



PROJECT DOSSIER

JORDAN, SYRIA & THE LEBANON

21 DAYS
1,900kms

Itinerary Guideline

AMMAN TO AMMAN

- Day 1:** In Amman. Drive south via Madaba & Mt Nebo to the Wadi Rum.
- Day 2:** Explore the Wadi Rum & optional camel ride. Camp under the desert sky.
- Day 3:** Aqaba and time for snorkeling & diving over the coral reefs of the Red Sea.
- Day 4:** Drive to the spectacular ruins of Petra.
- Day 5:** Entering through the narrow 'siq' gorge, we spend the day exploring the ancient ruins of Petra.
- Day 6:** We follow the ancient King's Highway via Shobak Castle to Karak.
- Day 7:** To the Dead Sea and the Roman town of Jerash.
- Day 8:** To Damascus via Bosra.
- Day 9:** Damascus - time to explore the city with its mosques & colourful bazaars.
- Day 10:** Across the Syrian Desert to Palmyra.
- Day 11:** Palmyra, exploring the site & museum.
- Day 12:** Drive along the Euphrates River visiting the old Roman trading points of Dura Europos & Mari.
- Day 13:** To Deir ez-Zor, Halabiye & Rasafa.
- Day 14:** To Aleppo citadel & St Simeon's Monastery.



- Day 15:** To Apamea, Saladin's Castle and Ugarit.
- Day 16:** Port of Latakia to the formidable crusader castle of Krak des Chevaliers and then back on to Damascus.
- Day 17:** Through the Chouf mountains to the Arabic palace of Beit Eddine, the Mediterranean and the ports of Sidon & Tyre. To Beirut.
- Day 18:** In Beirut, city tour and visit to the ancient town of Byblos.
- Day 19:** Via Tripoli into the Lebanon mountains to Bcharre.
- Day 20:** The marble temples at Roman Baalbek. The ruins at Anjar en route to Damascus.
- Day 21:** Drive from Damascus to Amman. Arrangements end late afternoon.

PLEASE NOTE:

The above is intended as a guide only and to indicate a typical itinerary and its highlights. While our intention is to adhere to this, it should be understood that group interests and wishes together with the constraints of weather, road conditions and local restrictions can alter our exact route, its activities and timings.

Highlights & Route

This region is an area of huge archaeological and historical importance. Relics of Stone Age settlement through the civilisations of the Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans and Byzantines to the Muslims, Crusaders, Ottoman Turks and even British and French, have all left their mark, not forgetting the lesser known creators of the wondrous Petra, the Nabataeans. All these diverse influences have shaped the region, but if you tire a little of history there is are the incredible natural wonders: the dramatic ochre canyons and desert of the Wadi Rum, the translucent waters and coral reefs of the Red Sea, the saline waters of the Dead Sea and the mountainous Mediterranean coastline of the Lebanon.

JORDAN

We begin our journey in Amman, Jordan's capital, before driving south to Mt Nebo which is supposedly one of the sites for the tomb of Moses. From here there certainly is a spectacular view of the promised land. Further south is the Wadi Rum, the desert at its best with its dramatic ochre canyons. Here one can camp under a vast desert sky crowded with stars in true Lawrence of Arabia style. We then leave the desert for the white sands and warm, crystal-clear waters of the Red Sea, rich with coral. Inland again and the dry ravines and narrow chasm walls of Wadi Musa reveal the extraordinarily beautiful red sandstone temples and treasure-houses of Petra, where for centuries the Nabataean Arabs maintained an independent city-state, collecting and controlling the flow of wealth throughout the known world. Leaving Petra, we head north following the ancient King's Highway which twists and winds through dramatic, but desolate lands past the ancient Crusader castles of Shobak and then Kerak. Kerak lies on the route of the ancient caravans that used to travel from Egypt to Syria in the time of the Biblical Kings and was also used by the Greeks and Romans. Then to the lowest point on earth and a swim or more accurately a float in the saline waters of the Dead Sea before reaching the impressive Roman ruins at Jerash. From beneath the sand, temples, baths, theatres and churches have been excavated and it is the best example of a Roman provincial city. Bosra also has impressive Roman ruins with a beautifully preserved Roman theatre and modern buildings built in and around old sections of the ruins.

SYRIA

From Bosra we cross into Syria and to its vibrant capital city Damascus. With its colourful mosques and bustling bazaars this is one of the great cities of the Middle East, a place where ancient and modern coexist. In the new part of the city, with its plazas and boulevards, there is every modern convenience and the roar of traffic competes with the constant wail of Arabic music from the cassette shops. However, in the cobbled back streets of the old city, men in jalabiyehs sit in pavement coffee houses smoking hookah pipes, while the narrow alleys of the covered bazaar are busy with the sounds of artisans at work and the cries of hawkers. Across the Syrian desert we find one of the world's great historical sites, the time softened ruins of Queen Zenobia's city, Palmyra, still echoing the footfall of camel caravans that carried wealth and knowledge from Samarkand, India and farthest China. From here we follow the Euphrates River and come across the ruins of various Roman trading points including the fortress city of Doura Europos founded in 280 BC, and Mari an important Mesopotamian city dating back some 5000 years with ruins of two palaces and five temples. Here ancient pottery shards litter the ground. Rising out of the desert is the old walled city of Rasafa with its remains of a Byzantine basilica and we also visit Zenobia's fortress town of Halabiye. Perhaps one of the most romantic cities of this region is Aleppo with its medieval citadel and Grand Mosque. Its fabulous covered souk is the largest and perhaps the oldest in Asia. Once under the stone vaulted ceiling you are swallowed up into another world. Smells of cardamon and cloves from the spice stalls assault your senses as do the cries of hawkers and barrow pushers, the rows of carcasses hanging from the doorways in the meat souk and the myriad of stalls selling everything from rope to prayer mats. The road from Aleppo leads via the ancient ruins of the Roman trading post of Apamea and Saladin's Castle to the Mediterranean coast and the ruined ancient city of Ugarit, where the world's first alphabet was found. Here on the coast is the busy port city of Latakia which has a more European feel with its wide tree lined streets and cafes. Leaving the coast we travel into the mountains and there sited in the range between Turkey and Lebanon is the most formidable of all the Crusader castles in the Middle East, Krak des Chevaliers dating back to 1150. The outside wall has thirteen towers and the two lions facing each other above the doorway are reputedly symbols of the English Crusader king, Richard the Lionheart. From here we return to Damascus to begin our journey into the Lebanon.

LEBANON

Driving through the Chouf Mountains we come across the elegant Arabic palace of Beit Eddine. Descending through the forested hills that slope down to the Mediterranean we visit the ancient port of Sidon and Tyre, home to Phoenician traders more than 3500 years ago. From here we drive north to Beirut, Lebanon's once glossy capital, 'the Saint Tropez of the Middle East', now returning to its former glory after years of war. Then via Tripoli to Byblos. Here are many traces of past civilisations as it is one of the oldest continuously inhabited towns in the world. From

Byblos we drive up into the scenic Lebanon Mountains to Bcharre, famous for its Cedar trees. They have long been treasured for their durable, aromatic scented wood and many are over 1500 years old! Finally, we explore the splendour of the marble temples at Roman Baalbek. Here one can stand amidst a vast sea of marble and columns and admire the vast Temple of Jupiter against the spectacular backdrop of the mountains and the Beqa'a Valley. We then return via the Roman ruins at Aanjar to Damascus and Amman.

GROUP SIZE

24 max. including Encounter staff. Local guides will be employed at certain places of interest where their knowledge is advantageous to our visit.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

An easier project with no demands other than the extended camping/nomadic lifestyle.

THE LOCAL PAYMENT (as in the brochure)

This is the payment made to the Project Leader at the point of departure. This payment must be made paid in US\$ dollars, either in cash notes or recognised Travellers Cheques. This payment completes the total inclusive price of the project. This amount will be utilised by the Project Leader to cover a proportion but not all of the 'on the ground' running costs of this project. There are no hidden extra payments.

INCLUDED IN EXPEDITION COST

All transport, food, camping equipment and supplies, hotels and guest houses in Lebanon, local guides, camping fees, entrance fees and activities as detailed from published starting date of expedition until the return to Amman.

EXPEDITION COST DOES NOT COVER

Flights from/to Amman, transfers to/from airport and airport taxes, vaccinations, visas, personal insurance, laundry, snacks, drinks, occasional lunches in major cities (minimal cost), personal clothing/equipment and items of a personal nature. Some individual entry fees to museums/sights (minimal cost). Accommodation/meals in Amman before/after the project.

EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED

Standard Encounter truck equipment including 2 person tents, campbeds, kitchen/dining tent, tables and stools, light, cooking equipment and utensils, mosquito nets, first aid kit.

WHAT YOU NEED TO BRING

A warm sleeping bag, a medium sized bag or backpack and a daypack. Personal clothing, strong footwear, water bottle, personal medicines and toiletries etc. No specialised clothing or equipment is necessary and you probably already have most of what is needed. A complete suggested clothing list is included in our pre-departure information. Soft bags or frameless backpacks are the most suitable kinds of luggage to bring. Airlines flying in and out of Amman have a 20kg baggage limit.

TRANSPORT

Encounter expedition truck. 4WD jeeps in the Wadi Rum.

ACCOMMODATION

Guesthouse in Beruit (2 nights). Otherwise camping throughout with standard Encounter truck equipment. (Your involvement is needed in camp set-up, domestic and day to day routines etc.).

MEALS, COOKING & FOOD

Camp cooked breakfasts and evening meals, picnic lunches. Expedition members are involved in daily fresh food shopping and cooking. (Fresh vegetables, fruit, meat where available, eggs, bread, cereals, cheese, preserves, supplemented by canned and dried goods in areas where no fresh supplies available). Restaurant/cafe meals in Beruit. In larger cities where a day is spent in individual sightseeing or activities away from the truck, lunch will sometimes be at your own expense. The cost of these occasional lunches is minimal.

PASSPORTS & VISAS

You will need a passport that is valid for not less than 6 months after the end of the expedition, and which contains not less than **8 blank pages**. Your passport **must** also be free of any evidence of having visited Israel.

Visa requirements and costs vary according to your nationality, and even then are subject to sudden change. Some visas need to be obtained before departure, others en route. Encounter or your agent can advise you of all the up to date visa requirements applicable to you, and their costs. We can also help you in obtaining any visas you may require before departure. Visas en route are applied for as a group with the assistance of your leader/driver.

INSURANCE

You must have personal Travel Insurance to cover Adventure Travel and it must cover all the aspects described on page 60 of the brochure. Please bring a copy of your policy with you to the pre-departure meeting. If your policy does not cover this minimum level then Encounter will not accept responsibility for the consequences.

The information in this dossier has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However, it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and Encounter Overland Ltd.

MEDICAL & VACCINATIONS

All vaccination requirements and medical recommendations are detailed in the pre-departure information pack at the time of booking. Please bring your vaccination certificate to the pre-departure meeting.

PERSONAL SPENDING MONEY

You should allow approximately US\$ 130 per week to cover personal day to day expenditure en route - drinks, snacks, laundry, occasional lunches in major centres, optional activities, some individual museum entry fees and some souvenirs. You should budget an additional US\$ 40 per day that you spend in Amman after or before the expedition to cover hotel, meals and incidentals. Credit cards are accepted in most large cities. Apart from this, and your en route visas, Encounter has no hidden expenses, funds or kitties to surprise your spending money in the Middle East.

ARRIVING AND LEAVING

You must be in the Amman hotel at 1800 hrs the evening before Day 1 for the pre-departure meeting.

OTHER COSTS/EXPENSES

- Local Payment
- Return flights.....
- Visas.....
- Vaccinations.....
- Insurance.....
- Personal
spending money.....
- Total** _____