

The International Institute for Peace through Tourism, in cooperation with the Royal Society for Conservation in Jordan, offers:

The Wild Jordan Tour  
building eco-tourism opportunities in Jordan...  
protecting the biodiversity of Jordan...  
meeting the people of Jordan...

Personally escorted by Donald & Lynne King, Ambassadors at Large for the International Institute for Peace through Tourism.

A word from Donald King...

For the past six years, my wife and I have maintained an apartment in Amman, spending nearly six months out of each year in Jordan, as we have developed this tour itinerary. It has been an enriching and wonderful experience. From a tour operator's point of view, Jordan is one of the most spectacular destinations in the world and it is one of the world's leaders in the tourism industry in the areas of ecotourism and sustainable tourism. And then, in any discussion of the world's most hospitable people, Jordanians have to be strongly considered. Please join us as we explore the fascinating and friendly country.

March 6—Depart the U.S for Queen Alia International Airport in Amman, Jordan. (Call for assistance with your air arrangements)

March 7—You will be met by your escorts and taken via motorcoach to Azraq Lodge “the Eastern desert's favorite secret”. Dinner will be provided by the lodge's Chechen Kitchen, famous for its authentic cuisine.

March 8—Today we will explore the Azraq Wetland Reserve, an expansive oasis in the middle of the desert and home to a wide variety of wildlife. We will walk the Marsh Trail to explore the wetland, strolling past tall reeds and open pools, observing the innumerable species of birds that thrive at this “Oasis in the Desert”. Three castles from the early Islamic period are on our itinerary and we will gain an appreciation for this region's rich history as we view sites that have been occupied by many different civilizations—including Umayyad, Ayyubid and Ottoman. We will also visit the local handicraft workshops, where women from the community produce finely-painted ostrich eggs and other hand crafted items. In the afternoon we will make our way northwest across the Biblical land of Gilead to Ajloun to spend the night at Ajloun Cabins.

March 9—Jerash, “A Rome away from Rome,” and next to Petra, the most visited site in Jordan, is the highlight of today's itinerary. An unbroken chain of human occupation goes back more than 6000 years at Jerash, but it was during the Roman period that the city, one of the members of the Decapolis League, that the area enjoyed its golden age. Much of the splendor—colonnaded streets, marble theatres, spacious public squares, hilltop temples—can still be observed, because Jerash is considered one of the best-preserved Roman provincial towns in the world. Nearby is Ajloun Castle, offering a majestic view over the countryside. Often erroneously referred to as a Crusader castle, in actuality it was originally built in 1184-1185 by the nephew of Salah ad-Din al-Ayyubi (Saladin) to protect against

Crusader attacks. Also, we will visit Eagle's View Point, where local women produce natural olive oil soap. Overnight at Ajloun Lodge.

March 10—After breakfast we will make our way to the northern edge of Jordan to the ancient ruins of Umm Qays, which offers a view of the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan River. Heading south, keeping the Jordan River nearby on our right side we will make our way to Bethany Beyond Jordan, site of the ruins of one of the oldest known churches in the world—thought to commemorate the baptism of Jesus. Wadi Mujib, fronting the Dead Sea is our next destination and for the fit traveler an opportunity to scramble through the rock-strewn and water-filled canyons that have given this site its reputation as one of the most magnificent places in Jordan. The Mujib Biosphere Reserve, at 1500 feet below sea level, is the lowest nature reserve on earth, and has recently been added to UNESCO's Man and Biosphere program. Overnight in Wadi Mujib on the edge of the Dead Sea.

March 11—Skirting along the Dead Sea we will head further south visiting Karak Castle, one of the most significant Crusader castles, before arriving at Dana Biosphere Reserve, the four-time international award-winner for sustainable tourism. Dana is Jordan's largest nature reserve and boasts a series of spectacular mountains and wadis that extend from the top of the Jordan Rift Valley to the desert lowlands of Wadi Arabah. The stunning scenery and spectacular vistas can be appreciated from the balconies of the Dana Guesthouse or the Rummana Campsite. At the Handicraft Workshops, local women dry fruit grown in centuries-old terraced gardens to make jams and fruit leather. Handcrafted local silver jewelry is also available. Overnight at Dana Guesthouse

March 12—Moving even further south, we will arrive at Wadi Rum which T.E. Lawrence described as “vast, echoing and God-like”. Our 4x4 vehicle will afford us a grand view of this stupendous, timeless place, virtually untouched by humans—an incredible array of mountainous columns that spring up from the desert floor. Sometimes referred to as the “valley of the moon”, we will explore canyons and water-holes and see 4000-year-old rock drawings, remnants from ancient civilizations before we leave for Petra. Overnight Petra.

March 13—We give one full day to Petra, “the rose-red city, half as old as time”, recently named one of the 7 Wonders of the World.

These giant red mountains and vast mausoleums of a departed race have nothing in common with modern civilization, and ask nothing of it except to be appreciated at their true value - as one of the greatest wonders ever wrought by Nature and Man.

Often described as the eighth wonder of the ancient world, is without a doubt Jordan's most valuable treasure and greatest tourist attraction. It is a vast, unique city, carved into the sheer rock face by the Nabataeans, an industrious Arab people who settled here more than 2000 years ago, turning it into an important junction for the silk, spice and other trade routes that linked China, India and southern Arabia with Egypt, Syria, Greece and Rome.

The contours, colors and textures of the natural rocks are dazzling and made even more impressive by the incredible architecture of the ancient rock-carved buildings. Although much has been written about Petra, nothing really prepares you for this amazing place. It has to be seen to be believed.

Inside the site, several artisans from the town of Wadi Musa and a nearby Bedouin settlement have set up small stalls selling local handicrafts, such as pottery and Bedouin jewellery, and bottles of striated multi-coloured sands from the area. Overnight Petra.

March 14—We now turn back North, following the route that Moses and the Israelites took from Egypt, stopping at Umm ar-Rassas, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, where archaeologists have recently uncovered some of the finest Byzantine church mosaics, including a large carpet depicting Old

and New Testament cities on both the east and west banks of the Jordan River. Another feature at Umm Ar-Rasas walled settlement is a 15m Byzantine tower used by early Christian monks seeking solitude. Our next stop is Madaba, “the City of Mosaics.” The city, best known for its spectacular Byzantine and Umayyad mosaics, is home to the famous 6<sup>th</sup> century mosaic map of Jerusalem and the Holy Land. With two million pieces of coloured stone, the map depicts hills and valleys, villages and towns as far as the Nile Delta. Madaba is also one of the finest shopping experiences in Jordan, where antiques abound in neat shops. Nearby is Mt. Nebo, where Moses looked across the Jordan River to the Promised Land and where we will gain an afternoon vista before driving on to Amman, the capital of the city. Overnight Amman.

March 15--A sprawling city spread over 19 hills, or "jebels," [Amman](#) is the modern - as well as the ancient - capital of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Known as Rabbath-Ammon during the Iron Age and later as Philadelphia, the ancient city that was once part of the [Decapolis league](#), now boasts a population of around 2.3 million people. [Amman](#), often referred to as “the white city”, offers a variety of historical sites. There are a number of renovations and excavations taking place that have revealed remains from the Neolithic period, as well as from the Hellenistic and late Roman to Arab Islamic Ages. The site which is known as [the Citadel](#) includes many structures such as the Temple of Hercules, the Umayyad Palace and the Byzantine Church. At the foot of the Citadel lies the 6,000 seat Roman Theatre, which is a deep-sided bowl carved into the hill and is still being used for cultural events. Another newly restored theatre is the 500-seat Odeon that is used for concerts. The three [museums](#) found in the area offer a glimpse of history and culture; they are the Jordan Archaeological Museum, The Folklore Museum and the Museum of Popular Traditions. Our farewell dinner will be hosted by the Wild Jordan Center, perched high above the old city of Amman, it is a revolutionary concept devoted to promoting the protection and sustainable use of Jordan's rich natural heritage. It boasts a unique nature shop, an amazing whole food cafe with stunning views over the city. The gift shop features handicrafts from all Wild Jordan's sites throughout the country. Any money spent in the center will be used to support Wild Jordan's socioeconomic programs which provide nature-based jobs for local community members.

After dinner and some free time it will be time to say goodbye to your new friends in Jordan as we transfer to Queen Alia International Airport for departure to the U.S.

March 16—Arrival in U.S.