

KINGDOMS OF ANCIENT JORDAN

1 Arrival at QAIA – Meet & Assist – Transfer to Hotel

2 Kingdom of Ammon - Um al Jimal, Rehab, Amman - Overnight Amman

Umm Al-Jimal was a key stop on camel caravan routes and was built using black volcanic rock. A total of fifteen churches have been uncovered including the church of Eulianos which dates back to 345 AD. Nabatean inscriptions and graves have also been found in and around the city which links this site with Petra.

Rehab Banu Hassan is a biblical city mentioned in the second Book of Samuel (10:6). The most significant ruins of Christian Rehab include churches dating back to 70AD with a number of other churches built between 594 and 624 AD. The oldest churches are thought to be the earliest known place of Christian worship by around two hundred years. An ancient underground church was also found which is believed to have sheltered the early Christians, the 70 disciples of Jesus Christ. A mosaic found in the church describes these Christians as "the 70 beloved by God and Divine" and it is believed they fled persecution in Jerusalem and founded churches in northern Jordan.

Amman, previously known as Philadelphia and Rabbath Ammon, is one of the Decapolis Cities and once served as the capital of the Ammonite tribes. Mentioned in the Old Testament, the previous name of Amman, Rabbath Ammon, was the name of Saint Lot's son.

3 Um Qais, Pella & more. Overnight Amman

Jabbok - According to Genesis, Jacob first met the "Angels of God" in a place called Mahanaim across the Jabbok River. Jacob told the man, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." Jacob's name was changed to "Israel," Jabesh / Gilead - mentioned several times in the Bible (Genesis 31:21, 31:25, 37:25) was bounded on the north by Bashan and to the south by Moab and Amman. Half the Gilead was possessed by Sihon, and the other half, separated by the river Jabbok, by Og, king of Bashan.

Um Qais - The modern town of Umm Qais is located on the site of the ancient Greco-Roman town of Gadara, one of the cities of the Decapolis and, according to the Bible, the place where Jesus cast out the devil from the demonic man into a herd of pigs (Matthew 8: 28-34). Gadara was renowned for its cosmopolitan atmosphere, attracting an array of writers, artists, philosophers, and poets.

Pella The city of Pella "Tabaqat Fahl" has been continuously occupied since Neolithic times and was first mentioned in Egyptian inscriptions dating to the 19th Century BC. Its name was later Hellenized to Pella, perhaps to honor Alexander the Great's birthplace. Pella was one of the Decapolis cities and later a center and refuge for Jerusalem Christians in the 1st century AD who were fleeing the Jewish-Roman wars. The city was destroyed by the earthquake of 746 but a small village remains in the area.



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3

Day 3 ctd - Jerash Overnight Amman

Jerash and its Churches - Enter Jerash through Hadrian's Arch, built in honor of its namesake, and pass the Hippodrome, where chariot races and sporting events were held. Continuing north on the Cardo is the richly carved gate of the 2nd-century Roman Temple of Dionysus, which was rebuilt as a Byzantine church in the 4th century. It has been dubbed the "Cathedral," but there is no evidence this was the bishop's church, although on the east wall is a Shrine of the Virgin Mary, with a painted inscription to St. Mary and the archangels Michael and Gabriel. Just behind the Cathedral is the large Church of St. Theodore, built in 496 AD. Behind the church of St. Theodore, there are ruins of three Byzantine churches, St. Cosmos and St. Damian, St. John the Baptist and St. George's. St. George's was used after the earthquake of 749 AD but its mosaics were destroyed when the 8th century Christian iconoclastic movement banned the representation of humans and animals. Jerash is one of the most interesting sites in Jordan and a fantastic example of Roman architecture with two fantastic theatres, a Cardo and an amazing oval plaza.



4

Kingdom of Moab - Heshbon, Madaba, Mt. Nebo, Machaerus Um ar Rasas & Kings Highway. Overnight Petra

Moab was the home of Ruth before she left for Bethlehem. The Arnon valley divided the land between the Israelite tribes to the north and the land of Moab to the south (Num 21:13; Deut 3:16) and is mentioned many times in scripture. The first stop of the day is the Madaba mosaic map located in the Greek Orthodox Church. It is the oldest picture map of the entire Holy Land and mentions the names of historical cities and rivers. The map is said to have been made during the second half of the sixth century. The places on the map were chosen because they were either important cities on the trade roads or because of the events that took place in them. It represents the topography of the countries' mountains, seas, and rivers. The map is presented by the people of Madaba with this inscription: "From the people of Madaba, Jesus' loving city..."



A short drive away is Mount Nebo, the site where Moses overlooked the Holy Land but did not enter it and where a church and a monastery were built to honor him. Prophet Jeremiah (48:1) said of Nebo, "Thus says the Lord, Prophet Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is across from Jericho. Deuteronomy quotes "The Lord showed him all the land and told him do not cross there. So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab... and he buried him in the land of Moab opposite Beth-Peor, but no one knows the place of his burial to this day." (Deuteronomy 34:5-6).



Mukawir / Machaerus - The 1st century AD Roman - Jewish historian Josephus, identified the awe-inspiring site of Machaerus (modern-day Mukawir) as the palace-fortress of Herod Antipas, the Roman appointed regional ruler during the life of Jesus Christ. It was here, at this hilltop fortified palace overlooking the Dead Sea region and the distant hills of Palestine and Israel that Herod imprisoned and beheaded John the Baptist, "He was beheaded after Salome's fateful dance." (Matthew 14:3-11).

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4

Day 4 ctd , Um ar Rasas, Kings Highway Overnight Petra

Umm ar Ras While the origin of the Arabic name "Umm Ar-Rasas" remains a mystery archeologist Jemer Deran suggested that Umm Al-Rasas is Mephaath mentioned in the Book of Joshua. Inscriptions in the churches of Umm Ar-Rasas validate Deran's theory and prove that it is Mephaath which the Bible mentioned was located in the land of Moab. The main attraction is outside the city walls within the Church of St. Stephen, which contains a very large, perfectly preserved mosaic floor laid in 718 AD. It portrays fifteen major cities of the Holy Land from both east and west of the River Jordan. There is also a solitary brick tower, thought to be used as a stylite tower around this period. Wadi Mujib / Arnon Valley is mentioned throughout the Old Testament in the Books of Joshua (12:1, 9, 13), Judges (11:13) and Isaiah (2:16) as well as the book of Jeremiah. When the Romans conquered the entire area, they paid special attention to the Mujib Road. They paved it with stones and erected milestones. Some of it remains there to this day and is commonly known as the Kings Highway and leads all the way to Petra.



5

Kingdom of Edom - Visit Petra - Overnight Petra

Edom originally stretched from the land of Moab in the north to Eilat in the south which was its only seaport.

Christianity has been present in Petra since AD 343, when the whole city became Christian and many of the tombs became churches. Petra was a diocese during the Byzantine era and the remains of a Catholic cathedral have been found. During the time of Jesus and the Apostles, Petra was probably the East Mediterranean's greatest trading center. The extensive rock-cut capital of the Nabatean Kingdom flourished from the 3rd century BC to the early 2nd century AD. During the Exodus, Moses and the Israelites passed through the Petra area and local tradition says that the spring at Wadi Musa (Valley of Moses), just outside Petra, is the place where Moses struck the rock and brought forth water (Numbers 20:10-11). Petra was also likely to have been visited by the Three Kings on their way to Bethlehem to honor the baby Jesus (Matthew 2:1-12).



The ancient Nabatean capital gently reveals itself as you walk through the Siq, an immense one-kilometer-long fissure in the mountains. Near the end of the passage, the Siq, with great style, makes one last turn, and out of the gloom in towering brightness appears Petra's most impressive monument, el Khazneh - The Treasury. This is one of the most elegant remains of antiquity anywhere in the world and is carved out of solid rock.

There are hundreds of carved and built structures, soaring temples, elaborate royal tombs, a carved Roman theater, large and small houses, and burial chambers in Petra. Burgon the Victorian traveler and poet gave Petra a description that holds to this day - **"Match me such a marvel save in Eastern clime, a rose-red city half as old as time."**



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6

Lots' Cave, Jesus' Baptism at Bethany - Overnight Dead Sea

Lots Cave Lot was the nephew of Abraham and fled Sodom and Gomorrah to live in a cave on the southern shores of the Dead Sea. The cave, a 10-minute climb up a steep flight of steps, is surrounded by the ruins of a small Byzantine church (5th to 8th centuries), a reservoir, and some mosaics. Remains from the cave date to the early Bronze Age (3300–2000 BC) and an inscription in the cave mentions Lot by name.

Baptism Site & Hill of Elijah - Bethany Beyond the Jordan. "Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him (Matthew 3:13)". The Bible narrates that people traveled from the countries bordering Jordan to be baptized by John the Baptist. "And it came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee" (Mark 1:9). Jesus arrived at Bethany beyond Jordan and went to John to be baptized by John in the river and stood in line with the repentant sinners. John recognized Jesus by inspiration from the Holy Spirit and tried to discourage Jesus him by saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and you come to me?" But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented." (Matthew 3:14-15). John confirms that the events of Jesus' baptism occurred by saying, "These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing." (John 1:28)

The **Hill of Elijah** has long been identified with the place from which tradition says Elijah ascended to Heaven. Elijah, one of the most famous prophets, was sent to save people from paganism. King Ahab oppressed Elijah, and when Elijah grew old, God inspired him to leave and settle in what is modern-day Jordan. When he and his successor Elisha arrived at the River Jordan, Elijah struck it with his cloak and parted the waters of the river. They crossed the dry land, and as they were speaking on the other side of the river, a fiery chariot came and carried Elijah into the heavens (2 Kings 2).

The Dead Sea - Known in the Bible as the "Salt Sea" or the "Sea of the Arabah," this inland body of water is appropriately named because of its high mineral and salt content allowing nothing to live in its waters. It has also been called the "Sea of Sodom," the "Sea of Lot," and the "Stinking Sea." The Dead Sea, unlike the Sea of Galilee to the north, does not figure prominently in the biblical narratives. The unusually warm, incredibly buoyant, and mineral-rich waters have attracted visitors since ancient times, including King Herod the Great and beautiful Egyptian Queen, Cleopatra. All of whom have luxuriated in the Dead Sea's rich, black, stimulating mud and floated effortlessly on their backs while soaking up the water's healthy minerals with the gently diffused rays of the sun.

7

Traces of Jesus - Anjara, Ajloun, Tel Mar Elias. Overnight Amman

Jesus Christ, his disciples, and the Virgin Mary, passed through **Anjara**, in the hills of Gilead and rested in a cave during a journey between the Sea of Galilee, the Decapolis Cities, Bethany Beyond the Jordan and Jerusalem. The cave in Anjara has been a Holy Place for pilgrims for centuries and is commemorated with a modern shrine, the Church of Our Lady of the Mountain.



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7

Day 7 ctd, Ajloun, Tel Mar Elias. Overnight Amman

Ajloun - Some historians believe that Ajloun is named after Eglon, the King of Moab, who is mentioned in the Book of Judges. King Eglon conquered Jericho, defeated Israel and enslaved the people. So the children of Israel served Eglon for eighteen years.

Tel Mar Elias - it is believed that Prophet Elijah was born in Listib, a nearby ancient village. As a place of worship for approximately 14 centuries, Mar Elias sits upon layer upon layer of Islamic, Byzantine and Roman remains giving it the name Tel (Mar Elias). The small and older lower church has an unusual cruciform shape, and although only a small section of the original church remains it is still used as a place of worship. The upper church is one of the largest Byzantine churches discovered in Jordan and has been a significant place of pilgrimage for many centuries. The Byzantine Mosaic floors on this church are geometric in design and date. Return to Amman for your final night in Jordan



8

Transfer to Airport for Departure

DISCOVERY
CIRCLE

