

## Soulmate Special-Jordan With Aqaba



### **Day 1: Amman City Tour and The Royal Automobile Museum - Overnight in Amman:**

Welcome to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, founded by King Abdullah I, and currently ruled by King Abdullah II son of the late King Hussein. Over the years, Jordan has grown into a stable, peaceful and modern country. While Jordan is known for the ancient Nabataean city of Petra, carved from rock over 2000 years ago, it also offers much more for the modern traveller, from the Jordan Valley, fertile and ever changing, to the remote desert canyons, immense and still. Whether you are a thrill seeker, a historian, or you just want to relax, Jordan is the place for you. Amman, the Capital of Jordan, is a fascinating city of contrasts ideally situated on a hilly area between the desert and the fertile Jordan Valley, a perfect base to delve deep into Jordan as it is no more than a four hour drive from anywhere in the country. In the commercial heart of the city, ultramodern buildings, hotels, smart restaurants, art galleries and boutiques rub shoulders comfortably with traditional coffee shops and tiny artisans' workshops. Everywhere there is evidence of the city's much older past. The city is an ideal family location, also offering its visitors plenty of lively nightlife, with everything from cultural and theatrical events, to traditional Arabic entertainment, modern restaurants and clubs for kids. Amman City Tour widely comprises of Citadel Mount, Archeological Museum, Roman Theater, Down Town and old and new parts of Amman. Before ending the day, make sure you do not miss out on The Royal Automobile Museum - depicts the history of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, from the early 1920s until the present day. The featured cars highlight the life of His Majesty the late King Hussein and his reign, as well as the many aspects of his leadership. Rare photo archives and video footage are used throughout the museum. A multimedia room, a library, as well as a souvenir shop are available to provide the visitor with a comprehensive and stimulating historical experience. VISITING HOURS: 10:00 - 19:00, Friday 11:00 - 19:00, closed on Tuesday.

### **Day 2: Jerash, Ajlun & Umm Qays - Overnight in Amman:**

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After breakfast, transfer to the northern part of Jordan to visit Jerash-one of the most well preserved Roman cities in the world. Hidden for centuries in sand before being excavated and restored over the past 70 years, Jerash reveals paved and colonnaded streets, soaring hilltop temples, handsome theaters, spacious public squares and plazas, baths, fountains and city walls pierced by towers and gates. Ajlun area has a long history of human settlement, due to its Mediterranean climate, dense forests, and fertile soil. This rich history is reflected in the many archaeological ruins scattered in the woodlands and surrounding villages. Ajlun Castle (Qal'at Ar-Rabad) was built by Saladin's general in 1184 AD to control the iron mines of Ajlun, and to counter the progress of the Crusaders by dominating the three main routes leading to the Jordan Valley and protecting the communication routes between Jordan and Syria. It is a fine example of Islamic architecture dominating a wider stretch of the northern Jordan Valley. Close to Ajlun is Anjara, a Christian pilgrimage site where Jesus Christ, his mother Mary, and his disciples passed through and rested in a nearby cave now commemorated with the Church of Our Lady of the Mountain. Umm Qays renowned in its time as a cultural center, Gadara, was the home of several classical poets and philosophers, including Theodorus, founder of a rhetorical school in Rome. Known for its black stone basalt, it is perched on a splendid hilltop overlooking the Jordan Valley and the Sea of Galilee, Umm Qays boasts an impressive colonnaded terrace and the ruins of two theaters. Find yourself on the magnificent terrace of a fine restaurant with a breathtaking view of three countries.

### **Day 3: Madaba, Mount Nebo and Mukawir - Overnight in Amman:**

Madaba is one of the most memorable places in the Holy Land. Dubbed "the City of Mosaics," Madaba offers many sites to explore. From the contemporary Greek Orthodox Church of St. George, home of a wonderfully vivid 6th century Byzantine mosaic map showing Jerusalem and other holy sites, to the Archaeological Park where the Madaba Institute for Mosaic Art and Restoration trains artisans in the art of making, repairing and restoring mosaics. Mount Nebo is believed to be the place where Moses was buried and the most revered holy site in Jordan. When atop this mountain, one can see as Moses did the vast panorama that encompasses the Jordan River Valley, the Dead Sea, Jericho, and Jerusalem, often referred to as the Holy Land. Mount Nebo's first church was built in the late 4th century to mark the site of Moses' death. It remains a place of pilgrimage for Christians as designated by Pope John Paul II. The 1st century AD Roman-Jewish historian, Josephus, identifies the awe-inspiring site of Mukawir (Machaerus) as the palace/fort of Herod, who was the Roman-appointed ruler over the region during the life of Jesus Christ. It was here, at this hilltop fortified palace, overlooking the Dead Sea region and the distance hills of Palestine and Israel that Herod Antipas, the son of Herod, imprisoned and beheaded John the Baptist after Salome's fateful dance.

### **Day 4: Karak and Dana Nature Reserve - Overnight at Dana Nature Reserve:**

Karak sits 900m above sea level and lies inside the walls of the old city, where consequently, several strategic 7th century battles took place: the battles of Mu'ta, Yarmouk and Tabaqet Fahl. Many of Prophet Mohammad's (PBUH) venerable companions and military leaders were martyred and buried in Jordan, and their tombs and shrines today are important destinations for pious Muslims such as Al-Mazar Aj-Janubi, just 25 minutes south of Karak. Karak Castle is a dark maze of stone-vaulted halls and endless passageways. More imposing than beautiful, the castle is nevertheless an impressive insight into the architectural military genius of the crusaders. Dana Biosphere Reserve is composed of a chain of valleys and mountains that extend from the top of the Jordan Rift Valley down to the desert lowlands of Wadi Araba. The visitor to this area will be awed by the beauty of the Rummana Mountain, the timeless serenity of Dana Village and the grandeur of the red and white sandstone cliffs of Wadi Dana, and the mystery of the ancient archaeological ruins of Feynan, where the stars shine brighter than any other place. You can stay in the eco-lodges to experience the wilderness, meet locals and explore the ancient history.

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### **Day 5: Petra - Overnight in Petra:**

Petra - A world wonder, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and Jordan's most valuable treasure, Petra is Jordan's greatest tourist attraction. It is a vast and unique city, carved into the sheer rock face by the Nabataeans, an industrious Arab civilization, who settled here more than 2000 years ago, turning it into an important junction for the silk, spice and other trade routes that linked China, India, and southern Arabia with Egypt, Syria, Greece, and Rome. The Nabataean Kingdom existed for centuries, and Petra became widely admired for its refined culture, massive architecture and ingenious complex of dams and water channels. What To See: Petra's most famous monument, the Treasury or Al-Khazneh, appears dramatically at the end of the Siq. Used in the final sequence of the film "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade", this towering facade is only the first of Petra's secrets. A climb of over 900 rock-cut steps will bring you to what most visitors consider their highlight - a gigantic 1st century Monastery (Deir). To visit Petra during daylight is aweinspiring; to experience it at night by the light of 1,800 candles is truly out-of-this-world! Walk through the Siq to the Khazneh following a candle-lit path and enjoy the haunting music of the Bedouins at the Treasury. Tours start at 8.30pm and finish at 10.00pm every Monday, Wednesday and Thursday. A modest shrine commemorating the death of Prophet Aaron (PBUH), brother of Prophet Moses (PBUH), was built in the 13th century by the Mameluk Sultan, high atop Mount Aaron (Jabal Haroun) in the Sharah mountain range. Do not miss the Petra Archaeological Museum, and Petra Nabataean Museum.

### **Day 6: Wadi Rum and Aqaba City Tour - Overnight in Aqaba:**

After overnight stay at Petra, drive to Wadi Rum- A maze of monolithic rockscapes rises up from the desert floor to heights of 1,750m creating a natural challenge for serious mountaineers. Hikers can enjoy the tranquility of the boundless empty spaces and various sports activities and adventure games shall keep you entertained during the day span. Before the sun sets arrive at Aqaba. Contrasting the rose-coloured desert to the North, the indigo-coloured deep water lies just off shore in Aqaba, offering kaleidoscopic marine life within easy reach, and an array of fish darting through the ocean. Common species are branch coral, fungia, and montipora, and the rare archelia - a black, treelike specimen found at great depths and first discovered by the late King Hussein himself. There is snorkelling, fishing and sailing, or glass-bottomed boats for those who prefer to keep marine life at arm's length. There is a Mameluk Fort (now known as Aqaba Fort) at the end of the corniche and, on an island in the middle of the Gulf, the castle of Saladin, foe of Richard the Lion heart and Reynald de Chatillon. In this century, Arab forces with T. E. Lawrence of Arabia, wrestled the port from the Ottomans in one of the most dramatic victories of the Arab Revolt.

### **Day 7: Aqaba and The Dead Sea - Overnight at The Dead Sea:**

Enjoy the first half of the day exploring Aqaba city tour and end with the relaxation part of your journey at the Dead Sea. Relax in the gently lapping waters and be amazed that you can't sink! You will be in the largest natural spa on earth where you can treat yourself to a soothing massage, or try the well-known healing powers of minerals from the sea's muddy floor to treat many skin diseases or simply rejuvenate your skin. What To See: Lot's Sanctuary, one of the most significant archaeological discoveries in Jordan, is located near modern Ghor Al Safi. A dried pillar of salt nearby is said to be the remains of Lot's wife, who disobeyed God's warning not to look back as she fled Sodom. For a more enriched memory of this ancient story, visit the "Museum at The Lowest Point on Earth" that showcases the series of cultures and activities that has surrounded this area for the past 10,000 years.

### **Day 8: Transfer to Amman Airport:**

After breakfast, Late check out from hotel and transfer to Amman Airport for final departure



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