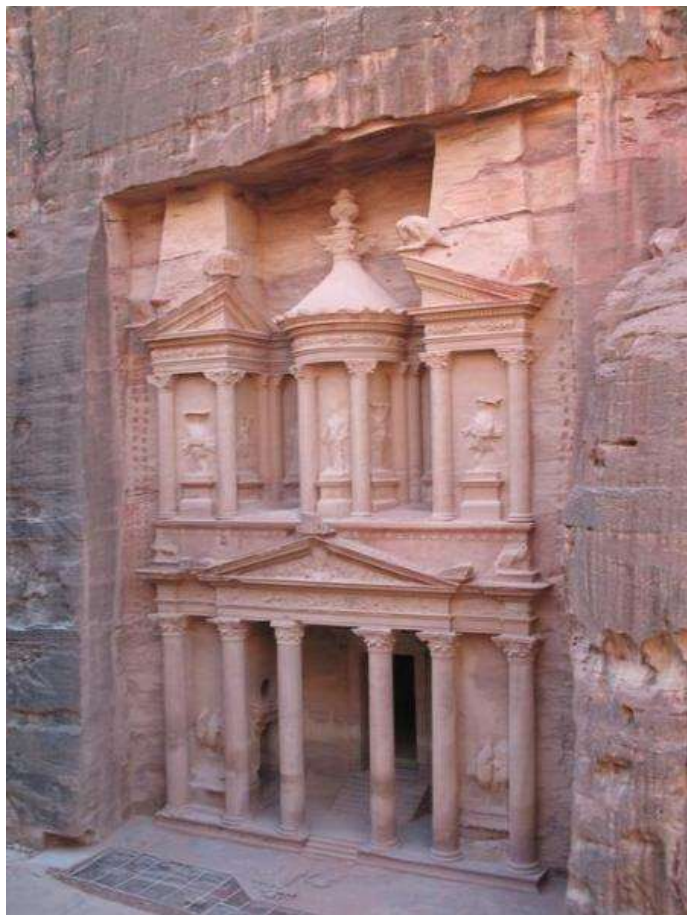


# Destination Information Guide

# Jordan



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# Welcome to the World of Big Five!

*The following general outline offers practical information, suggestions and answers to some frequently asked questions. It is not intended to be the definitive guide for your trip.*

Big Five Tours & Expeditions is pleased to welcome you on this exciting adventure. We take great care to insure that your travel dreams and expectations are well met. Our distinctive journeys allow you to experience the finest aspects each destination has to offer. We also aim to provide you with a deeper understanding of and appreciation for the places you'll visit and the people you'll meet.



## Amman, Jordan

**Elevation: 2535 feet    Latitude: 31 59N    Longitude: 035 59E**

Average Temperature

Years on Record: 21

	YEAR	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
°F	63	46	48	53	61	69	75	78	77	75	69	58	49

Average High Temperature

Years on Record: 21

	YEAR	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
°F	72	52	55	61	71	80	85	88	88	85	79	66	56

Average Low Temperature

Years on Record: 21

	YEAR	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
°F	54	39	40	44	51	57	63	67	67	64	58	49	42

## WEATHER

Hot and dry summers with cool evenings. The Jordan Valley below sea level is warm during winter and extremely hot in summer. Rain falls between November and March, while colder weather conditions occur in December/January.

## TIME ZONES

GMT + 2 (GMT + 3 between March and October - dates vary).

## PASSPORTS & VISAS

**Passports:** For international travel, a passport valid for at least six months from date of departure, containing at least 3 blank pages are necessary.

**Visas:** Many countries require travelers to obtain visas prior to arrival. Big Five Tours & Expeditions has appointed Trivisa to process required visas for our passengers. You can find the necessary forms from Trivisa's website at: [www.trivisa.com](http://www.trivisa.com). Please use account code JP1551, and follow the directions.

**Important:** Even if you do not need a visa prior to departure, please check your passport well in advance of departure to insure:

- 1) It is valid for at least six months after the date of travel.
- 2) You have sufficient blank pages for visa/entry stamps that will be added as you travel in and out of various countries.

*Please note: Pages reserved for amendments and endorsements cannot be used for visas.*

**Note:** Remember to carry with you in a safe place photocopies of all important documents in the event your passport or other documents are lost or stolen. Also, it's a good idea to have a passport photo with you. As a tourist, you will need to produce your passport when booking in at hotels, changing money or travelers' checks and prove your identity whenever requested by a policeman.

## AIRPORT FORMALITIES

Upon arrival, proceed through immigration and baggage claims and customs. Big Five personnel or their representatives will assist you with your baggage, escort you to your hotel, and assist with check-in formalities. **Departure Tax:** None - included in ticket.

## JORDAN CUSTOMS

The following goods may be imported into Jordan by people 18 years of age and older without incurring customs duty:

- 200 cigarettes or 25 cigars or 200g of tobacco (a charge of JD3.75 for each additional 200 cigarettes, up to a maximum of 2,000).
- 1l of alcohol (a charge of JD2.91 for each additional liter, up to a maximum of 4l).
- One or two opened bottles of perfume and a reasonable amount of eau-de-cologne or lotion in opened bottles for personal use only.
- Gifts up to the value of JD50 or the equivalent of US\$150.

**Restricted Items:** Firearms, sporting guns and other weapons require prior approval from both country of origin and destination. They may be carried as checked baggage only. **Prohibited Imports -** Narcotics.

## US CUSTOMS

Returning U.S. residents are allowed to bring back \$800 worth of merchandise duty-free. There are limits on some items. Regulations frequently change, however, so check with your nearest customs office for a list of limited and exempt items, or write the U.S. Customs Service, Box 7407, Washington, DC 20044. Or, visit their website [www.customs.ustreas.gov](http://www.customs.ustreas.gov).

## HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

Anyone traveling internationally should be in generally good health. Talk with your personal physician about any shots or boosters recommended depending on your personal health profile and your itinerary. Tetanus and polio vaccines should be up to date.

**Please note:** If you are on medication, be sure to bring enough for the duration of the trip.

Prescription medicines should always be carried in their original containers in your hand luggage.

**Health insurance is strongly advised during any foreign travel.** U.S. medical insurance is not always valid outside the United States. U.S. Medicare and Medicaid programs do not provide payment for medical services outside the United States. Uninsured travelers, who require medical care overseas, may face extreme difficulties.

**Please note:** If you are on medication, be sure to bring enough for the duration of the trip. Prescription medicines should always be carried in their original containers in your hand luggage.

For the most current information, please check the latest regulations with your local health office or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention hotline for international travelers at 1-877-FYI-TRIP (1-877-394-8747); fax: 1-888-CDC-FAXX (1-888-232-3299), or their main telephone number in Atlanta, 404-332-4559. Or, visit the CDC Internet home page at <http://www.cdc.gov>.

## CLOTHING

*For general clothing information, please review the **Travel Handbook** in your pre-departure materials. See pre-departure information for general packing check list.*

Lightweight clothes are advised between May and September. Warmer clothes are necessary for winter and cool summer evenings. Rainwear is needed from November to April. Hot and dry summers with cool evenings. Please remember that much of northern Africa is predominantly a Muslim with conservative standards of dress. These apply particularly to women. Women will be more accepted touring mosques and old churches if their head is covered. Do bring a bathing suit to use at hotels and onboard cruise ships, however, except onboard ships and poolside, women should not wear bare-backed dresses, shorts and short skirts. Bare shoulders are also taboo. It is acceptable, however, for men to wear shorts.

## LUGGAGE

*For general baggage information, please review the **Travel Handbook** in your pre-departure materials.*

## MONEY

**Currency:** Money: The official currency is the Dinar (JOD), which is divided into 100 piastres or 1,000 fils.

**Currency Exchange:** Foreign currencies can be exchanged easily in banks and bureau de change. Most hotels also provide exchange facilities. The daily exchange rates are published in local newspapers.

**Credit/Debit Cards and ATMs:** American Express, Visa, Diners Club and MasterCard are accepted in hotels restaurants and larger shops. ATMs can be found in most of the larger towns and throughout Amman.

**Traveler's Checks:** Those issued by UK banks are accepted by licensed banks and bureau de change. To avoid additional exchange rate charges, travelers are advised to take traveler's checks in US Dollars.

**Currency Restrictions:** Restrictions apply.

## COMMUNICATION

Arabic is the official language. English is widely spoken in the cities. French, German, Italian and Spanish are also spoken.

## ELECTRICITY

220 volts AC, 50Hz. Round two-pin plugs are used.

## FOOD & DRINK

Water that is not bottled should be boiled or otherwise sterilized. Milk should not be consumed unless bought in a container stating that it has been pasteurized. Avoid dairy products which are likely to have been made from unboiled milk. Food and water in rural areas may carry increased risk. Only eat well-cooked meat and fish. Vegetables should be cooked and fruit peeled.

The cuisine varies, although most restaurants have a mixed menu which includes both Arabic and European dishes.

### **National specialties:**

- Meze (small starters such as fool, hummus, kube and tabouleh).
- Kebabs.
- Musakhan (chicken in olive oil and onion sauce roasted on Arab bread).
- Mensaf (stewed lamb in a yoghurt sauce served on a bed of rice), a dish which is normally eaten with the hand.
- Baklava (pastry filled with nuts or honey).

### **National drinks:**

- Drinking Arabic coffee is a ritual. Coffee tends to be very strong and is served in small cups (with plenty of coffee grounds at the bottom).
- Local beer, wine and other types of alcohol are served in most restaurants and bars, except during the fasting month of Ramadan (non-Arabic nationals can drink alcohol only in hotels during Ramadan).
- Araq is a local liquor similar to Greek Ouzo, usually mixed with water and ice.

### **TIPPING**

Tipping should be done at your discretion and as a reward for good or exceptional service.

For general tipping guidelines please refer to:  
[www.cntraveler.com/travel-tips/travel-etiquette/2008/12/Etiquette-101-Tipping-Guide](http://www.cntraveler.com/travel-tips/travel-etiquette/2008/12/Etiquette-101-Tipping-Guide)

### **SHOPPING**

Every town will have a souk (market), and there are also many good craft and jewelry shops. There is a particularly good gold and jewelry market in Amman. Special items include Hebron glass, mother-of-pearl boxes, pottery, backgammon sets, embroidered tablecloths, jeweled rosaries and worry beads, nativity sets made of olive wood, leather hassocks, old and new brass and copper items, and caftans hand-embroidered with silver and gold thread. Jordan is famous for its gold and silver. The gold is usually 18kt. The center of Amman has a gold souk with over 50 shops.

Necklaces with a small golden coffee pot (dalleh, a national symbol) are popular and widely available.

Tourist-oriented towns offer many handicrafts, including mosaic. Mosaic schools train young people to work with the colorful, locally hewn stone. Another distinctive local craft is ostrich-egg painting: the paint is applied with needle pricks and designs can take weeks to complete. Other hand-crafted items include sand jars, hand-blown glass and embroidered clothing. Bottled Holy Water from the river Jordan can also be purchased, as can skin-care products made of Dead Sea mud.

**Shopping hours:** Sat-Thurs 0930-1330 and 1530-1800; some open as early as 0800 and close at 2000. Shops are closed on Friday except for the souks which usually open from 1600.

### **Social Conventions**

Be aware that the majority of the population is Muslim, so dress appropriately so you do not offend your hosts. Handshaking is the customary form of greeting. Jordanians are proud of their Arab culture, and hospitality here is a matter of great importance. Visitors are made to feel very welcome and Jordanians are happy to act as hosts and guides, and are keen to inform tourists about their traditions and culture. Islam always plays an important role in society and it is essential that Muslim beliefs are respected. Arabic coffee will normally be served continuously during social occasions. To signal that no more is wanted, slightly tilt the cup when handing it back, otherwise it will be refilled. A small gift is quite acceptable in return for hospitality. ***Women are expected to dress modestly and beachwear must only be worn at the beach or poolside.*** Photography: It is polite to always ask permission to take photographs of people and livestock; in some places photography is forbidden.

## SUGGESTED READING LIST

Many comprehensive and readily available guides are produced by Lonely Planet, Fodor, Insight, The Rough Guide, etc. Here are a few selections we thought might interest you. Barnes and Noble, [www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com), and Longitude Books, [www.longitudebooks.com](http://www.longitudebooks.com), have collections of books, searchable by country.

### **In a Desert Land: Photographs of Israel, Egypt, and Jordan**

by Neil Folberg

Neil Folberg's images of the wilderness of Israel, Egypt, and Jordan are as triumphant as Ansel Adams's depiction of the American West—with the added dimension of color.

These places are among the most beautiful on earth—the deserts of the Middle East, the Dead Sea coast, the ancient splendor of Luxor, the pyramids at Giza, and the eternal presence of Jerusalem itself—and their beauty all the more intense because of their rich historical and religious association. Breathtaking folio-sized reproductions of large-format photographs capture sacred vistas, images of awe, serenity, and ravishing beauty: the Oasis of Ain Umm-Ahmed, the view from the summit of Mount Sinai, a Bedouin orchard in the midst of a desert wadi, the dusty life of village and town, the Temple Mount, and the Wailing Wall.

### **Crossing Mandelbaum Gate: Coming of Age Between the Arabs and Israelis, 1956-1978**

by Kai Bird

PULITZER PRIZE WINNER KAI BIRD'S fascinating memoir of his early years spent in Israel, Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Lebanon provides an original and illuminating perspective into the Arab-Israeli conflict. Weeks before the Suez War of 1956, four-year-old Kai Bird, son of a garrulous, charming American Foreign Service officer, moved to Jerusalem with his family. They settled in a small house, where young Kai could hear church bells and the Muslim call to prayer and watch as donkeys and camels competed with cars for space on the narrow streets. Each day on his way to school, Kai was driven through Mandelbaum Gate, where armed soldiers guarded the line separating Israeli-controlled West Jerusalem from Arab-controlled East. He had a front-seat view to both sides of a divided city—and the roots of the widening conflict between Arabs and Israelis. Bird would spend much of his life crossing such lines—as a child in Jerusalem, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt, and later, as a young

man in Lebanon. Crossing Mandelbaum Gate is his compelling personal history of growing up an American in the midst of three major wars and three turbulent decades in the Middle East. The Zelig-like Bird brings readers into such conflicts as the Suez War, the Six Day War of 1967, and the Black September hijackings in 1970 that triggered the Jordanian civil war. Bird vividly portrays such emblematic figures as the erudite George Antonius, author of *The Arab Awakening*; Jordan's King Hussein; the Palestinian hijacker Leila Khaled; Salem bin Laden, Osama's older brother and a family friend; Saudi King Faisal; President Nasser of Egypt; and Hillel Kook, the forgotten rescuer of more than 100,000 Jews during World War II. Bird, his parents sympathetic to Palestinian self-determination and his wife the daughter of two Holocaust survivors, has written a masterful and highly accessible book—at once a vivid chronicle of a life spent between cultures as well as a consummate history of a region in turmoil. It is an indispensable addition to the literature on the modern Middle East.

### **Jordan**

by Patricia Skinner

Once part of the Ottoman Empire and then known as Transjordan, Jordan is a young nation that gained its independence in 1946. The country is home to amazing landscapes and historical sites dating back to ancient times, yet its short history has been plagued by economic instability and regional hostilities. From the awe-inspiring ruins of Petra and Jerash to the bustling seaport of Aqaba, from the modernizing monarchy to magnificent mosaics, and from the breathtaking Al Azraq Oasis to the saline Dead Sea, this volume showcases a hospitable people who are proud of their heritage.

**Pillars of Salt**  
by Fadia Faqir

**Publishers Weekly:** "The Jordanian-born Faqir (Nisanit), who writes in English, brings both the declamatory style and the intricate syntax of traditional Arabic storytelling to a novel of anti-traditional feminist themes. There are three narratives. The first is told by an itinerant male Storyteller, who has a monkey and a profane voice: "Men say Allah turned my friend the man, Maymoon, into a monkey when he wiped his ass with a piece of bread." This Storyteller spins tales that contradict those of the primary narrator, Maha, a peasant woman, who tells both her own tale and that of Um Saad, a more sophisticated woman from Amman. The two women are roommates in a mental hospital around the time of the British Mandate. Um Saad is a heartbroken mother of eight whose husband has replaced her with "the woman in green who licked the side of her mouth like a snake." It's sad, but it doesn't have half the drama of Maha's story, which concerns her love for her husband, now dead, whose "firm thighs told the story of endless days of riding strong Arab horses." Basically, the Um Saad and Storyteller chapters get in the way of the real drama: What's going to happen to Maha next? Will her husband rise from the dead? Will her brother punch her in the head (again)? Will she be forced to marry old Sheikh Talib? The novel's mix of Arabian Nights and social concerns regarding the repression of Arab women is sometimes awkward. But Faqir is a skilled writer striving for an ambitious synthesis of Arabic and English style, Islamic and Western sensibility. "

**Jordan: Living in the Crossfire**  
by Alan George

Drawing on numerous visits to the country and interviews with a diversity of people, including King Abdullah, Alan George describes how Jordan's reasonably stable monarchical system, unlike that in most Arab countries, has allowed the halting development of civil society and maintained control through the skillful co-option of opponents rather than heavy-handed reliance on its secret police. What is daily life like? How do its parliamentary system and political parties work? How free are the media? What are the future prospects of this buffer "state without a nation"?

**Jordan: A Hashemite Legacy**  
by Beverley Milton-Edwards, Peter Hinchcliffe

Created as a mechanism for maintaining British influence through a local patron, Jordan's future never looked certain. Nevertheless, under the leadership of the Hashemite monarchy led by Abdullah and then his grandson Hussein, the Kingdom of Jordan became a permanent feature on the map of the modern Middle East.

Under the rule of King Abdullah II, Jordan has remained an influential regional player in the Middle East Peace Process, its strategic position on the borders of Palestine, Israel, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Iraq ensuring that it cannot be overlooked in the regional and international politics.

Updated and expanded to include recent developments in Jordan and the Middle East.