

# JUST SAY JORDAN

Petra National Trust board member and GLOBETROTTER

**JEAN NEWMAN GLOCK** reveals an insider itinerary to this enchanting land.



**In JORDAN, the shadow of PETRA looms large—from the famed filming of “Indiana Jones” to the magnificent Roman road—yet there are so many other world-class sites to discover in the country.**

Indeed, a visit to Petra is a must, but book more than a three-day extension from a trip to Egypt or Israel so that you can take the time to explore Jordan in all its splendor.

Jordan is my second home—I’ve visited at least 26 times. My most recent trip was for a wedding and a celebration of the Petra National Trust on whose board I am proud to serve. So in celebration of showing you “my” Jordan, let’s take a journey inspired by my ultimate itinerary.

#### **JERASH>AMMAN**

We start in the north with a visit to **Jerash**. Just an hour’s drive from Jordan’s capital city of Amman, Jerash is an easy day trip and one of the finest Greco-Roman cities in the world. Perfectly preserved and never crowded, you can walk the ancient streets, imagining the former storefronts selling Roman wines while conjuring scents from the historic spice roads, yet don’t trip over the chariot marks, which are still present in the original marble paving stones.

Ideally, **Amman** requires three full days during your visit: One day to recover from your flight (try Royal Jordanian, with beautiful Dreamliners that fly direct from New York City and Chicago) and two full days to experience all the sites. The Citadel and the Roman Theatre guard both the city and millennia of history. Here, Neolithic, Greek, Roman and Muslim culture meld together at the Citadel to tell the story of this part of the world. Hire a guide to explain the treasures but leave time to wander alone, experience the solitude, and be thankful that such a rare historic overview still exists. Modern Amman bustles with gold souks, markets, designer stores, and beautiful hotels. And don’t miss Daimeh, one of

*Clockwise from top left: The Daimeh eatery; Jerash, pristinely preserved and never crowded; a Petra local drinks in the view; a hike along the famous Jordan Trail.*



the finest restaurants in the Middle East. The food is superb and the restaurant is a highly successful initiative by Queen Rania's Jordan River Foundation, supporting local communities and refugees. Be sure to peruse the superb local handicrafts in the shop.

If you're fit, ambitious, and have 36 days to spare, hike the newly inaugurated Jordan Trail, which traverses from the country's northern reaches to its southern port. Unlike any other experience, here you can walk through history and explore small villages along the way while experiencing the famous hospitality of the Bedouin.

Alternatively, drive south down the King's Highway and take in an equally exciting expedition. The new Bethany Beyond the Jordan

site was discovered in just the past 10 years and has been named to the UNESCO World Heritage list. Archaeologists have discovered many early Christian baptismal pools located right on the River Jordan. Additionally, following the archaeological and biblical research, Pope John Paul II proclaimed this site as the baptismal site of Jesus. A rustic trail will lead you down to the River Jordan, and several Christian faiths have recently completed churches on this pilgrimage site. Many visitors bring an empty bottle to fill with water from the river—my children and grandchildren have used this water for their baptisms, and so, reportedly, does the British Royal Family.

### **MADABA>WADI RUM> THE DEAD SEA**

Next on your southward journey is **Madaba**. Famous for its mosaics, witness the most famous one—the Holy Land and Jerusalem. Created in the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD, it's the oldest surviving original map of the region and was recently used at International

Court of Justice in The Hague to settle a present-day land dispute.

Nearby is **Mount Nebo**, the purported site where Moses viewed the Holy Land. On a clear day, you too can see Jericho and the golden Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. A recently renovated church houses some of the finest Roman mosaics in the world, including a spotted camel clearly created by someone who had yet to see a real one—artistic license in ancient Rome!

**Wadi Rum** stretches south from Madaba, where you can experience the desert as Lawrence of Arabia did, albeit with a tad more comfort via luxury glamping. The landscape is otherworldly and has been the site for many films including the latest Star Wars, "The Rise of Skywalker" and "The Martian" with Brad Pitt. After sleeping in the sand—even in the finest of tents—you'll

***Walk the ancient streets of Jerash, imagining the former storefronts selling Roman wines while also conjuring the scent of spices.***

*From left: The ethereal Dead Sea; the iconic King Abdullah I Mosque in Amman is recognized by its bright blue dome; Madaba is known for Byzantine and Umayyad mosaics; the posh Kempinski Hotel Ishtar Dead Sea, located in Jordan.*

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be primed for pampering. Fortunately, many exquisite **Dead Sea** resorts are nearby. Spend a day floating in the saline waters with well-known therapeutic effects and make sure to spend a spa morning or afternoon at the Kempinski Hotel Ishtar Dead Sea (the finest spa experience I've ever had).

**THE BEST OF PETRA**

Your next stop? Iconic **Petra**. Plan for two nights at the nearby Mövenpick Resort so you can visit the site at sunrise and then enjoy the wonderful Arabic mezze at the hotel. The Mövenpick is only steps from the entrance to the *siq*—the infamous entryway to the site. Take my advice: Walk the nearly mile-long path and don't be tempted by the carriages or horses as walking is actually much easier on the body. It's all downhill on the way in, which means uphill on the return, so save some energy after a day of exploring.

The *siq* ends with a dramatic opening to the Treasury façade, made

famous in iconic global photos. But take note: It is just a façade, with very small spaces behind. No large rooms with snakes as Harrison Ford found in "Indiana Jones," but nonetheless impressive in its beauty and craftsmanship. Don't stop here. My favorite area of Petra is located further inside the city, on the Roman road. Here, as you did in Jerash, you can walk down the street as others have for centuries, imagining the temples and shops that guarded the way while climbing the path to several ongoing archaeological digs. During my last visit, one of the digs was helmed by a team comprised entirely of women, a true rarity in this part of the world. As you explore, you'll be faced with a decision—whether or not to climb the Byzantine Monastery. Your answer? Absolutely. Fuel up at one of the lunch cafés; the Monastery and the view of the entire site is not to miss.

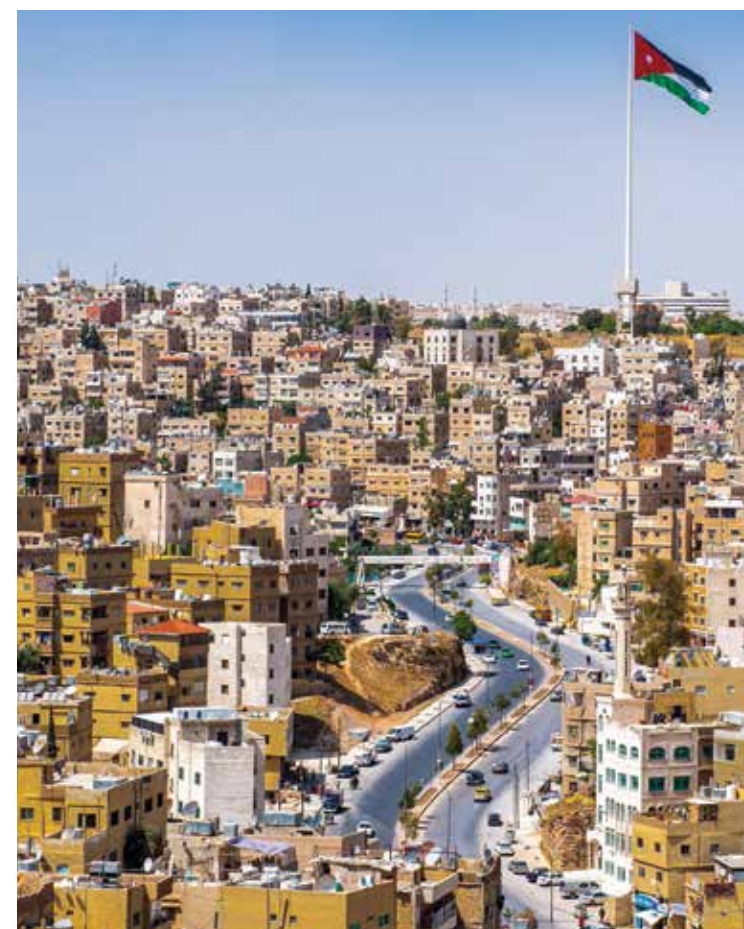
The King's Highway ends in the port and beach resort city of **Aqaba**, arguably the center of the world. Did you know you can stand in Aqaba and see Saudi Arabia, Israel, and Egypt all at one time? Sit on the beach, watch the world go by as ships arrive in port, or dive into the beautiful waters—in mere minutes you could swim across the border to Israel.

Your trip has now come full circle, from strolling the sands of Wadi Rum and walking the marble streets of Jerash and the Citadel, to standing where Moses viewed the "Promised Land" on Mount Nebo and marveling at the wonder of Petra. At last, you have visited Jordan—a small, welcoming country with outsized treasures of a lifetime. 🌍

**Top Table: Daimeh**

Recently opened in Amman, Jordan, **Daimeh** has become the **hottest restaurant** in town. Combining Jordanian and **Mediterranean cooking** with community-sourced produce, the creative menu is anchored in the region's timeless **food traditions**. But it's not just the menu that is innovative. Daimeh supports all communities across Jordan with locally sourced items and food prepared by the women of **Al Karma Kitchen**, a social enterprise sponsored by **Queen Rania's Jordan River Foundation**.

➔ **Digital Download.** Want even more Jordan journeys? Visit the website found on the back cover and enter OFFER EW20494.



Opposite, clockwise from top left: Local bazaars feature regional and rare grains and produce; the author, Jean Newman Glock, has visited Jordan more than 26 times; the famous gold souks of Amman, Jordan; the cityscape of Amman.