

POLITICALTOURS

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Jordan

Dates:

September 2019, Monday 16th to Tuesday 24th

Amman, Jerash, Wadi Rum, Petra

Led by Prof. Avi Shlaim

The Hashemite Kingdom seems like an island of stability compared with the turbulence to its north and east. It remains a must for travellers exploring the Middle East.

This 9-day journey explores how Jordan remains resilient, despite significant challenges at home and across its borders. Refugees from Syria and Iraq now number over a million. Its economy also depends overwhelmingly on state spending that provides little room for error. Many are pushing for political and economic reform.

We look at the history of the kingdom whose borders were supposedly drawn up by Winston Churchill on the back of a napkin after the First World War, and its relations both with Israel, and with the Palestinians who make up the majority of Jordan's citizens.

No visit to Jordan would be complete without taking in some of the key sites it is blessed with, from the Roman city of Jerash in the north, to the desert splendour of Wadi Rum and the hidden city of Petra in the south.

Prof. Avi Shlaim was born in Baghdad, grew up in Israel and has studied the Arab-Israel conflict for most of his life. His biography of King Hussein is widely regarded as the best there is.

Price: £4530.00

Single Supplement: £500.00

Most meals and all accommodation are included in the price. Flights are not included and need to be arranged with your own travel agent.

Like all our tours the itinerary is focused on current affairs. Events on the ground may change and the final schedule may be adjusted accordingly.

Itinerary

Day One:

Meet at 7p.m. for dinner with Political Tours expert Prof. Avi Shlaim. An introduction to the week ahead.
Overnight Amman

Day Two: Amman

Introduction to Amman – including the political history of Jordan from the founding of the Hashemites, to the reign of the current King Abdullah – plus a walk around the historic downtown. Learn in-depth about the Jordanian relationship with the Palestinians, from the 1948 to 1967 wars and Black September. We will visit a Palestinian family in their home. Over dinner with guests we discuss the Hashemite balancing act.
Overnight Amman

Day Three: Jerash and the new refugees

We drive north for an hour to the historic Greco-Roman city of Jerash and meet with NGO's and UN agencies dealing with Syrian refugees – of which there are well over 600,000 and counting; many of whom are trapped in a kind of no man's land at the border with Syria. How does Jordan cope? Learn more on the dilemma faced in managing the refugee situation, and in effectively combating security threats from Isis and others.
Overnight Amman

Day Four: The economy, media, and reform

Overview of the economy, to which refugee aid is now a big contributor, whilst the state remains the major employer in the country. We visit key media outlets to discover how Jordan's press is notoriously self-censored. We look at the security services (GID) who retain a big say in the day-to-day running of the country, and meet with former government and court officials who are advocating reform. They argue that the kingdom needs substantive political reform, or risks a backlash. Dinner with speakers.
Overnight Amman

Day Five:

Meetings with government officials to learn about where Jordan is heading now. New hopes are being pinned on a deal that will give Jordan access to the EU's single market and in turn provide much needed jobs for refugees and a boost for the economy; this is in marked

contrast to other countries where refugees are barred from work. A visit to an innovative programming centre where fast-track IT training is given to refugees and Jordanians. Diplomats discuss the country's tightrope location, sandwiched as it is between Iraq, Israel, Syria and Saudi Arabia.
Overnight Amman

Day Six: Aqaba and Wadi Rum

Morning 55-minute flight to Aqaba, where we will lunch and receive an introduction to Jordan's sole port, a vital trade entrepôt that's located on its 26 kilometres of Red Sea coast. Four countries almost meet at this point and perhaps surprisingly co-operate in a range of areas from commerce to the environment. It's an hour's drive from here to Wadi Rum, made famous by the exploits of T.E Lawrence during the First World War, for dinner Bedouin style in the desert.
Overnight Wadi Rum

Day Seven: Wadi Rum and Petra

Day to explore the desert in spring bloom with expert guides before a two-hour drive along part of the kings highway to Petra and the Movenpick Hotel. Dinner in the modern settlement of Petra, then Petra By Night, which involves an atmospheric walk down the ceremonial entrance called the Siq – a 1.5 kilometre long cleft through the rock which is flanked by 1,500 candles for the occasion, all the way to the iconic Treasury façade.
Overnight Movenpick Petra

Day Eight: Petra

Full day in Petra with time to explore the highlights of the vast ancient site, which was once the centre of the 2,000 year old Nabatean empire, and was 'lost' for 500 years before being rediscovered in 1812. The Nabatean people toiled here carving giant ceremonial buildings from the living rock – like the so-called Theatre, Treasury and Monastery, the Colonnaded Street and the Royal Tombs. At dinner we look back over the tour and Jordan's prospects in the region.
Overnight Movenpick Petra

Day Nine: Petra

Tour ends after breakfast.