attracted by the patronage of intoxicated, vulnerable and comparatively wealthy foreigners.

The military keep a low profile and you're unlikely to experience anything but friendliness, honesty and hospitality from them, in common with their compatriots. It's generally safe for men to walk around day or night in well-lit areas of Amman and other towns, but women should be more cautious.

DISCOUNT CARDS

Student discounts are occasionally available at tourist sites on production of an International Student Identity Card (ISIC) – university ID cards are not accepted.

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

The following embassies and consulates are in Amman. Egypt also has a consulate in Aqaba (see the boxed text, p303, for visas for neighbouring countries). In general, offices are open 9am to 11am Sunday to

Thursday for visa applications and 1pm to 3pm for collecting visas.

Australia (Map p87; ☎ 06-5807000; www.jordan.embassy.gov.au; 3 Youssef Abu Shalhout, Deir Gharb)

Egypt Consulate (Map p248; ☎ 03-2016171; cnr Al-Isteglal & Al-Akhatal Sts, Aqaba; ☎ 8am-3pm Sun-Thu) Embassy (Map p90; ☎ 06-5605175; fax 5604082; 22 Qortubah St, Jebel Amman; ☎ 9am-noon Sun-Thu) Between 4th and 5th circles.

France (Map p90; ☎ 06-4604630; www.ambafrance-jo.org; Al-Mutanabbi St, Jebel Amman)

Germany (Map p90; ☎ 06-5930367; www.amman.diplo.de; 31 Bin Ghazi St, Jebel Amman) Between 4th and 5th circles.

Iraq (Map p90; ☎ 06-4623175; fax 4619172; Al-Kulliyah al-Islamiyah St, Jebel Amman) Near the 1st circle.

Israel Consulate (Map p99; ☎ 06-5503529; Maysaloon St, Shmeisani)

Lebanon (Map p90; ☎ 06-5929111; fax 5929113; Al-Neel St, Abdoun) Near the UK embassy.

Netherlands (Map p90; ☎ 06-5902200; www.netherlandsembassy.com; 22 Ibrahim Ayoub St) Near the 4th circle.

New Zealand Consulate (Map p94; ☎ 06-4636720; fax 4634349; 99 Al-Malek al-Hussein St, Downtown) On the 4th floor of the Khalaf Building.

Saudi Arabia Consulate (Map p90; ☎ 06-5924154; fax 5921154; 1st Circle, Jebel Amman)

Syria (Map p90; ☎ 06-5920684; Abdoun Prince Hashem bin Al-Hussein St, Jebel Amman) Near the 4th circle.

UK (Map p90; ☎ 06-5909200; www.britain.org; Dimashq St, Wadi Abdoun, Abdoun)

USA (Map p87; ☎ 06-5906000; http://usembassy-ammman.org; 20 Al-Umawiyeen St, Abdoun)

Yemen (Map p90; ☎ 06-5923771; Al-Ameer Hashem bin al-Hussein St, Abdoun Circle)

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Jordan's best-known cultural event is the Jerash Festival of Culture and Arts (see the boxed text, p129). In summer (July and August), traditional concerts and plays are held at the Odeon and Roman Theatre in Amman, as well as in the towns of Salt and Fuheis.

Another summer festival is the **Global Village** (www.globalvillagejo.com) in the Marj al-Hamam area of Amman. Held in July and August it comprises an international carnival with funfair, shopping opportunities, theatre and local cultural entertainments.

A brand-new addition to the events circuit in Jordan is the **Jordan Rally** (www.jordanrally.com) held in April and organised by the

FIA World Rally Championship. See p67 for details.

A festival that may be of interest to music-loving travellers is **Distant Heat** (www.distantheat.com). Whether or not it lives up to its billing as one of the top 10 festivals in the Middle East, it's a fun event that 'highlights Jordan as a peaceful destination' and attracts a young crowd from around the region. The all-night party, featuring top international and local electronic-dance-music artists, is held at the end of July each year in Wadi Rum and often continues next day with beach pool parties in Aqaba.

FOOD

In this guide restaurants are ordered by price (not by author preference), starting with the cheapest. Venues have been chosen for the quality of the experience on offer in terms of the food, atmosphere and service, as well as their value for money.

A kebab sandwich or budget meal of roast chicken costs JD1 to JD3; a main dish in a midrange restaurant costs around JD4 to JD6; and a meal in a top-end restaurant costs from JD8 upwards. See p77 for more detailed information, and p296 for restrictions on eating and drinking during Ramadan.

GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELLERS

Homosexuality is illegal in most Islamic countries in the Middle East, but in Jordan (according to most sources) gay sex is legal and the age of consent is 16. Public displays of affection by heterosexuals are frowned upon and the same rules apply to gays and lesbians, although same-sex hand-holding is a common sign of friendship in Jordan.

There is a subdued underground gay scene in Amman – if you're keen to explore it, keep your enquiries discreet. Gay-friendly venues that attract young, gay and straight crowds include the multipurpose Books@café (p109) and the Blue Fig Café (p109). Other suggested meeting places are the top-end hotel bars in Amman.

Check www.gaymiddleeast.com and the gay and lesbian thread of Lonely Planet's Thorn Tree bulletin board (www.lonelyplanet.com) for more information.

HOLIDAYS

As the Islamic Hejira calendar is 11 days shorter than the Gregorian calendar, each

TABLE OF ISLAMIC HOLIDAYS

Hejira Year	New Year	Prophet's Birthday	Ramadan Begins	Eid al-Fitr	Eid al-Adha
1430	29.12.08	09.03.09	22.08.09	20.09.09	27.11.09
1431	18.12.09	26.02.10	11.08.10	10.09.10	16.11.10
1432	07.12.10	15.02.11	01.08.11	31.08.11	05.11.11
1433	20.10.11	04.02.12	21.07.12	20.08.12	23.10.12

year Islamic holidays fall 11 days earlier than the previous year. The precise dates are only fixed a short time beforehand because they depend upon the sighting of the moon.

Public Holidays

During the public holidays listed below, government offices and banks close. Shops, moneychangers and restaurants generally remain open, and public transport functions normally. During Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha many shops close as shop owners join their families on these important days of celebration.

Archaeological sites and nature reserves tend to be very crowded on Fridays and public holidays.

New Year's Day 1 January

Good Friday March/April

Labour Day 1 May

Independence Day 25 May

Army Day & Anniversary of the Great Arab Revolt
10 June

Christmas Day 25 December

The main Islamic holidays are listed below. See the Table of Islamic Holidays, above, for equivalent dates in the Western calendar.

Islamic New Year First Day of Muharram.

Prophet's Birthday Celebrated on 12 Rabi' al-Awal.

Eid al-Isra Wal Mi'raj Celebrates the nocturnal visit of the Prophet Mohammed to heaven.

Ramadan Ninth month of the Muslim Calendar.

Eid al-Fitr Starts at the beginning of Shawwal to mark the end of fasting in the preceding month of Ramadan.

Eid al-Adha Commemoration of Allah sparing Ibrahim (Abraham in the Bible) from sacrificing his son, Isaac. It also marks the end of the haj.

Ramadan

During the holy month of Ramadan Muslims refrain from eating, drinking, having sex and smoking during daylight hours in accordance with the fourth pillar of Islam (see the boxed text, p60). Even gum-chewing is considered *haram* (forbidden).

Although many Muslims in Jordan do not follow the injunctions to the letter, most conform to some extent. Foreigners are not expected to follow suit, but it's bad form to eat, drink or smoke in public during this period (see Celebrations, p79).

Business hours during Ramadan are erratic and tempers tend to flare towards the end of the month. After 6.30pm many villages turn into ghost towns as people go home to break their fast. Tourist attractions and hotel restaurants remain open and public transport generally functions normally, but the serving of alcohol may be restricted to room service or simply be unavailable.

INSURANCE

Travel insurance that covers theft, loss and medical problems is essential. The policy should cover ambulance fees and emergency flights home.

Some policies specifically exclude 'dangerous activities', which can include scuba diving, motorcycling and even trekking. You must have insurance if you plan to dive in Aqaba – decompression-chamber treatment is an expensive business!

You may prefer a policy that pays doctors or hospitals directly. Alternatively, if you submit a claim after the event, ensure you keep all documentation. Some policies ask you to call back (reverse charges) to a centre in your home country where an immediate assessment of your problem is made. See also Insurance, p324.

INTERNET ACCESS

Jordan is part of the cyber community, and boasts numerous Internet Service Providers (ISPs), including **Cyberia** (www.cyberia.jo).

Almost every town in Jordan has at least one public internet centre. The most competitive rates, and the highest number of internet centres, are found outside major universities such as Yarmouk University

(Irbid) and the University of Jordan in northern Amman. Costs range from about 750 fils to JD3 per hour.

If you have a laptop it's possible to connect to the internet from top-end and a few midrange hotels that have direct-dial phones. Check with the hotel desk for local dial-up numbers.

The easiest way to collect mail through internet centres is to open a web-based account such as **Hotmail** (www.hotmail.com) or **Yahoo! Mail** (mail.yahoo.com). Most places are also set up for various online chat services, such as MSN Messenger.

LEGAL MATTERS

The Jordanian legal system has evolved from distinct traditions. Civil and commercial law is largely based on British-style common law, while religious and family matters are generally covered by Islamic Sharia courts, or ecclesiastic equivalents for non-Muslims.

Travellers, naturally, are expected to respect the law. Penalties for drug use of any kind are stiff, and criticising the king can bring a jail term of up to three years. Traffic police generally treat foreign drivers with a degree of good-natured indulgence, as long as no major traffic laws have been broken. However, excessive speeding, drunk driving and seat belt avoidance are not tolerated. If you break the law, your embassy can only contact your relatives and recommend local lawyers.

MAPS

The Jordan Tourism Board's free *Map of Jordan* is a handy driving map. The Royal Geographic Centre of Jordan also publishes good maps, including a hiking map of Petra.

Several detailed maps are available outside Jordan: ITMB's 1:700,000 map *Jordan* is probably the easiest map to find. *Jordan* by Kümmerly and Frey is the best driving map, and the latest edition of GEO Project's *Jordan* (1:730,000) has an excellent map of Amman.

MONEY

Known as the *jay-dee* among hip young locals, the currency in Jordan is the dinar (JD) and it is made up of 1000 fils. You will sometimes hear the terms *piastre* or *qirsh*: this refers to 10 fils (10 qirsh equals

100 fils). Often when a price is quoted the unit will be omitted, so if you're told that something is 25, it's a matter of working out whether it's 25 fils, 25 piastre or 25 dinars! Although it sounds confusing, most Jordanians wouldn't dream of ripping off a foreigner, with the possible exception of taxi drivers (see p294).

Coins come in denominations of 10, 25, 50, 100, 250 and 500 fils, and one dinar. Notes come in denominations of JD1, 5, 10, 20 and 50. Try to change larger notes as often as possible – when paying for petrol, for example, or for your hotel bill – as it can be hard to pay with large notes in small establishments.

Changing money is very easy in Jordan, and most major currencies are accepted in cash and travellers cheques. Until recently, US dollars were the most readily accepted; at the time of writing, with the dollar still weak against other major currencies, UK pounds and euros are the flavour of the month; you'll get nowhere with Australian or New Zealand dollars.

There are no restrictions on bringing dinars into Jordan. It's possible to change dinars back into some foreign currencies in Jordan, but you'll need to show receipts to prove that you changed your currency into dinars at a bank in Jordan.

Syrian, Lebanese, Egyptian, Israeli and Iraqi currency can all be changed in Amman. Egyptian and Israeli currency are also easily changed in Aqaba. Banks and moneychangers charge about the same for exchanging cash, but large hotels charge more. There are small branches of major banks at the borders and airports.

If you are a collector of notes and coins, you may be interested in old Iraqi money, bearing the portrait of Saddam Hussein, for sale on street corners in downtown Amman. Even if they're fake, they're good as a conversational gambit with the Iraqi refugees who are selling them.

ATMs

It is possible to travel in Jordan almost entirely on plastic. ATMs giving cash advances abound in all but the smaller towns – just don't forget your PIN!

There are no local charges on credit-card cash advances, but the maximum daily withdrawal amount is around JD500,

depending on your particular card. All banks have large signs (in English) indicating which credit cards they accept.

Visa is the most widely accepted card at ATMs and for cash advances, followed by MasterCard. Other cards, such as Cirrus and Plus, are also accepted by many ATMs (eg Jordan National Bank and HSBC). If an ATM swallows your card, call ☎ 06-5669123 (Amman).

Credit Cards

Most major credit cards are accepted at top-end hotels and restaurants, travel agencies, larger souvenir shops and bookshops. Commissions of up to 5% may be added to the bill, so it may be better to get a cash advance and pay with the paper stuff.

The following are emergency numbers to contact in Amman if you lose your credit card:

American Express (☎ 06-5607014)

Diners Club (☎ 06-5675850)

MasterCard (☎ 06-4655863)

Visa (☎ 06-5680554)

International Transfers

Some major banks (such as Arab Bank and Jordan National Bank) can arrange the international transfer of money. Cairo-Amman Bank is part of the international service offered by **Western Union** (www.westernunion.com). **MoneyGram** (www.moneygram.com) has agreements with several banks. Fees are high with both, so obtaining a cash advance with a credit card is a better bet.

Moneychangers

In theory, moneychangers do not charge commission on travellers cheques, but in practice many do, so shop around. It's advisable to check the rates at banks or in the English-language newspapers before changing money.

Tax

Jordan has a sales tax of 16%, but this is generally only added to the bill in midrange and top-end restaurants. Midrange and top-end restaurants and hotels may also add on an additional 10% service charge. The Aqaba special economic zone has a sales tax of only 5% and many Jordanians head there on shopping sprees to take advantage of the lower consumer prices.

See Duty-Free, opposite, for information on tax rebates for tourists.

Tipping

Tips of 10% are generally expected in better restaurants. Elsewhere, rounding up the bill to the nearest 250 fils or giving back the loose change is appreciated, especially by petrol attendants and taxi drivers.

Travellers Cheques

Most types of travellers cheques are accepted, with the most recognised being American Express (Amex). Check the commission before changing them.

PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEO

Airport Security

All airports in Jordan have X-ray machines for checking luggage. Digital images are not affected when scanned by this equipment, but if you have print film keep it in a zip-lock bag ready for manual inspection. Don't keep your film in your checked-in luggage.

Equipment

Digital accessories and memory cards are widely available; a 1GB memory card costs around JD20. Many camera shops can burn photos onto a CD and print digital pictures.

Photographing People

Some Jordanians, particularly women and the elderly, object to being photographed, so ask first. Persisting in taking a photograph against someone's wishes can lead to ugly scenes, so exercise courtesy and common sense. Children generally line up to be photographed.

Jordanians are very proud of their country and can be offended if you take pictures of anything 'negative' or suggestive of poverty and squalor; this may include the activity of a marketplace.

Restrictions

Photography in military zones and 'strategic areas' like bridges and public buildings is forbidden. Take particular care in the Eastern Desert as there are several sensitive military sites not far from the desert castles. You also need to be careful along the Dead Sea Highway where there are

numerous checkpoints protecting the sensitive border with Israel and the Palestinian Territories.

Technical Tips

The single biggest factor to take into account is light. Taking pictures in the middle of the day will almost guarantee a washed-out shot, as the strong contrasts of light and shade are hard for a camera to deal with. Where possible, try to exploit the softer light of the early morning and late afternoon, which enhances subtleties in colour and eliminates problems of glare. If you do need to take shots in bright light, use a lens filter and keep the sun behind you.

If you want your camera to continue working for your next trip, don't get sand in it! A large zip-lock plastic bag and a lens brush will help keep your camera clean. Bear in mind, too, that a lens filter is cheaper to replace than the lens itself.

POST

Postal Rates

Amman is the best place from which to send parcels – see p93. For more detailed postal information, **Jordan Post** (www.jordanpost.com.jo) has an informative website.

Sending Mail

Stamps are available from souvenir shops where postcards are sold and there are postboxes around towns. Letters posted from Jordan take up to two weeks to reach Australia and the USA, but often as little as three or four days to the UK and Europe. Every town has a post office, but parcels are best sent from Amman or Aqaba.

Reliable courier companies include **FedEx** (www.fedex.com.jo), which has an office in Amman, and **DHL** (www.dhl.com), which has offices in Amman and Aqaba. Half a kilo costs around JD50 to most countries, although the per-kilo rate decreases dramatically the more you send.

SHOPPING

Jordan, with its strong tradition of handicraft production, is a fun place to shop. If you are after goods of a high quality, it pays to visit specialised craft centres as opposed to one-stop shopping in souvenir shops. For a full description of the kinds of craft that Jordan is famous for, please see p65.

Bargaining

Bargaining, especially when souvenir-hunting, is essential, but shopkeepers are less likely than their Syrian and Egyptian counterparts to shift far from their original asking prices. See the boxed text, p300.

Duty Free

There are duty-free shops at Queen Alia International Airport and next to the Century Park Hotel in Amman, plus small outlets at the border crossings with Israel and the Palestinian Territories.

Most upmarket shops offer tax rebates. If you spend over JD350, keep your receipts, fill out a tax rebate form and leave the country within 90 days, you can get the 16% tax refunded to your credit card at a booth at the airport, just before check-in.

Export Restrictions

Exporting anything more than 100 years old is illegal, so don't buy any souvenir (including 'ancient' coins or oil lamps) that is deemed by the salesman to be 'antique' – if only because it probably isn't. If you're unsure about an item's provenance, contact the **Customs Department** (☎ 06-4623186; www.cus.toms.gov.jo) in Amman.

Handicrafts

Several outlets around Jordan sell high-quality items handmade by Jordanian women. Profits from the sale of all items go to local NGOs aiming to develop the status of women, provide income generation for

POSTAL RATES FROM JORDAN

Type	Middle East	UK/Europe	USA/Canada	Australia
Letter/postcard	325 fils	475 fils	625 fils	625 fils
1kg parcel	JD4.200	JD14.300	JD14.600	JD13.600
Extra 1kg	JD3.600	JD4	JD8.100	JD7.100

GETTING A GOOD DEAL

In common with neighbouring countries, Jordan has a tradition of bargaining for goods. This means that items do not have a value per se: their value is governed by what you are willing to pay balanced against the sum the vendor is happy to sell the goods for. This subtle exchange is dependent on many changeable factors, such as how many other sales the vendor has made that day, whether you look like a person who can afford an extra dinar or two, and even whether the vendor had a row with their spouse in the morning. Equally, it is your chance to decide what you are willing to pay for an item and then use your interpersonal skills to see if you can persuade the vendor to match it.

Bargaining, or haggling, is a highly sociable activity, often conducted over a cup of tea or even, for large purchases, lunch with the family. As with all social interaction, there's an unwritten code of conduct that keeps such negotiations sweet. Avoid paying the first price quoted: this is often considered arrogant and bad manners. Start below the price you wish to buy at so you have room to compromise when the vendor quotes a higher price than he or she wishes to sell at – but don't quote too low or the vendor may be insulted. Never lose your temper: if negotiations aren't going to plan, simply smile and say goodbye. You'll be surprised how often the word *ma'a salaama* (goodbye) brings the price down.

Resist comparing prices with other travellers. If they were happy with what they paid for something, they certainly won't be if you tell them you bought the same thing for less. And besides, as shopping is one of the most memorable and sociable parts of travelling in Jordan, a 'good deal' generally means a good deal more than just the exchange of money.

marginalised families, nurture young artists and/or protect the local environment.

For more information on these local cottage industries, see the boxed text on p22 and p197. Also consult the GreenDex on p358 to see if a shop gets the green 'thumbs up' from our authors.

Products from these small-scale initiatives include silver jewellery from Wadi Musa; handmade paper products from Iraq al-Amir, Aqaba and Jerash; ceramics from Salt; painted ostrich eggs from Shaumari; weavings from Iraq al-Amir; and traditional clothing from across Jordan. Stylish home decor items aimed at the foreign market, including cushions, tablecloths and wall hangings, are also available.

Unfortunately, some shop owners have jumped on the cooperative bandwagon and claim to be part of charitable foundations when they are not. Check that the sign above the shop exactly matches the shop you are looking for!

Other Souvenirs

If you can carry it hand-luggage, a Jordanian water pipe makes a good souvenir; buy a supply of charcoal if you intend to use it when you get home. Easier to carry around is the traditional Arab headcloth, or *keffiyeh*, and *agal* (the black cord used

to keep it on your head), so characteristic of the region. The elegant flowing ankle-length Bedouin robe known as a *jalabiyya* is available at shops all over Jordan. Mind you, while you may think you look pretty hip in this attire, the locals may not agree.

A few music shops in downtown Amman sell either ouds (Arabic lutes) or *darbukkas*, the standard Middle Eastern-style drums. The ones you'll see for sale in tourist shops, however, are more for display than to play.

Other souvenirs include olive oil, modern mosaics from Madaba and Hebron-style glass from Naur (outside Amman). Jordan's capital of kitsch is Wadi Musa, where Nabataean T-shirts, Petra reproductions and bottles of coloured sand, skilfully created through tiny funnels, are sold throughout town.

Woodwork items, generally imported from Syria, include walnut jewellery boxes and chess sets inlaid with mother-of-pearl. Inspect the joints and inlay carefully if your purchase is to survive the journey home.

SMOKING

The tide of anti-smoking sentiment sweeping across many parts of the world has yet to reach Jordan. There are no laws in place banning smoking in public and the occa-

sional no-smoking signs (such as those at the airport) are blithely ignored. Top-end hotels in Amman, the Dead Sea and Aqaba reserve a few non-smoking rooms for their guests and the occasional quality restaurant enforces a non-smoking policy at selected tables, but in all other public places, including buses and taxis, smoking is still considered de rigueur.

SOLO TRAVELLERS

Jordan is an excellent destination for travelling alone. The country is friendly, safe, compact and easy to travel in with plenty of opportunities to meet Jordanians and mix with fellow travellers (particularly in Amman, Madaba and Wadi Musa).

During any bus ride (as one traveller, Fernando Perego, writes), 'local people extend the hand of friendship' and, as often or not, the journey will end in an invitation to share tea or meet the family. Dr Perego was even invited to visit the local clinic. Another traveller, Nathalie Ollier, found that her planned itinerary of a morning trip to Mukawir turned into an all-day tea-tasting event as she was taken from one interested shop owner, bus driver or village resident to another. People will be surprised you are alone, but on the whole will leave you be if you're after a bit of peace and quiet.

For advice for women travelling alone, see p304.

TELEPHONE

The telephone system in Jordan is privatised, so visitors can make a call from a private telephone agency, call from a hotel or shop, or buy a telephone card from one of the 1000 or more pay phones throughout Jordan.

Local calls cost around 150 fils for three minutes. The easiest place to make a call is at your hotel, where local calls are often free. Otherwise, most shopkeepers and private telephone agencies will lend you their telephone if you have a prepaid Ma'alak card (available in various denominations from grocery stores). The cost of overseas calls from Jordan varies widely: one to 10 minutes costs from around JD3.

Overseas calls can be made at any card pay phone or from hotels, but are substantially more expensive. Reverse-charge telephone calls are normally not possible.

Mobile Phones

Mobile phones in Jordan use the GSM system. Two main service providers are **Fastlink** (☎ 06-5823111; www.fastlink.com.jo) and **Jordan Telecom Group** (☎ 06-4606666; www.jordantelecomgroup.com), both of which offer a full range of plans and pre-paid SIM cards. Rates for signing up start at JD10, including 175 minutes of talk time.

Per-minute mobile charges are around 350 fils to Europe and Australia and 700 fils to the USA.

Telephone Codes

To make a call from a landline, you must precede the six- or seven-digit number with a two-digit area code. See Quick Reference, inside the front cover, for details.

TIME

Jordan is two hours ahead of GMT/UTC in winter and three hours ahead between 1 April and 1 October, when daylight-saving time is introduced. Note that Jordan's daylight-saving time is slightly out of sync with summer clock changes in Europe. There are no time differences within Jordan. Jordan is on the same time zone as Israel and the Palestinian Territories, Syria and Egypt.

TOILETS

Most hotels and restaurants, except those in the budget category, now have Western-style toilets. In most others you'll be using squat toilets with a hose for ablutions and a water bucket provided for flushing.

Toilet paper (the use of which is considered an unsanitary practice in most Middle Eastern countries) is seldom available, except in the midrange and top-end hotels and restaurants. Local people prefer to use the hose and then deposit any toilet paper (used for drying purposes) in the basket by the side of the toilet bowl; these baskets should be used to avoid blockages as the sewerage system is not designed for paper. For those who can't do without it, toilet paper can be bought in most grocery shops throughout Jordan.

If caught short in the desert or hillsides of Jordan, it is imperative you choose a spot well away from water courses and bury the outcome in as deep a pit as possible to avoid creating new 'Kleenex trails'.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Jordan has a good network of tourist offices and visitor centres. The main tourist office in Amman is located on the ground floor of the **Ministry of Tourism & Antiquities** (www.tourism.jo) in Jebel Amman (see p95).

The comprehensive website of the **Jordan Tourism Board** (JTB; www.visitjordan.com) has regularly updated information. JTB also publishes some excellent brochures in several languages available from its offices in Jordan and abroad. Contact the following offices for a brochure and map package:

France (☎ 01-55609446; gsv@articleonze.com; 122 rue Paris, 92100 Boulogne-Billancourt, Paris)

Germany (☎ 069-92318870; jordan@adam-partner.de; Weser Strasse 4 60329 Frankfurt)

UK (☎ 0207-3716496; info@jordantourismboard.co.uk; 115 Hammersmith Rd, London, W14 0QH)

USA (☎ 1877-7335673, 703-2437404; www.seejordan.org; Suite 102, 6867 Elm St, McLean, VA 22101)

TRAVELLERS WITH DISABILITIES

In late 2000 Jordan celebrated its first-ever Olympic gold medal, won by the female athlete Maha Barghouthi in the Sydney Paralympics. Jordanians are very proud of this achievement and it threw a spotlight on people with disabilities. The benefits of this are taking a long time to filter through and for now Jordan is still not a great place for travellers with disabilities. Although Jordanians are happy to help, cities are crowded and the traffic is chaotic, and visiting tourist attractions – such as the vast archaeological sites of Petra and Jerash – involves long traverses over uneven ground.

There is some good news, however. The Jordanian government has legislated that wheelchair access must be added to all new public buildings. Horse-drawn carriages are provided at Petra for visitors with disabilities to help with access to the main sites. The Royal Diving Club is a member of the **Access to Marine Conservation for All** (AMCA; www.amca-international.org), an initiative to enable people with disabilities to enjoy diving.

VISAS

Visas are required by all foreigners entering Jordan (JD10). Visas can be obtained on arrival either at the airport or at most of Jordan's land borders. Tourist visas are valid for three months (that is, you must enter the country within three months of

the date of issue) and allow stays of up to one month from the date of entry.

At the Airport

Visas are issued on arrival at the airport in Amman from the visa desk opposite the immigration counters. Payment must be made in Jordanian dinars. There are moneychangers adjacent to the counters, but ATMs are only available after immigration. After getting your visa, you don't need to line up in the immigration queues: simply show your stamp to an immigration official and you'll be waved through.

At Land Borders

Visas for Jordan are issued with a minimum of fuss at any of Jordan's land borders, with the exception of King Hussein Bridge. If you intend to enter Jordan using this crossing from Israel and the Palestinian Territories, then you need to obtain a single/multiple entry visa (cost JD10/20) from one of Jordan's embassies or consulates abroad. This only applies, however, if you're entering Jordan through this crossing for the first time. If you are re-entering Jordan (you may have decided, for example, to take a detour to Jerusalem for a few days while staying in Amman), you do not need to reapply for a Jordanian visa at King Hussein Bridge, providing you return within the validity of your Jordanian visa or its extension. Remember to keep the stamped exit slip and present it on returning. Note that you also must return through the same border – this option does not apply at any of Jordan's other border crossings.

See p309 for details regarding border crossings.

Via the Aqaba Economic Zone

If you arrive in Jordan's southern city of Aqaba, by air on an international flight, sea from Nuweiba in Egypt or by land from Eilat, you are entitled to a free visa as part of the free-trade agreement with the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Area (ASEZA). If you stay in Jordan for more than 15 days, you must register with the **ASEZA office** (☎ 03-2035757; www.aqabazone.com) in Aqaba.

Multiple Entry Visa

Multiple entry visas (JD20) must be obtained in advance from Jordanian consulates

GETTING VISAS FOR OTHER MIDDLE EAST COUNTRIES IN JORDAN

Travelling between Jordan and neighbouring countries is possible by obtaining the relevant visas. Bear in mind that you will be refused entry to Syria, Iraq and Saudi Arabia if there is any indication in your passport of entry to Israel and the Palestinian Territories (see the boxed text, p312).

For details regarding border crossings, see p309. For addresses of embassies and consulates, see p294.

Egypt

Most nationalities are issued a visa (US\$15, payable in dollars) on arrival in Egypt.

If you're travelling by boat from Jordan to Nuweiba and you only intend to visit the Sinai Peninsula, you can get a free 'Sinai Entry Stamp' on arrival, valid for 15 days. Similarly, if you're travelling overland via Israel and the Palestinian Territories, these stamps are available at the Taba border.

If you wish to travel further than Sharm el-Sheikh, then you need to request a full visa for Egypt on arrival (not available at Taba). Single/multiple entry visas (JD12/15) can be obtained in advance from the Egyptian consulate at Aqaba. One passport photo is required and the visa is usually processed within two hours. The relatively chaotic Egyptian embassy in Amman charges a little more (JD15/19), but also issues visas the same day (after 3pm).

Iraq

Travel to Iraq is not advised at present. It takes two to three weeks to get approval for visa applications from the Ministry of Interior in Baghdad.

Israel & the Palestinian Territories

Staff at the heavily fortified Israeli embassy in Amman actively discourage visa applications, as visas are available at the three border crossings currently open to foreigners – Jordan Bridge (known as Sheikh Hussein Bridge in Jordan), Allenby Bridge (King Hussein Bridge) and Yitzhak Rabin (Wadi Araba) – and many nationalities do not require one.

Visas of one month's duration are available at Jordan Bridge and Yitzhak Rabin border crossings. Three-month Israeli visas are available at Allenby Bridge border crossing.

Lebanon

Lebanese visas are readily available at Lebanese entry points, but not at the Lebanon Embassy in Amman. As such, if you are travelling to Lebanon via Syria you will need to obtain your Syrian visa *before* you arrive in Jordan.

Saudi Arabia

It is not possible to visit Saudi Arabia as a casual traveller. You must either have a Saudi resident's visa to enter the country or, if you are travelling from Jordan to Kuwait or to Yemen and you can prove there is no other way of getting to your destination (ie you are travelling in your own car), you may be granted a three- or seven-day transit visa. This must be applied for well in advance from your country of normal residence and is subject to many additional stipulations. Check with the Saudi Arabian embassy in your own country before attempting this process.

Syria

If you intend to travel to Syria, you must obtain a visa for Syria *before* you arrive in Jordan. Only foreign residents in Jordan (ie expatriate workers and diplomats) and residents of a country without Syrian representation can be issued a Syrian visa at the embassy in Amman. Some readers have received a Syrian visa after obtaining a letter of recommendation (in Arabic) from their embassy in Amman, but this is definitely more the exception than the rule and should not be counted on.

Visas are theoretically available at the Syria–Jordan border, providing there is no Syrian representation in your country of residence. Some travellers have even reported getting a visa at the border regardless of this rule. If visiting Syria is an important part of your trip, however, you may not want to leave this to the good humour of the border guard.

It's important to remember that you cannot enter Syria from Jordan if you have a visa stamp in your passport from Israel and the Palestinian Territories – see the boxed text, p312.

or embassies outside the country. In the Middle East, you can find Jordanian embassies in all the neighbouring states, including Israel and the Palestinian Territories. You may want to avoid getting a Jordanian multiple-entry visa from the latter, however, if you intend to travel elsewhere in the region. This is because many Arab countries refuse entry to those who have Israeli stamps or documentation in their passports (see the boxed text, p312).

Visa Extensions

From Amman and Aqaba visas can easily be extended, at no extra charge, for stays of up to three months. After assembling the necessary paperwork (see p95) it takes about 30 minutes to complete the registration process at a police station. You may be required to have an HIV test (JD20), which usually takes 24 hours to process. The maximum stay allowed on an extended tourist visa is six months. Failure to register results in a fine for every day you have overstayed.

For longer-term residency, or to sort out any problems with your visa, you may be asked to go to the **Directorate of Residency & Borders** (Map p99; ☎ 06-5623348; Majed al-Idwans St, Shmeisani, Amman; ☎ 8am-3pm Sun-Thu, to 1pm Sat). Take service taxi 6 or 7 to Shmeisani from downtown, from where it's a 15-minute walk. The office is next to the Shmeisani central police station (*markaz mudiret ash-shurta*; مركز مديرية الشرطة).

WOMEN TRAVELLERS

As a woman travelling alone around Jordan for three weeks, I have found the people only helpful, hospitable and friendly.

K Millar, UK

Attitudes Towards Women

Attitudes of Jordanian men towards foreign women in Jordan can be trying to say the least. The reasons for this are complex and variable. By contemporary Western standards, Jordan's largely Muslim society is generally conservative and most men have little or no contact with women or sex before marriage. Some men formulate their stereotype of a Western woman based on Western films and TV, and are thereby convinced that all foreign women are promiscuous and will jump into bed at the drop of a hat.

The fact that some women choose to do just that contributes to this impression.

Precautions

There will probably be times when you will have male company that you'd rather do without. This may involve nothing more than irritating banter, proposals of marriage and declarations of undying love. Harassment, however, can also take the form of leering, sometimes followed by minor physical misdemeanours – a grope in a bus for example. Serious harassment and rape is rare in Jordan.

Where possible, it's best to ignore such behaviour or pass it off as part of the experience or you'll end up letting a few sad individuals spoil your whole trip. Plenty of women travel through Jordan, often alone (this author included), and never encounter serious problems.

To minimise harassment, it's imperative to respect Muslim sensibilities regarding clothing, especially in small towns and rural areas, which tend to be more conservative than Amman. In the trendy districts of Amman such as Abdoun and Shmeisani, in large hotels and resorts or even in the middle of Petra (where tour group parties generally wear whatever they feel like) you'll feel comfortable dressing as you would at home. Outside those areas, aim for knee-length dresses or loose trousers, and cover your shoulders and upper arms.

On public beaches at the Dead Sea and in Aqaba, wear a swimsuit (and preferably a T-shirt and shorts) when swimming and save the bikinis for top-end resorts and dive centres. Never go topless – especially in the wadis where skinny dipping in freshwater pools is never as unseen as you might imagine.

Some foreign women go to the extent of covering their head, but this is inappropriate for non-Muslims in Jordan and can be misconstrued – particularly by the women of Jordan's Christian communities who do not wear headscarves.

Some behaviour may well warrant a good public scene, emphasising the shame and dishonour involved. You'll be surprised how quickly bystanders will take matters into hand if they feel someone has overstepped the mark. If you have to say something to ward off an advance, *imshi* (clear

off) should do the trick, but try not to swear or lose your temper or you will lose public sympathy into the bargain. In theory, the chances of getting harassed are greater in budget hotels where there are fewer controls on who comes and goes.

Lastly, some advice for single female travellers from single female readers:

- Don't go to a bar unaccompanied.
- Avoid eye contact with any man you don't know – wearing dark glasses can help.
- A wedding ring will add to your respectability in Arab eyes, even if you're not married; a photo of your children/husband (real or fake) will clinch it.
- Don't sit in the front seat of a chartered private or service taxi.
- On public transport, sit next to a woman if possible.
- Don't go outside with wet hair, as this apparently implies that you've had sex recently!
- Be cautious when venturing alone to remote regions of large archaeological sites such as Petra – including Siq Al-Barid (Little Petra) – and Jerash.
- Check for peep holes in rooms and bathrooms (particularly cigarette holes in curtains).
- Pay a little more for a better hotel.
- Place a chair against your locked hotel room door in case of 'accidental' late-night intrusions.
- Be particularly circumspect about declarations of undying love from Jordanian guides, even (and especially) the handsome ones!

If you suffer serious harassment go to a police station or tourist-police booth; the latter can be found at most tourist sites. The tourist police in Jordan take reports seriously. Should the need arise, do not hesitate to call the nationwide **Halla Line/tourism complaints number** (☎ 80022228) especially for tourists; it is staffed by English-speaking police officers.

Most toiletries are easily found in Jordan, though tampons are not always readily available. You should bring your own contraceptives and any special medications.

Restaurants, Bars & Coffeehouses

Some places such as coffeehouses are usually seen as a male preserve. Although it's

quite permissible for Western women to enter, in some places the stares may make you feel uncomfortable.

A few restaurants have a 'family section' where local and foreign women, unaccompanied by men, can eat in peace. In some of the local bars and coffeehouses there is only one toilet, so try to avoid using these (same advice goes for male travellers!). Midrange bars and cafés in Amman almost always welcome women (see p111). For an idea of the difficulties of eating in restaurants as a solo woman, see the boxed text, p81.

WORK

There is not much in the way of casual work in Jordan as all such jobs are in hot demand from Palestinian and Iraqi refugees. If you are interested in staying longer in the country and have a specific skill or qualification then it's best to apply for work before leaving home. That way, your employer will be responsible for paying for your air ticket and will sponsor your work permit.

Diving

Qualified dive instructors or divemasters may be able to get work at one of the diving centres in Aqaba, particularly during peak season (September to March). Keep in mind, however, that positions are hotly contested by locals.

Language Teaching

English-teaching opportunities are open to those with TOEFL qualifications. The **British Council** (☎ 06-4636147; www.britishcouncil.org.jo) recruits teachers from the UK with a RSA Preparatory Certificate (the Diploma is preferred) or equivalent and at least two years' work experience. For details contact the British Council **information centre** (☎ UK 0161-9577755; www.britishcouncil.org) before arriving in Jordan. Casual vacancies within Jordan occasionally arise: address your CV to the Teaching Centre Manager.

The **American Language Center** (☎ 06-5523901; www.alc.edu.jo) runs the other top language school. Like the British Council, teachers are mostly recruited before arrival in Jordan.

If you are keen to stay in Jordan for a whole year, Father Innocent at the **St George's Church Pilgrim House** (☎ 5523901; diodoros@wanadoo.jo) in Madaba invites volunteers to teach English in his school in return for

board and keep, private Arabic lessons, participation in evening lessons run by the British Council and 'pocket money'. For further details see p189.

Volunteer Work

If you are keen to learn more about Jordan's ecological projects, there are limited opportunities to work within some of the country's nature reserves on a three-month voluntary program. Board and lodging are generally offered in return for a variety of services such as working in the visitor centres. For more information, contact the **RSCN** (www.rscn.org.jo).

These posts are best filled by local Jordanian people, but if you have a specialist

skill in management or conservation, you may strike it lucky.

Those hoping to work with Palestinian refugees should contact the public information office of the **UN Relief & Works Agency** (UNRWA; Map p99; ☎ 06-5609100, ext 165; jorpio@unrwa.org; Al-Zubeid Bldg, Mustapha bin Abdullah St, Sh-meisani, Amman). There is no organised volunteer program, but if you are in Jordan for a few months (they prefer longer-term commitments, rather than just a few weeks) and have a particular professional skill in education, relief or health, you may be able to arrange something. Contact them at least three months in advance.

For more volunteer opportunities, see www.volunteerabroad.com/jordan.cfm.

Transport

CONTENTS

Getting There & Away	307
Entering the Country	307
Air	307
Land	309
Sea	314
Tours	314
Getting Around	315
Air	315
Bicycle	315
Bus	317
Car & Motorcycle	317
Hitching	322
Local Transport	322
Tours	323

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Ever since Burckhardt rediscovered Petra for the Western world in the 19th century, tourists have been finding ways of visiting this part of the Middle East. For the modern-day visitor, this means that there are plenty of well-established and efficient ways of both getting to Jordan (often on direct flights) and visiting the main sights of interest while there.

As Jordan is a relatively small country, some people choose to combine their trip with visits to neighbouring countries. This is possible by flying from Amman to regional capitals; by crossing Jordan's land borders with Syria and Israel and the Palestinian Ter-

THINGS CHANGE...

The information in this chapter is particularly vulnerable to change. Check directly with the airline or a travel agent to make sure you understand how a fare (and ticket you may buy) works and be aware of the security requirements for international travel. Shop carefully. The details given in this chapter should be regarded as pointers and are not a substitute for your own careful, up-to-date research.

ritories; or by taking a boat across the Red Sea to Nuweiba in Egypt. As Amman is well connected with other Arab countries, it's also possible to combine a trip with Dubai (an increasingly important world destination) in the UAE, and other Gulf capitals.

Please note that prices in this chapter are likely to change due to the rapid fluctuations in fuel costs at the time of writing.

ENTERING THE COUNTRY

Entering Jordan is straightforward whether by air, land or sea, with visas (see p302) and money-exchange facilities available at all borders.

Passport

Your passport should be valid for at least six months after you arrive in Jordan. Always carry your passport with you when travelling around sensitive areas such as near the border of Israel and the Palestinian Territories, along the Dead Sea Highway and roads linking the Dead Sea Highway to interior towns. Checkpoints and passport checks are common in all these areas.

AIR

Airports & Airlines

Queen Alia International Airport (☎ 06-4453187; www.qaia.gov.jo), about 35km south of Amman, is the country's main gateway. A sign reads: 'No one likes to wait, we know, but there are great things ahead.' This is heartening because the airport is pretty uninspiring at present. There are two terminals: Terminal 1 is used for most Royal Jordanian flights and Terminal 2 is used by other airlines. The terminals are within easy walking distance, on opposite sides of the airport road. Both terminals have ATMs, foreign exchange counters, a post office and left-luggage counter. The departure lounge has a reasonable café; there is also a good range of gift items, books, Arabic sweets and Dead Sea products for sale in the duty-free section.

Alia Hotel (☎ 06-451000; www.aliahoteljordan.com; s/d JD70/85), the only airport hotel, is 2km from the airport terminal.

The only other international airport is at Aqaba where some international carriers

stop en route to Amman. Flights to Sharm el-Sheikh in Egypt are handled from here and occasional charter flights from Europe stop here, too.

The national airline, **Royal Jordanian** (Map p87; ☎ 06-5678321; www.rja.com.jo; 9th fl, Housing Bank Centre, Shmeisani, Amman), is a well-established airline with a good safety record. It has direct flights to most major cities in Europe and all Middle East capitals. **Royal Wings** (www.royalwings.com.jo), a subsidiary of Royal Jordanian, has smaller planes for short flights from Amman to Aqaba (twice daily).

The following airlines fly to Jordan and have offices in Amman:

Air France (airline code AF; Map p99; ☎ 06-666055; www.airfrance.com; hub Charles de Gaulle, Paris)

British Airways (airline code BA; Map p87; ☎ 828801; www.ba.com; hub Heathrow, London)

Emirates (airline code EK; Map p90; ☎ 06-643341; www.emirates.com; hub Dubai)

Gulf Air (airline code GF; Map p90; ☎ 06-653613; www.gulfairco.com; hub Bahrain)

KLM (airline code KL; Map p94; ☎ 06-655267; www.klm.com; hub Amsterdam)

Kuwait Airways (airline code KU; Map p99; ☎ 06-690144; www.kuwait-airways.com; hub Kuwait City)

Lufthansa Airlines (airline code LH; Map p99; ☎ 06-601744; www.lufthansa.com; hub Frankfurt)

Qatar Airways (airline code QR; Map p99; ☎ 06-684526; www.qatarairways.com; hub Doha)

Turkish Airlines (airline code TK; Map p90; ☎ 06-659102; www.turkishairlines.com; hub Istanbul)

Tickets

Jordan is not a cheap destination to fly into, but special offers are often available on the internet during non-peak seasons (November to February and mid-May to end of August). Some airlines offer 'open-jaw' tickets that allow you to fly into Amman, but out of Beirut (Lebanon) or Damascus (Syria).

A few airlines, notably Gulf Air, still require reconfirmation of onward or return international flights at least 72 hours before departure.

ONLINE BOOKING AGENCIES

It is often cheaper to buy an air ticket to Jordan through online agencies. The following agencies provide a variety of e-ticketing, hotel-booking and car-hire services:

Cheap Tickets (www.cheaptickets.com)

Expedia (www.expedia.com)

Orbitz (www.orbitz.com)

Travelocity (www.travelocity.com)

Last Minute (www.lastminute.com)

Readers have also recommended www.connections.be and www.airstop.be for discounted online tickets from Europe to Jordan; www.cheaptickets.co.uk is another

CLIMATE CHANGE & TRAVEL

Climate change is a serious threat to the ecosystems that humans rely upon, and air travel is the fastest-growing contributor to the problem. Lonely Planet regards travel, overall, as a global benefit, but believes we all have a responsibility to limit our personal impact on global warming.

Flying & Climate Change

Pretty much every form of motor travel generates CO₂ (the main cause of human-induced climate change) but planes are far and away the worst offenders, not just because of the sheer distances they allow us to travel, but because they release greenhouse gases high into the atmosphere. The statistics are frightening: two people taking a return flight between Europe and the US will contribute as much to climate change as an average household's gas and electricity consumption over a whole year.

Carbon Offset Schemes

Climatecare.org and other websites use 'carbon calculators' that allow jetsetters to offset the greenhouse gases they are responsible for with contributions to energy-saving projects and other climate-friendly initiatives in the developing world – including projects in India, Honduras, Kazakhstan and Uganda.

Lonely Planet, together with Rough Guides and other concerned partners in the travel industry, supports the carbon-offset scheme run by climatecare.org. Lonely Planet offsets all of its staff and author travel.

For more information check out our website: lonelyplanet.com.

DEPARTURE TAX

Jordan's departure tax for foreigners is JD5. If you are leaving by air, the departure tax is generally included in the ticket price.

reliable agency specialising in airfares from UK to Jordan.

Australia & New Zealand

There are no direct flights between Australasia and Jordan. Most flights travel via Southeast Asian capitals or through hubs in the Middle East.

Gulf Air and Emirates fly from Sydney and Melbourne and sometimes offer open-jaw tickets to other Middle East destinations. Recommended agencies in Australia for discount fares:

Flight Centre (☎ 133 133; www.flightcentre.com.au)

STA Travel (☎ 134 782; www.statravel.com.au)

Trailfinders (☎ 1300 780 212; www.trailfinders.com.au)

Recommended agencies in New Zealand for discount fares:

Flight Centre (☎ 800 243 544; www.flightcentre.co.nz)

STA Travel (☎ 508 782 872; www.statravel.co.nz)

Middle East

There are regular flights from Amman to other regional capitals. Flights are not particularly cheap, however, but specials over the Thursday/Friday Islamic weekend are sometimes available.

In Amman, the best places to start looking for air tickets are the agencies along Al-Malek Al-Hussein St, near the flyover.

In Tel Aviv, try the **Israel Student Travel Association** (ISSTA; ☎ 03-7777316; www.issta.com; 128 Ben Yehuda St). There's also a branch in Jerusalem (☎ 02-6252799; 1 HaNevi'im St).

In İstanbul there are lots of travel agencies on the northern side of Divan Yolu in Sultanahmet, all of them specialising in budget air tickets. **Orion-Tour** (☎ 212-2326300; www.oriontour.com; Halaskargazi Caddesi 284/3, Marmara Apartmani, Sisli 80220) is recommended.

The area around Midan Tahrir in Cairo is teeming with travel agencies. One of the best is **Egypt Panorama Tours** (☎ 02-359 0200; www.eptours.com) just outside Al-Ma'adi metro station.

It is important to remember that you cannot enter Syria (and some other Middle

Eastern countries) from Jordan if you have a visa stamp in your passport from Israel and the Palestinian Territories – see boxed text, p312.

UK & Continental Europe

National carriers and other regional airlines (such as BMI in the UK) offer direct flights to Amman from London, Paris, Amsterdam and Frankfurt – the major hubs for discounted fares in continental Europe. Direct flights are also available from other European capital and regional cities.

Recommended agencies in Europe for discount fares:

CTS Viaggi (☎ 06-441111; www.cts.it) A student and youth specialist in Italy.

Nouvelles Frontières (☎ 08-25000747; www.nouvelles-frontieres.fr) Branches across France.

STA Travel (www.statravel.com) Branches across Europe.

Trailfinders (☎ 0207-9383366; www.trailfinders.com) A popular agency in the UK.

Voyages Jules Vernes (☎ 0207-6161000; www.vjv.co.uk) UK-based agency, operating charter flights to Aqaba; they may sell extra seats to the public.

Voyageurs du Monde (☎ 08-92235656; www.vdm.com) Branches across France.

USA & Canada

Royal Jordanian has direct flights between Amman and New York, Chicago and Detroit, with onward code-share flights with America West. Most flights, however, require a change of aircraft in Europe (London for British Airways, Paris for Delta/Air France and Amsterdam for Northwest/KLM). Alternatively, connections can be made through Gulf cities, such as Dubai (UAE), Manama (Bahrain) or Doha (Qatar).

Air Canada and Royal Jordanian offer flights, via London or Frankfurt, from Canada to Amman.

Recommended agencies in the USA and Canada:

STA Travel (☎ 800-7814040; www.statravel.com) Has offices throughout USA.

Travel CUTS (☎ 1866-2469762; www.travelcuts.com) Canada's national student travel agency with offices in all major cities.

LAND

It's easy to reach Jordan by land from Syria or from Israel and the Palestinian Territories. Foreign residents of Saudi Arabia (and transit passengers who can show they have no

other way of reaching Jordan – see the boxed text, p303) are also able to enter Jordan by land. For information regarding visas on arrival from these countries, see Visas, p302.

Most travellers arrive in Jordan by bus or service taxi, although there is no problem in bringing your own car or motorcycle (see p318).

Leaving Jordan by land requires a little more planning on account of certain visa stipulations: if you're intending to visit Syria, in particular, read the information about obtaining visas for other Middle Eastern countries in the boxed text, p303.

Egypt

Most people travel between Jordan and Egypt by boat (p314). It's quicker and cheaper, however, to travel overland via Israel and the Palestinian Territories (but read the boxed text, p312, regarding the Israeli border-stamp stigma before making a decision).

If you choose this route, taxis run between Aqaba and the Wadi Araba border crossing (known as Yitzhak Rabin on the Israeli and Palestinian Territories side) and between Yitzhak Rabin and Taba on the Egyptian border. Alternatively, you can take a taxi from Yitzhak Rabin or Taba to Eilat bus station and take a bus to either border from there. The whole trip takes about 1½ hours. If using this route, see the boxed text, p303.

Iraq

Travel to Iraq is not recommended at present. Occasional service taxis run the gauntlet between Baghdad and Abdali bus station in Amman. They use the al-Karama-Tarbil border post, 330km from Amman. This is currently an extremely dangerous journey, however, through the notorious 'Sunni triangle'.

Israel & the Palestinian Territories

Since the historic 1994 peace treaty between Jordan and Israel and the Palestinian Territories, three border crossings have opened to foreigners – Sheikh Hussein Bridge in the north, King Hussein Bridge near Amman, and Wadi Araba in the south. These border crossings are known respectively as Jordan Bridge, Allenby Bridge and Yitzhak Rabin in Israel and the Palestinian Territories; you should refer to them as such only when travelling on that side of the border.

BORDER CROSSINGS

It's worth reading about each of the border crossings before deciding which one to use. This is because the most frequented border, King Hussein Bridge, is not the quick nip between Amman and Jerusalem that it may suggest on the map.

On both sides of all three borders there are moneychanging facilities (not recommended for large sums as commissions are inflated), places to eat and drink, and duty-free shops. On the Jordanian side of all three borders there's a post office and a **tourist information counter** (☎ 8am-2pm, closed Fri).

Borders are closed on the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur and the Islamic holiday of Eid al-Fitr (see p295).

If you're departing from Jordan on a Friday or Saturday, arrive at the border early as public transport in Israel and the Palestinian Territories doesn't run during the Jewish Shabbat (between sunset Friday and sunset Saturday).

King Hussein Bridge Crossing (Allenby Bridge)

Known in Arabic as 'Jisr al-Malek Hussein', this **border crossing** (☎ 8am-6pm Sun-Thu, to noon Fri & Sat) is only 40km from Amman and 30km from Jerusalem. As such, it offers travellers the most direct route between the two cities, providing they have the right paperwork (see p302 for visa considerations at this border). A further issue when using this border in either direction is that the crossing can take up to three hours, depending on Israeli security measures; avoid 11am to 3pm when delays are more common.

To reach this border from Amman, take a service taxi from Amman's Abdali (or Wahadat) bus station to King Hussein Bridge (JD4, 45 minutes) or there's a single daily JETT bus (JD8) at 6.30am.

Buses (JD2) go between the two borders and although the ride to the Israeli and Palestinian Territories side is short, it lasts an eternity with repeated stops for passport and bag checks. It's not possible to walk, hitch or take a private car across this border.

To get to Jerusalem from the border, take a *sherut* (Israeli shared taxi; around US\$40 for the car) to Jerusalem's Damascus Gate. Alternatively, take a bus to Jerusalem or, if that's not running, a bus to Jericho and then a *sherut* to Damascus Gate.

A DAY OUT AT THE BORDER CROSSING *Kerryn Burgess*

Travelling from Jordan to Israel via the King Hussein Bridge border crossing (known as the Al-lenby Bridge crossing in Israel) is time consuming. Allow at least three hours from the time you arrive at the cluster of buildings on the Jordan side until the time you're into a waiting *sherut* (Israeli shared taxi) on the Israel and Palestinian Territories side. On the Jordan side, things are relatively straightforward. You may have to wait for up to an hour for the bus that takes you across the border itself. The distance is short, but the bus will be stopped and searched several times. At least once, you'll be asked to leave the bus and stand in a 'holding pen' while the bus is searched and your passport is checked yet again. On the Israeli side, expect to negotiate large crowds, chaotic queues and lack of signage about where to go next. If in doubt, ask someone from the queue who's done the crossing before; don't expect anyone official to be available or helpful. You'll be separated from your luggage, which must be X-rayed. Expect to be questioned at length by immigration officials about your reasons for visiting Israel. It happens to everyone. If you know any Israelis in Israel, have their telephone number handy to provide to immigration officials. They won't necessarily make contact, but it can help smooth the way for you anyway. Be sure to read the boxed text, p312.

Travelling in the other direction (from Israel and the Palestinian Territories into Jordan) is usually quicker. Nevertheless, we suggest you think twice before deciding to make a 'day trip' to Jerusalem or elsewhere on the other side of the border, unless you don't mind spending a good portion of the day at the crossing.

Kerryn Burgess is the commissioning editor for the Middle East at Lonely Planet.

If travelling in the other direction, an Israeli exit tax of 127NIS (around US\$29, compared to around 70NIS at other borders) is payable. If you intend to return to Israel, keep the Jordanian entrance form safe – you will have to present it on exiting the border.

Sheikh Hussein Bridge Crossing (Jordan Bridge)

Known in Arabic as 'Jisr Sheikh Hussein', this **border crossing** (🚌 6.30am-10pm Sun-Thu, 8am-8pm Fri & Sat) links northern Jordan with Beit She'an in Galilee, 6km away.

To reach this border from Irbid, regular service taxis leave the West bus station for the border (JD1, 45 minutes). From the bridge it's a 2km walk (or hitch) to the Israeli side, from where you have to take a taxi to the Beit She'an bus station for onward connections inside Israel and the Palestinian Territories.

If travelling in the other direction, take a bus to Tiberias, and change at Beit She'an (6km from the border). From there, take another bus to the Israeli border (arrive early because there are few buses). After passport formalities and payment of Israeli exit tax (70NIS), a compulsory bus takes you to the Jordanian side.

From the Jordanian side, either wait for a minibus or shared taxi to Irbid (from where

there are regular connections to Amman), go to Shuneh ash-Shamaliyyeh (North Shuna) by private or service taxi, or walk (3km) to the main road and flag down a minibus or service taxi.

Wadi Araba Crossing (Yitzhak Rabin – formerly known as Arava)

This handy **border crossing** (🚌 6.30am-10pm Sun-Thu, 8am-8pm Fri & Sat) in the south of the country links Aqaba to Eilat. To reach there from Aqaba, take a taxi (JD5, 15 minutes). Once at the border you can walk across. From the border, buses run to central Eilat, only 2km away. All in all, Aqaba to Eilat takes about an hour.

In the other direction, if you're travelling from Jerusalem and you want to skip Eilat, ask the driver to let you out at the turn-off for the border, a short walk away. The exit tax is 68NIS here. At the Jordanian border take a taxi into Aqaba (JD5, 15 minutes) or negotiate a taxi fare direct to Petra (around JD40, two hours) or to Wadi Rum (around JD18, one hour).

BUS

Several cities in Jordan are now regularly linked to cities in Israel and the Palestinian Territories. Travelling by bus directly between Amman and Tel Aviv saves the hassle

ISRAELI BORDER-STAMP STIGMA

Our mailbags are full of questions about the infamous 'Israeli stamp stigma'. Here are a few frequently asked questions.

I've never heard of this Israeli stamp business – what's it all about? Given the tensions between Arab countries and the Jewish state of Israel, any evidence of a visit to Israel in your passport (such as an entry or exit stamp from a border crossing) will bar you from entering a number of countries in the region, including Syria.

So what can I do if I plan to combine my visit to Jordan with a trip to Israel and Syria? When you enter or leave Israel, you can ask immigration officials to stamp a separate piece of paper instead of your passport.

So there's no problem then? That depends on where you go to next. If you have, say, an exit stamp from one border and an entry stamp dated a week later from a different border in Jordan, it will be obvious to the Syrian authorities, for example, that you must have been in Israel and the Palestinian Territories in the meantime. Indeed, travellers have been turned away from Syria's border with Jordan for having unexplained periods of time in their passport, such as six weeks in Jordan without any evidence of a Jordanian visa extension.

So how do I get round that problem? You can fly into and out of Ben-Gurion airport; enter and depart through King Hussein Bridge border crossing with a multiple entry visa and ask the Jordanian officials to stamp a piece of paper instead of your passport; or plan to visit Israel and the Palestinian Territories at the end of your trip.

Is an Israeli stamp a problem when trying to enter most Arab countries? No, it's not a problem when entering Jordan, Egypt, Turkey, Tunisia and Morocco. Officially, Bahrain, Qatar, the UAE and Oman will refuse you entry if you have evidence of a visit to Israel in your passport, but in reality they don't usually look for an offending stamp.

For which countries in the Middle East is it a problem?

Syria, Lebanon, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Libya and Yemen. If you get an Israeli or Jordanian exit or entry stamp in your passport, there's little you can do. If you report that your passport is 'lost' to your embassy in any country in the Middle East, it may be met with cynicism and even rejection. The bottom line is that the restrictions that some Arab countries make are in place for a purpose and if you try to sidestep those rules, you can expect your intentions to be misinterpreted at some point.

of getting to/from the borders on your own, but it's more expensive than crossing independently, and you'll have to wait for all passengers to clear customs and immigration.

From Amman, **Trust International Transport** (Map p87; ☎ 06-5813427) has buses from its office at 7th Circle (p116) to Tel Aviv (JD25, six hours), Haifa (JD20, seven hours) and Nazareth (JD20, seven hours), departing daily except Saturday at 8.30am. Buses cross the border at Sheikh Hussein Bridge. Bus schedules change frequently, so check departure times and book (and collect) tickets in advance from the bus station. There is one **Jordan Express Tourist Transport** (JETT; Map p99; ☎ 06-5854679; www.jett.com.jo) bus to King Hussein Bridge (JD8, one hour, 6.30am).

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

If you're driving from Israel and the Palestinian Territories, you must use the bor-

der crossings at Sheikh Hussein Bridge or Wadi Araba.

Saudi Arabia

Getting a visa, even a transit visa, to Saudi Arabia is a very difficult feat – see the boxed text, p303, for details.

If you are eligible for a visa, then the main land route for public transport is at Al-Umari, south of Azraq. The other two crossing points are Ad-Durra, south of Aqaba, and further east at Al-Mudawwara. Several companies run services to and from Jeddah and Riyadh from Amman's Abdali bus station.

Syria

It's relatively simple to travel between Jordan and Syria, but if you travel directly between Amman and Damascus it's quicker and cheaper to take a direct bus or service

taxi rather than negotiate local transport and border crossing formalities on your own.

If you're heading to Syria from Jordan, make sure you get a Syrian visa before arriving in Jordan (see the boxed text, p303), either in your home country or in Istanbul, Ankara or Cairo.

BORDER CROSSINGS

There are border crossings with Syria at Ramtha and Jabir. They are known respectively as Der'a and Nasib in Syria, but you should refer to them as such only when travelling on the Syrian side of the border.

Both border crossings are efficient and are open 24 hours. If you intend to drive between Jordan and Syria, the better border to cross is at Der'a–Ramtha.

On the Jordanian sides of both borders, there is a post office and **tourist office** (☎ 8am–5pm Sat–Thu, to 2pm Fri), places to eat and drink, and moneychangers (open most of the time) where Jordanian dinars and Syrian pounds can be changed.

Jabir (Nasib)

Most service taxis between Amman and Damascus now use this crossing. If you're coming from Syria and plan to visit eastern Jordan (eg Azraq), this border is useful for connections to Zarqa or Mafraq.

Ramtha (Der'a)

Ramtha is the border most commonly used by travellers visiting sights in northern Jordan (eg Jerash and Umm Qais) and in southern Syria (eg Ezra'a and Bosra ash-Sham). There are buses to Ramtha from Amman's Abdali station (JD1, two hours) and Irbid (JD1). From Ramtha, service taxis and minibuses run regularly to the border. If hitching, ask the immigration office on the Jordanian side to flag down a vehicle for a lift to the Syrian border.

You can also get direct transport between Irbid or Amman and Damascus, without stopping in Ramtha.

BUS

The air-conditioned **Jordan Express Tourist Transport** (JETT; Map p99; ☎ 06-5854679; www.jett.com.jo; Al-Malek al-Hussein St, Shmeisani) bus travels between Amman and Damascus (JD7, seven hours) twice daily in either direction. JETT also has a daily bus to Aleppo (JD10,

eight hours). JETT's international terminal is close to the Abdali bus station in Amman. The bus schedule changes frequently so check times of departure and book (and preferably collect tickets) in advance from the bus station.

The Palace Hotel in Amman (p106) offers a minibus tour to Damascus, with stops in Jerash, Bosra and Shaba. You'll need a minimum of four passengers (which can be hard to assemble given the necessity of arranging visas in advance); the price is around JD20 per person.

SERVICE TAXI

The enormous yellow *servees* (shared taxis) to Damascus leave regularly throughout the day and are faster than the buses, although you'll have to wait longer in the evening for one to fill up. Service taxis take less time to cross the border than trains or buses because there are fewer passengers to process, and the drivers are experienced in helping passengers with immigration and customs formalities.

From Amman, service taxis for Damascus ('ash-Sham' in Arabic) leave from the eastern or lower end of Abdali bus station (Map p90); from Damascus, they leave from Baramke Garage. The trip costs around JD10 from Amman and takes about three hours. Service taxis also travel between Damascus and Irbid's south bus station (JD5, 2½ hours).

TRAIN

A biweekly train service still leaves Amman for Damascus (JD3) along the **Hejaz Railway** (www.jhr.gov.jo) on Monday and Thursday at 8am, but few travellers go this way as the dawdling service takes all day, with a change of trains at the border. The quaint old station is on King Abdullah I St, about 2.5km east of Raghadan bus station in Amman. The **ticket office** (☎ 06-4895413) is only open from 7am on the morning of departure, although you may find someone around at other times. To reach the station, take a service taxi from Raghadan bus station, or a private taxi (around JD1).

Elsewhere in the Middle East

For other destinations in the Middle East, travellers need time, patience and, most importantly, the necessary visas. Most trips

involve long, hot journeys with frustrating delays so most people end up flying.

JETT has occasional through-services to Beirut (JD20) and Cairo (US\$65), departing from the international bus office in Amman. The fare to Cairo must be paid in US dollars, and includes the Aqaba–Nuweiba ferry ticket. Check with the JETT office ahead of your departure as schedules and prices change frequently.

SEA

Visiting Egypt is both a popular side trip from Aqaba or feasible as part of your onward journey. As Jordan has no land borders with Egypt, the journey involves a short boat ride. At most times of the year this is a matter of turning up and buying your ticket. During haj, however, when Aqaba is abuzz with thousands of excitable Egyptian pilgrims returning home from Mecca, you may find the journey becomes something more epic. Most nationalities can obtain Egyptian tourist visas either on the boat or on arrival at Nuweiba – see the boxed text, p303, for details before making your plans.

There are two main boat services to Nuweiba in Egypt, which leave from the passenger terminal just south of Aqaba. Departure times are often subject to change so call the **passenger terminal** (☎ 03-2013891; www.abmaritime.com.jo/english) before travelling.

The fast boat (one hour) leaves daily at noon (except Saturday) and costs US\$70. Children under 12 pay US\$55. Departure tax (JD5) is not included in the ticket price. The return ferry leaves Nuweiba at 3.30pm.

There is also a slower (three hours or more) car ferry service that officially leaves at midnight. Some days it doesn't leave at all. Tickets cost US\$60 (children under 12 US\$50).

Note that fares from Nuweiba must be paid for in US dollars. The service leaves Nuweiba at around 2pm but expect delays.

You need to show your passport to buy tickets. It's not possible to buy return tickets. There are money-exchange facilities at the terminals at Aqaba and Nuweiba. The Jordanian side offers a decent exchange rate but avoid travellers cheques, which attract a huge commission.

Passports are collected on the boat in both directions and handed back on arrival at immigration. Bear in mind, if you are travelling from Egypt you will arrive in Aqaba too late for public transport to Petra or Wadi Rum, so you'll have to overnight in Aqaba or arrange a taxi.

TOURS

Organised tours from abroad are generally divided into cultural/historical tours, overland adventures that combine several Middle Eastern countries, and activity-based holidays that involve some hiking and camel riding.

See p323 for details of companies inside Jordan that can organise individual tours and itineraries.

Australia

Adventure World (☎ 02-89130755; www.adventureworld.com.au)

Peregrine Adventures (☎ 03-86014444; www.peregrineadventures.com)

Israel & the Palestinian Territories

Desert Eco Tours (☎ 972-52276575; www.desertecotours.com) Specialises in camel, hiking and 4WD tours; based in Eilat.

UK

Abercrombie and Kent (☎ 0845-6182200; www.abercrombiekent.co.uk)

Alternative Travel Group (☎ 0186-5315678; www.atg-oxford.co.uk; 69-71 Banbury Rd, Oxford OX2 6PJ) Activities in Dana, Wadi Rum and Aqaba.

Cox & Kings (☎ 0207-8735000; www.coxandkings.co.uk)

Exodus (☎ 0208-6755550; www.exodus.co.uk)

Explore (☎ 0845-0131537; www.explore.co.uk)

High Places (☎ 0114-2757500; www.highplaces.co.uk)

Ten-day hiking and scrambling trip in Wadi Rum.

Imaginative Traveller (☎ 0845-0778802; www.imaginative-traveller.com)

Martin Randall Travel (☎ 0208-7423355; www.martinrandall.com)

Tribes (☎ 017-28685971; www.tribes.co.uk)

USA

Archaeological Tours (☎ 1866-7405130; www.archaeologicaltr.com; 271 Madison Ave, suite 904, NY, NY 10016) A 14-day historical tour with archaeologists.

Jordan Tourism Board North America (☎ 1877-7335673; www.visitjordan.com) Professionally organised assorted tours.

GETTING AROUND

Jordan is a relatively small country, making it possible to drive the 430km from the Syrian border in the north to the Saudi border in the south in just over five hours – but of course size isn't everything. Most of Jordan's attractions lie not along the main arteries (such as the Desert Highway) but along the spectacular switchbacked mountain roads of the north or the historical, ambling and rural King's Highway. As such, if you want to make the most of your trip to Jordan, you need to factor in a little more time for your journey than the distance on the map may indicate.

There is only one domestic flight (Amman to Aqaba) and no internal public train service, so public transport in Jordan comprises a combination of buses/minibuses, service taxis and private taxis.

Chartering a service taxi (white) or private taxi (yellow) is another alternative and often the driver adds untold value to the trip by giving you local information and cultural insights. Where public transport is limited or nonexistent, hitching is another way of getting around.

AIR

There is only one domestic air route, operated by Royal Jordanian twice daily between Amman and Aqaba (JD35 one way, one hour).

Royal Wings (www.royalwings.com.jo), a subsidiary of Royal Jordanian, flies daily between Aqaba and Amman. You can buy tickets for either airline at any travel agency or Royal Jordanian office. See p259 for details.

BICYCLE

Cycling can be fun or sheer folly depending on the time of year. From March to May and September to November are the best times to get on your bike – you won't have to battle with the stifling summer heat or the bitter winter winds.

It ought to be said that cycling in Jordan wouldn't be a first choice for everybody: there are few places to stop along the highways; the traffic is unpredictable; drivers are not used to cyclists; many of the cities and main towns, such as Amman and Karak, are sprinkled over steep hills; and spare parts

are hard come by because so few locals ride bikes. If that isn't enough to put you off, then the stone throwing might be:

There is no way to cycle along the King's Highway without getting stoned. We read it in your guidebook before leaving, but thought that kids would not stone three male adults with beards and long trousers who are looking angry. We were wrong. And it's not only *some* groups of kids who try to stone you, but basically it's becoming a major hobby for all male children between three and 20... Cycle in the morning when children are at school.

Bernhard Gerber, Switzerland

If you are still undeterred, then there is some good news. Roads are generally smooth and tourist attractions are well signposted in English. With some preparation, and an occasional lift in a bus, cyclists can average about 40km a day. Most major sights are conveniently placed less than a day's ride apart, heading south from the Syrian border, ie Irbid–Amman–Madaba–Karak–Dana–Petra–Ma'an–Wadi Rum–Aqaba. All these places have accommodation of some kind and restaurants, so there's no need to carry tents, sleeping bags and cooking equipment. Most other attractions can be easily visited on day trips, by bike or public transport.

The King's Highway is the most scenic route, but also the most physically demanding, especially as strong prevailing north-south winds take their toll. In fact, you may want to take public transport across the extremely wide and steep Wadi Mujib valley between Madaba and Karak, and between the turn-off to Wadi Rum and Aqaba, which is very steep, has appalling traffic and plenty of treacherous turns.

Other scenic routes are from the eastern plateau in the north down into the Jordan Valley – but don't forget the climbs back up again are unremittingly long and tough on the calf muscles. It's probably best to avoid the dull and busy Desert Highway, together with the Safi to Aqaba stretch of the Dead Sea Highway, which is always hot and has very few facilities.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN A HURRY

Wondering if you can get from Jerusalem to Petra in one day or vice versa? Check the following summary of transport to find out exactly how far you can get in a single day on public transport. Note that names in brackets refer to the name of the border crossing on the other side of the relevant border.

Between	Summary of Transport	Approx. Time	More Information
Petra & Jerusalem via Amman & the West Bank Taking this route means you may be able to avoid evidence of a visit to Israel in your passport. Beware of long delays at the border. Note that you can't take your own car through this crossing.	From Petra		
	Bus to Amman's Wahadat bus station	3 hours	Transport p217
	Share-taxi or bus to King Hussein Bridge (Allenby Bridge)	1 hour	Visas p303 Border Crossings p310
	Bus across the border (border closed by noon Fri & Sat)	3 hour delay	
	Share-taxi or bus to Jerusalem's Damascus Gate	30 mins	
	From Jerusalem		
	Share-taxi or bus to Allenby Bridge (King Hussein Bridge)	30 mins	Transport p115 Visas p302
	Bus across the border (border closed by noon Fri & Sat)	3 hour delay	Border Crossings p310
	Share-taxi or bus from the Jordanian side of the border to Amman (Wahadat bus station)	1 hour	
	Change buses for final leg to Petra	3 hours	
Petra & Jerusalem via Aqaba & Eilat You can travel with your own vehicle this way. If arriving in Jordan, you may be exempt from paying for a Jordanian visa as you'll be entering via Aqaba free-trade zone. There are less border delays involved on this route.	From Petra		
	Bus to Aqaba (main bus station)	2½ hours	Transport p217
	Share-taxi or bus to Wadi Araba (Yitzhak Rabin) border	15 mins	Visas p303 Border Crossings p311
	Walk across the border (open every day)	30 mins	
	Share-taxi or bus to Eilat	15 mins	
	Bus to Jerusalem's Damascus Gate	5 hours	
	From Jerusalem		
	Bus to Eilat's bus station	5 hours	Transport p259
	Share-taxi or bus to Yitzhak Rabin (Wadi Araba) border	15 mins	Visas p302 Border Crossing p311
	Walk across the border (open every day)	30 mins	
Share-taxi to Aqaba	15 mins		
Share-taxi or bus to Petra	2½ hours		
Petra & Damascus via Amman This trip requires an early start in either direction. As romantic as it may seem, if you want to get to Petra from Damascus in the same day, you can forget using the Hejaz Railway.	From Petra		
	JETT bus to JETT bus station in Amman (or bus to Wahadat bus station)	3 hours	Transport p115 Visas p303
	JETT bus to Damascus (the bus waits for you to cross the border as part of the service)	4 hours	Border Crossing p313
	From Damascus		
	JETT bus to JETT bus station in Amman (the bus waits for you to cross the border as part of the service)	4 hours	Transport p115 Visas p302
	JETT bus to Petra	3 hours	Border Crossing p313

Between	Summary of Transport	Approx. Time	More Information
Petra & Sharm El-Sheikh via Aqaba & Nuweiba Note that from Sharm El-Sheikh or Nuweiba to Wadi Rum or Petra requires an overnight stop in Aqaba.	From Petra (by boat)		
	Bus to Aqaba (main bus station)	2½ hours	Transport p259
	Share-taxi or bus to ferry terminal	30 mins	Visas p303
	Boat at noon to Nuweiba	1 hour	Border Crossing p314
	Bus to Sharm El-Sheikh	2½ hours	
	From Nuweiba (by boat)		
	Not possible in a day		
Petra & St Catherine's Mount via Aqaba You can only get a visa for the Sinai Peninsula at the Taba crossing so if you want to travel further than Sharm El-Sheikh, this trip needs some careful planning.	From Petra (by land)		
	Bus to Aqaba (main bus station)	2½ hours	Transport p259
	Share-taxi to Wadi Araba (Yitzhak Rabin) border	15 mins	Visas p303 Border Crossing p311
	Walk across border	30 mins	
	Share-taxi or bus to Taba	15 mins	
	Share-taxi to St Catherine's Mount	3 hours	
	From St Catherine's Mount (by land)		
	Not possible in a day		

Spare parts are not common in Jordan, so carry a spare tyre, extra chain links, spokes, two inner tubes, repair kit and tool kit with spanner set. Also bring a low-gear set for the hills and a couple of water containers; confine your panniers to a maximum of 15kg. It may be an idea to contact the **Cycling Association** (www.cycling-jordan.com) for tips before departure.

BUS

Public minibuses are the most common form of transport for locals and visitors. They normally only leave when full, so waiting times of an hour or more are inevitable, especially in rural areas. Tickets are normally bought on the bus. Standing is not usually allowed and some seat-shuffling often takes place to ensure that unaccompanied foreign men or women do not sit next to members of the opposite sex. Locals signify that they want to get off by rapping a coin on a side window. Overcharging tourists on these buses is rare except on routes to and from Wadi Musa (for Petra), where drivers will probably try to charge you extra for 'luggage'.

The larger air-con buses offer a more speedy and reliable service because they generally depart according to a fixed schedule and they don't stop en route to pick

up passengers. Tickets should ideally be bought a day in advance from an office at the departure point.

The national bus company **JETT** (Map p99; ☎ 06-5854679; www.jett.com.jo; Al-Malek al-Hussein St, Shmeisani, Amman) operates the most comfortable bus service from Amman to Aqaba. It also has services to King Hussein Bridge border crossing, Petra and Hammamat Ma'in.

Other reliable companies with regular services from Amman include **Trust International Transport** (Map p87; ☎ 06-5813427) to Aqaba, and **Hijazi** (Map p90; ☎ 06-638110) to Irbid.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Jordan is a great place to drive and there are some spectacular routes linking the high ground with the Jordan Valley, lying below sea level (see the boxed text, p170). Indeed, there aren't many countries where you can claim to be driving uphill to the sea, but if you're on the Dead Sea Highway heading for the Red Sea, then Jordan is one of them!

Strictly speaking you don't need an International Driving Permit (IDP) to drive in Jordan unless you plan on crossing any borders, but it may help if you meet with an accident.

almost certain to have risen since the publication of this book. Remember to check with your car-hire company as to which petrol your car requires; most take super. Unleaded petrol (*khal min ar-rasas*) is only reliably available in Amman and even then at only a few stations. Diesel is available at about 320 fils per litre.

Petrol stations are run by the state-monopoly Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company. Stations can mostly be found on the outskirts of major towns, and at some junctions. Along the Desert Highway there are plenty of stations. There are fewer along the King's Highway, and very few along the Dead Sea Highway.

Garages with handy mechanics can be found in the outskirts of most towns. They can handle most repairs, at negotiable prices, but if it's not your car, always check with your car-hire company before getting anything done.

4WDs

Four-wheel drives are only necessary if you're going to remote parts of the desert, such as Burqu. You are highly advised to have prior experience of off-road driving before hiring a 4WD: driving in soft sand in 45°C heat, for example, is a recipe for disaster if you don't know what you're doing.

Four-wheel-drive vehicles can be hired from reputable agencies in Aqaba (p259) and Amman (p116); they are far more expensive than normal sedans, costing at least JD75 per day. Also, companies only offer 100 to 200 free kilometres; you then pay extra for each kilometre.

To get around Wadi Rum, you'll need to charter a 4WD jeep: these almost always come with a local driver. You can, however, drive your own 4WD in the area if you are an experienced off-road driver (see p273).

Hire

Hiring a car is a great way of getting the most out of Jordan and for exploring off-the-beaten-track.

There's no great need to hire a car to travel to places like Petra and Jerash, which are well served by public transport and which need a day or more to be explored properly on foot; or to Wadi Rum, where a 4WD invariably comes with a local driver.

Hiring a car to travel along the King's Highway, however, which is not well served by public transport, makes good sense and opens up lots of possible side trips almost unthinkable if relying on the bus.

There are many car-hire agencies in Amman, a few in Aqaba and one or two irregularly staffed offices at Queen Alia airport and the King Hussein border with Israel and the Palestinian Territories. Most car-hire agencies outside these areas usually consist of an office with one guy, one desk, one telephone and one car for hire (usually his!). The best deals are in Amman (see p116), where competition among agencies is fierce.

The following are some of the more reliable agencies. Charges, conditions, drop-off fees, insurance costs and waiver fees in case of accident vary considerably so shop around. Daily rates run at around JD25 to JD30, and weekly rates at JD140 to JD200. This doesn't include tax or petrol, but usually includes free unlimited kilometres. You can normally drop off the rental car in another city (eg Aqaba), for a fee of around JD25.

Always read your contract carefully before signing; remember that many places require a minimum three days' hire and all require a deposit of up to JD400 payable upon pick-up (usually by credit card) and refunded upon the return of the car.

Avis (Map p87; ☎ 06-5699420, 24hr 777-397405; www.avis.com.jo; King Abdullah Gardens, Amman) Offices at King Hussein Bridge and Aqaba, and branches at the airport, Le Royal Hotel & Jordan InterContinental Hotel. The biggest car-hire company in Jordan.

Budget (Map p87; ☎ 06-5698131; www.budget.com; 125 Abdul Hameed Sharaf St, Amman)

Europcar (Map p87; ☎ 06-5655581, 800-22270; www.europcar.middleeast.com; Isam Al-Ajlouni St, Amman) Branches at Radisson SAS, King Abdullah Gardens and in Aqaba (Map p248).

Hertz (Map p87; ☎ 06-5624191, 24hr line at airport 06-4711771; www.hertz.com; King Abdullah Gardens, Amman) Offices at the airport, Grand Hyatt Amman, Sheraton & in Aqaba (Map p248).

Reliable Rent-a-Car (Map p87; ☎ 06-5929676, 079-5521358; www.rentareliablecar.com; 19 Fawzi al-Qawegli St, Amman) Cars JD20 to JD25. Offers free drop-off and pick-up in Madaba or the airport, will deliver the car to you anywhere in Amman and will even drive you to the edge of town if you are nervous about Amman traffic. Contact Mohammed Hallak.

To ensure that you don't break down in the middle of nowhere, you should always hire a car less than three years old – most reputable companies won't offer anything else. Most hire cars have air-con and a heater, which is a godsend in summer or winter. Cars with automatic transmission are more expensive, but these are a boon to anyone not used to driving in mountain terrain or on the right-hand side of the road. Road maps are not provided by car-hire agencies, but child-restraining seats are generally available for an extra fee.

Some agencies are closed on Friday and public holidays. If so, prearrange collection and delivery to avoid longer hire periods. Check the car over with a staff member for bumps, scratches and obvious defects, and check brakes, tyres etc before driving off.

Most agencies only hire to drivers over 21 years old; some stipulate that drivers must be at least 26 years. It's not possible to drive a hire car from Jordan into neighbouring countries.

Insurance

Most car-hire rates come with basic insurance that involves a deductible of up to JD400 (ie in case of an accident you pay a maximum of JD400). Most agencies offer additional Collision Damage Waiver (CDW) insurance for an extra JD7 to JD10 per day, which will absolve you of all accident costs (in some cases a maximum of JD100 excess).

Insurance offered by major companies often includes Personal Accident Insurance and Theft Protection, which may be covered by your travel insurance policy from home. Always read the conditions of the contract carefully before signing – an English translation should always be provided.

If you're driving into Jordan in a private vehicle, compulsory third-party insurance must be purchased at the border for about JD35 (valid for one month). You also pay a nominal customs fee of JD5 for 'foreign car registration'.

Road Conditions

The condition of the roads varies; unsigned speed humps are common, as are shallow ditches across the road, usually at the entrance to a town.

If you're driving around Jordan, read the following carefully:

- Signposting is erratic – generally enough to get you on your way but not enough to get you all the way to the destination.
- Many road signs are in English, but they are sometimes badly transliterated (eg 'Om Qeis' for Umm Qais or, our favourite, 'AT TA NOURAN I QUI ES SI' for the At-Tannour Antiquities Site!). Brown signs denote tourist attractions, blue signs are for road names and green signs are for anything Islamic, such as a mosque.
- Take care when it's raining: water and sand (and sometimes oil) make a lethal combination on the roads.
- The Jordanian road system makes more use of U-turns than flyovers.
- One-way streets are often not signposted and can be fiendish in Karak and Irbid.
- Always watch out for obstacles: pedestrians who walk along the road; cars darting out of side roads; and herds of goats and camels, even on the major highways.
- Roundabouts are often large, and all drivers (local and foreign) find them totally confusing.
- Petrol stations are not that common, so fill up as often as you can.
- Parking in major towns, especially Amman, is a problem, but it's easy to find (and normally free) at major attractions like Jerash, Petra and Madaba.
- Most roads (and even the highways) are dangerous at night because white lines are not common, obstacles (eg herds of camels) are still roaming about, and some cars have no headlights or, worse, use only high beam.
- Jordanians are extremely reluctant to commit to a single lane, so there's a lot of straddling of two lanes and overtaking using the slow lane.

Road Hazards

Despite the small population, and relatively well-maintained roads, accidents are alarmingly frequent. In 2007 there was one death every 9.4 hours from road accidents.

The roads where accidents are more common are those frequented by long-distance trucks; eg the short stretch of Hwy 65 (south of Aqaba to the Saudi border) and Hwys 10 and 40 east of Amman.

In the case of an accident in a hire car, don't move the vehicle. Get a policeman from the local station to attend the scene immediately, get a police report (Arabic is OK) and contact the car-hire company. Not obtaining a police report will normally invalidate your insurance. Depending on where you are, most companies will send someone to the scene within hours. If there's any serious injury to you or someone else, contact your travel insurance company at home as well as your embassy/consulate in Amman.

If your own private car is involved in an accident, your driving licence and passport will be held by the police until the case has been finalised in a local court – which may take weeks.

Drivers are always considered guilty if they hit a pedestrian, regardless of the circumstances.

Telephone numbers for local police stations are mentioned throughout the book, but two numbers (☎ 191 and ☎ 192) are valid for police emergencies anywhere in Jordan, and should be answered by English-speaking staff.

Road Rules

Visitors from any country where road rules are rigorously obeyed may be shocked by the traffic in Jordan, especially in Amman. Indicators are seldom used, the ubiquitous horn is preferred over slowing down and pedestrians must take their chances. But anyone who has driven elsewhere in the Middle East may find the traffic comparatively well behaved. Provided that you can keep driving in Amman down to a minimum and plan how to get to your destination, you're unlikely to encounter too many difficulties if you take reasonable care.

Vehicles drive on the right-hand side of the road in Jordan. The general speed limit inside built-up areas is 50km/h or 70km/h on multilane highways in Amman, and 90km/h to 110km/h on the national highways.

Wearing a seat belt is now compulsory, though many Jordanians are reluctant to use them. Traffic police are positioned at intervals along the highways. Police tend to be fairly indulgent towards foreigners, as long as they do nothing serious.

HITCHING A RIDE WITH THE POLICE *Jenny Walker*

It was 20 years ago and springtime had brought to the hillsides of Northern Amman abundant bouquets of wildflowers. There were pastel-shaded anemones, bright yellow rock roses and occasional splashes of blood red poppies. But where, I wanted to know, was the elusive black iris, the national flower of Jordan?

After several days searching for this magnificent velvet-petalled king of the flower world, I finally gave up and began to make my way along the King's Highway.

It had been a long wait by the dusty roadside. The occasional rambling Peugeot spluttered by on cheap petrol. A languid hand draped from a half-opened window indicated that it would be quicker for me to walk than to hazard a ride in such an assembly of spare parts. I resigned myself to another long hike. At that moment, a police car rounded the corner, and to my consternation, pulled in front of me. Three policemen viewed me suspiciously and asked what I was doing alone and unchaperoned. I must have seemed harmless enough because they invited to take me to the next town.

A while later, I looked out of the car window at the very place in which a large clump of iris was growing lustily by the side of the road. 'Stop!' I shouted excitedly. 'Look, the iris!' The police dutifully backed up and we all hopped out to see. Before I could whip my camera from the bag, one of the policemen had an iris round the throat while the other two were grappling with its roots. 'No!' I cried. 'I don't want to take it. I just want a photo!' Somewhat bemused, they reverently patted the startled iris back into its roadside bed, let me take my photo, and delivered me to the next town as promised.

I've just returned to the same spot on the highway. Remarkably, the only other car on the road was a police car whose driver honked the horn good-naturedly and left me alone to root around under the olive trees. And there they were: not just one clump, but three: perhaps they are evidence of a new national pride in the environment I didn't witness two decades ago. Or perhaps, as I'd rather like to think, they multiplied in thanks for a good deed.

HITCHING

Getting a Ride

Hitching is never entirely safe in any country in the world. Travellers who choose to hitch should understand that they are taking a small but potentially serious risk. People who choose to hitch will be safer if they travel in pairs and let someone know where they are planning to go.

Despite this general advice, hitching is quite feasible in Jordan, especially in areas where public transport is limited or nonexistent, such as parts of the King's Highway and to the desert castles east of Amman.

Always start hitching early, and avoid 1pm to 4pm when it's often too hot and traffic is reduced while many locals enjoy a siesta. Somewhat surprisingly, police stationed at major junctions and checkpoints are often happy to wave down drivers and cajole them into giving you a lift. You may even be given a ride by the police themselves (see the boxed text, p321).

To indicate that you're looking for a lift, simply raise your index finger in the direction you're heading. On a large truck, you may be asked for a fare; in a private vehicle, you should ask if payment is expected and, if so, how much the driver wants. Otherwise, just offer a small amount when you get out – it will often be refused.

Finally, a few general tips. Make sure you carry a hat and lots of water; don't look too scruffy; don't hitch in groups of more than two; take extra care if you are a woman; and avoid riding in trucks on steep and windy roads (eg between the Wadi Rum turn-off and Aqaba) as they can be painfully slow.

Picking up Hitchhikers

Although there's no obligation to give anyone a ride, if you're driving a private or hired car, it's hard not to feel a twinge of guilt as you fly past weary-looking locals. On remote stretches like the Wadi Mujib stretch of the King's Highway, where public transport is limited or nonexistent, it's courteous to give a ride or two. Besides, it's a great way to meet Jordanian people. You should never charge a local for these lifts. They will assume, probably fairly, that any foreigner driving a private or hired car doesn't need the extra money.

LOCAL TRANSPORT

Bus

The two largest cities, Amman and Irbid, have efficient and cheap public bus networks. That said, few buses have destination signs in English (although some have 'English' numbers), there are no schedules or timetables available and local bus stations are often chaotic. Service taxis are much more useful and still inexpensive.

Taxi

There are two main types of taxis in Jordan. Yellow private taxis work like ordinary taxis. White service (*servees*) taxis run along set routes within and between many towns, as well as between Jordan and neighbouring countries.

Both service taxis and private taxis can be chartered. Hiring a service taxi for a day is usually cheaper than hiring your own car. To charter a service taxi along a set route (eg Aqaba to Ma'an), find out the standard fare per person and then pay for all the seats in a car (normally four). A long-distance trip in a private taxi costs more, but drivers are more amenable to stops and side trips.

If the taxi driver doesn't speak English, use the Arabic script in this guidebook or ask a local who does speak English to write down the destination(s) in Arabic.

PRIVATE TAXI

Yellow private taxis are very common in major towns like Amman, Irbid, Jerash, Ma'an, Madaba, Wadi Musa (Petra) and Aqaba, as well as around important transport junctions like Shunch al-Janubiyeh (South Shuna) and Tafila. There is no pricing standard among taxis. Taxis in Amman are metered and most drivers will use the meter; in Wadi Musa there is a standard fare of JD1 anywhere in town; elsewhere you'll just have to negotiate a reasonable fare.

Taxis are not expensive in Jordan and, after climbing up and down the *jebels* (hills) of Amman, or staggering around in the infernal summer heat of Aqaba, you'll be glad to fork out the equivalent of less than US\$2 for a comfortable air-con ride across town.

Note that metered fares are displayed in fils not dinars and if you proffer the fare in dinars by mistake, the driver is unlikely to correct you.

SERVICE TAXI

Service taxis are usually battered Peugeot 504 or 505 station wagons with seven seats, or Mercedes sedans with five seats. They are always white, and usually have writing and numbers (in Arabic) indicating their route.

Because of the limited number of seats, it usually doesn't take long for one to fill up. They cost up to twice as much as a minibus, and about 50% more than a public bus, but are quicker because they stop less often along the way to pick up passengers. However, they're not always that much more comfortable than a bus or minibus, unless you get the prized front seat. To avoid waiting for passengers, or to give yourself extra room, you can always pay for an extra seat.

Lone female travellers should always ask to sit in the front seat if the back is jammed with men, otherwise it's worth paying for an extra seat. If chartering a taxi, single females should always sit in the back.

Major cities, such as Amman and Irbid, are well served by service taxis that run along set routes within each city, and often go to (or past) places of interest to visitors. As with intercity service taxis, the route is listed in Arabic on the driver's door and drivers wait until they are full before departing.

TOURS

An alternative to a pricey group tour organised from abroad is to arrange your own private mini-tour with a Jordanian travel agency. Many of these can arrange hiking or archaeological itineraries and provide a car and driver.

For hiking and activities in Jordan's nature reserves you are best off contacting

the tourism department of the **Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature** (RSCN; www.rscn.org.jo), which can arrange short activity breaks or entire itineraries (see p72). For an extended trip to Wadi Rum it's best to contact a local Bedouin agency such as **Wadi Rum Mountain Guides** (www.bedouinroads.com).

If you're travelling independently, and on a tight budget, jumping on a budget-priced organised tour from Amman to a remote place like the desert castles of eastern Jordan is far easier, and often cheaper, than doing it yourself. See p105.

The following local agencies are reliable:

Alia Tours (☎ 06-5620501; www.aliatours.com.jo)

Standard tours.

Atlas Travel & Tourist Agency (☎ 06-4642034; www.atlastours.net) Also offers side trips to Israel and the Palestinian Territories, Syria and Lebanon.

Desert Guides Company (☎ 06-5527230, 079-5532915; www.desertguidescompany.com) Trekking, mountain-bike and adventure trips.

Golden Crown Tours (☎ 06-5511200; www.goldencrowntours.com) Offers archaeological, religious and adventure tours.

Jordan Beauty Tours (☎ 079-5581644, 077-7773978; www.jordanbeauty.com; Petra)

Jordan Direct (☎ 06-5938238; www.jdtours.com; Boumedien St, Amman) Located in Amin Marie Complex.

Jordan Inspiration Tours (☎ 03-2157317, 079-5554677; www.jitours.com; Petra)

Jordan Select Tours (☎ 06-5930588; www.select.jo) High-end tours.

La Beduina (☎ 03-2157099; www.labeduinatours.com)

Petra Moon (☎ 0302156665; www.petramoon.com; Wadi Musa) A professional agency that also offers an interesting range of treks in remote areas of Petra and Dana.

Royal Tours (☎ 06-5857154; www.royaltours.com.jo) Part of Royal Jordanian, and good for stopover packages.

Zaman Tours & Travel (☎ 03-2157723; www.zamantours.com; Wadi Musa) Adventure tours, camping, camel treks and hiking.

Health

CONTENTS

Before You Go	324
Insurance	324
Recommended Vaccinations	325
Medical Checklist	325
Internet Resources	325
Further Reading	325
In Transit	325
Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)	325
Jet Lag & Motion Sickness	326
In Jordan	326
Availability & Cost of Health Care	326
Infectious Diseases	326
Traveller's Diarrhoea	327
Environmental Hazards	328
Travelling with Children	329
Women's Health	329

Prevention is the key to staying healthy when travelling in the Middle East. Infectious diseases can and do occur in Jordan, but these can be avoided with a few precautions. The most common reason for travellers needing medical help is as a result of traffic accidents. Medical facilities in Jordan are generally very good, particularly in Amman.

BEFORE YOU GO

A little planning before departure, particularly for pre-existing illnesses, will save you a lot of trouble later. See your dentist before a long trip; carry a spare pair of contact lenses and glasses (and take your optical prescription with you); and carry a first-aid kit with you.

It's tempting to leave it all to the last minute – don't! Many vaccines don't ensure immunity for two weeks, so visit a doctor four to eight weeks before departure.

Bring medications in their original, clearly labelled, containers. A signed and dated letter from your physician describing your medical conditions and medications, including generic names, is also a good idea. If carrying syringes or needles, be sure

to have a physician's letter documenting their medical necessity.

INSURANCE

Find out in advance if your insurance plan will make payments directly to providers or reimburse you later for overseas health expenditures; it's also worth ensuring your travel insurance will cover repatriation home or transport to better medical facilities elsewhere. Your insurance company may be able to locate the nearest source of medical help, or you can ask at your hotel. In case

REQUIRED & RECOMMENDED VACCINATIONS

The following vaccinations are recommended for most travellers to Jordan, though you should check with your local health provider:

- diphtheria & tetanus – single booster recommended if you've had none in the previous 10 years
- hepatitis A – a single dose at least two to four weeks before departure gives protection for up to a year; a booster 12 months later gives another 10 years or more of protection
- hepatitis B – now considered routine for most travellers
- measles, mumps and rubella – two doses of MMR recommended unless you have previously had the diseases. Young adults may require a booster.
- polio – generally given in childhood and should be boosted every 10 years
- typhoid – recommended if you're travelling for more than a couple of weeks
- yellow fever – vaccination is required for entry into Jordan for all travellers over one year of age if coming from infected areas such as sub-Saharan Africa, and parts of South America

For more information on these diseases and vaccinations, see Infectious Diseases, p326.

of an emergency, contact your embassy or consulate. Your travel insurance will not usually cover you for anything other than emergency dental treatment. Not all insurance covers emergency aeromedical evacuation home or to a hospital in a major city, which may be the only way to get medical attention for a serious emergency.

See p296 for more information on insurance.

RECOMMENDED VACCINATIONS

Plan ahead for getting your vaccinations: some of them require more than one injection, while some vaccinations should not be given together. Note that some vaccinations should not be given during pregnancy or to people with allergies – discuss this with your doctor.

MEDICAL CHECKLIST

Following is a list of other items you should consider packing in your medical kit.

- acetaminophen/paracetamol (Tylenol) or aspirin
- adhesive or paper tape
- antibacterial ointment (eg Bactroban) for cuts and abrasions
- antibiotics (if travelling off-the-beaten-track)
- anti-diarrhoeal drugs (eg loperamide)
- antihistamines (for hay fever and allergic reactions)
- anti-inflammatory drugs (eg ibuprofen)
- bandages, gauze, gauze rolls
- insect repellent containing DEET (for the body)
- insect spray containing Permethrin (for clothing, tents and bed nets)
- iodine tablets or other water-purification tablets
- oral rehydration salts
- scissors, safety pins, tweezers
- steroid cream or cortisone (for allergic rashes)
- sunblock
- thermometer

INTERNET RESOURCES

There is a wealth of travel-health advice on the internet. For further information, the Lonely Planet website (www.lonelyplanet.com) is a good place to start. The World Health Organization (www.who.int/ith) publishes a superb book, *International*

TRAVEL HEALTH WEBSITES

It's a good idea to consult your government's travel health website before departure.

Australia (www.dfat.gov.au/travel)

Canada (www.travelhealth.gc.ca)

UK (www.doh.gov.uk)

United States (www.cdc.gov/travel)

Travel and Health, which is revised annually and is available online at no cost.

Another website of general interest is MD Travel Health (www.mdtravelhealth.com), which provides complete travel-health recommendations for every country, updated daily, also at no cost.

The Center for Disease Control (www.cdc.gov) offers a useful overview of the health issues facing travellers to Jordan and neighbouring countries.

The US embassy in Amman has a list of recommended doctors in Jordan at <http://usembassy-amman.org.jo/cons/doctors.doc>.

FURTHER READING

Lonely Planet's *Healthy Travel – Asia & India* is packed with useful information including pre-trip planning, emergency first aid, immunisation and disease information and what to do if you get sick on the road. Other recommended references include *Traveller's Health* by Dr Richard Dawood, *International Travel Health Guide* by Stuart R Rose, MD and *The Travellers' Good Health Guide* by Ted Lankester, an especially useful health guide for volunteers and long-term expatriates working in the Middle East.

IN TRANSIT

DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS (DVT)

Deep vein thrombosis occurs when blood clots form in the legs during plane flights, chiefly because of a prolonged immobility. The longer the flight is, the greater the risk. Though most clots are reabsorbed uneventfully, some may break off and travel through the blood vessels to the lungs, where they may cause life-threatening complications.

The chief symptom of DVT is swelling or pain of the foot, ankle or calf, usually but not always on just one side. When a blood

clot travels to the lungs, it may cause chest pain and difficulty in breathing. Travellers with any of these symptoms should immediately seek medical attention.

To prevent the development of DVT on long flights you should walk about the cabin, perform isometric compressions of the leg muscles (ie contract the leg muscles while sitting), drink plenty of fluids, and avoid alcohol and tobacco.

JET LAG & MOTION SICKNESS

Jet lag is common when crossing more than five time zones; it results in insomnia, fatigue, malaise or nausea. To avoid jet lag, drink plenty of fluids (non-alcoholic) and eat light meals. Upon arrival, seek exposure to natural sunlight and readjust your schedule (for meals, sleep etc) as soon as possible.

Antihistamines such as dimenhydrinate (Dramamine) and meclizine (Antivert, Bonine) are usually the first choice for treating motion sickness. Their main side-effect is drowsiness. A herbal alternative is ginger, which works like a charm for some people.

IN JORDAN

AVAILABILITY & COST OF HEALTH CARE

There are modern, well-equipped public hospitals in Amman, Irbid, Aqaba and Karak; smaller hospitals in Madaba, Ramtha and Zarqa; and basic health centres in most other towns. Jordan also has over 50 private hospitals, which cater primarily to patients from neighbouring countries, particularly the Gulf States, who are attracted by lower medical costs. Emergency treatment not requiring hospitalisation is free in Jordan.

Most towns have well-stocked pharmacies, but check the expiry date of medicine you buy in Jordan. It is better to bring any unusual or important medical items with you from home, together with a copy of a prescription. The telephone numbers for pharmacies (including those open at night) in Amman and Irbid, and for hospitals in Amman, Zarqa, Irbid and Aqaba, are listed in the English-language newspapers. All doctors (and most pharmacists) who have studied in Jordan speak English because medicine is taught in English at Jordanian

universities, and many have studied abroad. Dental surgeries are also fairly modern and well-equipped.

For minor illnesses such as diarrhoea, pharmacists can often provide valuable advice, and sell over-the-counter medication.

For an ambulance in Jordan call ☎ 193.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Diphtheria & Tetanus

Diphtheria is spread through close respiratory contact. It causes a high temperature and severe sore throat. Sometimes a membrane forms across the throat requiring a tracheostomy to prevent suffocation. Vaccination is recommended for those likely to be in close contact with the local population in infected areas. The vaccine is given as an injection alone, or with tetanus (you may well have had this combined injection as a child), and lasts 10 years.

Hepatitis A

Hepatitis A is spread through contaminated food (particularly shellfish) and water. It causes jaundice and, although it is rarely fatal, can cause prolonged lethargy and delayed recovery. Symptoms include dark urine, a yellow colour to the whites of the eyes, fever and abdominal pain. Hepatitis A vaccine (Avaxim, VAQTA, Havrix) is given as an injection; hepatitis A and typhoid vaccines can also be given as a single-dose vaccine, hepatyrix or viatim.

Hepatitis B

Infected blood, contaminated needles and sexual intercourse can all transmit hepatitis B. It can cause jaundice, and affects the liver, occasionally causing liver failure. All travellers should make this a routine vaccination. (Many countries now give hepatitis B vaccination as part of routine childhood vaccination.) The US Center for Disease Control says the level of hepatitis B is high in Jordan. The vaccine is given singly, or at the same time as the hepatitis A vaccine (hepatyrix). A course will give protection for at least five years. It can be given over four weeks, or six months.

HIV

This is spread via infected blood and blood products, sexual intercourse with an infected partner and from an infected

mother to her newborn child. It can be spread through 'blood to blood' contacts such as contaminated instruments during medical and dental procedures, acupuncture, body-piercing and sharing used intravenous needles.

Reliable figures aren't available about the number of people in Jordan with HIV or AIDS, but given the strict taboos in Jordanian society about drugs, homosexuality and promiscuity, the disease is relatively rare. Contracting HIV through a blood transfusion is about as unlikely as in most Western countries, and anyone needing serious surgery will probably be sent home anyway.

You may need to supply a negative HIV test in order to get a second visa extension for a stay of longer than three months.

Polio

Generally spread through either contaminated food or water, polio is one of the vaccines given in childhood and should be boosted every 10 years, either orally (a drop on the tongue), or as an injection. Polio may be carried asymptotically, although it can cause a transient fever and, in rare cases, potentially permanent muscle weakness or paralysis. Polio is not currently present in Jordan but is prevalent in neighbouring countries.

Rabies

Spread through bites or licks on broken skin from an infected animal, rabies is fatal. Animal handlers should be vaccinated, as should those travelling to remote areas where a reliable source of post-bite vaccine is not available within 24 hours. Three injections are needed over a month. If you've come into physical contact with an infected animal and haven't been vaccinated you'll need a course of five injections starting within 24 hours or as soon as possible after the injury. Vaccination does not provide you with immunity, it merely buys you more time to seek appropriate medical help.

Tuberculosis

Tuberculosis (TB) is spread through close respiratory contact and occasionally through infected milk or milk products. BCG vaccine is recommended for those likely to be mixing closely with the local popula-

tion. It is more important for those visiting family or planning on a long stay, and those employed as teachers and health-care workers. TB can be asymptomatic, although symptoms can include cough, weight loss or fever, months or even years after exposure. An X-ray is the best way to confirm if you have TB. BCG gives a moderate degree of protection against TB. It causes a small permanent scar at the site of injection, and is usually only given in specialised chest clinics. As it's a live vaccine it should not be given to pregnant women or immunocompromised individuals. The BCG vaccine is not available in all countries.

Typhoid

This is spread through food or water that has been contaminated by infected human faeces. The first symptom is usually fever or a pink rash on the abdomen. Septicaemia (blood poisoning) may also occur. Typhoid vaccine (typhim Vi, typherix) will give protection for three years. In some countries, the oral vaccine Vivotif is also available.

Yellow Fever

Yellow-fever vaccination is not required for Jordan but you *do* need a yellow-fever certificate, from a designated clinic, if arriving from an infected area, or if you've been in an infected area in the two weeks prior to arrival in Jordan.

TRAVELLER'S DIARRHOEA

Becoming sick from unhygienic food preparation in Jordan is slim, especially if you follow this advice:

- Avoid tap water unless it has been boiled, filtered or chemically disinfected (iodine tablets)
- Beware of ice cream that may have melted and then been refrozen (eg a power cut in the last day or two)
- Be careful of shellfish such as mussels, oysters and clams, particularly outside of Aqaba, as well as the raw-meat dishes available in Lebanese restaurants
- Eat meals only at busy restaurants and be cautious of buffets that may have been standing for more than a day.

If you do develop diarrhoea, be sure to drink plenty of fluids, preferably an oral-rehydration solution containing salt and

sugar (weak black tea with a little sugar, soda water, or soft drinks allowed to go flat and diluted 50% with clean water are also good). In an emergency you can make up a solution of six teaspoons of sugar and half a teaspoon of salt to a litre of boiled or bottled water.

A few loose stools don't require treatment but if you start having more than four or five stools a day, you should start taking an antibiotic (usually a quinolone drug) and an anti-diarrhoeal agent (such as loperamide). If diarrhoea is bloody, persists for more than 72 hours, is accompanied by fever, shaking chills or severe abdominal pain, you should seek medical attention.

Where this is not possible the recommended drugs for bacterial diarrhoea (the most likely cause of severe diarrhoea in travellers) are norfloxacin 400mg twice daily for three days or ciprofloxacin 500mg twice daily for five days. These drugs are not recommended for children or pregnant women. The drug for children is cotrimoxazole, with dosage dependent on weight. A five-day course is given. Ampicillin or amoxicillin may be given to pregnant women, but medical care is necessary.

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

Jordan is not a dangerous place to visit but it does have a few hazards unique to desert environments. While heat-related problems are the most common, don't forget that the desert can be bitterly cold in winter: there is a real risk of hypothermia if camping between December and February without adequate bedding. For hazards connected with swimming, diving or snorkelling, see p283.

Heat Illness

Read this section carefully, especially if you are travelling to Jordan between May and September. Despite the warnings, some visitors get themselves into trouble hiking through the desert in the heat of the day, especially around Wadi Rum.

Heat exhaustion occurs following heavy sweating and excessive fluid loss with inadequate replacement of fluids and salt. This is particularly common in hot climates when taking unaccustomed exercise before full acclimatisation. Symptoms include headache,

dizziness and tiredness. Dehydration already occurs by the time you feel thirsty – aim to drink sufficient water to produce pale, diluted urine. The treatment of heat exhaustion consists of fluid replacement with water or fruit juice or both, and cooling by cold water and fans. The treatment of the salt-loss component consists of salty fluids as in soup or broth, and adding a little more table salt to foods than usual.

Heat stroke is much more serious. This occurs when the body's heat-regulating mechanism breaks down. Excessive rise in body temperature leads to sweating ceasing, irrational and hyperactive behaviour and eventually loss of consciousness and death. Rapid cooling by spraying the body with water and fanning is an ideal treatment. Emergency fluid and electrolyte replacement by intravenous drip is usually also required.

Insect Bites & Stings

Mosquitoes may not carry malaria but can cause irritation and infected bites. Using DEET-based insect repellents will prevent bites. Mosquitos also spread dengue fever.

Bees and wasps only cause real problems to those with a severe allergy (anaphylaxis). If you have a severe allergy to bee or wasp stings you should carry an adrenaline injection or similar. For general bug bites, calamine lotion or a sting-relief spray will give relief and ice packs will reduce the pain and swelling.

Scorpion stings are notoriously painful and in Jordan can sometimes be fatal, especially for young children. Scorpions often shelter in shoes or clothing so check your shoes in the morning, particularly if you are camping in the vicinity of Little Petra.

Bed bugs are often found in hostels and cheap hotels. They lead to very itchy lumpy bites. Spraying the mattress with an appropriate insect killer will get rid of them; better still, find a better hotel!

Scabies are also frequently found in cheap accommodation. These tiny mites live in the skin, particularly between the fingers. They cause an intensely itchy rash. Scabies is easily treated with lotion available from pharmacies; people who you come into contact with also need treating to avoid spreading scabies between asymptomatic carriers.

Snakebite

To minimise your chances of being bitten always wear boots, socks and long trousers when walking through undergrowth where snakes may be present. Don't put your hands into holes and crevices, and be careful when collecting firewood.

Half of those bitten by venomous snakes are not actually injected with poison (envenomed). If bitten by a snake, do not panic. Immobilise the bitten limb with a splint (eg a stick) and apply a bandage over the site, with firm pressure, similar to bandaging a sprain. Do not apply a tourniquet, or cut or suck the bite. Get the victim to medical help as soon as possible so that antivenin can be given if necessary.

Water

Tap water in Jordan is generally safe to drink, but for a short trip it's better to stick to bottled water; alternatively boil water for 10 minutes, use water purification tablets or a filter. In the Jordan Valley, amoebic dysentery can be a problem. The tap water in southern Jordan, particularly Wadi Rum, comes from natural springs at Diseh and so is extremely pure.

TRAVELLING WITH CHILDREN

All travellers with children should know how to treat minor ailments and when to seek medical treatment. Make sure the children are up to date with routine vaccinations, bearing in mind some vaccines are not suitable for children under one year old.

In hot, humid climates any wound or break in the skin may lead to infection. The area should be cleaned and then kept dry and clean. Remember to avoid contaminated food and water. If your child is vomiting or experiencing diarrhoea, lost fluid and salts must be replaced. It may be helpful to take rehydration powders for reconstituting with boiled water. Ask your doctor about this.

Children should be encouraged to avoid dogs or other mammals because of the risk of rabies and other diseases. Any bite, scratch or lick from a warm-blooded, furry animal should be thoroughly cleaned. If there is any possibility that the animal is infected with rabies, immediate medical assistance should be sought.

Travel with Children from Lonely Planet includes advice on travel health for younger children.

WOMEN'S HEALTH

Emotional stress, exhaustion and travelling through different time zones can all contribute to an upset in the menstrual pattern. If using oral contraceptives, remember that some antibiotics, diarrhoea and vomiting can stop the pill from working and lead to the risk of pregnancy – remember to take condoms with you just in case. Condoms should be kept in a cool, dry place or they may crack and perish.

Emergency contraception is most effective if taken within 24 hours after unprotected sex. The International Planned Parent Federation (www.ippf.org) can advise about the availability of contraception in different countries. Tampons and sanitary towels are easily available in Amman but not necessarily in smaller towns.

Travelling during pregnancy is potentially risky during the first 12 weeks, when miscarriage is most likely, and after 30 weeks, when complications such as high blood pressure and premature delivery can occur. Most airlines will not accept a traveller after 28 to 32 weeks of pregnancy. Antenatal facilities are good in Jordan and medical staff speaks English. Taking written records of the pregnancy, including details of your blood group, is helpful if you need medical attention while away. Ensure your insurance policy covers pregnancy delivery and postnatal care.

Language

CONTENTS

Pronunciation	330
Tricky Sounds	332
Transliteration	332
Accommodation	332
Conversation & Essentials	332
Directions	333
Emergencies	334
Health	334
Language Difficulties	334
Numbers	334
Paperwork	335
Shopping & Services	335
Time & Dates	335
Transport	336
Travel with Children	337

Arabic is Jordan's official language. English is also widely spoken but any effort to communicate with the locals in their own language will be well rewarded. No matter how far off the mark your pronunciation or grammar might be, you'll often get the response (usually with a big smile): 'Ah, you speak Arabic very well!'

Learning a few basics for day-to-day travelling doesn't take long at all, but to master the complexities of Arabic would take years of consistent study. The whole issue is complicated by the differences between Classical Arabic (*fus-ha*), its modern descendant MSA (Modern Standard Arabic) and regional dialects. The classical tongue is the language of the Quran and Arabic poetry of centuries past. For a long time it remained static, but in order to survive it had to adapt to change, and the result is more or less MSA, the common language of the press, radio and educated discourse. It is as close to a *lingua franca* (common language) as the Arab world comes, and is generally understood – if not always well spoken – across the Arab world.

Fortunately, the spoken dialects of Jordan are not too distant from MSA. For outsiders trying to learn Arabic, the most

frustrating element nevertheless remains understanding the spoken language. There is virtually no written material to refer to for back-up, and acquisition of MSA in the first place is itself a long-term investment. An esoteric argument flows back and forth about the relative merits of learning MSA first (and so perhaps having to wait some time before being able to communicate adequately with people in the street) or focusing your efforts on a dialect. If all this gives you a headache, you'll have some idea as to why so few non-Arabs, or non-Muslims, embark on a study of the language.

PRONUNCIATION

Pronunciation of Arabic in any of its guises can be tongue-tying for someone unfamiliar with the intonation and combination of sounds. Pronounce the transliterated words slowly and clearly.

This language guide should help, but bear in mind that the myriad rules governing pronunciation and vowel use are too extensive to be covered here.

Vowels

Technically, there are three long and three short vowels in Arabic. The reality is a little different, with local dialect and varying consonant combinations affecting their pronunciation (this is the case throughout the Arabic-speaking world). More like five short and five long vowels can be identified; in this guide we use all but the long 'o' (as in 'or').

a	as in 'had'
aa	as the 'a' in 'father'
e	short, as in 'bet'; long, as in 'there'
i	as in 'hit'
ee	as in 'beer', only softer
o	as in 'hot'
u	as in 'put'
oo	as in 'food'

Consonants

Pronunciation for all Arabic consonants is covered in the alphabet table, right. Note that when double consonants occur in the

THE STANDARD ARABIC ALPHABET

Final	Medial	Initial	Alone	Transliteration	Pronunciation
ا			ا	aa	as in 'father'
ب	ب	ب	ب	b	as in 'bet'
ت	ت	ت	ت	t	as in 'ten'
ث	ث	ث	ث	th	as in 'thin'
ج	ج	ج	ج	j	as in 'jet'
ح	ح	ح	ح	H	a strongly whispered 'h', like a sigh of relief
خ	خ	خ	خ	kh	as the 'ch' in Scottish <i>loch</i>
د			د	d	as in 'dim'
ذ			ذ	dh	as the 'th' in 'this'
ر			ر	r	a rolled 'r', as in the Spanish word <i>caro</i>
ز			ز	z	as in 'zip'
س	س	س	س	s	as in 'so', never as in 'wisdom'
ش	ش	ش	ش	sh	as in 'ship'
ص	ص	ص	ص	ṣ	emphatic 's'
ض	ض	ض	ض	ḍ	emphatic 'd'
ط	ط	ط	ط	ṭ	emphatic 't'
ظ	ظ	ظ	ظ	ẓ	emphatic 'z'
ع	ع	ع	ع	'	the Arabic letter 'ayn'; pronounce as a glottal stop – like the closing of the throat before saying 'Oh-oh!' (see Tricky Sounds, p332)
غ	غ	غ	غ	gh	a guttural sound like Parisian 'r'
ف	ف	ف	ف	f	as in 'far'
ق	ق	ق	ق	q	a strongly guttural 'k' sound; also often pronounced as a glottal stop
ك	ك	ك	ك	k	as in 'king'
ل	ل	ل	ل	l	as in 'lamb'
م	م	م	م	m	as in 'me'
ن	ن	ن	ن	n	as in 'name'
ه	ه	ه	ه	h	as in 'ham'
و			و	w	as in 'wet'
				oo	long, as in 'food'
				ow	as in 'how'
ي	ي	ي	ي	y	as in 'yes'
				ee	as in 'beer', only softer
				ai/ay	as in 'aisle'/as the 'ay' in 'day'

Vowels Not all Arabic vowel sounds are represented in the alphabet. For more information on the vowel sounds used in this language guide, see Vowels (left).

Emphatic Consonants To simplify the transliteration system used in this book, the emphatic consonants have not been included.

transliterations, both are pronounced. For example, the word *al-hammam* (toilet), is pronounced 'al-ham-mam'.

TRICKY SOUNDS

Arabic has two sounds that are very tricky for non-Arabs to produce: the 'ayn and the glottal stop. The letter 'ayn represents a sound with no English equivalent that comes even close. It is similar to the glottal stop (which is not actually represented in the alphabet), but the muscles at the back of the throat are gagged more forcefully and air is released – it has been described as the sound of someone being strangled. In many transliteration systems 'ayn is represented by an opening quotation mark, and the glottal stop by a closing quotation mark. To make the transliterations in this language guide (and throughout the rest of the book) easier to use, we have not distinguished between the glottal stop and the 'ayn, using the closing quotation mark to represent both sounds. You should find that Arabic speakers will still understand you.

TRANSLITERATION

It's worth noting here that transliteration from the Arabic script into English – or any other language for that matter – is at best an approximate science.

The presence of sounds unknown in European languages and the fact that the script is 'incomplete' (most vowels are not written) combine to make it nearly impossible to settle on one universally accepted method of transliteration. A wide variety of spellings is therefore possible for words when they appear in Latin script – and that goes for places and people's names as well.

The whole thing is further complicated by the wide variety of dialects and the imaginative ideas Arabs themselves often have on appropriate spelling in, say, English (words spelt one way in Jordan may look very different again in Syria and Lebanon, with strong French influences); not even the most venerable of Western Arabists have been able to come up with a satisfactory solution.

While striving to reflect the language as closely as possible and aiming at consistency, this book generally anglicises place, street and hotel names (and the like) as the

locals have done. Don't be surprised if you come across several versions of the same thing.

ACCOMMODATION

I'd like to book a ...	<i>biddee ehjuz ...</i>
Do you have a ...?	<i>fi ...?</i>
(cheap) room	<i>ghurfa (rkheesa)</i>
single room	<i>ghurfa mufrada</i>
double room	<i>ghurfa bi sareerayn</i>
for one night	<i>li layli waHde</i>
for two nights	<i>layltayn</i>
May I see it?	<i>mumkin shoofa?</i>
It's very noisy/dirty.	<i>kteer dajeh/wuskh</i>
How much is it per person?	<i>'addaysh li kul waHid?</i>
How much is it per night?	<i>'addaysh bel layli?</i>
Where is the bathroom?	<i>wayn al-Hammam?</i>
We're leaving today.	<i>niHna musafireen al-youm</i>

address	<i>al-'anwaan</i>
air-conditioning	<i>kondishon/mookayif</i>
blanket	<i>al-bataaniyya/al-Hrem</i>
camp site	<i>mukhayam</i>
electricity	<i>kahraba</i>
hotel	<i>funduq/otel</i>
hot water	<i>mai saakhina</i>
key	<i>al-miftaH</i>
manager	<i>al-mudeer</i>
shower	<i>doosh</i>
soap	<i>saboon</i>
toilet	<i>twalet/bet al-mai</i>

CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

Arabs place great importance on civility and it's rare to see any interaction between people that doesn't begin with profuse greetings, enquiries into the other's health and other niceties.

Arabic greetings are more formal than in English and there is a reciprocal response to each. These sometimes vary slightly, depending on whether you're addressing a man or a woman. A simple encounter can become a drawn-out affair, with neither side wanting to be the one to put a halt to the stream of greetings and well-wishing. As an *ajnabi* (foreigner), you're not expected to know all the ins and outs, but if you come up with the right expression at the appropriate moment the locals will love it.

The most common greeting is *salaam alaykum* (peace be upon you), to which the correct reply is *wa alaykum as-salaam* (and upon you be peace). If you get invited to a birthday celebration or are around for any of the big holidays, the common greeting is *kul sana wa intum bikher* (I wish you well for the coming year).

After having a bath or shower, you will often hear people say to you *na'iman*, which roughly means 'heavenly' and boils down to an observation along the lines of 'nice and clean now, eh'.

Arrival in one piece is always something to be grateful for. Passengers will often be greeted with *il-Hamdu lillah al as-salaama* (thank God for your safe arrival).

Hi.	<i>marHaba</i>
Hi. (response)	<i>marHabtain</i>
Hello.	<i>ahlan wa sahan</i> or just <i>ahlan</i> (Welcome)
Hello. (response)	<i>ahlan beek/i</i> (m/f)

It's an important custom in Jordan to ask after a person's or their family's health when greeting, eg *kayf es-saHa?* (How is your health?), *kayf il'ayli?* (How is the family?). The response is usually *bikher il-Hamdu lillah* (Fine, thank you).

Goodbye.	<i>ma'a salaama/Allah ma'ak</i>
Good morning.	<i>sabaH al-khayr</i>
Good morning. (response)	<i>sabaH 'an-noor</i>
Good evening.	<i>masa' al-khayr</i>
Good evening. (response)	<i>masa 'an-noor</i>
Good night.	<i>tisbaH 'ala khayr</i>
Good night. (response)	<i>wa inta min ahlu</i>

Yes.	<i>aiwa/na'am</i>
Yeah.	<i>ay</i>
No.	<i>la</i>
Please. (request)	<i>min fadlak/fadleek</i> (m/f)
Please. (polite)	<i>law samaHt/samaHti</i> (m/f)
Please. (come in)	<i>tafaddal/tafaddali</i> (m/f)/ <i>tafaddaloo</i> (pl)
Thank you.	<i>shukran</i>
Thank you very much.	<i>shukran kteer/ shukran jazeelan</i>
You're welcome.	<i>'afwan</i> or <i>tikram/tikrami</i> (m/f)
One moment, please.	<i>lahza min fadlak/i</i> (m/f)
Pardon/Excuse me.	<i>'afwan</i>

Sorry!	<i>aasif/aasifa!</i> (m/f)
No problem.	<i>mafi mushkili/moo mushkila</i>
Never mind.	<i>ma'alesh</i>
Just a moment.	<i>lahza</i>
Congratulations!	<i>mabrouk!</i>

Questions like 'Is the bus coming?' or 'Will the bank be open later?' generally elicit the response: *in sha' Allah* (God willing), an expression you'll hear over and over again. Another common one is *ma sha' Allah* (God's will be done), sometimes a useful answer to probing questions about why you're not married yet.

How are you?	<i>kayf Haalak/Haalik?</i> (m/f)
How're you doing?	<i>kayfak/kayfik?</i> (m/f)
Fine thank you.	<i>bikher il-Hamdu lillah</i>
What's your name?	<i>shu-ismak/shu-ismik?</i> (m/f)
My name is ...	<i>ismi ...</i>
Pleased to meet you. (when departing)	<i>fursa sa'ida</i>
Nice to meet you. (lit: you honour us)	<i>tasharrafna</i>
Where are you from?	<i>min wayn inta/inti?</i> (m/f)
I'm from ...	<i>ana min ...</i>
Do you like ...?	<i>inta/inti bitHeb ...?</i> (m/f)
I like ...	<i>ana bHeb ...</i>
I don't like ...	<i>ana ma bHeb ...</i>

I	<i>ana</i>
you	<i>inta/inti</i> (m/f)
he	<i>huwa</i>
she	<i>hiyya</i>
we	<i>niHna</i>
you	<i>into</i>
they	<i>homn</i>

DIRECTIONS

How do I get to ...?	<i>keef boosal ala ...?</i>
Can you show me (on the map)?	<i>mumkin tafarjeeni ('ala al-khareeta)?</i>
How many kilometres?	<i>kam kilometre?</i>
What street is this? on the left on the right opposite straight ahead at the next corner this way here/there in front of	<i>shoo Hal shanki had? 'ala yasaar/shimaal 'ala yameen muqaabil dughri taneef mafraq min hon hon/honeek amaam/iddaam</i>

SIGNS

Entrance	مدخل
Exit	خروج
Open	مفتوح
Closed	مغلق
Prohibited	ممنوع
Information	معلومات
Hospital	مستشفى
Police	شرطة
Men's Toilet	حمام للرجال
Women's Toilet	حمام للنساء

near	qareeb
far	ba'eed
north	shimaal
south	janub
east	sharq
west	gharb

EMERGENCIES

Help me!	saa'idoonee!
I'm sick.	ana mareed/mareeda (m/f)
Call the police!	ittusil bil shurta!
doctor	duktoor/tabeeb
hospital	al-mustash-fa
police	ash-shurta
Go away!	imsheel/rouh min hoon!
Shame (on you)!	aayb!
(said by woman)	

HEALTH

I'm ill.	ana maareed/mareeda (m/f)
My friend is ill.	sadeeqi maareed (m)/ sadeeqati maareeda (f)
It hurts here.	beeyujani hon
I'm ...	andee ...
asthmatic	azmitrabo
diabetic	sukkari
epileptic	saraa/alsaa'a
I'm allergic ...	andee Hasasiyya ...
to antibiotics	min al-mudad alHayawi
to aspirin	min al-aspireen
to penicillin	min al-binisileen
to bees	min al-naHl
to nuts	min al-mukassarat
antiseptic	mutahhi
aspirin	aspireen/aspro (brand name)
Band-Aids	plaster

chemist/pharmacy	as-sayidiliyya
condoms	kaboot
contraceptive	waseela lee mana' al-Ham
diarrhoea	is-haal
fever	Harara
headache	wajaa-ras
hospital	mustashfa
medicine	dawa
pregnant	Hamel
prescription	wasfa/rashetta
sanitary napkins	fuwat saHiyya
stomach ache	wajaa fil battu
sunblock cream	krem waki min ashilt al-shams
tampons	kotex (brand name)

LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES

Do you speak English?	bitiHki ingleezi?
I understand.	ana afham
I don't understand.	ana ma bifham

I speak ...	ana baHki ...
English	ingleezi
French	faransi
German	almani

I speak a little Arabic.	ana baHki arabi shway
I don't speak Arabic.	ana ma beHki arabi
I want an interpreter.	biddee mutarjem
Could you write it down, please?	mumkin tiktabhu, min fadlak?
How do you say ... in Arabic?	kayf t'ul ... bil'arabi?

NUMBERS

0	sifr	٠
1	waHid	١
2	itnayn/tintayn	٢
3	talaata	٣
4	arba'a	٤
5	khamsa	٥
6	sitta	٦
7	saba'a	٧
8	tamanya	٨
9	tis'a	٩
10	'ashara	١٠
11	yeedaa'sh	١١
12	yeetnaa'sh	١٢
13	talaataash	١٣
14	arbatash	١٤
15	khamastash	١٥
16	sittash	١٦
17	sabatash	١٧
18	tamantash	١٨
19	tasatash	١٩

20	'ashreen	٢٠
21	wHid wa 'ashreen	٢١
22	itnayn wa 'ashreen	٢٢
30	talaateen	٣٠
40	arba'een	٤٠
50	khamseen	٥٠
60	sitteen	٦٠
70	saba'een	٧٠
80	tamaneen	٨٠
90	tis'een	٩٠
100	miyya (meet before a noun)	١٠٠
200	miyyatayn	٢٠٠
1000	'alf	١٠٠٠
2000	'alfayn	٢٠٠٠
3000	talaat-alf	٣٠٠٠

PAPERWORK

date of birth	tareekh al-meelad/-wilaada
name	al-ism
nationality	al-jenseeya
passport	jawaz al-safar (or paspor)
permit	tasriH
place of birth	makan al-meelad/-wilaada
visa	visa/ta'shira

SHOPPING & SERVICES

I'm looking for ...	ana abHath ... aa'n
Where is the ...?	wayn/fayn ...?

bank	al-bank
beach	ash-shaati'/al-plaaj/al-baHr
chemist/pharmacy	as-sayidiliyya
city/town	al-medeena
city centre	markaz al-medeena
customs	al-jumruk
entrance	al-dukhool/al-madkhal
exchange office	al-masref/al-saraf
exit	al-khurooj
hotel	al-funduq/al-otel
information desk	isti'laamaat
laundry	al-haseel
market	al-sooq
mosque	al-jaami'/al-masjid
museum	al-matHaf
newsagents	al-maktaba
old city	al-medeena al-qadeema/ al-medeena l'ateeqa
passport & immigration office	maktab al-jawazaat wa al-hijra
police	ash-shurta
post office	maktab al-bareed
restaurant	al-mata'am
telephone office	maktab at-telefon/ maktab al-haalef

temple	al-ma'abad
tourist office	maktab al-siyaha

I want to change ... money	baddee sarref ... masaari
travellers cheques	sheeket siyaHiyya

What time does it open?	emta byeftaH?
----------------------------	---------------

What time does it close?	emta bi sakkir?
-----------------------------	-----------------

I'd like to make a telephone call.	mumkin talfen min fadlak
---------------------------------------	--------------------------

Where can I buy ...?	wayn/fayn feeni eshtiree ...?
----------------------	-------------------------------

What is this?	shu hada?
---------------	-----------

How much?	addaysh/bikam?
-----------	----------------

How many?	kim waHid?
-----------	------------

How much is it?	bi addaysh?
-----------------	-------------

That's too expensive.	hada ghalee kheteer
-----------------------	---------------------

Is there ...?	fee ...?
---------------	----------

There isn't (any).	ma fee
--------------------	--------

May I look at it?	mumkin shoof?
-------------------	---------------

big/bigger	kbeer/akbar
cheap/cheaper	rkhees/arkhas
closed	msakkar
expensive	ghaali
money	al-fuloos/al-masaari
open	maftuH
small/smaller	sagheer/asghar

TIME & DATES

What's the time?	addaysh essa'aa?
------------------	------------------

When?	emta?
-------	-------

now	halla'
-----	--------

after	b'adayn
-------	---------

on time	al wakat
---------	----------

early	bakkeer
-------	---------

late	ma'qar
------	--------

daily	kil youm
-------	----------

today	al-youm
-------	---------

tomorrow	bukra
----------	-------

day after tomorrow	ba'ad bukra
--------------------	-------------

yesterday	imbaarih
-----------	----------

minute	daqeeqa
--------	---------

hour	saa'a
------	-------

day	youm
-----	------

week	usboo'
------	--------

month	shahr
-------	-------

year	sana
------	------

morning	soubetH
---------	---------

afternoon	ba'ad deher
-----------	-------------

evening	massa
---------	-------

night	layl
-------	------

Monday	<i>al-tenayn</i>
Tuesday	<i>at-talaata</i>
Wednesday	<i>al-arba'a</i>
Thursday	<i>al-khamees</i>
Friday	<i>al-jum'a</i>
Saturday	<i>as-sabt</i>
Sunday	<i>al-aHad</i>

The Western Calendar Months

The Islamic year has 12 lunar months and is 11 days shorter than the Western calendar, so important Muslim dates will occur 11 days earlier each (Western) year.

There are two Western calendars in use in the Arab world. In Egypt and westwards, the months have virtually the same names as in English (January is *yanaayir*, October is *octobir* and so on), but in Lebanon and eastwards, the names are quite different. Talking about, say, June as 'month six' is the easiest solution, but for the sake of completeness, the months from January are:

January	<i>kanoon ath-thani</i>
February	<i>shubaat</i>
March	<i>azaar</i>
April	<i>nisaan</i>
May	<i>ayyaar</i>
June	<i>Huzayraan</i>
July	<i>tammooz</i>
August	<i>'aab</i>
September	<i>aylool</i>
October	<i>tishreen al-awal</i>
November	<i>tishreen ath-thani</i>
December	<i>kaanoon al-awal</i>

The Hejira Calendar Months

1st	<i>MoHarram</i>
2nd	<i>Safar</i>
3rd	<i>Rabi' al-Awal</i>
4th	<i>Rabay ath-Thaani</i>
5th	<i>Jumaada al-Awal</i>
6th	<i>Jumaada al-Akhira</i>
7th	<i>Rajab</i>
8th	<i>Shaban</i>
9th	<i>Ramadan</i>
10th	<i>Shawwal</i>
11th	<i>Zuul-Qeda</i>
12th	<i>Zuul-Hijja</i>

TRANSPORT

Public Transport

Where is the ...?	<i>wayn/fayn ...?</i>
airport	<i>al-mataar</i>
bus station	<i>maHattat al-baas/ maHattat al-karaj</i>

ticket office	<i>maktab at-tazaakar</i>
train station	<i>maHattat al-qitaar</i>

What time does the ... leave/arrive?	<i>ay saa'a biyitla'/biyusal ...?</i>
boat/ferry (small) boat	<i>al-markib/as-safeena</i>
bus	<i>ash-shakhtura</i>
plane	<i>al-baas</i>
train	<i>al-teeyara</i>
	<i>al-qitaar</i>

Which bus goes to ...?	<i>aya baas biyruH 'ala ...?</i>
I want to go to ...	<i>ana badeh ruH ala ...</i>
Does this bus go to ...?	<i>hal-baas biyruH 'ala ...?</i>
How many buses per day go to ...?	<i>kam baas biyruH ben nahar ...?</i>
How long does the trip take?	<i>kam sa'a ar-ritHla?</i>
Please tell me when we get to ...	<i>'umal ma'arooF illee lamma noosal la ...</i>
Stop here, please.	<i>wa'if hoon 'umal ma'arooF</i>
Please wait for me.	<i>'umal ma'arooF istanna</i>
May I sit here?	<i>mumkin a'ood hoon?</i>
May we sit here?	<i>mumkin ni'ood hoon?</i>

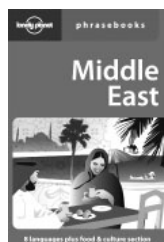
1st class	<i>daraja oola</i>
2nd class	<i>daraja taaniya</i>
ticket to/from	<i>at-tazaakar ila/min</i>

Private Transport

I'd like to hire a ...	<i>biddee esta'jer ...</i>
Where can I hire a ...?	<i>wayn/fayn feeni esta'jer ...?</i>
bicycle	<i>bisklet</i>
camel	<i>jamal</i>
car	<i>sayyaara</i>
donkey	<i>Hmaar</i>
4WD	<i>jeep</i>
horse	<i>Hsaan</i>
motorcycle	<i>mosotikl</i>
tour guide	<i>al-dalee as-siyaaHi/ al-murshid as-siyaaHi</i>

Is this the road to ...?	<i>Hal Haza al-tareeq eela ...?</i>
Where's a service station?	<i>wayn/fayn maHaltet al-benzeen?</i>
Please fill it up.	<i>min fadlak (emla/abee) Ha</i>
I'd like (30) litres.	<i>biddee talateen leeter</i>

diesel	<i>deezel</i>
petrol	<i>benzeen</i>

(How long) can I park here?*(kam sa'a) mumkin aas-f hon?***Where do I pay?***fayn/wayn mumkin an add'aa?***I need a mechanic.***bidee mekaneesyan***The car/motorbike has broken down (at ...).***al-sayyaara/-mutusikl it'atlit ('an ...)***The car/motorbike won't start.***al-sayyaara/-mutusikl ma bit door***I have a flat tyre.***nzel al-doolab***I've run out of petrol.***mafi benzeen or al-benzeen khalas***I've had an accident.***aamalt hads***TRAVEL WITH CHILDREN****Is there a/an ...?***fee ...?***I need a/an ...***biddee ...***car baby seat***kursee sayyaara leel bebe'***disposable nappies***pamperz (brand name)***nappies (diapers)***Ha fa daat***formula (baby's milk)***Haleeb bebe'***highchair***kursee atfaal***potty***muneeyai***stroller***arabeyet atfaal***Do you mind if I breastfeed here?***mumkin aradda hon?***Are children allowed?***Hal yousmah leel atfaal?*

Also available from Lonely Planet:
Middle East Phrasebook

Glossary

This glossary lists terms used in this book that may be unfamiliar to those living outside Jordan. Most are Arabic words commonly used in Jordan but some abbreviations are also included. See the boxed text (opposite) for architectural terminology, which may come in handy when visiting the sights of Petra and Jerash.

abu – father of...
agal – black headrope used to hold a keffiyeh in place
ain (ayoun) – spring or well
amir – see *emir*
arak – alcoholic spirit
ASEZA – Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority
Ayyubid dynasty – the dynasty founded by *Saladin* (Salah ad-Din) in Egypt in 1169

bab (abwab) – gate
Badia – stony desert
Bedouin (pl Bedu) – nomadic desert dweller
beit – house
beit ash-sha'ar – goat-hair Bedouin tent
bin – son of...; also *ibn*

caliph – Islamic ruler
caravanserai – large inn enclosing a courtyard, providing accommodation and a marketplace for caravans
Circassians – Muslims from the Caucasus who emigrated to Jordan in the 19th century

Decapolis (Latin) – literally '10 cities'; this term refers to a number of ancient cities in the Roman Empire, including Amman and Jerash
deir – monastery

eid – Islamic feast
Eid al-Adha – Feast of Sacrifice marking the pilgrimage to Mecca
Eid al-Fitr – Festival of Breaking the Fast, celebrated throughout the Islamic world at the end of Ramadan
emir – Islamic ruler, leader, military commander or governor; literally 'prince'

haj – the pilgrimage to Mecca
hammam(at) – natural hot springs; also a Turkish steam bath
haram – forbidden area
hejab – woman's headscarf

ibn – son of...; also *bin*
il-balad – downtown; the centre of town
imam – religious leader

jebel – hill or mountain
JETT – Jordan Express Travel & Tourism, the major private bus company in Jordan
JTB – Jordan Tourism Board

keffiyeh – checked scarf worn by Arab men
kilim – flat, woven mat
Koran – see *Quran*
Kufic – a type of highly stylised old Arabic script

maidan – town or city square
malek – king
malekah – queen
Mamluk dynasty – literally 'slaves'; Muslim dynasty named for a former slave and soldier class
medina – old walled centre of any Islamic city
mezze – starters, appetisers
mihrab – niche in the wall of a mosque that indicates the direction of Mecca
minaret – tower on top of a mosque
muezzin – mosque official who calls the faithful to prayer, often from the *minaret*

Nabataean – ancient trading civilisation based around Petra
nargileh – water pipe used to smoke tobacco (used mainly by men)

oud – Arabic lute

PLO – Palestine Liberation Organisation

qala'at – castle or fort
qasr – castle or palace
qibla – direction of Mecca
Quran – holy book of Islam
qusayr – small castle or palace

Ramadan – Muslim month of fasting
RSCN – Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature

Saladin – (Salah ad-Din in Arabic) Kurdish warlord who re-took Jerusalem from the Crusaders; founder of the *Ayyubid dynasty*
servees – service taxi
sheesha – see *nargileh*

AND A TRICLINIUM IS...?

Reading a guidebook to some of Jordan's most famous sights can seem like an exercise in linguistics – including Latin, Nabataean, Greek, Arabic and the languages of geography and classical architecture. Listen to any tour guide, especially at Petra, and you'll assume they're expert in all of them. But you don't have to be a polyglot to make the most of Jordan's wonders. Have a quick *shoofti* (Arabic word meaning 'you (female) looked') at the glossary of architectural terms below and you'll soon know your pediments from your porticos.

agora – open meeting space for commerce

baetyls – divine stones

capitals – carved tops of columns

cardo maximus – Roman main street, running north-south

colonnade – row of columns

Corinthian – look for fluted columns with leafy capitals

decumanus – Roman main street, from east to west

Doric – look for unfluted columns with plain capitals

high place – sacred site on mountain-top

loculi – grave

necropolis – cemetery

nymphaeum – literally 'temple of the Nymphs'; public baths, fountains and pools

pediment – triangular crowning feature on front of building

portico – structure supported by columns

propylaeum – gateway or grand entrance

stele – commemorative stone or column with inscriptions

temenos – sacred courtyard

tetrapylon – an archway with four entrances

triclinium – Roman dining room

sheikh – venerated religious scholar, dignitary or venerable old man

siq – gorge or canyon (usually created by tectonic forces rather than by wind or water)

souq – market

tell – ancient mound created by centuries of urban rebuilding

Trans-Jordan – Jordan's original name

Umayyad dynasty – first great dynasty of Arab Muslim rulers

umm – mother of...

UNRWA – UN Relief & Works Agency

wadi – valley or river bed formed by watercourse, dry except after heavy rainfall (plural: wadyan)

zerb – Bedouin oven, buried in the sand

© Lonely Planet Publications. To make it easier for you to use, access to this chapter is not digitally restricted. In return, we think it's fair to ask you to use it for personal, non-commercial purposes only. In other words, please don't upload this chapter to a peer-to-peer site, mass email it to everyone you know, or resell it. See the terms and conditions on our site for a longer way of saying the above - 'Do the right thing with our content.'