

Language

CONTENTS

Pronunciation	278
Tricky Sounds	280
Transliteration	280
Accommodation	280
Conversation & Essentials	280
Directions	281
Emergencies	282
Health	282
Language Difficulties	282
Numbers	282
Paperwork	283
Shopping & Services	283
Time & Dates	283
Transport	284
Travel with Children	285

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 long 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 now, you'll have some idea of 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 on p279. 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	د	د	d	as in 'dim'
ذ	ذ	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, p280)
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'
و			و	oo	long, as in 'food'
و			و	ow	as in 'how'
ي	ي	ي	ي	y	as in 'yes'
ي	ي	ي	ي	ee	as in 'beer', only softer
ي	ي	ي	ي	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 (p278).

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>laylkayn</i>
May I see it?	<i>mumkin shoofa?</i>
It's very noisy/dirty.	<i>kteer dajeh/wuskha</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 they'll 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'imān*, 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 or just ahlan (Welcome)</i>
Hello. (response)	<i>ahlan beek/i (m/f)</i>

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 (m/f)</i>
Please. (polite)	<i>law samaHt/samaHti (m/f)</i>
Please. (come in)	<i>tafaddal/tafaddali (m/f)/ tafaddaloo (pl)</i>
Thank you.	<i>shukran</i>
Thank you very much.	<i>shukran kteer/ shukran jazeelan</i>
You're welcome.	<i>'afwan or tikram/tikrami (m/f)</i>
One moment, please.	<i>lahza min fadlak/i (m/f)</i>

Pardon/Excuse me.	<i>'afwan</i>
Sorry!	<i>aasif/aasifa! (m/f)</i>
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? (m/f)</i>
How're you doing?	<i>kayfak/kayfik? (m/f)</i>
Fine thank you.	<i>bikher il-Hamdu lillah</i>
What's your name?	<i>shu-ismak/shu-ismik? (m/f)</i>
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? (m/f)</i>
I'm from ...	<i>ana min ...</i>
Do you like ...?	<i>inta/inti bitHeb ...? (m/f)</i>
I like ...	<i>ana bHeb ...</i>
I don't like ...	<i>ana ma bHeb ...</i>

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

DIRECTIONS

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

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	khamasa	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	talaatash	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-dukhoof/al-madkhal
exchange office	al-masref/al-saraf
exit	al-khurooj
hotel	al-funduq/al-otel
information desk	isti'laamaat
laundry	al ghaseel
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-haalaf

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	soubeh
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? *ay saa'a biyitla'/biyusal ...?*

boat/ferry	<i>al-markib/as-safeena</i>
(small) boat	<i>ash-shakhtura</i>
bus	<i>al-baas</i>
plane	<i>al-teeyara</i>
train	<i>al-qitaar</i>

Which bus goes to ...? I want to go to ... *aya baas biyruH 'ala ...? ana badeh ruH ala ...*

Does this bus go to ...? *hal-baas biyruH 'ala ...?*

How many buses per day go to ...? *kam baas biyruH ben nahar ...?*

How long does the trip take? *kam sa'a ar-riHla?*

Please tell me when we get to ... *'umal ma'arof illee lamma noosal la ...*

Stop here, please. *wa'if hoon 'umal ma'arof*

Please wait for me. *'umal ma'arof istanna*

May I sit here? *mumkin a'ood hoon?*

May we sit here? *mumkin ni'ood hoon?*

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

Private Transport

I'd like to hire a ... *biddee esta'jer ...*

Where can I hire a ...? *wayn/fayn feeni esta'jer ...?*

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>motosikl</i>
tour guide	<i>al-dalee as-siyaaHi/ al-murshid as-siyaaHi</i>

Is this the road to ...?

Hal Haza al-tareeq eela ...?

Where's a service station?

wayn/fayn maHaltet al-benzeen?

Please fill it up.

min fadlak (emla/abee) Ha

I'd like (30) litres.

biddee talaateen leeter

diesel	<i>deezel</i>
leaded petrol	<i>benzeen bee rasa</i>
unleaded petrol	<i>benzeen beedoon rasas</i>

(How long) Can I park here?

(kam sa'a) mumkin aas-f hon?

Where do I pay?

fayn/wayn mumkin an addf'aa?

I need a mechanic.

bidee mekaneesyan

The car/motorbike has broken down (at ...).

al-sayyaara/-motosikl it'atlit ('an ...)

The car/motorbike won't start.

al-sayyaara/-motosikl 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?

Glossary

This glossary is a list of Arabic (A) words commonly used in Jordan, plus some archaeological (arch) terms and abbreviations.

abu (A) – ‘father of...’

agal (A) – black headropes used to hold a keffiyeh in place

agora (arch) – open space for commerce and politics

ain (ayoun) (A) – spring or well

amir (A) – see *emir*

arak – alcoholic spirit

Ayyubids – the dynasty founded by Saladin (Salah ad-Din) in Egypt in 1169

bab (abwab) (A) – gate

badia (A) – stony desert

beit (A) – house

beit ash-sha’ar (A) – goat-hair Bedouin tent

benzin ‘adi (A) – regular petrol

bin (A) – ‘son of...’; also *ibn*

burj (A) – tower

caliph (A) – Islamic ruler

caravanserai – large inn enclosing a courtyard, providing accommodation and a marketplace for caravans

cardo maximus (arch) – Roman main street, from north to south

Decapolis – literally ‘ten cities’; this term refers to a number of ancient cities in the Roman Empire, including Amman and Jerash

decumanus (arch) – Roman main street, from east to west

deir (A) – monastery

duwaar (A) – circle

Eid al-Fitr (A) – Festival of Breaking the Fast, celebrated throughout the Islamic world at the end of *Ramadan*

emir (A) – Islamic ruler, leader, military commander or governor; literally ‘prince’

haj (A) – the pilgrimage to Mecca

haji (A) – one who has made the haj

hammam(at) (A) – natural hot springs; sometimes refers to a Turkish steam bath, and toilet or shower

haram (A) – forbidden area

hejab (A) – woman’s headscarf

IAF – Islamic Action Front, the largest political party in Jordan

ibn (A) – ‘son of...’; also *bin*

il-balad (A) – ‘downtown’, the centre of town

imam (A) – religious leader

intifada – ongoing Palestinian uprising against Israeli authorities in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem that started in December 1987

iwan (A) – vaulted hall opening into a central court

jalabiyya (A) – man’s full-length robe

janub(iyyeh) – south(ern)

jebel (A) – hill or mountain

JETT – Jordan Express Travel & Tourism, the major private bus company in Jordan

jezira (A) – island

jihad (A) – holy war in defence of Islam, also the personal struggle to be a good Muslim

jisr (A) – bridge

JTB – Jordan Tourism Board

keffiyeh (A) – checked scarf worn by Arab men

khal min ar-rasas (A) – unleaded petrol

khirbat (A) – ruins of an ancient village

khutba (A) – Islamic sermon

Kufic (A) – a type of highly stylised old Arabic script

madrassa (A) – theological college that is associated with a mosque; also a school

maidan (A) – town or city square

Majlis al-Umma (A) – Jordan’s National Assembly

malek (A) – king

malekah (A) – queen

Mamluks – literally ‘slaves’; Muslim dynasty named for a former slave and soldier class

masjid (A) – mosque

medina (A) – old walled centre of any Islamic city

mezze (A) – starters, appetisers

mihrab (A) – niche in the wall of a mosque that indicates the direction of Mecca

minaret (A) – tower on top of a mosque

minbar (A) – pulpit in a mosque

MSA – Modern Standard Arabic

muezzin (A) – mosque official who calls the faithful to prayer, often from the *minaret*

mumtaz (A) – ‘super’ petrol or ‘1st class’ (especially on trains); literally ‘excellence’

nargileh (A) – water pipe used mainly by men to smoke tobacco

necropolis (arch) – cemetery

nymphaeum (arch) – literally ‘temple of the Nymphs’; a place with baths, fountains and pools

oud (A) – Arabic lute

PLO – Palestine Liberation Organization

PNC – Palestinian National Council

PNT – Petra National Trust

PRA – Petra Regional Authority

praetorium (arch) – military headquarters

propylaeum (arch) – grand entrance to a temple or palace

qala’at – (A) castle or fort

qasr (A) – castle or palace

qibla (A) – direction of Mecca

Quran (A) – holy book of Islam

qusayr (A) – small castle or palace

rababa (A) – traditional single-string Bedouin instrument

Ramadan (A) – Muslim month of fasting

ras (A) – cape, point or headland

RSCN – Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature

saqiyah – a pump turned by a donkey

servees – service taxi

shaheed – martyrs

shamal(iyyeh) (A) – north(ern)

sharif (A) – descendent of the Prophet Mohammed (through his daughter, Fatima); general title for Islamic ruler

sheikh (A) – officer of the mosque or venerated religious scholar

sidd (A) – dam

siq (A) – gorge or canyon

soq (A) – market

stele (arch) – stone commemorative slab or column decorated with inscriptions or figures

tell (A) – ancient mound created by centuries of urban rebuilding

temenos (arch) – a sacred courtyard or similar enclosure

tetrapylon (arch) – an archway with four entrances

thop – traditional Bedouin robe

Trans-Jordan – Jordan’s original name

triclinium (arch) – dining room in Roman times

Umayyads – first great dynasty of Arab Muslim rulers

umm (A) – ‘mother of...’

UNRWA – UN Relief & Works Agency

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

zerb – Bedouin oven, which is buried in the sand

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