

JORDAN & PETRA EXTENSION ITINERARY

SAT. OCTOBER 15:

After breakfast we depart for Jordan. Once through border formalities we meet our new guide and driver for the next three days. Prior to our arrival in Petra we will visit the following sites:

Bethany- Extensive excavations of the surrounding area since 1996 have uncovered many sites. None more significant than the ruins of 'Bethabara'. Many believe this is the original site of John the Baptist's ministry and the location of his baptism of Jesus.

Jerash- Overshadowed by Petra, the ancient city of Jerash is acknowledged internationally as one of the largest and best preserved sites of Roman architecture outside of Italy.

Madaba- Named 'Medeba' in the Bible this town flourished with Christianity with many churches constructed between 6th and 7th centuries. Madaba holds some of the world's most famous Byzantine mosaics in the world.

Mt. Nebo- One of the Holiest sites in all of Jordan, Mt. Nebo is the supposed location where Moses was laid to rest. For those inclined you can climb Pisgah and admire the dazzling view across the Jordan Valley and the Dead Sea, to the rooftops of Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

Or day ends with a drive south to the ancient site of Petra. Here we check-in to the Marriott hotel for dinner and overnight stay. **(B,D)**

SUN. OCTOBER 16:

After breakfast we begin our visit of Petra. Petra was chosen as the capital of the Nabateans because it was located in a valley surrounded by sandstone mountains. The main entrance to Petra is called the Siq, with sides as high as 200 m (650 ft.). It was here that Christians escaped from the siege of Jerusalem by Titus in the 1st century. This gorge and the temple at the end of it (the Kazneh) were popularized in American culture in the movie Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade.

Knowledge of Petra was lost to the Western world until John Lewis Burckhardt tricked his Bedouin guides into leading him there in 1812. Some of the sights we shall see today are;

The Kazneh- Of the 800 carved tombs in Petra, the Kazneh is the most famous. Its name Kazneh means "treasure" and comes from the Bedouin belief that the Pharaoh chasing the Israelites hid his treasure in the urn at the top of the Kazneh. Tomb facades were built from the top down. Scaffolding was built and then grooves were carved into the rock. Into these grooves were inserted pieces of wood, which when made wet, expanded and cracked the rock.

Main Street -As many as 30,000 people may have lived in Petra during the 1st century A.D. It is a misconception that Petra was a city only for the dead. A large earthquake in 363 A.D. destroyed at least half of the city. Petra never recovered from this destruction

The Monastery -The Monastery is the largest tomb facade in Petra, measuring 50 m wide and 45 m high. Despite its name, it was built as a tomb monument and may have acquired its name from the crosses inscribed inside. Like the Kazneh, the structure consists of two stories topped by magnificent urn.

Monastery Top -Scholars debate whom the designers and builders of the tombs of Petra were. They were probably the product of local workers and artisans brought in from Alexandria and Rome. The monuments are Nabatean in style, but they incorporate classical, Egyptian and Mesopotamian elements.

After visiting Petra we return to Amman and enjoy our farewell dinner and overnight at the Radisson SAS hotel. **(B,D)**

MON. OCTOBER 17:

This morning we depart for Amman International Airport and our early departure to London and onward connection to Vancouver. **(B)**