

WILD WOMEN
expeditions

ULTIMATE JORDAN

10 DAYS



EXPERIENCE JORDAN

Jordan is tightly-wrapped in mystical mystery, isn't it? The enormous and ancient ruins are overwhelming. Everything is deeply-dug in yesteryear from the fragrant za'atar and sumac spices to the Bedouin camps and goat herds that pepper the dramatic landscape.

This trip delivers everything from the warm embrace of the Red Sea to the saline Dead Sea to the iconic Wadi Rum. You'll jump from Jeeps to camels to boats in this itinerary that spoils at every turn with unmatched opportunities to completely submerge yourself in the Jordanian culture.

Participate in lively cooking workshops at the Beit Khayrat Souf, a unique women-owned and managed cafe. At Iraq al-Amir Cooperative, you'll be able to participate in a paper-making or weaving project with local women of all ages who are gaining confidence through financial independence by creating and selling their handmade artisan projects.

You'll sleep soundly knowing that you are supporting socially and environmentally responsible, low-impact stays in Jordan like the solar-powered Feynan Ecolodge and the Red Valley domes (that are akin to sleeping on Mars) at the Memories Aicha Luxury Camp in Wadi Rum.

This trip was designed to integrate the intimacy of community integration, Petra's iconic sites and all the tempting flavours of Jordan. This trip is truly all-encompassing from mesmerizing sunrise camel rides to Dead Sea salt scrubs to Red Sea snorkeling. You can also have breakfast with Arabian horses at the Royal Stables!

Get your fill of falafels, biospheres bursting with biodiversity, old Roman roads, henna art and a little natural Kohl eyeliner for good measure.

Shall we reserve a camel and a candlelit room for you?



Ahlan Wa Sahlan! Welcome to Amman, the uber modern capital of Jordan! You'll feel the immediate embrace of the country's deeply-carved history—it's visible in the hillside juxtaposition of ancient ruins, stone amphitheater and contemporary buildings like the Jordan Museum (built in 2014), touted as the best in the Middle East.

You will be met by a smiling Wild Women representative at the Queen Alia International

Airport (AMM) and promptly transferred to your hotel while taking in the surprising and buzzing density of the largest city in Jordan. Amman is a popular launching pad for the red carpet stars (Petra, Wadi Rum and the Dead Sea) but is a necessary and mood-setting experience of its own accord.

You will be surrounded by many tempting wafts this afternoon! We're talking falafel, fattet hummus, kofte (lamb or beef shish kebabs) or the local version of pizza, manakish, traditionally topped with olive oil and za'atar. Don't spoil your appetite! We'll gather for our first dinner together at a local restaurant in Amman.

Meals Included: Dinner

Accommodations: Ambassador Boutique Hotel or similar



After a sound sleep we'll gather for breakfast before driving north to Jerash (50km/31 miles).

It is known as one of the largest and most well-preserved sites of precious Roman architecture outside of Italy. The Greco-Roman ruins and ancient walled town is a remarkable (and resilient) evocation of life 2,000 years ago.

Star-struck by history and the time warp that it induces, we'll dig even deeper into Jordan's

story with an elaborate, traditional lunch at Beit Khairat Souf. We'll experience the piquant flavours that are intricately braided into Jordanian life in the company of local women. Beit Khayrat Souf is a unique women-owned and managed café in Souf that was established as a creative solution to women's unemployment. The project continues to inspire a sturdy community of women leaders to network and propel the café's success. Founded by Sumia, a Jordanian woman, the empowerment initiative that she funded with a personal loan is a sweet feel-good start to our trip!

We'll continue on the tangy spice trail and return to Amman for a Levant-style cooking class and dinner at Beit Sitti, located in a stone house in one of the city's oldest neighbourhoods. Beit Sitti (Arabic) translates to "in my grandmother's house" and the three entrepreneurial sisters who started the cooking school have attracted the attention of BBC News, CNN Travel, Conde Naste Traveler, Vogue...and Wild Women for good reason! Our menu will depend on the seasonality of the market vegetables and the whims of the galley staff. With a few fool-proof recipes up your sleeve you can also purchase Beit Sitti's Arabian "Big Guns" trio (tahini, za'atar and sumac) to woo your future dinner guests.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodations: Ambassador Boutique Hotel or similar



We get to horse around this morning! We'll visit the Royal Stables and noble, Arabian horses of HRH Princess Alia Al Hussein. This muscular regal breed is a big bragging right of Jordan's cultural heritage and valued for its speed, stamina, intelligence and gentle demeanor.

Fun fact: Arabian horses typically only have 23 vertebrae while other breeds usually have 24.

We'll explore Amman today on a city tour and visit the electric vibe of the Amman market if time permits. Afterwards, we'll head to Iraq al-Amir Women's Cooperative ("Caves of the Prince") to share lunch with the women who run the cooperative. The co-op, founded by the Noor Al-Hussein Foundation in 1993, allows local women financial independence in addition to actively preserving heritage.

Iraq al-Amir is managed and run by local women and has introduced handicraft workshops to more than 150 women from all villages of Wadi Seer. Women of all ages continue to learn how to create artisan products which are then sold in the gift shop and online. We will have an opportunity to participate in either a paper-making or weaving project with them and have time to check out the store's colourful shelves and support the co-op.

After our artsy afternoon, we'll proceed to Dana (194km/121 miles) and the Dana Guest House, panoramically located on the cliffs of Wadi Dana and the Dana Nature Reserve. Each room has a terrace so you can gaze away until the stars pinprick the night sky! Spoiler alert: The glass walls of the shower offer an unexpected view of the expansive valley vista while washing your hair!

Arabic 101: Wadi means "valley" or "river that is created in the valley" when the rain falls heavily. For example, Wadi Rum translates to "Valley of the Moon."

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodations: Dana Guest House



After breakfast we'll start our trail to the Feynan Ecolodge, sharing the path with local Bedouin tending to their goats. We'll exchange warm greetings and perhaps stop to rest and enjoy the comfort of sweet tea on our 15km (9 mile) walk (*there is an alternate shorter hike and shuttle option for women who would prefer not to walk all the way to Feynan). We'll experience the four radically different biogeological zones of Dana Biosphere Reserve and observe the many rare

forms of flora and fauna that flourish in each landscape. This 320-square-kilometre (199-square-miles) reserve was a prized target for future mining so the conservation efforts are to be celebrated! More than 700 plant species, 190 bird species, 37 mammal species and 36 reptiles species have been documented in Dana. We'll be on high alert for the endangered sand cat, Syrian wolf, Lesser kestrel and spiny tailed lizard!

Feynan is accessed by foot as it's snuggled deep in the beating heart of the mountainous Dana Biosphere Reserve. At the dead end of a rugged track, the fairy tale candle-lit lodge appears like a mirage in the surreal folds of the Wadi Feynan.

The 26-room solar-powered lodge has been named as one of the best 25 ecolodges in the world by National Geographic Traveler magazine and that's a gigantic deal! The Ecolodge's concept was inspired by the historical caravanserai or camel caravans. The Silk Route's exhausting, winding journey across China, Central Asia and Europe was peppered with inns for restocking supplies and resting before the next daunting leg. We have a few more sleeps before riding camels of our own in Wadi Rum at sunrise!

Rest assured, this is one of the most socially and environmentally responsible, low-impact stays in the world! Enjoy every dreamy wink, but first, be sure to get star-struck on the Ecolodge's rooftop. A telescope allows for an even closer inspection of the dazzling constellations.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodations: Feynan Ecolodge

The Skinny on Today's Hike: The 15km hike is rated moderately difficult due to length and steep downhill at the beginning (with undulating hills for the remainder); it can be technically challenging in places due to wash-out and loose stones. As noted, a shuttle option is available. For the alternate hike option, the climb is still challenging and steep with some rocky scrambling, but shorter. Our guide will thoroughly describe both options for those who are concerned but be prepared to sweat! It will be a hot and challenging walk!



We'll spend the half the day exploring the dynamic area around Feynan. Depending on the ecolodge's daily activity calendar (which is subject to change and availability), we might be able to tour an ancient Roman and Byzantine copper mine, partake in a cooking class or lay back under the star-studded sky for an astronomy tour. Other potential activities include a village and museum visit, mountain biking, weaving goat-hair tents or how to make Arabic coffee or arbood bread with

a local Bedouin family. It will be a surprise!

Feynan partners with Bedouin families providing them with a reliable means for financial security. Bedouins are typically a wandering community, however they are often found in this valley because there is a school for the children.

The Ecolodge's remote location allows travellers to completely disconnect from the world, recharge and support the Bedouin community in an empowering way.

Please note: The availability of these activities is dependent on Feynan's schedule which is subject to change but reliably full of awesome opportunities!

Later in the afternoon we will drive to the city of Petra (64 km / 40 miles) where we'll be staying for the night. This transfer will likely take 1.5 to 2 hours as local Bedouins assist in shuttling guests out of the valley to meet the transfer vehicle to Petra.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Tonight's Sweet Sleep: Petra Moon or similar



After breakfast and perhaps an extra cup of sweet tea to revive the senses, we'll crack open the secret of Petra ("Red Rose City") on our hike to absorb the iconic view of Al Khazna's ("the Treasury") remarkable facade, glimpsed from a narrow cleft known as the Siq. This is perhaps the single-most striking sight of the entire region so have your iPhone or camera charged and revved for a workout. The 40m (131ft) facade and the Corinthian columns, friezes, intricate carvings, echoey chambers

columns, friezes, intricate carvings, echoey chambers and funerary urn are oozing with mysticism, graveyard ghosts and speculation. Dizzy from amazement, we'll embark on a slow and steady 3-hour hike up to a vista where we will have a birds eye view of the Treasury. This is where we can snap the million dollar selfie shot with one of the seven wonders of the world.

We'll also see the old Roman road, amphitheater and several ancient tombs. History will surround and wow us in a way that high school history class never did! We'll have free time after lunch to wander and wonder amidst the ancient Red Rose City. The total distance to walk the Petra site from the main entrance to the Roman ruins is approximately 4km one way.

Later tonight we'll be welcomed into a local home where we will have the intimate joy of sharing stories and experiences with the family while enjoying some incredible, classic Jordanian eats.

Later, you can choose to participate in the Petra by Night candlelight tour which begins at 8:30 PM from the Petra Visitor Centre and finishes at 10:30 PM. This event is a magical way to experience the old city by buttery candlelight. The tour involves walking the entire Siq to the Treasury which is aglow with over 1,500 candles.

Please note: The Petra by Night experience will be dependent on availability as the tour only runs three days a week.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodations: Petra Moon or similar



After a filling breakfast (feeding our butterflies of anticipation), we'll wake early and make our way to the site of Little Petra which is the starting point of the hike on the back trail that will loop us back to Petra. This 8km (5 mile) hike is referred to as the "back door to Petra." The first half of the hike is flat but does become gradually steeper.

Upon arrival, we will meet with a local expert guide who will accompany us.

The landscape today is ever changing from sandy plateaus to stone staircases. We'll pass Bedouin campsites and random goat herds on our guided tour that will culminate at the Monastery. This impressive seven-storey structure has a doorway that's 8m (26ft) high. Though less ornate than the Treasury, the sheer scale of this building painstakingly carved into a mountainside makes it an unmatched site. It's believed that it was used as a temple by Christians in the Byzantine period.

Beyond the Monastery you will descend approximately 850 steps back to the main Petra Site and then it is another 4km back to the main entrance (you will retrace your steps from the day before).

We'll enjoy a local lunch in the nearby town of Wadi Musa and then transfer (about 2 hours drive) to our next anticipated destination – Wadi Rum. High on the WOW factor, tonight's incredible posh stay is opulent. It's otherworldly. The Red Valley dome site is akin to a Mars colony with guaranteed "Martian views" during the day.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodations: Memories Aicha Luxury Camp



It's usually the early bird who gets the worm but today, the early birds get camels! We'll watch the sunrise from the best seat in the house—on a camel! Camels are often referred to as “the ships of the desert” as they were (and continue to be) instrumental in transporting awkward and heavy loads.

We'll then jump in a Jeep for a 4-hour ride in Wadi Rum, stopping for a BBQ in the desert.

Wadi Rum means ‘Valley of the Moon’ and we'll spend the morning exploring this otherworldly landscape from the vantage point of the Jeep. We'll make several stops to fully immerse ourselves in the lunar-like landscape with our feet on the ground, or “in the sand.” You'll see! We'll climb sand dunes, poke around Bedouin caves and marvel at the 12,000-year-old hieroglyphs as well.

Later in the evening relax in your geodesic dome or socialize in the camp's classy cafe nestled into the side of the sandstone cliffs.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodations: Memories Aicha Luxury Camp



We'll depart the clutches of Wadi Rum for the city of Aqaba on the mesmerizing Red Sea.

Kick back, relax. It's a one hour drive to Aqaba where we'll take advantage of one of the warmest and saltiest bodies of water on earth and pull on some fins and snorkel masks to see what lurks below.

We'll board a boat for a 4-hour journey on the Red Sea—please note that this boat is not an

exclusive charter and we will be sharing this boat with other co-ed passengers. This body of water is truly “bathtub warm” unlike the promise of your friend’s backyard pool temp in June! Here we’ll have the opportunity to snorkel in the Red Sea, one of the world’s most biodiverse coral reefs. Lunch will be on the high seas!

The afternoon will be spent travelling to the Dead Sea (a super scenic 3-hour transfer). Once we arrive and refresh, we’ll plan to regroup in the evening for a farewell dinner (sigh) conveniently located at our hotel.

Fun fact: The Red Sea’s name is derived from the colour changes that are a result of extensive blooms of the *Trichodesmium erythraeum* algae dying off. The sea is usually margarita green but the algae tints the waters a temporary reddish-brown.

Another fun fact: We’ve reached the lowest point on Earth: the Dead Sea. We like to call it the Grateful Dead experience.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodations: Movenpick Resort & Spa Dead Sea or similar



After a reflective breakfast we'll have a memorable morning lolling about in the Dead Sea. Soak, float and then enjoy a purifying mud and salt scrub. This is the perfect send-off. Scrubbed and rejuvenated, we'll take a group shuttle (one hour) to the Queen Alia International Airport (AMM) in Amman in the early afternoon. Prepare for big hugs and heavy-hearted goodbyes. Departure flights out of AMM should be booked after 5 PM.

This is so that you can spend the day enjoying the Dead Sea.

Note: For those heading to Egypt on the extension or full tour, we recommend an evening flight to Cairo. If you are extending your stay at the Dead Sea, a later airport transfer can be arranged for you at your own expense.

The only unanswered question is, where next?

Meals Included: Breakfast

IS THIS TRIP RIGHT FOR ME?

This journey is all-encompassing. We would like you to be comfortable with the following:

- Involves versatility and flexibility (except when you are in the Dead Sea -- then you can simply float!)
- Comfortable and confident in walking on ever-changing terrain up to 15km (9miles)
- Be prepared for a few long vehicle transfers
- Riding a camel
- Consider yourself sea-friendly, as there is a 4-hour boat ride
- Expect heat and a lot of time on your feet
- Be excited to sample the local cuisine
- Physical Rating: 3 of 5. Moderate > A good level of fitness is required

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- 9 decadent breakfasts, 8 lovely lunches and 9 authentic dinners (hello falafel!)
- 9 nights accommodation in sweet guest houses, solar-powered ecolodges and dreamy desert domes
- Air-conditioned vehicle transfers throughout.
- Awesome and energetic English-speaking female guide
- Activities referenced in full itinerary
- Entrance and admission fees where applicable with included activities
- Stress-free airport transfers (arrival and departure) are included on a group basis
- Optional single private room upgrade, subject to availability
- All applicable taxes are included in the trip price

ITINERARY DISCLAIMER

Wild Women Expeditions and our local partners intend to adhere to the described itinerary. This is only a general guide to follow on your tour of the region. Our itineraries are subject to change, as we cannot predict the weather or other environmental conditions. We are continually striving to make improvements to all our trips based on feedback from Wild Women members, guides, partners, and other research. We reserve the right to alter itineraries based on the above at any time.

*Itinerary version as of February 1, 2024.