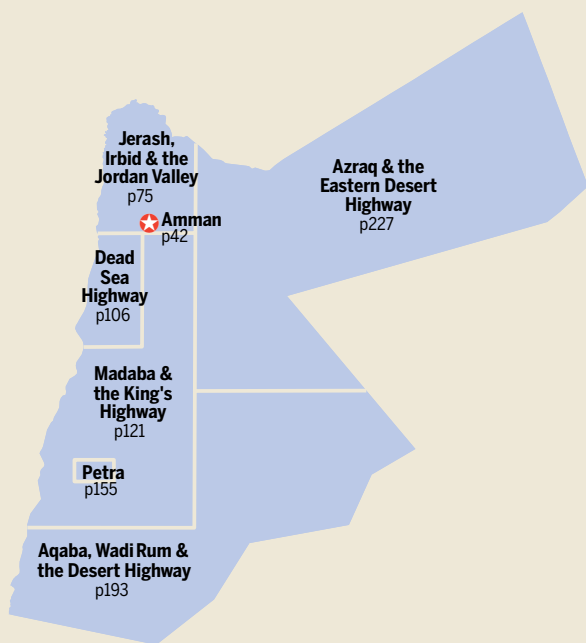




# Jordan



THIS EDITION WRITTEN AND RESEARCHED BY

Jenny Walker, Paul Clammer

## PLAN YOUR TRIP

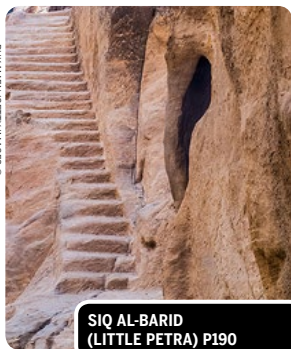
Welcome to Jordan	4
Jordan Map	6
Jordan's Top 15	8
Need to Know	16
If You Like	18
Month by Month	21
Itineraries	24
Red Sea Diving & Snorkelling	29
Travel with Children	36
Regions at a Glance	38

## ON THE ROAD

<b>AMMAN</b>	<b>42</b>	Ajloun Forest Reserve	88
<b>Around Amman</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>Irbid &amp; Around</b>	<b>91</b>
Wadi as-Seer & Iraq al-Amir	72	Irbid	91
Cave of Seven Sleepers (Ahl al-Kahf)	73	Abila (Quwayliba)	94
Fuheis	74	Yarmouk Battleground	94
<b>JERASH, IRBID &amp; THE JORDAN VALLEY</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>The Jordan Valley</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>Jerash &amp; Around</b>	<b>77</b>	Al-Himma (Mukheiba)	96
Jerash	77	Umm Qais (Gadara)	96
Dibeen Forest Reserve	86	Pella (Taqabat Fahl)	99
Ajloun	87	Salt	101
		Shuneh al-Janubiyeh (South Shuna)	103
		Bethany-Beyond-the-Jordan (Al-Maghtas)	103



BEDOUIN MAN AT WADI RUM P209



SIQ AL-BARID (LITTLE PETRA) P190



DEAD SEA P109

# Contents

## UNDERSTAND

### DEAD SEA HIGHWAY..... 106

Dead Sea .....	109
Herodus (Zara) Spring ..	114
Dead Sea Panoramic Complex.....	115
Hammamat Ma'in .....	116
Mujib Biosphere Reserve .....	117
Lisan Peninsula .....	119
Lot's Cave .....	119
Wadi Araba .....	120

### MADABA & THE KING'S HIGHWAY...121

Madaba .....	123
Mt Nebo .....	134
Around Mt Nebo.....	136
Wadi Jadid.....	137
Mukawir (Machaerus)...	137
Umm ar-Rasas .....	139
Wadi Mujib .....	140
Ar-Rabba .....	141
Karak .....	141
Wadi Hasa & Khirbet Tannour .....	146
Tafila .....	147
Dana Biosphere Reserve .....	147
Shobak.....	152

### PETRA..... 155

The Ancient City.....	158
Wadi Musa .....	179
Siq al-Barid (Little Petra).....	190

### AQABA, WADI RUM & THE DESERT HIGHWAY..... 193

<b>Aqaba &amp; Around .....</b>	<b>195</b>
Aqaba .....	195
South Coast .....	207
<b>Wadi Rum &amp; Around... 209</b>	
Wadi Rum .....	209
Diseh .....	224
<b>The Desert Highway... 225</b>	
Humaiyma.....	225
Ma'an .....	225
Qatrana .....	226

### AZRAQ & THE EASTERN DESERT HIGHWAY..... 227

<b>Azraq &amp; Around .....</b>	<b>229</b>
Zarqa .....	229
Hallabat .....	230
Azraq .....	232
Qasr al-Azraq .....	234
Azraq Oasis.....	235
Shaumari Wildlife Reserve .....	236
Qasr 'Uweinid .....	237
Qusayr Amra .....	237
Qasr Kharana .....	239
Qasr al-Mushatta .....	240

### Eastern Desert Highway..... 241

Mafraq .....	241
Umm al-Jimal .....	242
Qasr Deir al-Kahf .....	244
Safawi .....	245
Qasr Aseikhin .....	245
Qasr Burqu .....	245

Jordan Today.....	248
History .....	251
Amateur Archaeology... 269	
<b>Biblical Sites of Jordan .....</b>	<b>272</b>
<b>People &amp; Society .....</b>	<b>275</b>
<b>Islam.....</b>	<b>281</b>
<b>Traditional Crafts.....</b>	<b>284</b>
<b>Flavours of Jordan.....</b>	<b>288</b>
<b>The Natural Environment .....</b>	<b>292</b>
<b>Green Jordan &amp; Ecotourism .....</b>	<b>297</b>

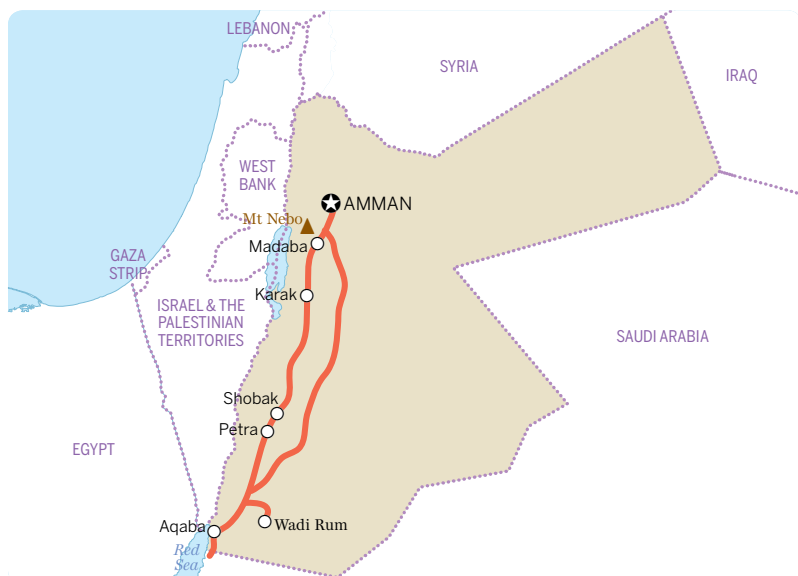
## SURVIVAL GUIDE

<b>Safe Travel.....</b>	<b>302</b>
<b>Women Travellers.....</b>	<b>304</b>
<b>Directory A-Z .....</b>	<b>306</b>
<b>Transport .....</b>	<b>319</b>
<b>Health.....</b>	<b>328</b>
<b>Language .....</b>	<b>333</b>
<b>Index.....</b>	<b>343</b>
<b>Map Legend.....</b>	<b>351</b>

## SPECIAL FEATURES

<b>Red Sea Diving &amp; Snorkelling .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Petra 3D Illustration .....</b>	<b>162</b>
<b>Biblical Sites of Jordan .....</b>	<b>272</b>
<b>Green Jordan &amp; Ecotourism .....</b>	<b>297</b>

# Itineraries



7  
DAYS

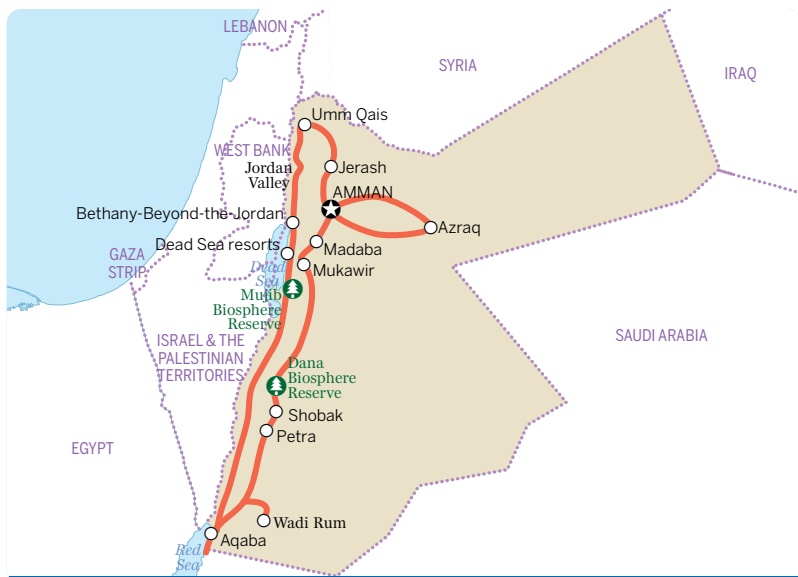
## Amman to Aqaba Return

Thanks to its relatively compact size, Jordan rewards even the shortest of getaways, especially if you're prepared to hire a car. This route takes in most of Jordan's key sites in a journey along the King's Highway, the ancient backbone of the country.

On day one experience modern Jordan in the souqs of **Amman**. On day two, piece together a biblical history in the mosaic town of **Madaba** and, like Moses, survey the Promised Land from neighbouring **Mt Nebo**.

Spend day three following the caravans of history along the King's Highway, crossing mighty Wadi Mujib. Visit the Crusader castles in **Karak** and **Shobak** and listen for ghostly hooves against cobbles.

Rise early on day four to experience the Siq at **Petra** and climb to a High Place for lunch. On day five, slither through Wadi Muthlim and watch the sunset at Petra's iconic Monastery. Proceed to the seaside town of **Aqaba**, two hours away. On day six, wash off the desert dust in the spectacular Red Sea before returning to Amman (four hours via the Desert Highway) on day seven; with an early start, a desert lunch is possible at **Wadi Rum** en route.

18  
DAYS

## Around Jordan

With around 18 days you can unravel a path through Jordan's most famous sites, travelling in the footsteps of Roman legionnaires, Crusader craftsmen, Islamic warriors and Bedouin nomads. This route takes in Jordan's main highlights and throws in a few wild cards too.

Begin with two days in **Amman** and a third at the races – chariot races that is – at the spectacular Roman ruins of **Jerash**. For a springtime flower show, camp overnight at the oak woodlands of Ajloun Forest Reserve or spend day four wading knee-high among daisies at the ruins of **Umm Qais**. On day five descend to the subtropical Jordan Valley, pausing at the point where Jesus was allegedly baptised in **Bethany-Beyond-the-Jordan**.

Follow the River Jordan towards a night of luxury at the **Dead Sea resorts** followed by an early morning float on day six at the world's lowest point. Survey the West Bank from a higher vantage at the Dead Sea Panoramic Complex en route for **Mujib Biosphere Reserve**. Splash, swim and struggle through 'Petra with water' on the unguided Siq Trail. Dry out along the Dead Sea Highway to Lot's Cave and swap stories about the adventure over a vegetarian supper at candlelit Feynan Ecologde.

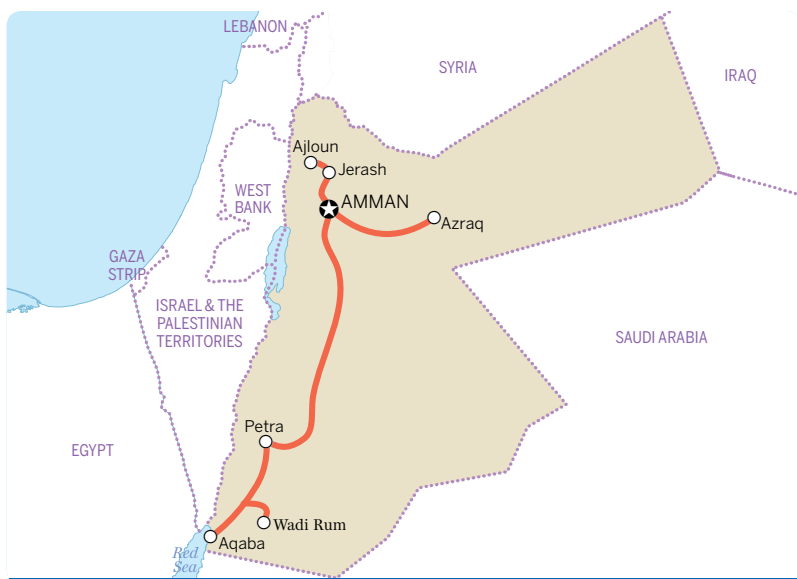
Begin week two chilling in **Aqaba** for two days, sparing time for a dive or snorkel in the fabled Red Sea. With batteries recharged, tackle a hike in **Wadi Rum** on day 10 and stay overnight in a Bedouin camp. Spend the next three nights in Wadi Musa, joining Petra by Night for a magical introduction to the world wonder of **Petra**.

Head north from Petra via the ancient King's Highway on day 14, sparing time to pause at the imposing castle of **Shobak**. Break the journey at **Dana Biosphere Reserve** and relax on day 15, taking village walks or a longer hike with a guide.

Spend day 16 making the most of the King's Highway to Madaba, pausing at Karak and Herod's Castle in **Mukawir** en route. Allow two days for souvenir shopping in **Madaba**, the closest town to the international airport, or at craft shops in nearby Mt Nebo. If energy and extra time allows, end your visit with a day trip to **Azraq** and the Eastern desert castles.



Top: Roman Theatre (p48), Amman  
Bottom: Flat breads, Ajloun (p87)



**12**  
DAYS

## Border to Border

Jordan is plumb in the middle of a richly historic region, making it an essential part of a Middle East adventure. This 12-day route by public transport assumes entry by ferry from Egypt and exit by bus to Israel and the Palestinian Territories. Check the latest travel advisories before making this trip as the security situation in South Sinai (Egypt) is changeable.

Spend the first two days acclimatising to a new country in **Aqaba**: Jordan has a distinct character, immediately felt in the souqs and open-air restaurants of this seaside town. Spare time for a swim – Jordan's access to the Red Sea may be diminutive but the coral gardens are pristine and relatively unvisited. On day three take the morning bus and go in search of 'El Lawrence' in the magnificent desert of **Wadi Rum**. Hop astride a camel and head into the red sand dunes for an overnight camping experience with the Bedouin.

On day four rise at dawn with the locals, ready to catch the minibus to **Petra**. With two days in the pink city you can hike to the High Places, learn to cook Jordanian food at Petra Kitchen and watch the sunset from the Monastery and enjoy an evening in the famous Cave Bar.

On day six head north to **Amman** on one of the frequent Desert Highway buses via Ma'an. Spend a night sampling city nightlife, including an evening's stroll downtown through Amman's Roman ruins. Hike from the Citadel on day seven and reward the effort with the capital's best-loved Arabic street food at Hashem Restaurant.

Get off the beaten track on day eight by stopping over for two nights at **Azraq**. Azraq Fort was Lawrence's winter hideout and the nearby Azraq Wetland Reserve is a reminder of the fragility of life in the black Badia (stone desert). After crossing such barren lands, the shrunken waters of the oasis seem miraculous.

Head for the Roman ruins of **Jerash** on day 10. After visiting the extensive site on the morning of day 11, overnight in nearby **Ajloun**. With a crumbling castle and a nature reserve, Ajloun is a peaceful place to spend a last day in Jordan before heading to the border with Israel and the Palestinian Territories.

4  
DAYS

## Gems in the North

With a long weekend, most visitors head straight for Petra on an overnighter from Amman. For a more rewarding use of time, leave the pink city for a longer visit and focus instead on Jordan's gems in the north. This trip bypasses the capital.

Hire a car or take a taxi from the airport in **Amman** and head to the Roman ruins of **Jerash**. On day two, amble down to the Jordan Valley via **Ajloun** and the Islamic castle of Qala'at ar-Rabad. Pause at the point where John allegedly baptised Jesus at **Bethany-Beyond-the-Jordan** and book in for some extreme R&R at the lowest place on earth. On day three, tear yourself away from the fluffy towels of the region's best spas (which come complete with a bob in the **Dead Sea** and therapeutic mud pack) and drive via the Dead Sea Panoramic Complex to steaming Hammamat Ma'in. From nearby **Mukawir**, where Salome reputedly danced for John's head on a platter, skirt the plateau ridge to the friendly mosaic town of **Madaba** and on day four visit Mt Nebo or the dolmens of Wadi Jadid. From Madaba, allow an hour to return to the airport.

6  
DAYS

## Petra Plus

Travellers often ask: 'Is it worth making the effort to get to Petra with only limited time?' The answer is yes! While you can cover Petra in an exhausting day trip from the capital, this route takes you on a more rewarding route through the south if you're prepared to use taxis.

From Amman, take the bus along the Desert Highway to **Aqaba**. With plenty of accommodation, a lively ambience and excellent seafood, it'll be hard to leave town on day three. Take the early bus to Wadi Musa, the town closest to the Nabataean treasures of **Petra**. Amble through the Siq at midday, missing the morning tour groups. Watch the sunset turn the Royal Tombs pink, and return to the lively travel scene in the town's Cave Bar.

Follow the ghosts of Crusaders along the King's Highway to **Shobak** on day four and stay overnight at **Dana Biosphere Reserve**. Hike down to **Feynan Ecolodge** on day five, prearranging transport along the Dead Sea Highway back to Aqaba (or north to Amman) on day six.





## OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Beijing and Delhi, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

## OUR WRITERS



### Jenny Walker

**Coordinating Author; Madaba & the Kings Highway; Petra; Aqaba, Wadi Rum & the Desert Highway; Azraq & the Eastern Desert Highway** Jenny's first involvement with Arabia was as a student, collecting butterflies for her father's book in Saudi Arabia. She went on to write a dissertation on Doughty and Lawrence (Stirling University) and an MPhil thesis on the Arabic Orient in British literature (Oxford University). Current PhD studies (Nottingham Trent University) focus on Arabian

deserts in contemporary literature. A member of the British Guild of Travel Writers and the Outdoor Writers and Photographers Guild, she has written extensively on the Middle East. With her husband, Wing Commander (retired) Sam Owen, she authored *Off-Road in the Sultanate of Oman* – home for the past 16 years. Jenny has travelled in over 110 countries and is Associate Dean of an engineering college in Muscat. Jenny also wrote the Women Travellers chapter for this guide.



### Paul Clammer

**Amman; Jerish, Irbid & the Jordan Valley; Dead Sea Highway** Paul has contributed to over 25 Lonely Planet guidebooks and worked as a tour guide in countries from Turkey to Morocco. In a previous life he may even have been a molecular biologist. He's travelled extensively in the Middle East and wider Islamic world, and prior to researching this guide he spent nearly a year living in Amman, which allowed him plenty of time to track down the finest felafel, hummus and shwar-

ma the city has to offer. Paul also wrote the Safe Travel, Directory, Transport and Health chapters for this guide.

### Published by Lonely Planet Publications Pty Ltd

ABN 36 005 607 983

9th edition – July 2015

ISBN 978 1 74220 801 5

© Lonely Planet 2015 Photographs © as indicated 2015

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in China

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be copied, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, except brief extracts for the purpose of review, and no part of this publication may be sold or hired, without the written permission of the publisher. Lonely Planet and the Lonely Planet logo are trademarks of Lonely Planet and are registered in the US Patent and Trademark Office and in other countries. Lonely Planet does not allow its name or logo to be appropriated by commercial establishments, such as retailers, restaurants or hotels. Please let us know of any misuses: [lonelyplanet.com/tp](http://lonelyplanet.com/tp).

Although the authors and Lonely Planet have taken all reasonable care in preparing this book, we make no warranty about the accuracy or completeness of its content and, to the maximum extent permitted, disclaim all liability arising from its use.

© Lonely Planet Publications Pty Ltd. 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.'