



RIDE WORLD WIDE

JORDAN

PETRA & THE WADI RUM 2023

RIDE INFORMATION

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 will explore the south of Jordan around Petra and the Wadi Rum, which has to be one of the world's most striking desert areas and was made famous by Lawrence of Arabia. They include a visit to the fascinating lost city of Petra, 'rose red city' of the Nabateans and one of the 7 New Wonders of the World, followed by several days riding through the Wadi Rum desert. The rides are organised by Hashem Al Flahat. Hashem and his family own the horses and he guides most of the rides personally. He is an experienced and knowledgeable guide, who grew up in Wadi Mousa and has worked with horses since he was 8 years old. Hashem's late father also bred horses and he has a great team of experienced, welcoming Jordanian and Bedu staff.



DATES

Set date rides are for 7 or 9 nights with riding on 5 or 6 days respectively. These are run throughout the year - please contact us to check availability. Rides are usually limited to 10 riders. Private departures and tailor-made rides with standard or more luxurious accommodation can be arranged for groups on request.

HORSES

The horses used are mostly Jordanian Arabs, with some Arab crosses. The majority are mares, although there are a few geldings and occasionally a stallion may be used for riding. They are well cared for, tough and strong, living in the desert year round. They are fairly small, averaging about 15hh to 15.2hh, are generally quite narrow and lightly built (typical desert Arabs) with quite a lively, spirited temperament. They feel full of energy and are responsive and fast to ride but are also sensitive and sensible which makes them easy to handle.

TACK

Saddles are English GP or endurance style, usually Wintec. Saddle blankets have pockets for personal belongings, cameras, water bottle etc. They are good quality and comfortable although the desert environment is hard on tack and you should not expect it to be 'as new'! The horses are mainly ridden in snaffles with pelhams occasionally used (the Bedu traditionally ride their horses in a bit-less bridle, a bit only being used for races, battles or for a 'difficult' horse) but they are used to a loose contact with the bit at a walk and trot, responding best to light use of hand and leg, and to the rider's weight.

RIDING

There is generally 4 to 6 hours in the saddle on riding days although riding hours may vary with the weather. The Petra to Wadi Rum ride follows a route riding from Petra through the mountains to the Wadi Rum Desert. In winter months the ride may be adapted slightly if it is cold in the mountains, with the horses moved by truck into the Wadi Rum after visiting Petra. Rides are usually lead by Hashem, an experienced desert guide who speaks fluent English, or occasionally by another local English speaking guide who works with him. Luggage, camping equipment and supplies are transported by 4 wheel drive back-up vehicle and local staff will be on hand to set up camp and help with the horses although riders will also be asked / encouraged to help groom and tack up / untack their own horse before and after riding. There may be some walking, leading horses, each day during rides - generally for 5 minutes or so to warm them up in the morning before starting and again to cool them off at the end of the day. You may also be asked to get off to lead for short stretches during the ride to give horses a rest, to cross the Highway, or if the ground is rough or sand, deep.

WEIGHT LIMIT

The usual rider weight limit is 85 kgs / 13st 5lbs, although some heavier riders may be accepted if horses are available - if you are over 80kg / 12st 8lbs please contact us to discuss availability of horses for the dates you have in mind.



PACE

Overall the pace of the rides is expected to be moderate, but it will vary 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 will depend on the weather, conditions for the horses and also the ability of the group as a whole. Great care is taken to ensure horses are relaxed and calm and that everyone feels in control - the desert is a vast open environment with no barriers or fences! When riding in the mountains, if the going is rough or stony, the sand deep, or if it is very hot, the pace will be slow and in places you will be asked to ride one behind the other. You may also be asked to ride in a '2 x 2' formation for canters, or to head off singly or in pairs rather than as one group.

RIDING EXPERIENCE

These 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 feel energetic and 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 also enjoy your trip much more if you are 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 hard work, particularly if it is hot! If you do not ride regularly at home, we recommend concentrated training before you go to get used to the hours you will spend in the saddle.



TERRAIN

The landscape on the rides will vary from day to day. Around Petra there are rolling sand and gravel hills, with some cultivation and some areas of dense mountain peaks; in central Wadi Rum the landscape overall is flatter and although 'desert' the scale of the rocks makes the riding landscape varied. Wide sand valleys are framed by mountainous monoliths, gravel tracks wind between huge boulders or through canyons, adjacent to immense cliff faces. To the north are wide, completely unobstructed clay flats of several kilometres (used as a training ground for Arab endurance horses) and to the east, vivid green, agricultural land, where crops are grown. Close to Petra you follow winding, sometimes stony paths through the hills, and there is some road work, both tarmac and dirt, in the vicinity of the villages (you will be asked to dismount and lead your horse in some villages), but overall the terrain on the rides is good for horses, generally compacted sand that is soft, but not too deep, and dry but forgiving clay. En-route 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 will be in a combination of hotels and simple desert camps. Hotels are also simple but adequate, equivalent to an international 2* - 3 * standard. Rooms have private bathrooms and ride rates are based on twin / double (or occasionally triple) occupancy. Single travellers will be asked to pay the single supplement to book a single hotel room (although if you are prepared to share AND there is a willing sharer, this will be waived (see price information below). The meeting point for the rides is Amman airport and the first night of each ride is at a hotel in Madaba; one night will be at a hotel in Wadi Mousa, the modern town at the entrance to Petra (La Maison or similar); 4 or 5 nights are spent camping; on the 9 night itinerary one night will be at a hotel in Aqaba (My Hotel or similar), with the last night of both 9 and 7 night rides back at the hotel in Madaba. Camping accommodation is fairly basic but you should be reasonably comfortable. Usually, assuming the weather is warm, temporary 'fly' camps will be set up with small two man pop-up tents (or individual tents for those travelling alone) and comfortable foam mattresses for sleeping (you will need your own sleeping bag) - or you can sleep on your mattress under the star-studded sky. Camps do not generally have a 'mess' tent - they are carefully positioned for protection from wind and sun - and meals are eaten in a sheltered spot, but in December, January and February when it can be cold a larger mess tent may be taken with you. **cont. over**



ACCOMMODATION cont.

They have a separate, simple washing "shower" tent (jugs of water provided for washing); loos are "open air" - find a secluded bush or rock! You will be expected to put up your personal tent (these are pretty simple!) and to carry your own luggage etc. but a cook travels with you and staff prepare meals, heat water on request etc. For most rides, even in colder winter months, the camp is moved but sometimes a semi-permanent camp may be used as a desert base.

MEALS

You can expect food to be very good - a mixture of local and European style - and plentiful. When camping you will have the opportunity to sample the Bedu lifestyle (with several added comforts!) and meals may be served from the traditional large, communal plate or 'Mansef' laid out on a table for you to help yourself. You then eat in Bedu style on a carpet or mat sitting cross-legged on the floor. A typical breakfast would be a choice of boiled eggs, yoghurt, honey, cheese and warm pitta bread, accompanied by 'chai' - sweet tea often deliciously 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 keeps you going after your ride until dinner, usually a speciality of the area, such as fish from the Aqaba Gulf in spices; chicken and potatoes or the local Bedu lamb and rice served with yoghurt and pitta. The hotels used have restaurants and breakfast is normally a buffet, whilst dinner might be a choice off the menu or a selection of dishes served buffet-style. 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 when camping are included in the ride cost but no other soft or alcoholic drinks. Alcohol is not recommended for cultural reasons (you can take your own duty free if you wish, or it's possible to purchase at some special shops in Amman or Aqaba - although it is rather expensive). When staying at hotels drinks can be bought from the bar (NB not all hotels serve alcohol).



WEATHER

Seasons in Jordan are the same as Europe with summer months 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 usually 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 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 (sometimes down to 0C in December / January), **rain and even snow**, is not unheard of and temperatures drop sharply as the sun goes down.

WHAT TO BRING

We will send you a list when you book.

ITINERARY

The following is an example of the Petra to Wadi Rum Ride although **please note** that day by day arrangements are a guide only and, as desert conditions are unpredictable, the itinerary may be changed if the weather or local conditions require. The order of events, may also change, for instance with the visit to the Dead Sea at the beginning, the ride run in the reverse order from Wadi Rum to Petra, and the visit to Petra last. This is left to the discretion and experience of your guides. Please contact us for the Winter Wadi Rum Ride Itinerary.

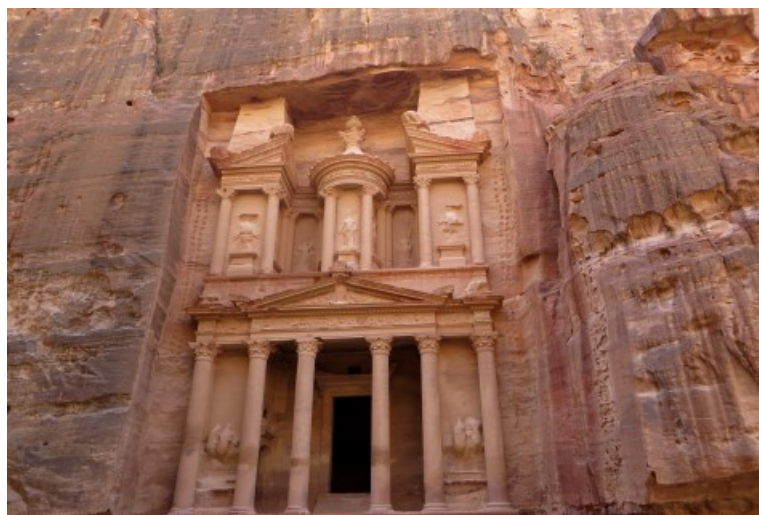


ITINERARY cont.

Petra to Wadi Rum Ride - Example itinerary

Day 1 - Arrive Queen Alia International Airport, Amman, where you will be met and driven to a hotel in Madaba. Dinner will be available until 21.00. Overnight Mosaic Hotel (or similar). (D).

Day 2 - Breakfast at the hotel, then at about 08.00 set off on a drive of about 3 hours south to Wadi Mousa, the modern town close to the ancient city of Petra. Once in Wadi Mousa you can leave luggage at your hotel and the rest of the day is free to visit the ancient city of Petra, 'rose red city' of the Nabateans. A guided tour (2 to 3 hours) with a local English speaking guide will be organised in the late morning and the rest of the afternoon is free to explore at your leisure. The "Treasury" and the "Monastery" are the most notable facades but the ruins are spread over a huge area with many wonderful rock carved buildings that can keep you busy for hours or days. Own arrangements for lunch. Dinner and night at hotel in Wadi Mousa (La Maison Hotel or similar). (B,D)



Day 3 - Breakfast, then transfer to meet the horses just outside Wadi Mousa. Mount up and set off riding into the hills above Petra, with wonderful views across to Djebel Haroun mountain, the highest summit in the Petra region. The prophet Aaron, older brother of Moses, was buried here by Moses himself. Leaving the horses tied up, those who wish can walk up to the "High Place of Sacrifice" for the incredible view over Petra and the maze of canyons in which it is hidden. A picnic lunch before riding on in the afternoon to camp on Taybeh mountain. Dinner and the night in camp. (B,L,D)



Day 4 - After breakfast you ride from Taybeh mountain to the old village of Rajif, which has great views overlooking the Wadi Araba desert. Stop for a picnic lunch in the shade of olive and fruit trees. After lunch you continue riding along the Silk Road which was used by the trading caravans, taking produce between Egypt and Arabia, Palestine and Syria. There are opportunities for long canters across the plains in the direction of Ber Hammad (an old Nabatean caravan cistern). Dinner and the night in camp. (B,L,D)

Day 5 - Breakfast in camp and then set off riding through Ber Hammad along the trail which in Nabataen and Roman times connected Wadi Sabra and Petra. With fit horses and fresh mountain breezes, there should be plenty of chances for exhilarating trots and canters where the going allows. You ride through limestone hills to the gateway of the desert "bab el Sahara" - in good weather you can see the red sandstone buttresses of Djebel Rum, the central mountain of the Wadi Rum area with peak at 1784 metres. Lunch will be at a Bedu camp which will also be your home for the night. In the afternoon you ride to the head of a dramatic canyon, returning to the Bedu camp for dinner and the night. (B,L,D)

ITINERARY cont.

Day 6 - Continue riding east through curious little canyons, still following the spice trail along parts of the ancient silk road. Pass the old village of Thogra and then dismount to lead the horses across the Desert Highway, the main road between Amman and Aqaba which continues to Saudi Arabia. Continue east through a long valley to the lunch stop. In the afternoon, eastwards again riding towards the sandstone cliffs of Wadi Rum - you may have time to visit the natural rock arch 'Karaze' before reaching camp. Dinner and the night in camp. (B,L,D)



Day 7 - Breakfast in camp and mount up to ride beneath majestic sandstone cliffs, stopping to see the famous inscriptions made by the Thamudic and Nabatean people centuries ago. Then ride south east towards the agricultural village of Chakria stopping for lunch in the shade of a rock face. In the afternoon cross the mud flats and enter the central part of the Wadi Rum protected reserve. Overnight in Um Ishrin valley. Dinner and night in camp. Dinner and the night in camp. [Those on the 7 night itinerary will transfer to Madaba after riding for dinner and night at the Mosaic Hotel (or similar)] (B,L,D)

Day 8 - You are now in the heart of the Wadi Rum. After breakfast saddle up and set off through the beautiful valley of Um Ishrin, passing by the red sand dunes in the valley of Anafishia. You will pass the ruins of "Lawrence's house" and ride through the beautiful Barrah canyon, where there are several Thamudic engravings on the cliff faces depicting camels and other animals. Reaching the lunch stop you say goodbye to the horses and, after lunch, transfer about 1 hour by car, to Aqaba on the Red Sea. Dinner and night at the My Hotel (or similar) in Aqaba. (B,L,D)

OR, for 7 night itinerary - Breakfast and transfer to Queen Alia International airport (about 40 minute drive) (B)



Day 9 - Breakfast and then set off driving northwards, through Wadi Araba and then along the shores of the Dead Sea. After about 3 hours you reach the Grand East Dead Sea Resort. The rest of the day swimming, floating & relaxing at the, trying a famous mud wrap if you wish! Own arrangements for lunch and in the late afternoon you will be driven back towards Madaba passing Mount Nebo, with a chance to visit the church before sunset. Dinner and night at the Mosaic Hotel (or similar) in Madaba. (B,D)

Day 10 - Breakfast and transfer to Queen Alia International airport (about 40 minute drive) (B)

DATES & RATES 2023

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

Petra to Wadi Rum Ride (7 nights) - USD 1940

Single supplement USD 160

Petra to Wadi Rum Ride (9 nights) - USD 2065

Single supplement USD 185

7 or 9 nights starting every Saturday, February to May and September to November

During summer (June, July, August) & winter (December, January) rides are every other week.

Please note May to early September will be hot; and January, February & December can be cold (snow is possible). Itineraries may be changed during these times to cope with the climate, for comfort of both riders and horses.



Prices quoted above assume a minimum of 2 people on the ride.

Rates INCLUDE all riding and services of riding guide, twin accommodation (see note below re: single rooms), entrance fee to Petra as per itinerary, meals as indicated, tea, coffee and mineral water when camping, collection from and transfer back to Amman airport at standard times on the first and last days.

Rates EXCLUDE International flights and travel to / from Amman and taxes, airport transfers outside set days / times, visa fees, personal medical insurance (which you must have), lunches in Petra and at the Dead Sea, wine, beer, other alcoholic and all bottled drinks when camping, all drinks at hotels, entrance fee to Mount Nebo, personal extras (laundry, telephone calls etc) and any tips you wish to leave staff.

Single travellers - Rates quoted assume twin-shared accommodation. Single tents are provided when camping for those travelling alone but a single supplement is charged for single bookings to cover single hotel rooms. If you are travelling alone and are prepared to share with another (same sex) guest on the ride to save paying the supplement, we can sometimes arrange this - let us know and we will see if we can find a sharer - if there is no-one, the supplement will be charged.

FLIGHTS & TRAVEL INFORMATION

The meeting point for rides is Amman airport and the first and last nights will be spent in Madaba about ½ hour's drive from the airport. There are usually just 2 set transfers from the airport on each arrival day, generally one early afternoon and one late evening and these will be co-ordinated once we have arrival times for all participants - so you may have a wait at the airport depending on arrival times of others. (NB if you arrive between midnight and 07.00 there will be an extra transfer charge). You will be taken back to Amman airport on the last day (Day 8 or 10) in the morning (NB extra charge for transfers after midday). British Airways and Royal Jordanian both have daily direct flights to Amman from London Heathrow with fares around £450 to £750 per person economy return, depending on the time of year. KLM and Air France have flights from London and regional airports via Europe.

Please note that ALL airlines seem to change their flight times to Amman once or twice during the season and arrival / departure times are not all that convenient! We can arrange meeting and airport transfers after midnight but there is an extra charge for this. Flight times may also mean you have a very short night or a long wait before check-in at the hotel is possible (we will do our best to help and can easily book extra nights to avoid this, although 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 & 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, the cost is currently 40 JOD - in many cases complimentary visas are arranged via our ground handlers).

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.

(DRAFT 06/09/2023)

