

# Getting Started

Jordan is an easy and highly enjoyable country to visit. The logistics of travel are a breeze, from the visa you get on arrival to the ATMs parked on every street corner. The country is compact, travel times are short and transport is generally comfortable. Budget travel in Jordan is definitely doable but you'll probably get the most from the country if you can spend a bit more, every now and again splashing out for a dive or guided hike, perhaps hiring a car for a few days or dining in a upscale restaurant. The great thing about Jordan is that you can really see a lot in a short period of time, or combine the country with the other great sights of the Middle East, from Jerusalem to Damascus, both just a few hours away by road.

## WHEN TO GO

For a small country, Jordan has an extraordinary range of climates. The best time to visit climate-wise is in spring (March to May) and autumn (September to November), when the daytime temperatures aren't too extreme. April is probably the best month, when temperatures are warm and wildflowers are in bloom. March can be cold and rainy in the north but is balmy by the Gulf of Aqaba and the Dead Sea.

Average daytime maximum temperatures in Amman range from 12.6°C in January to 32.5°C in August. See the Climate Charts on p240.

Winter can be surprisingly cold. Snow in Amman is not unheard of (even Petra gets the occasional fall) and the deserts can be freezing, especially at night. Make sure you have plenty of warm clothes and a windproof and waterproof jacket. Aqaba is the one exception, with average daytime maximum temperatures of around 20°C in January, and is quite a hit with deep-frozen northern Europeans during winter.

In high summer (July and August) the weather in the humid Jordan Valley is extremely oppressive – it feels like you're trapped in an airless oven – with suffocating daytime highs well in excess of 36°C. It's also fiercely hot in the desert (including Wadi Rum), though this is a dry heat

## DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT...

- Your driver's licence and/or Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI) diving card if you plan to hire a car or go diving
- A Syrian visa if headed north to Syria (see p251)
- A Jordanian visa if headed from Israel & the Palestinian Territories across King Hussein/Allenby Bridge (see p257)
- A swimming costume if visiting the Red or Dead seas or canyoning in Wadi Mujib
- A sleeping sheet and/or bag if you're staying overnight in Wadi Rum or one of Jordan's nature reserves, especially outside of summer
- A torch (flashlight) for exploring archaeological sites and overnighing in Wadi Rum
- Your PIN to access cash through ATMs
- Binoculars if bird- or animal-spotting in a nature reserve
- Other handy items such as: a Swiss army knife, a few metres of nylon cord (for a clothesline), clothes pegs, a universal sink plug, an electrical adaptor, earplugs (useful if you're staying near mosques), padlocks and a towel

## UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES IN JORDAN

- Petra (1985; p175)
- Qusayr Amra (1985; p135)
- Dana Nature Reserve (Biosphere Reserve) (1998; p171)
- Umm ar-Rasas (2004; p163)

and thus easier to deal with. The tourist authorities usually plan festivals (such as the Jerash Festival) for the summer period. If you do visit in summer, come well prepared with a hat, sunscreen and protective clothing.

The month of Ramadan is a time when visitors should not eat, drink or smoke in public during the day so it's a tricky time to visit. Eid al-Fitr, the great celebration at the end of Ramadan, is a fun time to visit but it's best to bunker down for a few days because public transport is heavily booked and hotel rooms are sometimes hard to find, especially in Aqaba. See p244 for more on Ramadan.

Note also that most of the excellent ecotourism projects operated in Jordan's Dana, Wadi Mujib and Ajlun nature reserves only operate between April and October.

## COSTS & MONEY

Jordan is not the cheapest country in the area to travel around, but it is possible to get by on a tight budget and, if you spend wisely, good value can be found all over the country.

The most basic accommodation costs from JD2 for a bed in a very basic shared room or on the roof, but most decent budget places charge about JD5/8/11 for a single/double/triple. A good midrange single/double costs from JD12/20 up to JD25/35, while top-end doubles start from JD65.

Street snacks like a felafel or shwarma sandwich (see p59) are cheap and you can get a decent budget meal for JD1 to JD3. In any midrange restaurant, expect to pay JD1 for a starter and from JD1.500 to JD2.500 for most main courses. If you're splashing out at one of Amman's better restaurants, don't expect too much change back from JD15 per person, and you'll pay more if you have a bottle of wine.

Public transport is cheap – less than 500 fils per hour of travel in a public bus or minibus, and about JD1 per hour in a more comfortable, long-distance private bus.

One of the biggest sightseeing expenses in Jordan is the entrance fee to Petra (up to JD31 for three days, depending on the season), but it's so worth it! Entry to other popular sights such as Jerash costs JD5 but most places are free or cost just a dinar or two.

If you stay in a shared room or sleep on the roof at the cheapest possible hotel, eat nothing but felafel and shwarma and use public transport and/or hitch exclusively, it's possible to get by on about JD8 per day, though JD10 is more realistic. If you add the cost of an occasional chartered taxi, decent food and the entrance fee to Petra, the cost per day for a budget-minded traveller is about JD15. For JD30, you could live comfortably.

## TRAVEL LITERATURE

In the late 19th century the archaeologist Selah Merrill set off to explore what is modern Jordan, the area he called *East of the Jordan*. His book is one of the very few written in the 19th century about this area, but it can be hard to find a copy.

## HOW MUCH?

souvenir keffiyeh  
from JD5

postcard 100 fils

cup of tea 200-400 fils

cup of western coffee  
JD1-1.500

two-course cheap  
lunch JD2

midrange dinner JD7

See also Lonely Planet  
Index, inside front cover.

Johann Ludwig (also known as Jean Louis) Burckhardt spent many years in the early 19th century travelling extensively through Jordan, Syria and the Holy Land, disguised as a pilgrim and compiling a unique and scholarly travelogue detailing every facet of the culture and society he encountered along the way. The result is *Travels in Syria and the Holy Land*,

## TOP CHOICES

### Top Five Jordanian Experiences

- Dive among the spectacular wrecks and coral of the Red Sea, south of Aqaba (p227)
- Spend a night under sparkling desert skies with the Bedouin in Wadi Rum (p212)
- Splash through the ochre-coloured canyon of a wadi (p147)
- Float on the Dead Sea for a weird been-there-done-that experience (p143)
- Organise a camel ride with a Bedouin guide up Jebel Haroun mountain in Petra (p191) or through Barrah Siq in Wadi Rum (p210)

### Top Five Adventures

- The three-day camel trip from Wadi Rum to Aqaba (p210)
- Wadi Mujib – hike through gorges and slot canyons along the Maqui Trail or the Faqua-Wadi Mujib routes (p147), or explore one of Jordan's other wild wadis (p237)
- The three-day hike from Dana to Petra via Wadi Feinan, Wadi Ghuweir and Mansourah (p172)
- Climb Jebel Rum or scramble through the canyons of Jebel Umm Ishrin or Jebel Khazali (p211)
- Hire a camel or donkey or hike for two days to Jebel Haroun, Sabra and Tayyibeh (p191 and p192)

### Top Five Views

- The Promised Land from atop Mt Nebo (p158)
- The Dead Sea from the Dead Sea Panorama Complex (p146)
- The Sea of Galilee and the Golan Heights from Umm Qais (p120)
- Wadi Araba from the Desert Highway headed towards Aqaba
- Wadi Rum anywhere, from towering canyon walls to red-sand dunes – even the night sky (p203)

### Be Good to Yourself – Top Five Splurges

- Hammam it up with a massage, sauna and body scrub in Amman (p86) or Wadi Musa (p193)
- Pamper yourself at a Dead Sea spa (p145)
- Enjoy a cocktail as the sun sets over Petra, the Dead Sea or the Gulf of Aqaba
- Take a day off in Aqaba at a private beach (p220 or p231)
- Upgrade to a fabulous boutique hotel such as the Sofitel Taybet Zaman near Petra (p198 and p234)

### Top Ten Ruins

- Petra – Nabataean capital (p175)
- Jerash – one of the best preserved Roman ruins in the Middle East (p108)
- Karak Castle – the biggest Crusader castle in Jordan (p165)
- Qusayr Amra – superb 8th-century frescoes (p135)
- Umm Qais – Roman and Byzantine city (p120)
- Madaba – Byzantine mosaics (p150)
- Shobak Castle – Crusader fortifications and tunnels (p173)
- Ajlun – Islamic castle (p114)
- Umm al-Jimal – urban architecture (p128)
- Umm ar-Rasas – churches and mosaics (p163)

### Top Five Off-the-Beaten-Track Ruins

- Umm ar-Rasas (p163)
- Pella (p124)
- Khirbet Tannour (p170)
- Khirbet Feinan (p171)
- Umm al-Jimal (p128)

which mentions his 'discovery' of Petra (see p177). *Desert Traveller – The Life of Jean Louis Burckhardt* by Katherine Sim is an excellent biography of this remarkable traveller, packed with interesting insights.

The redoubtable Englishwoman Gertrude Bell wrote a few memoirs about her travels in the region in the early 20th century, including the fairly dated and light-hearted *The Desert and the Sown*, though it's mostly concerned with Syria. One of the most impressive women travellers of the last 150 years, Bell has been described as 'the architect of the modern Middle East', 'the most powerful woman of the British Empire' and 'the brains behind Lawrence's brawn'.

Annie Caulfield's *Kingdom of the Film Stars: Journey into Jordan* is an entertaining, personal account of the author's relationship with a Bedouin man in Jordan. *Walking the Bible* by Bruce Feiler is an engaging travelogue that follows Feiler's travels through Egypt, Israel & the Palestinian Territories and Jordan, searching for the physical roots of the Bible. Feiler shows considerably more empathy for people and places in Israel & the Palestinian Territories than those of the Arab world, but writes well on the archaeology of the Holy Land.

For books on Petra see p179.

## FILMS

Foreign films to check out before you leave include David Lean's epic *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962), starring Peter O'Toole as Lawrence and filmed partly in Wadi Rum. The lesser-known *A Dangerous Man: Lawrence After Arabia* (1991) stars Ralph Fiennes in one of his earliest film roles.

Petra's Siq and Treasury landed a starring role as the hiding place of the Holy Grail in the closing scenes of Stephen Spielberg's *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989), starring Harrison Ford and Sean Connery. The film plays mightily in the budget guesthouses of Wadi Musa.

The PBS docu-drama *Lawrence of Arabia – the Battle for the Arab World* (2003) is worth a look if you are interested in Jordanian history.

## INTERNET RESOURCES

**Atlas Tours** ([www.atlastours.net](http://www.atlastours.net)) A travel agency site but with lots of good background information on Jordan.

**Bible Places** ([www.bibleplaces.com](http://www.bibleplaces.com)) Interesting rundown on biblical sights in Jordan and Israel & the Palestinian Territories.

**Jordan Jubilee** ([www.jordanjubilee.com](http://www.jordanjubilee.com)) Probably the single best website about Jordan, loaded with practical tips and great detail; offers a wonderful window onto Jordanian society.

**Jordan Tourism Board** ([www.see-jordan.com](http://www.see-jordan.com) or [www.seejordan.org](http://www.seejordan.org)) Reasonable links to range of Jordan-related websites.

**Lonely Planet** ([www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com)). The Thorn Tree has an active range of Jordan experts who offer good advice if you post a question.

**Madaba** ([www.madaba.freeservers.com](http://www.madaba.freeservers.com)) Excellent description of Madaba's attractions and other nearby sites.

**Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities** ([www.tourism.jo](http://www.tourism.jo)) Online brochures, maps and more

**Pilgrimage 2000** (<http://holysites.com>) Good rundown of Jordan's biblical sites, prepared for the millennium visit of the late Pope John Paul II.

**Royal Family of Jordan** ([www.kingabdullah.gov.jo](http://www.kingabdullah.gov.jo) or [www.kinghussein.gov.jo](http://www.kinghussein.gov.jo)) Official websites of Jordan's Hashemite royal family, with good tourist information.

**RSCN** ([www.rscn.org.jo](http://www.rscn.org.jo)) Accessible information about Jordan's environmental and ecotourism projects. Check out the 'Adventures' and 'Wild Jordan' sections.

**'One of the most impressive women travellers of the last 150 years, Bell has been described as 'the architect of the modern Middle East''**

# Itineraries

## CLASSIC ROUTES

### AMMAN TO AQABA

One Week

One week is the minimum length of time required to truly explore Jordan on any form of transport. If you have less than a week you're better off just concentrating on Petra and Wadi Rum.

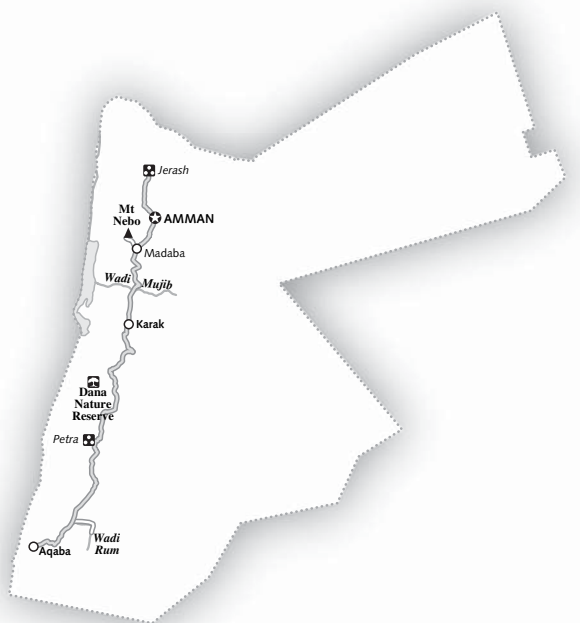
Spend your first day or half-day in **Amman** (p63) and then make a day trip to the Roman ruins at **Jerash** (p108). From Amman it's a short hop or day trip to **Madaba** (p150) to take in the Byzantine mosaics and visit nearby **Mt Nebo** (p158) where Moses is said to have died.

From Madaba head along the King's Highway to Petra, crossing Wadi Mujib gorge and the Crusader castle at **Karak** (p166). You'll have time for a flying visit to **Dana Nature Reserve** (p171), or add on a day for some hiking.

Be sure to budget two full days for **Petra** (p175). On the first day make an early start and enter the site through the Siq before the tour groups arrive. On day two enter the site through the Wadi Muthlim gorge and finish off with a visit to the Monastery.

Take the early bus to **Wadi Rum** (p203) and you'll still have time for a full-day tour by 4WD. An overnight in a Bedouin camp is a must. Next morning head to **Aqaba** (p216) for some diving or a lie on the beach; you deserve it.

A whirlwind short break that takes in a Crusader castle, views of the Promised Land, Jordan's most impressive Roman remains, desert landscapes and even some snorkelling. Use Amman or Madaba as a base for the first three days. To do all this by public transport you'd need 10 days.



### AMMAN TO AQABA

Two Weeks

Two weeks is the ideal amount of time in which to see Jordan's main highlights.

After a couple of days visiting Amman and Jerash take a day tour or hire a car to visit the desert castles, in particular the caravanserai-style **Qasr Kharana** (p136) and the Unesco World Heritage site of **Qusayr Amra** (p135). If you have a car try to add on a visit to the ruined desert garrison town of **Umm al-Jimal** (p128).

Take a minibus from Amman to Madaba and use this as a base from which to visit Mt Nebo and the ruins of **Herod's Castle** (p162) at Mukawir. Hire a taxi for the day and combine a visit to Jesus' baptism site at **Bethany-Beyond-the-Jordan** (p141) with a float in the **Dead Sea** (p143) at Amman Beach, before returning via sunset views from the Dead Sea Panorama complex.

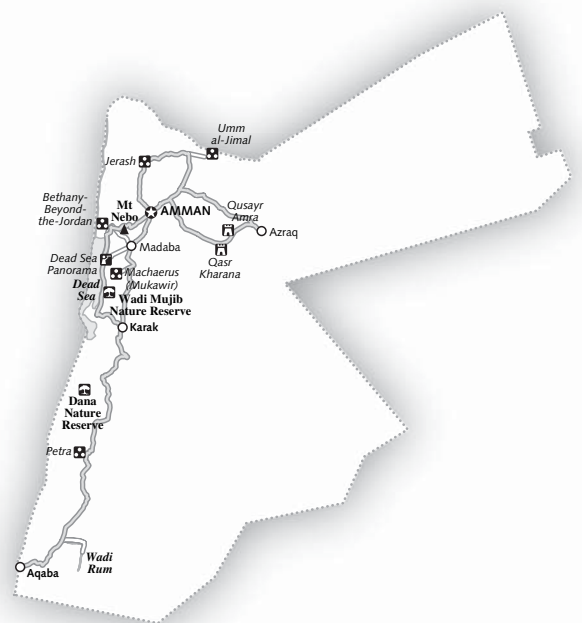
If you do have a car and are visiting between April and September you could consider making a half-day hike in **Wadi Mujib Nature Reserve** (p146). The Maqui Trail in particular is superb – reserve a place in advance.

The next day, journey down to **Karak** (p165) and spend a couple of hours exploring the crusader fort. If you spent the night at the Wadi Mujib Nature Reserve camp site or at a swanky Dead Sea resort then take the Dead Sea Highway to Karak.

Next stop is **Dana Nature Reserve** (p171), for a relaxing day of village walks or a longer hike with a guide.

On a two-week itinerary you should allocate three days for **Petra** (p175), which'll allow for some hiking and exploration of the lesser-visited sights.

Finish off with an overnight trip to **Wadi Rum** (p203) to enjoy some desert stillness, before heading down to the beach at **Aqaba** (p216).



This itinerary follows the same route as the shorter week-long version but gives you the extra time to fit in some hiking, some fine archaeological sights and explore some of Petra's lesser visited corners. Even if you use public transport most of the time, it's still worth hiring or chartering a vehicle for a few days to visit remote places.

## ROADS LESS TRAVELLED

### SELF-DRIVE

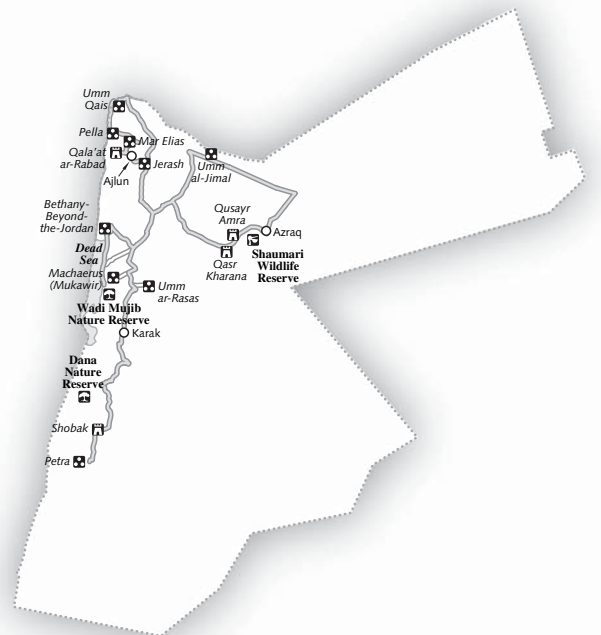
In two days you could make a relaxing excursion to the historic sights, limestone hills and olive orchards of northern Jordan. Drive north to Ajlun via Jerash to the Islamic castle of Qala'at ar-Rabad. From here backroads lead to the recently discovered church ruins at **Mar Elias** (p115) and on to the **Ajlun Nature Reserve** (p116), where you can do some lovely light walking. If you get good directions, you can take country roads from here to **Pella** (p124), before heading up the Jordan Valley to **Umm Qais** for more ruins (p120).

A two-day eastern loop could take in the desert castles of **Qasr Kharana** (p136) and **Qusayr Amra** (p135), plus a brief visit to **Shaumari Wildlife Reserve** (p131). Overnight in Azraq and on the second day (or a long first day) take the northern Hwy 10 to the brooding basalt ruins of **Umm al-Jimal** (p128).

From Madaba a great one-day Dead Sea loop can take in views of the Dead Sea at the **Dead Sea Panorama** (p146), a float in the sea and then a visit to the site of Christ's baptism at **Bethany-Beyond-the-Jordan** (p141), topped off by a sunset tilapia dinner at the nearby Talloubi Restaurant. If you have an extra day, tack on a splash up the Siq Trail of **Wadi Mujib Nature Reserve** (p146).

A car is also very useful for traversing the King's Highway from Madaba to Petra, via Herod's Castle at **Mukawir** (p162), the church mosaics of **Umm ar-Rasas** (p163) and the twisting tunnels of the Crusader castle at **Shobak** (p173). Two days is a good amount of time for this (overnight in Karak and Dana) or add on an extra day and go hiking in the **Dana Nature Reserve** (p171).

Hiring a car is a great idea but it's not cheap, so make the most of your time with these itineraries. Amman, Madaba, Wadi Rum, Aqaba, Petra and Jerash are all easily visited by public transport so concentrate on the other sights mentioned here by car. You can do all this in a week or take several bite-sized itineraries of a day or two.



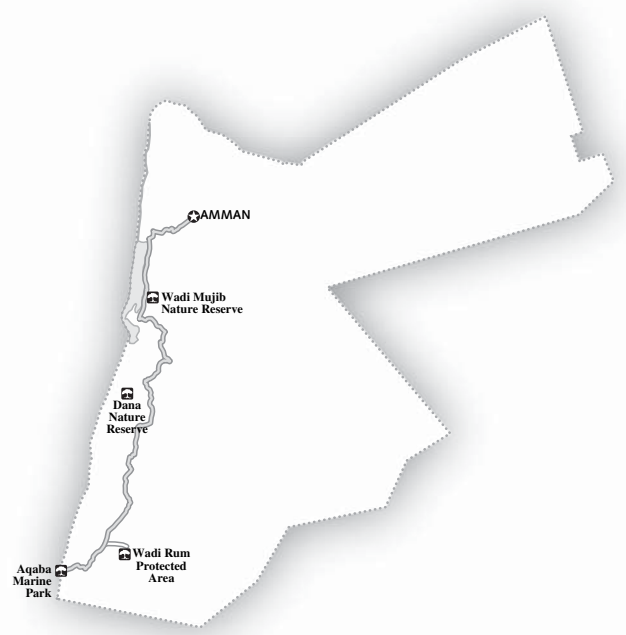
### JORDAN'S NATURE RESERVES

From Amman, take the Dead Sea Highway past the resorts and shore of the Dead Sea to the **Wadi Mujib Nature Reserve** (p146). Here you can have a serious adventure on the exciting Malaqi Trail, hike the Ibex Trail for views of the Dead Sea and Nubian ibex, or just cool off by splashing up the Siq Trail.

From Wadi Mujib, travel south via Karak or Safi/Fifa to **Dana Nature Reserve** (p171), which is a great place to just relax for a half day. Join a group for a hike in the southern Al-Barra region or make a more demanding hike down Wadi Ghuweir to Feinan Lodge and then back to Dana. The easiest option is to hike down Wadi Dana (no guide required) and arrange transport back to Dana with the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN). One pleasant day-trip is to make the half-day hike to Rummana and arrange for the RSCN to take you back to Dana village.

After a stop in Petra, budget a couple of nights in the desert at **Wadi Rum** (p203). Most people whizz around the site in a 4WD but, for a richer, slower-paced sense of the desert, arrange in advance a couple of days of hiking and climbing in the far south. There's some great rock scrambling through Jebel Umm Ishrin and to Burdah Rock Bridge and you can reach the summit of Jebel Rum with some experience with ropes. Then there's always the three-day camel trip to Aqaba...

Finally, budget a couple of days for some great **scuba diving** (p227) among the wrecks and reefs of the Gulf of Aqaba. Remember that after diving you can't fly or drive up onto the central Jordan plateau for 24 hours.



Pack some hiking shoes and make the most out of Jordan's natural beauty through its fledgling ecotourism projects. You'll need to hire a car or taxi to get to Wadi Mujib but the others can just about be visited with public transport (Dana requires some patience). Make arrangements in advance with the RSCN (see p53).

## TAILORED TRIPS

### BIBLICAL JORDAN

The east bank of the Jordan has been repeatedly touched by the prophets, and modern-day pilgrims can follow in the footsteps of such illustrious company as Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Elijah, John the Baptist and Jesus. Over 100 sites in Jordan are mentioned in the Bible alone.

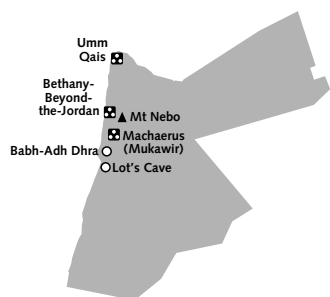
Probably the single most important site is **Bethany-Beyond-the-Jordan** (p141), where Jesus is said to have been baptised and where Elijah ascended to heaven on a fiery chariot. Just north of here Joshua led the tribes of Israel across the Jordan River into the Promised Land.

From Bethany it's a short climb along the old pilgrim road to **Mt Nebo** (p158), where Moses finally cast eyes on the Promised Land before dying.

A day trip south of Madaba are the ruins of Herod's fort at **Mukawir** (p162), where John the Baptist was imprisoned and beheaded at the behest of Salome.

At the southern end of the Dead Sea is **Lot's Cave** (p148) where Lot's wife turned to salt and Lot's daughters seduced their father, after they all fled the destruction of **Sodom and Gomorrah** (p147), which is believed to lie nearby.

Back up north, Jesus performed one of his lesser-known miracles at Gadara, modern **Umm Qais** (p120), turning a band of brigands into a pack of swine.



## Snapshot

Plucky little Jordan. In the middle of a tough neighbourhood, stuck between 'I-raq' and a hard place (Israel & the Palestinian Territories, Syria and Saudi Arabia), surrounded by political extremism and the violence of the Israeli-Palestinian struggle, devoid of the region's great oil reserves and running out of water, it's been a tough few years for the tiny kingdom.

The political instability of the region, especially the Gulf, in the last 15 years has hit Jordan hard. Tourism virtually collapsed in the wake of the September 11th attacks and a recovery only started in 2005. The current American occupation of Iraq once again cut off the country's main source of cheap oil and its main market for exported goods.

Add to this high unemployment (officially 15% but actually around double that), an extraordinarily high proportion of refugees, unpredictable climatic conditions, a dangerous dependency on foreign aid and one of the highest foreign debts per capita in the world. Currently, about 30% of the government's expenditure is used to pay off its debts.

But it's not all bad. The arrival of 100,000 mostly wealthy, mostly Christian Iraqi refugees has injected life into the Jordanian economy, raising property prices in Amman by 20% in 2005 alone. Jordan hopes to benefit from the rebuilding of Iraq, especially in the service and banking industries, pitching itself as the gateway to Iraqi reconstruction. Tourism is starting to recover and money is currently pouring into several major tourism and hotel projects in Amman and Aqaba. The new joint Israeli-Jordanian 'Bridging The Rift' desert science centre straddling the border in Wadi Araba is a small but notable example of what can be achieved in the region through conciliation rather than conflict.

Politically and diplomatically King Abdullah has inherited the tricky balancing act of his father. Peace with Israel & the Palestinian Territories, support for the US and the resulting jump in fuel prices have all proved unpopular among most Jordanians. There is of course a payoff for supporting the US. Jordan currently gets US\$1 billion a year in American aid and in 2000 Jordan became only the fourth country to enjoy a free-trade agreement with the USA.

King Abdullah has pushed ahead with economic reforms aimed at repositioning Jordan as a hi-tech and service centre. Political reform has been slower to arrive. Jordan now has 22 registered parties, including a communist party and the main opposition Islamic Action Front (IAF), which has connections with the fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood. The IAF's opposition to the peace treaty with Israel & the Palestinian Territories causes disquiet but criticising the king remains unheard of (and against the law).

Change has come fast in the last 15 years but Jordan remains essentially a tribal desert monarchy, where change is coming from above not below, and an increasingly marginalised section of society has not kept up with these changes. Tensions remain between the conservative Bedouin countryside and the more Islamicised Palestinian cities, and between Western-looking modernists and conservative Islamist elements. Nor has the country remained unaffected by the rise of militant Islam. A US diplomat was murdered in Amman in 2002 and several Al-Qaeda plots in Jordan were foiled in 2004. In August 2005, militants fired rockets at a US warship docked at Aqaba. In November 2005, an Iraqi Al-Qaeda bomb attack on three Amman hotels claimed the lives of 60 people,

### FAST FACTS

Local name:  
Al-Mamlakah al-Urdunniyah al-Hashimiyah

Land Area: 96,188 sq km

Population: 5,759,000 (July 2005 est)

Human Development Index: ranked 90th out of 170 of world's countries (Egypt 120th, Syria 106th, Palestinian Territories 102nd, Israel 22nd)

Religion: 80% Sunni Muslim, 15% Shi'a Muslim, 5% Christian

Only 4.5% of Jordan's land is cultivated

Around 1.7 million Palestinians live in Jordan

Tourism contributes 10% of GDP and US\$800 million to the economy every year

23% of Jordanians have a mobile phone, compared to 7% in Egypt and 2% in Syria

shocking the Jordanian people and provoking outraged demonstrations against the act.

The challenge facing King Abdullah is to keep Jordan on track as a modern and cosmopolitan Arab state, but one with a traditional Bedouin heart. The success of this, unfortunately, may well depend largely on political events beyond Jordan's borders. As long as its neighbours are in turmoil, Jordan will continue to walk a tightrope in its attempts to remain the most stable country in the Middle East.

# The Author



## BRADLEY MAYHEW

Bradley has returned to the Middle East frequently since first visiting Jordan in the early 1990s as an adventure-tour organiser. Since then he's travelled the breadth of the Islamic world, from Casablanca to Kashgar, Tangiers to Tajikistan.

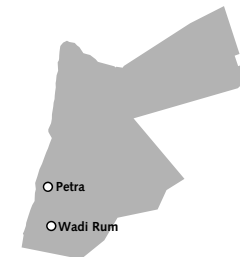
Bradley is the co-author of Lonely Planet guides to *Jordan*, *Central Asia*, *Tibet*, *Nepal* and *Shanghai* and has worked on Lonely Planet guides from *Morocco* to *Mongolia*. He has also lectured on Central Asia at the Royal Geographic Society.

### My Favourite Trip

I had such a great time in Jordan that I can't recall a single place that I didn't enjoy. One of the more unexpected highlights of this trip was reconnecting such sites as Lot's Cave and the ruins of Sodom with hazy biblical stories that were stored so far back in my childhood that I didn't even know I remembered them.

Petra (p175) was fabulous, especially hiking through deserted Wadi Muthlim and around some of the lesser known tombs. Best for me, though, was Wadi Rum (p203). Clambering up to the Burdah rock bridge with the Bedouin climber Attayak Ali; brewing up a mint tea atop Jebel Umm Adaami, the highest peak in Jordan; running with abandon down huge red sand dunes; and hiking through the labyrinthine Rakhabat Canyon all offered stunning and contrasting views of the desert, far from the 4WDs that buzzed like flies around the main sights.

Three weeks later, back home, I was still leaving little piles of powdery red sand wherever I walked; my favourite souvenir from Jordan.



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