TREK TO ANCIENT PETRA

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How fit do I need to be?

This trekking challenge is all about **endurance** fitness rather than speed and it is certainly not a race. Try to train with your day-pack on your back and get used to drinking and carrying water during your training. Sticking to our training plan will really pay off. You will be up early in the mornings and trekking for approximately 6-8 hours each day, so good fitness is very important. Distances are misleading in this type of terrain, and it's more useful when training to think about the hours you need to walk for! This trek is achievable for most people provided they **train well in advance**.

Keep in mind that this is designed to be a personal or fundraising challenge, and many people will find elements of the trip difficult at times – whether it is the physical trekking, the heat, rough camping, the difference in culture or something else. Try to work as a team and help each other out during any difficulties. While there are challenges, **the enjoyment and rewards that come from trekking the trails of the Bedouin are immense**!

What will the trekking be like?

You will be trekking over hilly, varied terrain with narrow rocky tracks, and some exposed sections. There is also some walking on soft, loose sand. Trails are rough underfoot. Some climbs – and descents – are steep and strenuous, particularly on the first day in the mountains; you should have a good level of fitness and stamina. You will trek approximately 95-100km on this trip overall, though it's more useful when training to think about the hours you need to walk for and the terrain that you'll be walking over! If you are unsteady on your feet on uneven terrain you will find trekking poles useful, but do make sure you use these when training. The trails can get very dusty; sunglasses with a good surround protection are very useful. The heat will be the main challenge for many, but there are some short sections with relatively steep drops, which pose more of a challenge for vertigo sufferers.

Who accompanies us on the trek from Discover Adventure?

Your trip will be led by an **experienced Discover Adventure leader**. Sometimes they accompany you from the UK, but they may meet you in-country. Our leaders are selected for their experience in harsh wilderness environments, knowledge of travel in remote areas, friendliness and approachability, sense of humour and ability to safely and effectively deal with any situation that arises. They are also trained in expedition first-aid. You are in very safe hands with a Discover Adventure leader.

Will there be a doctor trekking with us?

An expedition doctor or medic usually accompanies the group as well, dependent on **group size**. Our medics are there to provide first aid and promote day-to-day welfare on the trip; they carry a robust medical kit, but cannot possibly be equipped with everything needed to counter any given situation. They also provide crucial support to our leaders and, as they are usually found at the back of our groups, are also experts at encouraging you when things get tough.

Who else will accompany the group on this challenge?

Our local support crew is made up of local guides, drivers and cooks; we also have donkeys or mules to carry extra water. Local guides know the area well, and are a great source of knowledge about local customs and lifestyles. They are very proud of their country, and are friendly, welcoming hosts. Discover Adventure crew work closely with the local crew to ensure your trip runs smoothly and safely.



What is the accommodation like?

At the start and end of the trek you stay in a good standard hotel (3-4*) on a twin-share basis. If you are travelling alone, you will be paired up with someone of the same sex and similar age – please let us know if you wish to share with a particular person, if you have not already done so. Whilst on the trek itself you will be **camping in two-man tents**, with dining tents, camp-fires and fabulous views! We highly recommend peacefully sleeping under the incredible star-strewn night skies for at least one night – there's nothing quite like it! While camping there may be some water provided to wash with, but we recommend bringing wet wipes – we are in a desert so we prioritise the water for drinking and cooking! Be aware that the water supply generally in Jordan is scarce.

Can I request single accommodation?

There may be a limited number of single rooms in the hotels at the start and end of the trip, subject to request and at an additional cost, on a first-come, first-served basis. During the trek itself, single supplements are not feasible. Sharing a room is a really good ice-breaker if you don't know anyone else on the trip, so don't worry too much about it!

What are the transport arrangements for the group and our kit?

When you arrive in Jordan you will travel on a coach or minibus, depending on the group size, which will take you to the start and the end of the trek. Your **luggage will be transported each day by 4x4 vehicles** as you trek, though not on the same route, so it is not possible to access your main packs during the day. You will need to make sure that you carry a day-pack containing everything you may require while trekking (i.e. water, spare layers, waterproof, sun-cream, hat, camera, snacks).

What will the weather be like?

The days are usually dry and very hot, especially on the desert floor. As you gain height in the mountains, temperatures cool and there is more shade. Never under-estimate the power of the sun's rays, even when it is cloudy or windy. It's very easy to get burnt ears, calves or backs of arms so do cover up and ensure that you bring minimum SPF 30 sun-cream along with a high SPF lip salve. A sun hat, which covers your neck, and quality sunglasses are also a must. Strong winds are not uncommon. Night temperatures vary; it can be relatively mild at night, even at the mountain camps, but can also get very chilly, so be prepared.

What do I need to bring?

Refer to your **Kit List** to ensure that you have all the trekking essentials. Make sure your walking boots are lightweight, waterproof (it can rain in the desert) and well-worn in. You may also wish to bring some foot powder with you to absorb sweat and help to prevent blisters. Trekking tops of a wicking nature will be more comfortable to walk in than cotton. Don't forget your charity t-shirts for photos! If you intend to trek with poles, ensure that you train with them. We recommend that you use a platypus-style drinking system rather than bottles as it is easier to have regular small drinks.

What will I be eating?

It is amazing what the local crew produce in this environment! The food is freshly-cooked and plentiful so it is important that you make sure you are eating well for the long days of trekking. Breakfast will be typically be porridge, bread, honey, yoghurt, jam, cheese, tea and coffee. Packed lunches are usually bread, cucumber, tomatoes, cheese, olives, cold meat, fruit and biscuits. For dinner you will typically have a choice of potatoes, rice, meat, salads, hummus, olives, and fruit or pastries for dessert.

I have a specific dietary need; will there be enough for me to eat?

Being vegetarian, gluten free, dairy free or having other dietary requirements is usually not a problem provided you **let us know well in advance** (airlines need to know at least 8 weeks prior to the departure). Please do not expect the variety you would have at home – we will be among people of a different culture who may not understand your requirements, however willing they are to help, and in some regions certain foods are hard to access. If you feel you aren't getting enough energy because of your dietary requirements please talk to the leaders on the trip – they can't help unless they know there's a problem. If you know there are plenty of foods you cannot eat you may wish to bring extra snacks from home so you can top up your energy supply. Please feel free to ask us for advice.



Do I need to bring snacks?

Bring enough snacks to keep you going each day - around **2-3 tasty treats a day will suffice**. We recommend a combination of slow and fast release snacks such as cereal bars, flapjacks, salted nuts, biscuits, and a packet of sweets – but nothing that will melt! Bringing a combination of treats will keep you interested in snacking as consistent energy levels are important.

What if I have any issues during the trip?

Our leaders are very experienced and work very hard to ensure your trip runs as smoothly and enjoyably as possible, and we're sure that you'll have a wonderful time. If you do have any concerns or problems during the trip please talk to the crew and give them the opportunity to explain or rectify things while they are able. They are all very approachable!

How much do I need to drink?

Drink, drink, drink! Due to the nature of the challenge and the hot, dry climate, you will need to drink significantly more in Jordan than you would trekking in the UK. You will be provided with plenty of drinking water at breakfast for the day ahead, and again in the evenings at dinner; on most days we will have donkeys carrying extra bottles. Ensure that you keep topping up your bottles and hydration systems at every opportunity. You will need to drink at least 3ltrs of water a day; carry plenty of water when training are you are used to that amount of weight.

Outside of trekking, you may have to buy bottled water. To cut down on the inevitable single-use plastic this consumes, we strongly recommend you invest in a filtration bottle such as Water-to-Go. This will allow you to drink from (eg) hotel taps and airports without concern. Please follow the link on our Responsible Tourism web-page for more information and a discount code. Even with a filtration bottle, there may obviously still be times you need to buy bottled water, but it will cut down on plastic waste, and can be used for many DA trips to come!

What is the celebration meal?

At the end of your challenge, there will be a special meal to **celebrate your achievements**. Please check your trip itinerary to confirm whether you will need to set aside funds to pay for this on the night.

What about toilets?

Toilet facilities won't be like home. There are rarely toilet facilities during the day, so please be prepared. You will need to take baby wipes, nappy sacks and paper in order to make sure you **leave no trace** whilst out on your trek. These can then be discarded in the nearest bin. In camp we have well-constructed long-drops (with seats!) and in the permanent camp there are flushing toilets, though toilet paper should not be flushed.

What can I do to prevent illness during the challenge?

On the trek itself, food is cooked and prepared to very high standards and you can eat with confidence – though illness can spread through the group very quickly when you are living closely together, so it's important to bring **antiseptic hand sanitiser** for use after the toilet and before eating to minimise the spread of germs. Also, avoid sharing water bottles and sharing each other's food or sweets as this spreads germs very easily, even if you are being careful.

Restaurants in Jordan have very good standards of hygiene and the chances of being ill from badly-prepared food are rare. An upset stomach is more likely to be due to a change in diet and climate. However, we'd recommend basic precautions, such as not drinking tap water – or cleaning teeth in it. Avoid ice cubes in drinks unless you are sure they are made with bottled water. For the same reason avoid salads, raw vegetables and fruit that you cannot peel yourself, as well as unpasteurised dairy products.

There is always a risk of sunstroke and dehydration on a trip of this nature if you are not careful. Drink lots of water, replenish your salt intake and protect yourself against the strong sun: use high factor sun cream or sun block, wear a hat and sunglasses. The key point for good health is to keep your resistance high – eat and drink well – and to be fully aware of all possible health risks such as poor hygiene, undressed open cuts, untreated water and bites.



Any safety tips for non-trekking time?



Despite ongoing turmoil in the region, Jordan is a surprisingly safe country to visit. As always, you should be alert, but not so paranoid that you can't enjoy friendly interaction with the local people – and they are incredibly welcoming and friendly!

However, as in anywhere in the world, there are opportunists waiting for careless tourists. One of the benefits of group travel is safety – you all look out for each other, and there's no reason to be alone. Sometimes, however, it's easy to lose concentration in a group. Take responsibility for yourself and your belongings, and stay focussed in busy, touristy areas; these are more likely to attract pick-pockets.

Leave your valuables behind; you don't need your best jewellery and gadgets on this trip. Be careful at night and avoid walking or getting into taxis alone. Crowded areas such as bus stations and markets attract pick-pockets and bag-slashers, so be vigilant for both yourself and your companions. Avoid any demonstrations or political gatherings.

Will there be Wi-Fi, phone reception and charging points?

There is Wi-Fi in the hotels at the start and the end of the challenge, and at the permanent camp at Little Petra, but not in all areas, and it is unlikely to be as fast as you're used to at home. There won't be any internet access, or power for charging devices, when on the trek itself, and phone reception is limited. You may wish to bring your own solar charging device. Treat this challenge like a **Digital Detox** and tell your relatives that no news is good news.

For voltage and plug information in hotel accommodation, see https://www.iec.ch/world-plugs

What will happen in the case of an emergency on this challenge?

The crew will have mobiles and other communication systems, extensive medical kit and other safety apparatus where necessary. If you are feeling unwell on this trek, tell your leaders and listen to their advice as your health and safety is our top priority.

What currency should I take?

The currency in Jordan is the Jordanian Dinar (JD, known as 'gee dee') and made up of 100 piastres; you can obtain it before departure (you may need to order well in advance). Changing money in Jordan is very easy, though there may not be opportunities until the end of the trip. Most major currencies are accepted, including Sterling. Although you may get a better rate when exchanging US dollars, it's usually not worth the extra cost of buying them if you do not already have some. Do not bring Scottish banknotes, as you will struggle to exchange them. Hotels will change money, but banks and money-change bureaux give a better rate of exchange – however access to them is less practical.

For everyday use JD5 is probably the biggest note that you want, so ask for small denominations when buying your Dinar. It can be difficult to get change from large notes. Ripped and dirty notes are often not accepted so try to avoid being given them. ATMs (cash machines) are found throughout the main cities; the main credit cards are accepted by most large hotels, restaurants and shops catering to tourists.

How much money will I need to bring with me?

£100-150 in spending money will be ample unless you plan to buy lots of souvenirs. There is little opportunity to spend money before the most touristed locations at the end of the trip; you will be able to change more money here if you need it. Out of this spending money, you will need to set aside approximately funds for the meals typically not included (check your itinerary for details) and tips for the local crew. Allow as well for any soft drinks, snacks or other personal expenses. Alcohol is expensive in hotels, as Jordan is predominantly a dry (ie alcohol-free) country.

If for reasons due to fitness, illness or any unforeseen circumstances, you have to depart from the group arrangements, you must ensure that you have enough funds to cover any resultant costs – for example, extra hotel accommodation or meals. Some of these may be recoverable through your travel insurance, depending on your cover and the circumstances.

What do you recommend for crew tips?

The local crew work incredibly hard and it is great if we can show our appreciation in the form of a tip. The guide is **$40-50 per participant** which is split out between the local crew, but this is of course at your discretion. Please do not give out individual tips to any crew who you feel have helped you personally, as they work well as a team and those out of sight will be working just as hard as those with you on the trek. Your trip leader will give you further advice. Please do feel free to offer any unwanted kit on the last trekking day as the local crew may be grateful for extra kit.

Are there many shopping opportunities?

For most of the trek you will see very few other people. At Petra and Little Petra, there will be plenty of market stalls catering to tourists. Many market sellers will expect you to haggle over price. Haggling is great fun, and a good way of interacting with local people. A good rule of thumb is to offer two-thirds of the asking price and meet somewhere in the middle. However, while the intention is to knock the price down, be aware that if the sellers are desperate for immediate cash they will sell at a loss. So do not drive too hard a bargain; remember that £1 means a lot more to the seller than it will to you once you get home.

How do I ensure I'm sensitive to the local culture?

At Discover Adventure we expect our groups to be sensitive to other cultures – be especially respectful in public areas and near places of worship, but even in the most remote locations, we have local crew with us and they also deserve your respect.

Remember that what you would wear on a hot day in the UK is not necessarily acceptable in other countries, particularly in Muslim regions. Women travellers should dress appropriately; avoid tight or 'strappy' tops in favour of regular T-shirts, and shorts should not to be too short. Men should also always wear a top. By dressing thoughtfully, you not only experience minimum hassle but do not offend the local people.

Try to research a little about the culture before you go: it is greatly beneficial to have some understanding of Islam or the Jordanian way of life. Or learn a few basic Arabic phrases; it all goes a long way to ensuring you connect with local people in a positive way. Thanks in advance for helping to maintain the good reputation of Discover Adventure groups.



When will we know the flight details and meeting point?

Discover Adventure will usually confirm the main group flight details 6 weeks prior to the trip departure so you will know which airport you are travelling from and can arrange suitable transport. You will be sent your **Final Joining Instructions** in the month prior to the trip departure date, within which specific details of **where and when to meet your trip leader** and fellow trekking participants will be confirmed.

Will I need my flight ticket before the trip departure date?

Unless specified otherwise, you do not need to have your flight ticket prior to the trip departure date as this will be given to you by the trip leader or a Discover Adventure representative at the airport. If there are alternative plans, your Challenge Co-ordinator will inform you.

Can I make my own flight arrangements or alter my flight from the main group?

Flights are included on this trip and you will automatically be booked on to the main group flights, unless you let us know otherwise in good time (no later than three months prior to the trip departure). It is possible to make your own flight arrangements; a land-only discount will be applied. See the **Flight Arrangements Form** in your Passenger Portal.

It is also possible to extend your stay and deviate from the main group flight booking (fee applies); again, see the form. Note that you will remain on the same flight path, returning from the same airport. There is sometimes a supplement to pay if the flights are more expensive on your requested day; early requests have the best chance of avoiding this. We will always contact you if this is the case to check whether you are happy to proceed. If you are keen to upgrade your flight, this may be possible at a supplement and you can contact us for an approximate price but please note that this is often very expensive and we will require full payment upfront.

What is the luggage allowance?

Your main luggage limit on the plane is 20kg with a 5kg allowance for hand luggage. Do **travel lightly** and take only small bottles of toiletries. If you stick to the kit list you will manage this with no problems. Don't forget that suitcases are not suitable; **soft rucksacks/kitbags only** (with no wheels on). Discover Adventure Kitbags are specially designed for the rigours of our challenges and are very affordable; see your Passenger Portal for information.

What if this trip does not meet minimum numbers?

Every group needs a minimum number of bookings for it to be feasible to run. Cancelling a trip is rare, and we do our utmost to avoid it. You will be contacted in plenty of time if we are concerned about the group size, and we will discuss options with you.

Do I need travel insurance?

As part of your booking conditions, it is compulsory that you ensure you have adequate travel insurance cover to cover you for trekking. See the insurance page on our website for further information.

What are the passport and visa requirements?

A valid 10-year passport is essential; with at least six months remaining on arrival in-country. British citizens should refer to the foreign travel advice given here for more information. British visitors need a visa to enter Jordan; this is usually obtained as a group visa by our ground handler (providing you have given us your passport details well in advance) and included in the tour cost. We will notify you in advance if this changes. If you are not travelling with the group, individual tourist visas can be obtained easily on arrival at the airport. If you do not have a UK passport, it is your responsibility to check the entry requirements with your own embassy, so please do so in good time. Remember to check any regulations for countries you may transit during your flight too.

There may also be health declarations to make. Do check the FCO Entry Requirements information carefully, as regulations can and do change without warning.

How can I find out more about the requirement for vaccinations?

You will need to ensure that your routine UK schedule of vaccinations is up-to-date (especially Tetanus) and check the NaTHNaC Travel Health Pro website for further guidance and information. Always consult your local GP or travel clinic for the latest health advice, as they are aware of any updates in World Health Travel requirements.

Malaria is not a risk in Jordan, though there are still biting insects – cover up at dawn and dusk in loose-fitting clothing, use a good insect repellent and avoid wearing strongly perfumed toiletries.

