Impressions of Jordan 2019

22 October to 1 November 2019
11 days

From £1795 pp excl. flights, based on Room share basis

Optional single supplement: £375

Better Travel Photography - Photo tours with Steve Davey
www.BetterTravelPhotography.com/jordan
Land arrangements for this tour

The land arrangements for Impressions of Jordan are sub-contracted to Intrepid Travel who will use their extensive knowledge from over twenty years in the travel industry to make sure that you have the best travel experience, and to work in a way which will be the most beneficial for the countries we travel in.

Our arrangements are now handled by the Intrepid Travel UK Private Groups office, which opens up a range of payment options and also means that your trip can now be protected by the UK travel industry protection. It also means that we can draw on the experience and contacts of other companies in the Intrepid Group. Intrepid in the UK can accept payments by bank transfer, cheque, debit card as well as Visa and Mastercard credit cards.

Intrepid are also able to book flights for you, which will mean that your entire trip can be covered by their full ATOL protection (for any flight/trip combination that starts and finishes in the UK). The flight price that they quote you will include their booking fee. More details on their industry protection by clicking here and scrolling to clause 27. As you are booking with the UK office, your booking will be covered by the UK booking conditions.

*Intrepid Travel were formed over twenty years ago in Australia, and have been running excellent small group adventures ever since.*

**Intrepid’s Core Purpose** - Intrepid’s core purpose is to enrich peoples lives by creating unique, interactive travel experiences. They provide fun, affordable and sustainable travel adventures that are beneficial to local communities.

**Home From Home** - Where you stay is all part of your Intrepid experience. Whether it’s a centrally-located city hotel, or a homestay in a tribal village, staying close to a region’s people and culture is the guiding principle. Our choices are based on friendliness as well as facilities, character as much as convenience.

**Small Groups** - Travelling in a small group makes it more like travelling with friends than on an organised tour. It means you get to experience more of the local culture, and we don't dominate; we can actually get to know people and do the things they do.

**Experienced leaders** - Intrepid have some of the best leaders in the business: well trained locals who act as ambassadors between you and the place you are travelling in. This means that you can get the most from the country and the people you meet.

Please remember though, these tours are based on an Intrepid trip, but are a completely separate product. They don't appear on the Intrepid website, and you should address any questions through Steve on improve@bettertravelphotography.com
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Once described to me, by a group of Bedouin round a campfire above the ancient city of Petra, as 'a quiet house in a noisy neighbourhood', Jordan is firmly back on the tourist map! It has just made the Lonely Planet hot list for 2019, and this is a great time to visit before the crowds return! We ran a version of this trip twice a few years ago, but have made a few tweaks to achieve what I believe is the best itinerary possible.

Jordan is a fascinating country, steeped in history, and with a warm and friendly population. You can find ruins from the Bible, Romans, Crusaders, Saladin and of course the Nabateans, who built Petra. You are even able to wander in the footsteps of Lawrence of Arabia in the sprawling wilds of Wadi Rum.

We have arranged this trip to take in the very best of this photogenic country, but in a shorter format than our usual tours to make it more affordable.

We start in the sophisticated city of Amman, before exploring nearby ruins and a wildlife wetland - not something that you would expect in a desert country. Certainly there is very little water in our next location, the atmospheric Wadi Rum. We will be able to photograph eroded rocks and star trails from our desert camp, before continuing on to the Red Sea at Aqaba. This is a great place to join a snorkel boat, to witness the remarkably well preserved coral relatively close to shore.

Nothing can prepare you for the scale and the majesty of the ancient city of Petra. The approach, along the narrow siq, is one of the true Wonders of the World, and we have three nights here - enough to explore every corner.

Less travelled, we visit the Kerak Crusader castle and then the remote Dana Nature Reserve, where we stay in a traditional village at the top of a deep valley.

Our final destination is the pleasant city of Madaba, which we use as a base to float in the salty waters of the Dead Sea, explore Mount Nebo and wander the sprawling Roman city of Jerash. This ancient city has a full sized chariot track where races used to entertain the population. Jerash has been hailed as the best preserved Roman city outside of Italy.

Steve will accompany the tour supplying his unique blend of photographic tuition and encouragement.
Impressions of Jordan itinerary

Day 1: Arrival Amman
Ahlan Wa Sahlan! Welcome to Jordan.
Welcome to Amman. After checking into your hotel the rest of the day is free until your welcome meeting later today. Our hotel is well placed in downtown Amman, just opposite the Roman Theatre. There are terrific views from the rooftop bar, and you will be able to easily explore the area around the hotel and savour the atmosphere. After our welcome meeting, we will head out for an optional evening meal.

Included Activities:
Welcome meeting

Accommodation:
Amman Pasha Hotel or similar

Day 2: Amman, Qasr Amra & the Azraq Wetland Reserve
After an early breakfast, we start our city tour by visiting the Citadel, Amman’s history spans nine millennia dating back to the Stone Age. It boasts one of the largest Neolithic settlements (c. 6500 BC) ever discovered in the Middle East. The Citadel hill contains early Bronze Age tombs (3300-1200 BC). From the top of the hill we will then drive down town to first visit the Roman Amphitheatre, before continuing to the down town area. The downtown area is much older and more traditional with smaller businesses producing and selling everything from fabulous jewelry to everyday household items.

Next we transfer to visit Qasr Amra. One of the best-preserved desert buildings of the Umayyads, the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Qasr Amra is the highlight of a trip into the Eastern Desert. Part of a much greater complex that served as a caravanserai, bathhouse and hunting lodge, the Qasr or qusayr (little castle) is renowned for its rather risqué 8th-century frescoes of wine, women and wild times.

Transfer to Azraq Wetland Reserve, where depending on time, we will either walk the March Trail (01 hour) or the Water Buffalo Trail (02-03 hours), before returning to our hotel.

Included activities:
Citadel entrance
Roman Amphitheatre entrance
Qasr Amra entrance
Azraq Wetland Reserve entrance
Meals included:
Breakfast

Accommodation:
Amman Pasha Hotel or similar

Day 3: Amman - Wadi Rum
After breakfast, we check out of our hotel and drive to Wadi Rum. This is a stupendous, timeless place, virtually untouched by humanity and its destructive forces. Here, it is the weather and winds that have carved the imposing, towering skyscrapers, so elegantly described by T.E. Lawrence as "vast, echoing and God-like...". We enjoy a 4WD tour for around 4 hours before finishing at our camp for dinner and overnight.

Depending on the weather, this will be our first chance to photograph star trails in the dark skies over the desert.

Included activities:
4WD Wadi Rum tour

Meals included:
Breakfast & dinner

Accommodation:
Dream camp or similar

Day 4: Wadi Rum - Aqaba
After a quick 4WD transfer back to our coach, we drive to Aqaba on the coast of the Red Sea. The rest of the day is free to explore this quaint town. Aqaba is where Jordan comes for its vacations, and is an interesting spot! There are a number of great bars and obviously excellent seafood restaurants. One of the best things to do is to take a snorkel boat. This will visit a couple of fantastic reefs near the town. If you have a PADI then you can organise to dive in the Red Sea. Our local leader will be able to arrange this for anyone who is interested.
Optional activities:
Red Sea snorkel boat

Meals included:
Breakfast

Accommodation:
Aquavista Hotel or similar

**Day 5: Aqaba - Petra**
 Petra is justifiably on most people's list of 'must-visit' places. It is the jewel of Jordan, the lost city of the biblical Nabataean, an impressive series of tombs and dwellings hidden behind ornate facades carved directly into the rock. Dating back to the 6th century BC, the site was lost to Western minds until it was rediscovered in 1812 by a Swiss explorer.

We will arrive in time for an afternoon visit to look around this vast, and truly fascinating site.

**Included activities:**
Petra entrance pass

**Meals included:**
Breakfast

**Accommodation:**
Sharah Mountains Hotel or similar

**Day 6: Petra**
 Petra is the ancient city of the Nabatean civilisation. It lay at the centre of a vast series of trade routes that stretched across the known world. The Nabateans believed in preparing for the afterlife, and many of the famous pink carved facades are intact tombs. The city is reached by walking down a long and narrow gorge, called the siq. The most famous site is the Treasury, which was importalised in Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom!

The city was taken by the Romans, who reputed fought their way down the siq. They left their mark on the city, building a theatre and a typical paved Roman road.

Petra is a vast site, with many outlying tombs to visit, including the Place of High Sacrifice and the remote Monastery. These will need a good level of fitness as they include a lot of stairs! The views from the top of each of these places are incredible though. There are also a number of self-guided walks that you can undertake, where you can have some of the

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most atmospheric tombs all to yourself.

Today would be a good day to head to the so-called Monastery, at the far end of the site, which is a great place to witness the sunset, although you will need to walk fast to get to the exit in time!

*Included activities:*  
Petra entrance pass

*Meals included:*  
Breakfast

*Accommodation:*  
Sharah Mountains Hotel or similar

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**Day 7: Petra**

Today we will have our second full day to explore the site. We have a few options for sunrise. One of the most atmospheric is to head to the cliffs above the Treasury, where a local Bedouin has set up a small teashop! The views down to the Treasury are incredible.

Today is a Monday, which is one of the days where you can 'enjoy' the optional Petra by Night show. In truth, this is a bit rubbish, and quite crowded. I have worked out that if you have the Petra by Night ticket, you can simply not leave the site at the end of the day, and wait around by the Treasury. This allows you to take pictures of the candles infront of the facade before the crowds arrive, and then either stay and watch, or slip away back up the siq and shoot star trails over some of the more atmospheric tombs before the Petra by Night finishes and the whole site is closed!

*Included activities:*  
Petra entrance pass

*Meals included:*  
Breakfast

*Accommodation:*  
Sharah Mountains Hotel or similar

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**Day 8: Petra - Dana**

From the biggest tourist attraction in the country, we head to one of its least known attractions - the Dana Nature Reserve.

We drive to the traditional 500 year old Dana village, and check into our guest house. We have some time to explore, before heading on a two hour walk - the Dana Village trail.
Shooting portraits in Petra

Although people head to Petra for the ruins - it is a fantastic place to shoot portraits of the Bedouin people, who used to live there, and are still allowed to run business on the site.
We will be rewarded with some stunning views and maybe a glimpse of some local wildlife. This is certainly a place where it will be worth getting up to see the sunrise over the vast Dana Gorge!

**Included activities:**
Dana village trail

**Meals included:**
Breakfast

**Accommodation:**
Dana Guest House or similar (shared bathrooms)

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**Day 9: Dana - Kerak - Dead Sea - Madaba**
A full day of sightseeing starts with a drive to Kerak Castle. The Crusader castle is some 220m long, 125m wide at the north end, and 40m wide at the southern end, where a narrow valley deepened by a ditch separates it from the adjoining and much higher hill – once Saladin’s favorite artillery position.

We carry on to the lowest point on earth, the Dead Sea where you will experience floating effortlessly, and somewhat saltily! Lunch is included at one of the tourist beaches in the Dead Sea. From here we continue to the pleasant town of Transfer to Madaba for overnight.

**Included activities:**
Kerak entrance
Dead Sea tourist beach entrance

**Meals included:**
Breakfast

**Accommodation:**
Best Western Grand Hotel or similar

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**Day 10: Madaba - St. George’s Church - Mt. Nebo - As-Salt - Jerash - Madaba**
This is another full day of sightseeing, where we will experience a vast array of Jordanian history. We start with a visit to St. George’s Church that houses the oldest mosaic map of Jerusalem. In the same area is Mt. Nebo where Moses is believed to be buried.

We continue to the ancient town of As-Salt. This was one of the most important settlements in the area

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between the Jordan Valley and the Eastern Desert. Because of its history as an important trading link between the Eastern Desert and the west, it was a significant place for the region’s many rulers.

Finally, we continue to the breathtaking Roman city of Jerash. Nestled in a quiet valley among the mountains of Gilead, is the grandeur of Imperial Rome being one of the largest and best preserved sites of Roman architecture outside of Italy. To this day, its paved and colonnaded streets, soaring hilltop temples, handsome theatres, spacious public squares and plazas, baths, fountains and city walls pierced by towers and gates remain in exceptional condition. We return to Madaba for overnight

*Included activities:*
St. George’s Church entrance
Mount Nebo entrance
Jerash entrance

*Meals included:*
Breakfast

*Accommodation:*
Best Western Grand Hotel or similar

**Day 11: Tour ends**
Sadly your tour comes to an end. There are no activities planned for today and you are free to depart at any time.

*Meals included:*
Breakfast
what is covered on this trip?

As well as enjoying the stunning country of Jordan, you will learn a massive amount about photography and many of the techniques used by a professional travel photographer. Steve's tours generally cover a wide range of technical and practical techniques for improving your travel photography. This is done with a combination of practical group and individual demonstrations, illustrated talks on aspects of travel photography and group reviews and discussions.

We have recently completely revitalised our teaching schedules on our trips: we will be setting a lot more projects for people to work towards, and also holding more personal image reviews. Steve tailors the subjects covered on the tours depending on the level of knowledge of people on the tour, individual requirements and the nature of the itinerary. Always very approachable, Steve is always willing to give individual help, look at pictures or enter into a spirited discussion about just about everything.

There are a number of specific skills that will be covered on this trip, including:

- I will show you simple ways to improve the focus and sharpness of your pictures.
- I will teach techniques to achieve great portraits of the people we meet on our travels
- I will show you how to see pictures and prepare your camera ready to take them
- I will help you to learn to see pictures
- I will show you a number of ways to improve your exposures!
- I will show you how to use a polarising filter
- I will show you how to shoot stunning star trails photographs
- I will show you how to use panning for exciting action shots
- I will teach you better ways to use your flash
- I will show you how to shoot and process panoramic pictures
- I will teach you how to shoot photostories of the places we will visit.
- I will teach you the rules of composition (and when to break them)
- I will teach you some simple post-production techniques to give your pictures more impact.
- I will teach you how to back up pictures and clean your camera.

Our schedule is flexible, and will be responsive to the needs and interests of the group. If there is anything else that you would like covered on the trip, then please ask at any time. Steve is always happy to include anything in the trip tuition.

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who is this tour suited to?

Our photo tours cater for a wide spectrum of people at a range of different levels of photography. Steve’s skill in explaining things, patience and tireless energy mean that he is able to pitch talks and individual tuition so that they are relevant for a range of different abilities. These tours are primarily aimed at people who have at least a basic knowledge of their cameras and are keen to develop their skills further.

The people who get the most from a trip like this are those who are aware of the areas that they want to develop. It might sound obvious, but if you know your own shortcomings then you are better able to tackle them!

If you have a greater knowledge, then Steve will be able to fill in a lot of the theories behind things that you might have already thought that you knew, which will help make decisions more instinctive and more confident. He will also be able to help you to take your photography forward to the next stage and can teach you a number of advanced techniques and theories.

If you are an absolute beginner, then these tours will still teach you a vast amount about photography. A large part of photography is artistic and not technical. Selecting viewpoints and angles, composition and especially approaching people to take their picture are as vital as apertures and shutter speeds. Allied to this Steve will explain all of the technical aspects that you need to know as they relate to you and your camera.

You will get more out of these tours if you have a basic familiarity with your camera. If it is new, and out of the box then you might spend a great deal of time thumbing through the manual, and not learning about photography. I should also point out that whilst Steve has a lot of experience with different cameras, he doesn’t know everything about all of them! If you are not familiar with your camera, then you should definitely bring the manual with you! Between us, we should then be able to sort out most things!

Travel in Jordan

Jordan is a relatively easy country to travel in, with good quality vehicles and roads, but many of the sites are spread out, and will need a reasonable level of fitness to fully explore. This might include a number of steps.

As we are travelling in October, temperatures shouldn’t be a problem, but the evenings might be a little chilly. Jordan can be a bit of a culture shock though, but the people are warm and friendly and we are sure that you will come away loving this fascinating country.

Group tours and personalities

It is important to remember that whilst photography does need patience and sometimes you need to wait for a picture; this is a group tour. There will be a lot of time for you to go off on your own, but there will also be times where we have to meet at a certain time, or during a journey need to maintain our pace. If the group dynamic is not really for you and you have
the opinion that everyone else can just wait for you if you are taking a picture, wandering off or shopping, then these (or any group tours) probably aren’t for you!

Similarly, if you are the sort of person who gets offended or irritated by other people easily, and just "have to speak your mind" about it, then maybe any group trip is not for you. These trips work better if everyone is prepared to work together as a team, and help each other. We will all have a better time, and come away with better pictures and better memories.

**Non-photographing partners**
We are often asked about non-photographing partners coming on our trips, and he always say that they are more than welcome - as long as they are not photographer-phobic! We believe that travel photography is a great way to engage with a place and the people who live there. Because we are photographers we will see more sunrises, talk to more locals, try more foods and visit more markets than ordinary trips. This means that non-photographers can engage with us - and some even go away with a new interest in photography. We are also about having a good time too - we are mindful that this is a holiday as well as a photography tour - so we aim to have lively meals, a lot of laughs and the odd drink or two. As someone recently stated about our tours:

"Your love of photography and travel is infectious and I can honestly say I have never laughed or learnt so much on a holiday before!"

If Steve had to have a mission statement for these tours, then this is it!

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**Included in the trip price**

- 8 nights hotel accommodation
- 1 night guesthouse
- 1 night desert camp
- All transport as per itinerary
- 10 breakfasts
- 1 dinner
- Citadel entrance
- Roman Amphitheatre entrance
- Qasr Amra entrance
- Azraq Wetland Reserve entrance
- 4WD Wadi Rum tour
- Petra three-day pass
- Dana village trail
- Kerak entrance
- Dead Sea tourist beach entrance
- St. George’s Church entrance
- Mount Nebo entrance
- Jerash entrance
- Pre-trip Facebook group
- Experienced Intrepid leader
- Expert photographic tuition

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11 days

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Optional single supplement: £375

To book your place on this tour, and see the full booking conditions, head to:

www.BetterTravelPhotography.com/jordan