



RIDE WORLD WIDE

Jordan 2013

Ride Information Sheet

Jordan is a country that will constantly surprise even the most seasoned traveller. It is a leading light in the Arab world, yet at the same time, it is part of the Holy Land. Today its traditional Bedu past is complemented by a host of outside influences and it is a very open and easy-going country to travel in where hospitality is a matter of course. These rides mainly explore the south of Jordan around Wadi Rum, which has to be one of the world's most striking desert areas and was made famous by Lawrence of Arabia. All rides include a visit to the fascinating lost city of Petra, the 'rose red city' of the Nabateans, one of the New 7 Wonders of the World. The rides are run by Saleem Alzalabieh and his team who are all Bedu from the Wadi Rum.

Dates Trips are either for 8 or 9 nights' duration with 5 or 6 days riding and are run from set dates throughout the year. Please see the set departure dates overleaf and call us to check availability. Rides are limited to 10 riders. Private departures and tailor-made rides with standard or luxury accommodation can be arranged for groups on request - please also see out Hashemite Kingdom Ride information.



The Horses The horses used on these rides are mostly pure Arabs originating from Jordan, Iraq and Syria, with some Arab crosses. There are about 25 horses at the stables and the majority are mares and geldings, averaging about 15hh and are generally of a typically Arab narrow light build. They are fast and responsive with quite a lively, spirited temperament, although they are also sensitive and sensible making them easy to handle. The horses used are owned personally by Saleem and are all well cared for. Tack can suffer a great deal from the desert environment and stitching etc. does deteriorate quickly so don't expect it to be new and gleaming. Saddles are comfortable, English style leather or wintec with saddle bags provided for sun cream, cameras, water bottle and other small items you may need during the day. Bridles are leather (the Bedu traditionally ride their horses in a bit-less bridle, a bit only being used for races, battles or for a 'difficult' horse) mainly with snaffle bits. The horses are used to a loose contact with the bit at a walk and trot, and respond best to light use of the hand and leg, and to the rider's weight. Riders are encouraged to help groom and tack up their own horse before riding but there is always someone on hand to help, and to check that all is in order. Please note that there is usually a weight limit of 13 stone 5 lbs / 85 kgs on these rides, although some heavier experienced riders may be accepted if horses are available. If you are over this weight please call us to check availability of horses for the dates you have in mind.

Riding The standard trips include 5 or 6 consecutive days riding. There are generally 5 or 6 hours in the saddle, covering about 25 to 35kms each riding day, although this may vary with the itinerary and time of year. Rides are usually lead by Saleem or another local guide, all are experienced in the desert and speak English. Local horsemen and Bedu will be on hand to help look after the horses and to provide back up. Baggage, camping equipment, water for the horses and main supplies are transported for you by 4 wheel drive back-up vehicle. There will be some walking, leading the horses, each day during the rides - you will might walk the horses for 5 minutes or so to warm them up in the morning before starting the ride and again to cool them off after riding at the end of the day. You may also be asked to get off to lead for short stretches during the ride to give the horses a rest or if the ground is rough or the sand, deep.

Pace Overall the pace of the rides is moderate, but it varies with the going in different areas. The open and flat going in the Wadi Rum provides some good opportunities for long trots and canters although the amount of fast work here depends on the weather, conditions for the horses and also the ability of the group as a whole. You can expect 4 or 5 canters each day - great care is taken to ensure the horses are relaxed and calm and that everyone feels in control - the desert is a vast open environment and there are no barriers or fences! When riding in the mountains, if the going is rough, the sand is deep, or if it is very hot, the pace will be slow and in places you will need to ride one behind the other. You may also be asked to ride in a '2 x 2' formation at times for canters, and might head off singly or in pairs rather than as one group.

Riding Experience The rides are aimed at reasonably experienced, confident riders. To join them you must be comfortable, secure and relaxed in the saddle on a fairly spirited horse at a walk, trot and fast canter. You should also be used to riding at these paces outside, with a group of horses, in an open environment. The horses are sensible, but they have a lively and sensitive temperament, so they suit confident, relaxed and sensitive riders. They are best ridden with a light contact with the mouth and light use of the leg rather than 'on the bit'. You will enjoy your trip much more if you are also fairly fit - both riding fit and with a reasonably good level of general fitness as there will be some walking each day in sandy terrain which can be quite hard work, particularly if it is hot! If you do not ride regularly at home, we recommend some concentrated training before you go to get used to the hours you will spend in the saddle.



Terrain The deserts of Wadi Rum and Jordan's great south provide a vast, open and strikingly beautiful riding environment. There is quite a variety of landscapes - the coastal mountain ranges close to Aqaba; open, sandy desert plains in central Wadi Rum, dotted with impressive sandstone towers and huge boulders; wide, completely unobstructed clay flats of several kilometres long to the north (used as a training ground for Arab endurance horses!) and vivid green, agricultural land, where crops are grown, in the east. In the Wadi Rum you ride through wide, desert valleys framed by mountainous monoliths and lined with vast stretches of sand, sometimes following gravel tracks that wind amongst huge boulders or weaving single file through a canyon or adjacent to an immense cliff face. In some places you follow winding paths through the hills, but overall the terrain on the rides is good for horses and the going is generally compacted sand that is soft, but not too deep, and dry but forgiving clay. You may pass nomadic Bedu in traditional camps and see several of the area's historic landmarks, both natural and man-made, many of which are described by Lawrence of Arabia in his book, 'The Seven Pillars of Wisdom'.

Accommodation Accommodation on the standard set date rides is in a combination of hotels and desert camps - usually in mobile, temporary camps though a semi-permanent camp with a large central tent in the Bedu style may be used in winter months or bad weather. Hotels are of an international 3 * standard. Rooms have private bathrooms and ride rates are based on twin / double (or occasionally triple) occupancy. For a single room / tent (usually required for single travellers) a supplement is charged though if you are happy to share a twin or triple room with others, this can be waived. The meeting point for the rides is Amman airport and the first night of each ride will usually be spent at the Mosaic Hotel in Madaba. One or two nights (depending on itinerary) are at a 3* hotel (Petra Palace or similar) in Wadi Mousa, the modern town at the entrance to Petra. A night may also be spent in Aqaba, usually at the 4* Days Inn. 4 or 5 nights are spent camping in the desert and the last night is spent back at the hotel in Madaba or in Amman. Camping accommodation is fairly basic but you should be reasonably comfortable. Two types of camp are used. For the most part, when the weather is warmer (in spring and autumn) temporary 'fly' camps are set up. These use light and easily portable dome tents (2 riders are expected to share a 3 man size tent) and thick foam mattresses are supplied (you will need to take your own sleeping bag). Alternatively you can opt for a comfortable mattress under the star-studded sky. There is no mess tent on the mobile camps and meals eaten round the fire in a sheltered spot. A separate, simple washing "shower" tent and jugs of hot water are provided for washing. Camps are carefully positioned for protection from wind and sun.

The semi-permanent camps (which may be shared with others who are not in the riding group), are used when the weather is cold or wet. They typically have a central 'mess' tent which is a traditional long black Bedu tent made of handwoven goat and camel hair. For sleeping there are twin fixed-frame spacious 'tents' with proper beds, and these camps also have a shower with hot water, and a loo. The central mess tent usually has a sitting / dining area, with low tables and foam mattresses covered with kelims to sit on.



Meals Food on the rides is generally very good - a mixture of local and European style - and there is always plenty. When camping you have the opportunity to sample the Bedu lifestyle (with several added comforts!) and meals are often served from the traditional large, communal plate or 'Mansef' laid out on a table for you to help yourself. You then eat in traditional style on a carpet or mat sitting cross-legged on the floor. A typical breakfast would be a choice of eggs or omelette, yoghurt, honey, jam and bread, accompanied by 'chai' - delicious sweet tea usually flavoured with sage or cardamom - or coffee. Lunch when riding is a picnic, perhaps a freshly prepared spicy vegetable curry with salads and warm bread, followed by fresh fruit. Tea and biscuits keep you going after your ride until dinner, usually a speciality of the area, perhaps chicken barbecued in spices; or lamb and rice served with yoghurt and pitta bread. The hotels used have restaurants and breakfast is normally a buffet, while dinner might be a choice off the menu or a selection of dishes served buffet-style. In Aqaba you might visit the Ali Baba restaurant with a chance to sample fish and seafood fresh from the Red Sea. There is usually enough variety to cater for vegetarians but if you have any specific dietary requirements please let us know in advance so we can try to make special arrangements. Mineral water, tea & coffee and some soft drinks are included when camping, but not alcoholic drinks - so you might like to buy something in duty free. When staying at hotels, wine, beer and other drinks can be bought from the bar.



Weather The seasons in Jordan are the same as Europe with summer months being June to September and winter, November to February. Jordan has a desert climate that is pleasant and warm but often with a large temperature difference between day and night, shade and sun. Spring and autumn (March to May and October / November) are the best times for riding with long, warm days and mild nights. Summer days can be very hot with temperatures rising to 38 or even 40 degrees C. Riding hours will be adjusted when it is hot to avoid the hottest sun, but anyone planning to join a ride in the late spring, summer or early autumn (May to September) must be able to cope with the heat. In winter, days are usually warm and clear, though can be cold, and rain is not unheard of, and temperatures drop sharply when the sun goes down. Night-time temperatures in December and January can be zero or below with a cold wind. The sun sets at around 16.40 in December, so days are short.

What to bring We will send you a list of things we suggest you bring when you book.

Itineraries The following are outlines of each itinerary, these may change if local conditions demand - rain or unseasonably cold weather, for example, may mean a variation in the order of events.

Wadi Rum Ride - The itinerary starts with a night in a hotel in Madaba / Amman and early next morning you are driven to Petra. A full day to visit Petra and the night in a hotel in Wadi Mousa. The next morning you are driven to Wadi Rum to meet the horses. Then follows 6 days riding through the famous valleys of Rum, heading south across the desert towards the coastal mountains of Aqaba and along the Saudi border, then north to eventually finish up back at the stables near the village of Rum. After the last days ride you are driven to Aqaba where the night is spent. The next morning is free for snorkelling in the Red Sea, then in the afternoon transfer back to Madaba where the last night is spent. (Alternative to Aqaba is to spend the last 2 nights in Madaba with a day visit to the Dead Sea & Mt Nebo). 4 nights are spent in hotels and 5 nights in desert camps.



Winter Rides - Again 9 night trips which include 6 days riding in the Wadi Rum desert passing several of the landmarks and monuments described by Lawrence of Arabia such as the 'Seven Pillars of Wisdom' and the 'Mountain of Cool Breezes'. 4 nights of the trip are spent in hotels, with visits to Madaba, Mt Nebo, the Dead Sea, and also a full day in Petra for sightseeing at the beginning. This is followed by 6 days riding in the Wadi Rum, using mobile camps (weather permitting) or a fixed base. After the last days ride you transfer back to Madaba for the last night.

Christmas / New Year in Wadi Rum - The 8 night trips during Christmas and New Year include 5 consecutive days riding, 4 nights in desert camps and 4 nights in hotels. If the weather permits then accommodation in the desert will be in simple camps, moving each day - but if cold or wet a fixed Bedu style base camp will be used, allowing you to become accustomed to desert life and to explore the area from a semi-permanent base in the relatively cold winter months.

Hashemite Kingdom Private Ride - These rides are arranged for private groups or couples on request. The itinerary can be flexible but we usually suggest 7 nights with includes 4 nights in 5* hotels, one night in Amman, one in Petra and two at the amazing Kempinski Hotel on the Dead Sea. There are 4 days riding and de-luxe camps are set up, with large, walk in tents, proper beds, shower tents etc. Extra staff are on hand in camp and to help with the horses - please see our separate information sheets.

Dates 2013**Wadi Rum Ride:**

6th to 15th September
 21st to 20th September
 28th September to 7th October
 4th to 13th October
 18th to 27th October
 25th October to 3rd November
 1st to 10th November
 8th to 17th November

Winter Rides:

22nd November to 1st December
 6th to 15th December

Christmas Ride: 21st to 29th December

New Year Ride: 28th December to 5th January 2014

Rates 2013

Please note that due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, prices are now quoted in US dollars. The sterling price will be the equivalent rate using the USD/sterling exchange rate in force when you book/pay.

Wadi Rum Ride (9 nights) - USD 1975 per person; single supplement USD 160

Winter Ride (9 nights) - USD 1975 per person; single supplement USD 160

Christmas & New Year (8 nights) - USD 1830 per person; single supplement USD 160



Rates quoted include all riding, twin accommodation (see note below re: single rooms), entrance fee to Petra, meals as indicated, some drinks whilst on the ride, guiding, collection from the airport in Amman on Day 1 and transfer back to Amman airport on the last day.

Rates exclude flights to / from Amman and taxes, airport transfers outside the set days / times, visa fees, personal medical insurance (which you must have), lunch in Petra, wine and alcoholic drinks when camping, all drinks at hotels, and any tips you wish to leave.

Single travellers - The rates quoted assume twin-shared accommodation. The single supplement is charged to guarantee a single room / tent - if you are happy to share then no supplement is charged. The single supplement just for hotels is USD 120 and just for a single tent is USD 40.

Hashemite Kingdom Ride (4 nights in 5* hotels & 3 nights 5Δ camps) - from 5000 USD per person (rates depend on group size) **See separate information sheet.**

Dates - On request for 2 to 8 people.

Travel arrangements / Flights - The meeting point for these rides is Amman airport. The first and last nights of the trip are spent in Madaba (or Amman) - about half an hour's drive from Amman airport. If you arrive before 14.00 you may need to wait for a transfer, if you arrive very late, eg after midnight then there will be extra transfer charges. On the last day (Day 9 or 10) of your trip you will be taken back to the airport in the morning (extra charge for transfers after 14.00).

Transfers are co-ordinated with different arrival / departure times so if riders are arriving on different flights then some may need to wait a short time at the airport.

British Airways and Royal Jordanian both have daily direct flights to Amman from London Heathrow. Fares are around £450 to £600 per person economy return, depending on the time of year. Easyjet have flights 3 times a week (Thursday, Sunday & Tuesday), so you will need extra nights in Jordan which we are happy to help with. KLM and Air France also have flights via Europe, but a change of plane is involved.

Please note that ALL airlines seem to change their flight times to Amman once or twice during the season and so at some times of year the arrival / departure times are not all that convenient. We can arrange meeting and airport transfers after midnight but there is an extra charge. Flight times may mean you have a very short night or a long wait before you can check-in at the hotel (we can easily book extra nights to avoid this but at extra cost).

Please call us for more travel information or if you would like us to book flights (our ATOL number is 6213).



General visa and health information (NB this is a brief outline - further information will be sent to you if you make a confirmed booking.)

Visas If you hold a British Passport, currently a visa **IS** required to visit Jordan. This can be obtained on arrival at Amman airport (this is usually quick and easy) or you can apply in advance to the Jordanian Embassy ('The Embassy of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan') in London.

Health No jabs are required as a condition of entry from the UK and Europe although The Hospital for Tropical Diseases in London recommends that you ensure you are up to date with Tetanus inoculations for travel to Jordan. Hepatitis A, Rabies and Typhoid may also be recommended in some cases. If you are planning a long stay, visiting other places before or after your ride that are particularly remote or very rural then you should talk to a GP or specialist travel clinic before departure.



Example itineraries - The following is an example of the 9 night Wadi Rum Ride although **please note** that the day by day arrangements are a guide only and as desert conditions are unpredictable, itineraries remain flexible. The order of the riding days may be changed around or substituted if the weather or local conditions require. This is left to the discretion and experience of your guides. **Please contact us for the 9 night Winter & 8 night Christmas / New Year itineraries.**

Wadi Rum Ride (9 nights) - Example itinerary

Day 1 - Arrive Queen Alia International Airport, Amman, where you will be met and driven to your hotel in Madaba or Amman. Depending on your arrival time dinner may be available.

Day 2 - Breakfast at the hotel and set off early, at about 7.30am, on a drive of about 2 ½ to 3 hours to Wadi Mousa, the modern town close to the entrance of the ancient city of Petra. An English speaking guide will show you the main sites and the rest of the day at leisure in Petra with your own arrangements for lunch (there are some small restaurants within the site). In the evening, dinner and overnight in a hotel in Wadi Mousa. (B,D).



Day 3 - Breakfast at the hotel, then set off driving (about 1½ hours) to the Wadi Rum, where you meet your guide and the horses over a cup of Bedu tea. A short familiarization close to the stables to match horses and rider, then set off riding through the Um Ishrin valley, visiting Lawrence's 'house' on the way. The morning is slow and relaxed, giving you time to get to know your horse. There will be a break for lunch and in the afternoon ride on through an open valley with views over the red sand. Camp is set up at Abu Hassaran. Dinner and overnight in camp. (B,L,D)

Day 4 - After breakfast set off riding across the Rash Rasha valley, with its orange coloured sands, towards Qatar Mountain. Visit the Qatar spring and lunch close by. In the afternoon ride to Um Raza with its red walled canyons. Camp will be set up in UmRaza. (B,L,D)

Day 5 - Breakfast and set off riding until you reach the legendary Caves of Harab Antar. Lunch by the caves and in the afternoon ride south towards the Saudi border and Wadi Saabit, along hard tracks which are good for a long canter, then picking your way through the maze of enormous rock formations and gigantic boulders that scatter the desert. Camp is set up in Wadi Saabit, not far from Jebel Um Adami, Jordan's highest peak at 5948 feet. Dinner and night in camp. (B, L,D)

Day 6 - After breakfast saddle up and set off riding across the Cerdan valley. Here you will see a Neolithic well which is still used by the Bedu. Stop for lunch in Um Umgur and in the afternoon ride on, crossing narrow canyons to arrive at Abu Rashaba where camp is set up for the night. (B,L,D)

Day 7 - Ride from Abu Rashaba towards Burdah mountain, the 'mountain of cool breezes'. Cross Khour Al Ajram, one of Wadi Rum's main valleys, and stop where there is a good view of the natural rock bridge of Burdah joining two rocky peaks high above the sand. A picnic lunch and continue riding and in the afternoon through the valley of the Dunes, passing Jebel Um Feshiyeh where there are Nabatean inscriptions. Camp is set up in the beautiful red dunes of this area. (B,L,D)

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Day 8 - The ride this morning is through Barrah Canyon, which cuts spectacularly through the rock and has immense, sheer cliff walls, towards the agricultural village of Disi. Depending on the group, you may ride across the mud flats of Al Ga'a which are used as a training ground for Arab endurance and marathon horses, and are perfect for a long exhilarating canter. Continue on after the flats, returning to the stables near Rum village. Lunch at the stables then set off driving, either to Aqaba and the Red Sea, or to Madaba. Dinner and night at a hotel in Aqaba or Madaba. (B,L,D)



Day 9 - Breakfast and, for those in Madaba, start with a morning visit to the famous mosaics, including St George church and the Mosaic school. Then set off by car to the Dead Sea arriving in time for lunch (own arrangements) then time to swim, float and relax. In the late afternoon drive back towards Amman, passing Mount Nebo. In Aqaba the day is free either for some snorkelling at the Berenice Private Beach, which is a short way south from the town, or for shopping / relaxing. In the mid afternoon meet the minibus for a 4 hour drive to Madaba. Dinner and night at the hotel in Madaba. (B,D)

Day 10 - Breakfast and transfer to Queen Alia International airport (about 30 minute drive) (B)

(Updated 11/07/13)

