



# Jordan

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## Best for Nature

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## Best for Culture

- » Petra (p313)
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## Why Go?

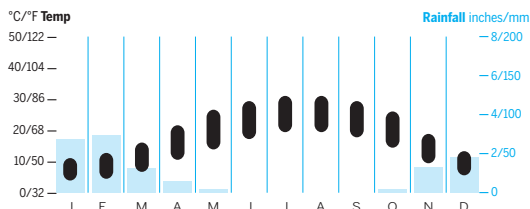
*Ahlan wa sahlan!* – ‘Welcome to Jordan!’ From the Bedouin of Wadi Rum to the taxi drivers of Amman, you’ll be on the receiving end of this open-armed welcome every day. It’s this, and a sense of stability amid a problematic neighbourhood, that makes travel in Jordan such a delight.

With heavyweight neighbours pulling big historical punches, Jordan easily holds its own. Amman, Jerash and Umm Qais were cities of the Roman Decapolis, while biblical sites include Bethany-Beyond-the-Jordan, where Jesus was baptised, and Mt Nebo, where Moses reputedly surveyed the Promised Land. Grandest of all is the sublime Nabataean capital of Petra, carved from vertical cliffs.

But Jordan is not just about antiquities – it also offers the great outdoors. Whether diving in Aqaba, trekking in the camel-prints of Lawrence of Arabia or hiking through stunning canyons, Jordan’s eco-savvy nature reserves offer the best of adventures in the Middle East.

## When to Go

### Amman



**Mar–May** The weather is perfect, with warm days, cool nights and spectacular wildflowers.

**Sep–Nov** A good time to go hiking, with less visitors and relief after intense summer heat.

**Dec–Feb** The Red and Dead Seas offer balmy dips, while upland Jordan shivers with winter chills.

## AT A GLANCE

- » **Currency** Jordanian dinar (JD)
- » **Mobile Phones** Sim cards widely available
- » **Money** ATMs widespread; credit cards (except Amex) widely accepted
- » **Visas** Available on arrival

## Fast Facts

- » **Capital** Amman
- » **Country code** 962
- » **Language** Arabic (English widely spoken)
- » **Official name** Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
- » **Population** 6.5 million

## Exchange Rates

Australia	A\$1	JD0.73
Egypt	E£1	JD0.18
Euro Zone	€1	JD0.94
Israel & the Territories	1NIS	JD0.19
Syria	S£10	JD0.12
UK	£1	JD1.15
US	US\$1	JD0.71

For current exchange rates see [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com).

## Resources

- » **Bible Places** ([www.bibleplaces.com](http://www.bibleplaces.com)) Biblical sites
- » **Jordan Tourism Board** ([www.visitjordan.com](http://www.visitjordan.com))
- » **Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature** ([www.rscn.org.jo](http://www.rscn.org.jo)) Nature reserves
- » **Ruth's Jordan Jubilee** ([www.jordanjubilee.com](http://www.jordanjubilee.com)) Petra information

## Connections

Jordan is easily visited overland from neighbouring countries, with visas available on arrival at border crossings and Aqaba port. Arrival in Jordan is by boat (from Egypt), bus or service taxi; you can bring your own car or motorcycle (but not hire car). Leaving Jordan by land requires more planning: if you're intending to visit Syria, in particular, read the visa information on p37. Onward travel in the region can also be problematic after visiting Israel and the Palestinian Territories (see p36).

## ITINERARIES

### One Week

Arrive in **Aqaba** from Egypt, and party in Jordan's holiday town. On day two, take the early-morning bus to **Wadi Rum**, of Lawrence of Arabia fame. Hike or share the cost of a 4WD desert tour and return to Aqaba. On day three, take the early-morning bus to Wadi Musa and explore the rock-hewn wonders of **Petra**, a world-class site. On day four, catch the evening bus to **Amman** and spend day five exploring the capital. On day six, watch a chariot race in the Roman ruins of **Jerash** and leave the next day on a direct bus from Amman – either north to Damascus or west to Jerusalem via the King Hussein crossing, taking note of visa restrictions.

### Two Weeks

Amplify the above by travelling the **King's Highway** between Petra and Amman, either by taxi or a minibus-hitching combo, visiting the Crusader castles of **Shobak** and **Karak**, the escarpment village of **Dana**, and dramatic **Wadi Mujib** en route. Chill out in the travel-friendly town of **Madaba** from where you can tour the **Dead Sea** and **Bethany**, or romp round the **Eastern Desert** castles.

## Essential Food & Drink

- » **Fuul medames** Fava-bean dish drizzled with fresh-pressed olive oil; served with unleavened Arabic bread, sour cream, local salty white cheese and a sprinkling of *za'atar* (thyme and other herbs).
- » **Maqlubbeh** Pyramid of steaming rice garnished with cardamom and sultanas; topped with slivers of onion, meat, cauliflower and fresh herbs.
- » **Mensaf** Bedouin dish of lamb, rice and pine nuts, combined with yogurt and the liquid fat from the cooked meat.
- » **Kunafa** Addictive dessert of shredded dough and cream cheese, smothered in syrup.
- » **Marrameeya** Sage-based herbal tea, especially delicious at Dana.
- » **Petra Kitchen** Cook your own Jordanian speciality in Wadi Musa.