

Trek to Ancient Petra



Duration: 7 days



This challenging and adventurous trek takes us through unique landscapes in one of the friendliest countries in the world, ending at the impressive rock-hewn facades of Petra's red canyons, one of the New Seven Wonders of the World.

Starting at Dana, we follow ancient Bedouin paths for one hundred spectacular, vista-packed kilometres of the 650-km Jordan Trail. From gentle hills, wadis and arid desert, we cross the dramatic mountains, sandstone canyons and wild-sculpted escarpments of Jordan's Rift Valley.

Our trek ends with a beautiful, little-used ascent to the 'back door' of Petra, the ancient Red-Rose City of the Nabateans, which we have time to explore. A day relaxing at the Dead Sea rounds off this unforgettable adventure.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Fly London to Amman

Arrive and transfer to hotel in the centre of town. Night hotel.

Day 2: Dana – Feinan Ruins

After an early breakfast and detailed trip briefing, we drive south through a varied arid landscape to the small village of Dana. The village lies within a diverse 320km² nature reserve, with mountains, valleys, plateaux and desert, and is strikingly colourful. Our trek starts from the village, where we begin our descent along a twisting track to the desert floor (approx 250m above sea level). We pass through different eco-systems with varying flora and fauna, eventually reaching our campsite on the desert floor next to the ruins of Feinan, an ancient Byzantine church dating back to 4000 BC. Night camp.

Drive approx 3 hours; trek approx 7 – 8 hours / 13 km

Day 3: Feinan Ruins – Wadi Araba

We wake early and, after a good breakfast, load up the equipment and set off on our day's trek. Our route today takes us across *hamada*, rough stony desert, with beautiful jagged mountains rising up to 1400m to the east. To the west and northwest, open desert descends towards the Dead Sea, which lies 400m below sea level. The morning's route takes us around several small hills before we head out across open desert towards Wadi Barwaz, which lies at the foot of the mountains, for lunch. Wadi is the name given to a dried-up river bed or water course, a regular feature in this dry landscape. After lunch and a brief rest we head south-west into the desert. We gradually descend towards Wadi Araba, first crossing *hamada* and then an area of small sand dunes. The views are awe-inspiring and we gain a true sense of the wonderful desert landscape, but it is hard-going at times and hot work. We camp again under amazingly clear, starry night skies. Night camp.

Trek approx 8 – 9 hours / 18 km

DETAILED ITINERARY (cont.)

Day 4: Wadi Araba – Ras Feid

Today we leave the flat hamada behind and head into the mountains, where at least shade and a welcome breeze are more prevalent. A gradual ascent across stony desert brings us to the foot of the mountains, and from here a steeper ascent across small boulders and rocks brings us to a steep and twisty track. We follow this high into the mountains: a particularly challenging section! This is a remote but beautiful region with spectacular views west into the desert. After a break for lunch, we continue steeply up to the high saddle (720m), with breath-taking views into the heart of these stunning mountains. We then follow a steep, narrow track which winds its way down to the river valley; the scenery constantly changes as we climb and descend amidst dramatic red cliffs and rocks. A short and well-earned flat section takes us through the beautiful Sakakin canyon before a more gradual ascent on good tracks to camp above the river. Night camp.

Trek approx 8 – 9 hours / 14 km

Day 5: Ras Feid – Shkaret Msei'd

We leave camp behind us and enjoy a pleasant walk back through the Sakakin canyon. Our route then becomes tougher as we gradually climb back up into the mountains. This trail is used by the Bedouin as they move their animals from the desert to the higher and cooler regions for the summer. The views are magnificent. Our route is tough, with some steep climbs and rocky descents as we contour around the mountainsides, but the rewards are superb! Eventually we climb up to a pass, where we have tremendous views across the rounded white moonscape-like rocks and cliffs, and the desert beyond. We descend to the river valley and continue among incredible eroded rock formations to Shkaret Msei'd, where we camp in a simply wonderful setting near a Nabatean wine press. This is a tough but outstanding day in some challenging terrain. Night camp.

Trek approx 8 – 9 hours / 18 km

Day 6: Shkaret Msei'd – Little Petra

After another night under the stars we head predominantly downhill from the mountains into low-lying hills and the desert landscapes surrounding the ancient site of Little Petra. Our route follows an undulating path which is at times relatively gentle



CHALLENGE GRADING

Trips are graded Yellow, Orange or Red, in increasing level of challenge. This trek lies within the **Orange** range.

The grade is determined by factors such as terrain, distance, climate, altitude, etc. Each colour grade has a **spectrum** which reflects the difficulty of these factors; trip duration, accommodation and living conditions are also taken into account.

The Challenge Factor icon shows the most challenging aspect – the terrain, which is rocky, steep in places, with some relatively high drops. Vertigo sufferers will find those short sections more challenging than others.

The grade reflects the overall trip; some sections will feel more challenging than others. Unusual weather conditions also have a significant impact, and not all people are tested by the same aspects.

DETAILED ITINERARY (cont.)

and easy-going underfoot, though there are some steep, rocky sections. We emerge from a narrow canyon into sand-dunes; crossing them between dramatic eroded cliffs, we arrive suddenly amongst the simple rock-hewn temples and strange sandstone formations of the site itself. These ruins are some of the oldest in the Middle East, dating back 9000 years, and will whet our appetite for the sights that await us at Petra. We tour the site before continuing to weave our way through the rocky valleys to the permanent camp set amongst the rock formations which is our home for tonight – with showers, electricity and proper beds in cabin-like tents, this feels like a well-earned luxury! Night camp.

Trek approx 8 hours / 16 km

Day 7: Little Petra – Petra – Dead Sea

Today is what we have all been waiting for: the trek into Petra itself! The huge tombs and buildings of Petra, carved out of the rock, are testament to the one-time wealth of the ancient capital of the Nabateans, which provided refuge to caravans of traders crossing the deserts. Our little-trodden route takes us up through a rocky canyon and a long series of steps, with spectacular views once more, before contouring around the mountainside and undulating through sandy desert. Before us we finally see the Monastery, an impressive carved building standing an immense 43m high and 50m wide, and one of the highlights of Petra. We continue on our guided trek to the centre of Petra, descending roughly 800 rock-hewn steps, and admiring the incredible ruins and tombs, before arriving at the Treasury, the most famous and impressive sight at Petra. We then walk out through the famous narrow As-Siq to the conventional entrance, where our waiting transport takes us off to the Dead Sea coast for two nights of relaxation! Night hotel.

(Dinner not included)

Trek approx 7 hours / 18 km; Drive approx 4 hours

Day 8: Dead Sea Coast

A full day to relax and enjoy the delights of the scenic Dead Sea coast. The Dead Sea is at least 8 times more salty than the ocean, and having a relaxing float in the salty waters, and a good coating of natural mud, is too good an opportunity to miss! We meet up again in the evening for a big celebration to mark our achievements. Night hotel.

(Lunch not included)

Day 9: Fly Amman to London

Drive to Amman (approx 1 hour) for our return flight back to London.

Discover Adventure reserves the right to change the route or itinerary for safety reasons should local conditions dictate.

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