

Reach Out – Spring Break, 2010

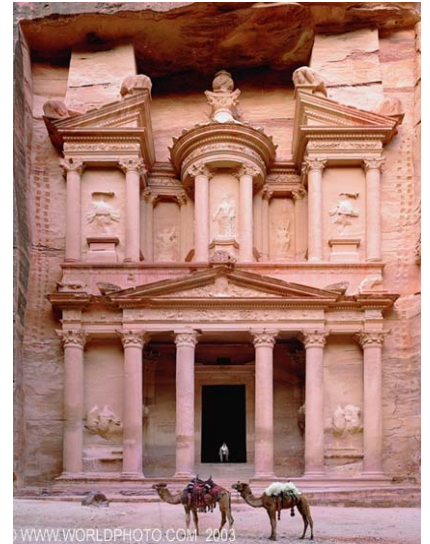
Jordan

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Cost: *approx.* \$1,600

Dates: March 4-16, 2009

Language: Arabic useful but not necessary



The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is a peaceful country in the midst of a volatile region and shares its borders with Israel, Syria, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia. Its existence as a modern state began post-World War I, as it emerged from the former Ottoman Empire under King Abdullah I, whose great-grandson, King Abdullah II, leads the country today. Jordan is a constitutional monarchy with a representative parliament that manages a population in flux: the “native” Jordanian Bedouin have been joined in recent decades by immigrants from Palestine (especially after the 1967 war), Lebanon, the Gulf, Egypt, Asia, and, most recently, Iraq (over 2 million refugees have streamed into the area in the wake of the Second Gulf War – a huge amount in a country roughly the size of Indiana). Despite its status as an island of stability in a sea of conflict, Jordan has been hit by hard times in recent years, in large part due to the massive strain placed on its economy by the influx of refugees from neighboring countries and the relatively minimal amount of international aid to counter that. With tourism down since 9/11, gas prices rising drastically since the start of the Iraq War, and water and food shortages in an ever-growing population, Jordan is having a rough time.

Our Reach Out trip to Jordan is taking a unique approach by focusing on the impact of the refugee crisis in Jordan. As such, the trip will have two major components: pre-trip learning and expansion of our understanding of the relevant issues, followed by hands-on work and cultural experience in Jordan. The pre-trip component will consist of a series of meetings with professors and experts on different facets of the conflict, focusing on the refugee experience, in fields ranging from psychology to economics. We’ll also be learning handy “Arabic Survival Phrases” and some basics of the Jordanian dialect to facilitate our interactions with refugees and taxi drivers alike. Once in Jordan, our trip will take a three-pronged approach: humanitarian work in refugee camps under the auspices of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA); meetings with ambassadors, Red Cross, UN, and Jordanian government officials for an administrative perspective; and exploring Jordan’s history and culture, with planned stops to some of Jordan’s most rich and beautiful areas.

Tentative Itinerary:

Thursday, March 4: Flight from New York JFK to Amman (arrive Friday afternoon).

Saturday-Sunday March 6-7: Exploring downtown Amman and Umm Qais/Jerash.

Monday-Thursday, March 8-11 + Monday, March 15: Working in the Refugee Camp, meetings with officials, experiencing Amman and the surrounding towns and sites.

Thursday-Sunday, March 11-14: Exploring Jordan: Dead Sea, Petra, Wadi Rum.

Tuesday, March 16: Nonstop flight back to New York JFK.