



RIDE WORLD WIDE

Jordan

Hashemite Kingdom Ride 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. Most itineraries include a visit to the fascinating lost city of Petra, the 'rose red city of the Nabateans' and one of the wonders of the ancient world. The rides are organised by Hanna Jashan who has been guiding rides for a number of years and having experienced riding safaris in Africa and South America, and lived for several years in the USA, knows just what it needed to make these rides an extra special experience.



The Horses The horses used on these rides are mostly pure Arabs originating from Jordan, Iraq and Syria, with some Arab crosses. The majority are mares, though there are three or four stallions and some geldings, and all live outside in the desert year round so they are tough and strong. They average 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. Tack suffers 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 good quality, English and endurance style with saddle blankets that have pockets for personal belongings, cameras, water bottle etc. The Bedu traditionally ride their horses in a bit-less bridle, a bit only being used for races, battles or for a 'difficult' horse. These horses are mainly ridden in snaffles and some in pelhams, but they 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. Please note that there is usually a weight limit of 13 stone 5 lbs / 85 kgs on these rides, although some heavier 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 There are generally 5 or 6 hours in the saddle each riding day, covering 25 to 35km a day, although this may vary with the itinerary and time of year. Generally you will ride 3 to 3 ½ hours in the morning, then stop for a couple of hours and continue for another 2 or 3 hours riding in the afternoon. Rides are lead by Hanna or one of his Jordanian guides, who are all experienced in the desert and speak fluent English. Local horsemen, mostly of Bedu origin, will be on hand to help look after the horses and to provide back up. There will be some walking, leading the horses, each day during the rides - you will generally lead the horses for 10 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 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. 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 generally lively and sensitive temperament, so they suit confident, relaxed and sensitive riders. 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. The landscape on the trips varies. There are 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 mountains 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 is in a combination of 5* hotels and luxury desert camps. The meeting point for the rides is Amman airport and the first night of most itineraries will be spent in Amman at the Grand Hyatt Hotel. In Petra the Movenpick Hotel is usually used and on the Dead Sea the opulent Kempinski Hotel. All the hotels used have swimming pools and the excellent facilities one would expect of any 5* hotel. There is also a spa and fitness centre at the Kempinski Dead Sea. Guest rooms are large and all with en-suite bathrooms. In the desert de-luxe camps are set up, with large, walk in tents, proper beds with linen and blankets, carpets, chairs and bedside tables. There are shower tents (water will be heated), portable chemical loos, and a traditional Bedu mess tent for dining and entertaining. Extra staff are on hand in camp and to help with the horses.



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'. This and individual place settings are laid out in traditional style on a carpet or mat and you eat sitting cross-legged on the floor. A typical breakfast would be a choice of boiled eggs, yoghurt, honey, fresh cheese and warm pitta bread, accompanied by 'chai' - delicious sweet tea usually flavoured with sage or cardamom - or strong Turkish 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, such as fish from the Aqaba Gulf in spices; chicken and potatoes or lamb and rice served with yoghurt. The hotels used have good restaurants and breakfast at the hotels is normally a buffet, while 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 and a selection of soft drinks are included in the trip rate when camping, and beer and wine are available for purchase. When staying at hotels, wine 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, but temperatures drop sharply when the sun goes in. 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 is an outline of a 7 night itinerary but itineraries can also be tailor made to suit. Please note that the day by day arrangements are a guide only and as desert conditions are unpredictable, itineraries remain flexible and may be changed if the weather or local conditions require. This is left to the discretion and experience of your guides.

Hashemite Kingdom Ride Itinerary

Day 1 - Arrive Amman airport where you will be met and driven to the Grand Hyatt Amman 5* Hotel. Night at the Grand Hyatt Hotel (or similar).



Day 2 - Breakfast at the hotel, then set off on a drive of about 2 ½ to 3 hours south to Wadi Mousa, the modern town close to the ancient city of Petra arriving about lunchtime. The afternoon to visit Petra at your own leisure. Own arrangements for lunch & dinner today. Night at the 5* Movenpick Petra Resort in Wadi Mousa (or similar). (B)

Day 3 - Breakfast at the hotel and set off by car to the Wadi Rum, about an hours drive. Meet the horses, mount up and set off riding southward. There may be time to visit Lawrence's Well, described in Lawrence of Arabia's book the Seven Pillars of Wisdom. A break for lunch after a fairly short and slow first ride allowing you time to get used to the horses. End the day riding from the southern end of Khazali mountain south to Toour Mufleh where camp has been set up. Dinner and the night in camp. (B,L,D)

Day 4 - Breakfast in camp and ride north along the Baran Canyon, which cuts spectacularly through the rock and has immense, sheer cliff walls. A long exhilarating canter to the lunch spot, then over the vast mud flats towards the agricultural village of Disi. Return to camp for dinner and the night. (B,L,D)

Day 5 - Breakfast in camp and then mount up and perhaps ride towards the Saudi border, passing through the Nogra Canyon. Stop for a picnic lunch in the shade at Jebel Al Mangour then continue riding north, passing views of the natural rock bridge of Burdah which joins two rocky peaks, high above the sand. Dinner and night in camp. (B,L,D)



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Day 6 - The final day's ride, heading towards Rum village, passing the Seven Pillars of Wisdom. In the later afternoon drive to the 5* Kempinski Hotel Ishtar Dead Sea Hotel, (about 3 hours). Time to settle in before watching the sun set over the Dead Sea. Own arrangements for dinner in one of the hotel restaurants, night at Kempinski Ishtar Dead Sea Hotel (or similar). (B, L)

Day 7 - Breakfast and a full day to relax and enjoy the Dead Sea and this opulent hotel. Own arrangements for lunch and dinner. Night at Kempinski Ishtar Dead Sea Hotel (or similar) (B)



Day 8 - Breakfast and drive about an hour to Amman airport for your onward journey (B)

Please note that the day by day itinerary is only a guide and as desert conditions are unpredictable, itineraries remain flexible and may be changed if the weather or local conditions require.

2013 Dates: Dates on request for groups of 2 or more

2013 Rates:

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

Prices vary with each itinerary / time of year but based on the above itinerary are approximately as follows:

7 to 8 riders - USD 5000 per person

4 to 6 riders - USD 5315 per person

2 to 3 riders - USD 5625 per person

Single supplement - USD 500

Rates quoted include all riding, twin accommodation in 5* hotels and luxury camp, entrance fee to Petra & Wadi Rum, all meals when camping; B&B at in hotels, 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, visa fees, personal medical insurance (which you must have), lunch & dinner at hotels, wine and alcoholic drinks when camping, all drinks at hotels, lunches at hotels, and any tips you wish to leave.

Single travellers - The rates quoted assume twin-shared accommodation. Single tents are provided when camping for those travelling alone but a single supplement is charged for single hotel rooms. This is compulsory if you are travelling alone unless you are prepared to share a room AND we have a sharer for you (if we do not have a sharer, the supplement is charged).

Travel arrangements / Flights - The meeting point for these rides is Amman airport. The first night of each trip is usually spent in Amman and the last usually at the Dead Sea - about an hour's drive from Amman 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 fly three times a week from Gatwick to Amman and KLM and Air France also have flights via Europe, but a change of plane is involved.

Travel arrangements / Flights cont.

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. Meeting on day 1 will still be arranged at any time, day or night, but flight times may mean you have a very short night or a long wait before check-in to the hotel is possible (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 Polio and Tetanus inoculations for travel to Jordan. If you are planning a long stay and to visit other places before or after your ride that are particularly remote or very rural, you should talk to a GP or specialist travel clinic before departure. You may be advised to have vaccinations against Typhoid and Hepatitis A as well.

(Updated 25/10/12)

