

Jordan

Feminism and Falafels



Crusader castles, bewitching deserts and the spectacular 'lost city' of Petra: This journey offers you and your students the chance to discover Jordan's highlights, sleep under star filled desert skies and enjoy the country's legendary hospitality. On this incredible journey into the heart of the Middle East you will also learn about the women of Jordan - visiting a women's cooperative and learning how to make traditional handicrafts. You'll also get to perfect the art of 'bread spinning' and learn how to cook a traditional Arabic meal. Although it's only an eight day trip, you'll come away with a better appreciation of Jordan's legendary hospitality and the role of women in Arab society.



Recommended Itinerary:

Day 1: Fly from London to Amman

Culture shock rating: 

Physical rating: 

Day 2: Amman City Tour, Arabic cooking lesson, Golden Souq and citadel

Situated in the heart of the old city of Amman, 'Beit Sitti' is located in one of the oldest neighbourhoods of the city. This morning we will experience true Jordanian culture by learning how to cook a four course Arabic meal with a traditional hajjeh. In addition, we will learn how to spiral "Shrak" bread in the air; we will be able to eat freshly prepared bread straight off the hot cooking stone. In the afternoon we explore the city on a walking tour encompassing The Golden Souq, the King Hussein Mosque and the vegetable markets just off Quraysh Street, finishing at the citadel. Through all of this our guide will help illustrate as much as possible the role of women in Amman and talk about the contrasts between living in the city and the country side. There will be ample opportunity to talk about these issues with our carefully selected female tour leaders. We return to our hotel by bus for dinner.

Day 3: Wadi Rum, Bedouin style camp, star gazing

Today we travel south to Wadi Rum along the Desert Highway (approximately 320kms, 4 hrs). Wadi Rum offers some of the most extraordinary desert scenery anywhere in the world. As an optional excursion it is possible to arrange a four hour camel safari amongst the sand dunes and spectacular rock formations of the desert. We camp close to the entrance of the Wadi and in true desert fashion we will sleep in a traditional Bedouin tent or under the stars. The influence of Lawrence of Arabia is still evident today, the Howeitat Bedouin, who have claimed the Wadi for their own, are reputedly the remainder of Lawrence's Arab army who marched with him from Azraq in the north, then stayed behind once battle was done. At night, if blessed with clear skies, the Milky Way, satellites and shooting stars can clearly be seen.

Day 4: Wadi Rum by 4WD, Little Petra

We explore the Wadi by 4WD as this is perfect for examining the varied desert environment and how it is shaped by natural forces. We then head to Little Petra where we are able to explore the many rock-cut dwellings and caves that litter the area. Climbing up some worn sandstone steps we are rewarded with spectacular views over the site. Our visit to Little Petra today is a great taster of the 'main event' tomorrow.

Day 5: Explore Petra This morning we make our way to the fabled site, following the same path as the site's discoverer Burckhardt, we are funnelled through the banded rock walls that tower above. At the end of the kilometre-long path, we are rewarded by a glimpse of the most beautiful building of all - the Khazneh or Treasury -

so-called because the Bedouin believed that the urn crowning the edifice held a cache of gold and jewels. The first sight of this perfectly proportioned tomb, carved from the towering rock, is truly unforgettable but there's much more to come! Some 2,400 years ago the Nabateans taxed the trade caravans that plied between Arabia and the eastern Mediterranean and using the proceeds built the first houses and temples here. Later these taxes proved even more rewarding and today the Nabatean legacy includes houses, tombs, temples and much more. It is well worth making the hour or so ascent up the rocky path leading to the Monastery, a vast structure rivalling even the Treasury. If time allows, climb to one of the High Places, the mountain-top altars where ritual sacrifices were made; from here there are spectacular views of the mountains, valleys and canyons below.

Day 6: Dana Nature Reserve, Kerak Crusader Castle, Madaba

The recently developed nature reserve around Dana village aims to protect some of Jordan's endangered species and has also managed to preserve the timeless traditions still practised in the village. Later we travel onto Kerak where a formidable Crusader castle overlooks a long, winding road down to the Dead Sea. Finally we visit Madaba famous for its 6th century mosaics. We will spend the night in Madaba.

Day 7: Madaba, Mt Nebo, Dead Sea swimming, Amman We spend time in Madaba then head to the biblical site of Mt Nebo. The Bible tells us this is the final resting-place of Moses; from here he looked out onto the Promised Land. We continue to the Dead Sea, at 400 metres below sea level it's the lowest and saltiest place on earth. There will be time to swim (or rather float!) before heading back to Amman.

Day 8: Amman, Iraq-Al Ameer Women's Cooperative Society In the morning we can arrange a visit to a women's co-operative in Amman to gain further insight into women's issues in Jordan. At the women's co-operative you can view the many handicrafts made by Jordanian women as well as learning more about women within Jordan at the visitor centre. Fly out of Amman to the UK.

Important information:

It is important to realise that the itinerary needs to be flexible. While every effort will be made to follow the above schedule, in the event of political problems, airline schedule changes or natural events, we will do our best to make your trip as enjoyable and hassle-free as possible, but it is important to EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED and be prepared to accept some slight changes. Relax and have faith in your guides.



DAYS FOR GIRLS This trip can include a session working alongside Days for Girls, a grass roots organisation aimed at giving every woman and girl access to proper feminine hygiene products and health advice. For more information look on our website: www.thestc.co.uk/travel/days-for-girls

Women in Jordan

Jordan is one of the most stable countries in the Middle East and it enjoys a strong economy and close relations with the west. The people are renowned for their hospitality.

The majority of Jordanian women are well educated and the country has the highest female literacy rate in the Middle East. Jordan's constitution states that 'jobs are awarded on capability' but then why are 80% of young Jordanian women unemployed?

How do the views of women living in urban and rural areas differ? Are urban women more likely to be feminists? The answers to these questions and the role of women in modern Jordanian society are explored in this exciting journey.



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