

elevateSM destinations

JORDAN

COUNTRY GUIDE

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PURPOSE OF THE COUNTRY GUIDE

This Country Guide contains a plethora of information that will be useful preparing for and during your journey to Jordan. There is information on cultural considerations, communication tips and tricks, health and safety recommendations, and so much more! Please refer to the packing list, emergency contact list, itinerary and online trip portal for specific details on your trip.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Passport

Travelers should ensure that the validity of their passports extends at least 6 months beyond the end of their intended stay, and should have at least 2 blank (unstamped) visa pages in their passport to enter the country. The last 2 amendment pages are unacceptable for visas and immigration stamps. You will need to renew your passport if you are out of Visa pages, as the State Department no longer provides additional pages. If you need to renew your passport, please do so as soon as possible.

We recommend travelers scan a copy of your passport and email it to yourself and have a photo of it saved on your phone.

Visa

Elevate Destinations and our partners in Jordan will secure your visa in advance of travel to Jordan. You will be responsible for any visa required for travel before or after the main program. If you would like assistance procuring any visas, please let us know and we can connect you with a visa processing center such as [A1 Visas & Passports](#).

Travel/Health Insurance

In addition to the trip costs, the Barr Foundation secured travel insurance for all Fellows. Click [here](#) for a detailed description of this policy. If you have any questions about the insurance coverage, please let us know.

The insurance purchased by Barr Foundation is only valid for the dates of the Learning Journey; October 12 – 25, 2023. If you are planning on extending your travels and would like to purchase travel insurance to cover your travel, you will need to do so individually. Should you require assistance in purchasing additional insurance we are happy to refer you to a trusted travel insurance broker.

Covid Policies & Procedures

Covid Protocols for the Barr Fellows' Learning Journey:

The most important thing to note is that you should use your best judgment.

Before You Travel

- Before you leave home, please consider and arrange for what you will need to travel comfortably during an extended flight (e.g. high-quality mask, hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, etc.)

- Please take a Covid test within 24 hours of your departure. If you test positive, please follow the steps below **(which start with contacting Kim Haskins)**.

During the Trip

Currently, the government of Jordan has lifted all Covid restrictions. We ask that you use your best judgment based on your personal circumstances and follow the procedures outlined.

Covid Tests & Precautions

- Two Covid tests will be provided for you in Jordan. If frequent testing is part of your usual practice, please plan to pack additional tests.
- Five high-quality (KN95) masks will be provided for you in Jordan. If you choose to mask daily, please plan to carry additional masks
Please note that we all have different risk factors and comfort levels related to Covid. Some may wear masks in enclosed spaces and others may not. We ask that everyone be respectful of the choices each traveler makes based on their personal circumstances.
- Hand sanitizer will be available and frequent hand washing is encouraged.

If You Don't Feel Well

- Covid tests will be provided for you in Jordan. If you don't feel well, please take a test. **If you test positive, please follow the steps below (which start with contacting Kim Haskins)**.

If You Test Positive (Before or During the Trip)

Again, please use your best judgment based on your personal circumstances. In addition, please contact Kim Haskins immediately so she can assist with next steps, including asking for your consent to tell others of their potential exposure.

- If you test positive within a few days of our departure for Jordan, Kim Haskins can help with deciding on an approach, including the possibility of your joining the group later.
- If you test positive while in Jordan, we will do our best to get you your own room, the cost for which will be covered at no expense to you. If the hotel does not have additional rooms available, we ask for everyone's flexibility and patience as it may be necessary to be creative with rooming assignments to support the needs of the person(s) who test(s) positive and also minimize exposure of the group.
- If you test positive, do not have symptoms, and would like to participate in learning journey activities, you will be asked to wear a high-quality mask.
- If you need to rest and recuperate and/or need medical attention, please inform Kim Haskins so she can work with Global Rescue, and our local Guide, Nader Saleh, to make arrangements accordingly.

If You Have Been Exposed to Covid

- If you have been exposed to someone with Covid, please wear a high-quality mask and test after 5 days. You may participate in the Learning Journey during the 5-day masking period.
- If you test negative on day 5, you no longer need to wear a mask.

Immunizations

Prior to travel, Elevate Destinations strongly recommends that you look into recommended immunizations for your time in Jordan. Given that we are not a licensed Health Care provider, we cannot advise travelers on which immunizations they may or may not need. We recommend that all travelers do the following:

- a) Consult with a travel clinic or your personal physician regarding immunizations and other precautions you may need to take in order to participate in this journey. You will need to do this well in advance of your trip as some vaccinations require time to take effect, and you may need to allow time between a series of shots.
- b) Visit [the CDC Website for Jordan](#) to view recommended vaccines and medicines, travel health notices for the region, and other tips for staying healthy and safe.

Other Health Considerations

This will be an amazing journey, but as with all travel, a spirit of adventure and a degree of flexibility will enhance your enjoyment of this program.

As Jordan is a desert environment, there are a few extra things to keep in mind. The climate is dry and you will be exposed to strong heat and sun during hikes through Petra and Wadi Rum for extended periods of time. Please consider taking some preventative measures against heat and sun exposure such as wearing long, breathable protective clothing and hats, and actively hydrating throughout your time in Jordan.

We recommend a medium level of physical agility, as some of the drives may have sections of unpaved, or bumpy roads. For the most satisfying experience, and in fairness to your fellow travelers, please note that this trip requires the following:

- Ability to walk at least one mile without difficulty
- Ability to spend extended periods of time on your feet
- Ability to climb sets of stairs without assistance
- Ability to keep pace with an active group of travelers and to be on time for all scheduled activities
- Ability to ride comfortably in a vehicle on unpaved, bumpy roads for extended periods of time

Note About Medications

Always travel with medications in their original, clearly labelled containers and in your carry-on luggage (not in checked baggage). A signed and dated letter from your physician describing your medical conditions and medications, including generic names, is also a good idea. If carrying syringes or needles, be sure to have a physician's letter documenting their medical necessity and keep these handy when entering or exiting any of Jordan's borders.

Safety Recommendations

Your guide will give you current briefings on safety while in-country, but here are some basic ground rules for safety while traveling:

- Keep all valuables in the hotel safe.
- Avoid flashing money. Be mindful of your belongings at all time. Keep bags in front of you in crowds, and on your lap when at restaurants.
- Pay attention: avoid walking around with your smartphone in hand.
- Be vigilant when crossing roads.
- Stick with the group.
- Always make sure that others know of your whereabouts and movements.
- Avoid street protests or large gatherings.
- Do not wear expensive or sentimentally valuable jewelry while traveling.
- Let your guide know if you have any safety concerns.

Smart Traveler Tip!

We recommend that all travelers from the U.S. sign up for the [State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#). This is a free service provided by the U.S. Government to U.S. citizens who are traveling to, or living in, a foreign country. By enrolling in this program, the State Department will proactively assist you in case of any emergency while abroad. By enrolling in this program:

- The Embassy will alert you via email about safety conditions in Jordan
- The Embassy in Jordan will know that you are there and can proactively contact you in an emergency, whether natural disaster, civil unrest, or family-related.

Important Travel Documents

In case of emergency, it is advisable to travel with copies of the following documents, either email yourself scanned copies and / or save a photo of these documents on your phone. We also recommend printing copies of these documents to leave with relatives or friends at home.

- Passport - and a photocopy of the first page
- Covid Vaccination Card; both the original copy and a photocopy
- International flight itinerary or e-tickets
- Emergency contact list - provided by Elevate Destinations that includes:
 - Address and phone numbers of your hotels
 - In-country 24/7 emergency support number
 - Contact information to reach Global Rescue, which provides emergency medical consultation, evacuation and security extraction services
- Travel insurance policy details and 24-hour emergency number
- Details of relatives/friends and your primary care physician to be contacted in an emergency
- Bank and credit card details, camera serial numbers etc.

Communications

Wifi: In most places you will visit in Jordan, wifi will be available. Speed, bandwidth, and availability will likely be less reliable than you are used to. Oftentimes, connection is stronger in the lobby of hotels than in the rooms. Expect access to be particularly limited, if at all available, in Wadi Rum.

International Calls: If you are in Jordan and trying to reach a number *outside* of the country, dial 00 before dialing the country code and local number. To call numbers in Jordan *from* the U.S. dial 011 + 962 + [telephone number]. You'll find that most standard phone numbers in Jordan include the 1-digit area code for the capital, Amman, 6, before the remaining seven numbers.

Staying connected: Here are the most common methods for making local/international calls:

1. **Smart Phone apps:** Apps such as, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, and Viber (when Wifi is available). Remember to download these apps *before* you travel!
2. **Getting an international calling package:** Setting up international coverage from your cell phone provider for the duration of your trip is often the simplest option and the best to avoid roaming charges.
3. **Use a local phone/ SIM card:** This is a good option for making calls within Jordan as international calls can get expensive. Local SIM cards are inexpensive, can be found at a variety of stores, and often have pay-as-you-go plans where you can “top up” your credit for use in the country. Please be aware of any requirements your phone has in order to accept the local SIM cards (i.e. size of SIM card, jailbroken, etc). This will change your phone number for the duration of time you have a foreign SIM card in your phone. Please also let us know in advance if you would like assistance purchasing a local phone.
4. **Calls from hotel:** Please be advised that some hotels impose a surcharge that can be more than double the cost of international calls. Be sure to check the hotel policy before placing an international call from a hotel.

Money

The currency in Jordan is the Jordanian Dinar (JOD) – known as the jay-dee (JD). [Click here to see the current exchange rate.](#) One dinar is equal to 10 dirhams, 100 qirsh and 1,000 fils. You will sometimes hear piastre or girsh, which are both 10 fils (10 qirsh equals 100 fils). Denominations are as follows:

- **Coins:** 1, 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100 fils
- **Bills:** 1/2, 1, 5, 10, 20 and 50 dinars

For your extra personal costs and shopping, \$30 - \$50 USD per day is a good rule of thumb.

Local currency can be obtained at ATMS, hotels, banks or foreign exchange bureaus in Amman (not likely in small towns). In general, we suggest that you limit the amount of money you convert into local currencies and exchange only what you think you will spend before leaving any foreign country.

Cash: Credit cards are widely accepted in Jordan though there are smaller stores and restaurants that will only accept cash. We recommend bringing \$100 - \$300 USD in case you have issues withdrawing cash from an ATM.

Ask for smaller bills when you change money, or use your large bills at large shops to receive more change. In many cases, people (local vendors especially) don't have change.

If you bring USD, your bills should be:

- **New** (printed in the last 5 years)
- **In pristine condition** (no rips, tears, smudges, markings, creases, etc)
- **Larger denominations** (the \$50 and \$100 bills attract the best exchange rate).

Your guide can generally help with currency exchange throughout your trip. It is suggested that you save all receipts from your currency exchange transactions. Only paper bills will be accepted for exchange, not coins.

Credit Cards: Credit cards (Visa preferred) are acceptable in larger establishments, while cash is more appropriate everywhere else. Most merchants will charge an additional 3-5% of the bill for a credit card transaction. Please note American Express cards are not commonly accepted.

ATM/Debit Cards: You can use your debit card to withdraw money from ATMs.

Smart Traveler Tip!

Be sure to notify your bank and credit card companies of your travel plans, in case they view your activity as fraudulent and put a block on your card.

Gratuities: Gratuities for meals, drivers, and your guide will be covered. However, we strongly recommend tipping your porters at the hotels and leaving behind cash in your room for the cleaning staff. For porters \$1-2 USD (1-1.50 dinar) per bag is appropriate. For cleaning staff, we recommend leaving behind \$3-5 (2.50 - 4 dinar) per day.

IN-COUNTRY INFO

Time

Jordan is 3 hours ahead of GMT (Greenwich Mean Time) during Daylight Savings Time and GMT+2 for the remainder of the year. During the time you are in Jordan, the time will be 7 hours ahead of East Coast time (EST) and 10 hours ahead of West Coast time (PST).

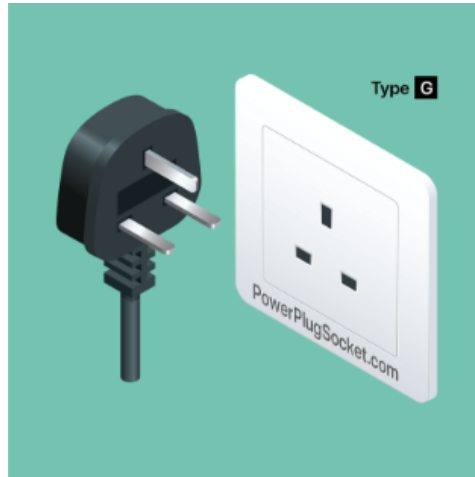
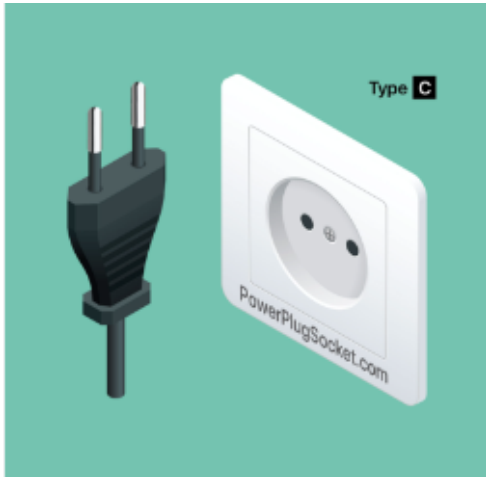
Electricity

Jordan uses a standard voltage of 230V, and the frequency of 50Hz. The most commonly used plugs are **Type C and G**. Because of the variety, we recommend bringing a multi-purpose adaptor.

Smart Traveler Tip!

Download a conversion app for things like currency, temperature, time, and distance while traveling. Here are some apps that we like:
Units - Free Unit Converter, Convert Units for Free, Converter+, GlobeConvert

The circular two pin Type C (photo below) is the most common followed by the three pin Type G (photo below).



You can use your electric appliances in Jordan, if the standard voltage in your country is in between 220 - 240 V (as is in the UK, Europe, Australia and most of Asia and Africa). If this is not the case it should be used alongside a voltage transformer or converter. Converters are typically used with appliances that operate for a short duration (1-2 hours), while most transformers can be used alongside appliances that operate continuously.

Water

The water in Jordan is not potable, therefore, it is advised to drink **bottled or purified water**. Do not use ice, unless you know it was made from clean drinking water. If you'd like to be extra safe, we recommend brushing your teeth with bottled water. Drinkable water - bottled or purified - and non-alcoholic beverages will be supplied at all meals.

Toilet Paper

We recommend carrying toilet paper or tissues with you as many bathrooms, especially in more remote areas or restaurants, may not have any. Please also remember that in Jordan some places may ask that you throw the toilet paper into the trash bin and not into the toilet itself, as this can cause problems with the delicate sewage system.

Waste Disposal

Keep in mind that in much of the developing world waste disposal systems are not as advanced as you might be used to. Oftentimes, landfills are adjacent to conservation land or trash is burned. Recycling is often unavailable. To minimize your impact on the country you are visiting, please consider the following guidelines:

- Leave no Trace — everything that you bring with you should go home with you.
- If you plan on shopping, make sure that you have extra room in your luggage or an extra bag to check on your way home (don't dump items to make room!)

- Avoid packing with plastic baggies and instead purchase reusable packing cubes, cloth bags, and reusable toiletry bags
- Bring a reusable water bottle that you can refill
- Remove packaging or tags of any newly purchased items before you go

Local Cuisine & Drink

Jordanian cuisine is central to their landmark hospitality. Since the country was at the crossing point of trade routes, its food is influenced by cultures as distant as India as well as those in the same region. Known for its healthiness, its main ingredients are vegetables, legumes, fruits, yogurt, dried fruit and meat such as lamb and chicken. Most meals are preceded by a *mezze*, which is more or less a selection of small dishes, dips, and salads including *hummus*, *baba ganoush*, and *tabbouleh*. Mezze dishes also include *fatayer*, pasties stuffed with minced meat, and *kibbeh*, fried bulgur wheat meatballs. Often for breakfast, you will be served *manageesh*, a flatbread with various toppings (such as cheese and the spice, *zaatar*). For special occasions, *mansaf* is a Bedouin Speciality of lamb stew with *jameed* (a kind of dry yogurt) and aromatic herbs slowly cooked over many hours. Once mansaf is ready, it is served over a bed of rice and pine nuts with more yogurt added. This traditional dish is eaten communally and typically with your hands. While in Jordan, you can expect to see plentiful almonds, dates, falafel, and *shawarma*. As a rule, desserts are usually served with a good tea - typically mint, one of the most popular drinks in Jordan.

Weather Conditions

Jordan is a relatively small country with a total land area of 34,495 square miles. Although mostly desert, within its compact area, there are 3 distinct climatic zones; the Jordan valley, Mountain Heights Plateau and the Desert or Badia region, which constitutes 75% of the total land area of Jordan.

Jordan's weather consists of 4 seasons: Autumn, winter, spring, and summer.

Spring (March through May): Spring in Jordan starts in March and valleys are green and temperatures stay in the 60s. This is the perfect time to visit Jordan - with warm days and cooler nights. Beautiful wildflowers – including the striking Jordanian black iris – turn the countryside lush and colorful. Rains typically end in late April.

Summer (June through August): Summer is typically rainless in Jordan and daily temperatures can reach 104°F (40°C) and above, especially when the Sirocco (a hot, dry southerly wind) blows. At times, these winds can be very strong and can cause sandstorms. Jordan experiences over 13 hours of sunshine per day and can be intensely hot in the Jordan Valley, the area around Aqaba and the Eastern Desert.

Autumn (September through November): Autumn, which is when the Barr Fellows' Learning Journey will be, is a wonderful time to visit Jordan because of the relief from the heat. This is typically a dry period with scarce rain. Temperatures typically range from the 50's - 70's °F and some wildflowers will return before the winter cold sets in. In the desert (Wadi Rum, Dana Reserve), the temperatures can be hot during the day (can be up to 80's °F in the sun) and cool down substantially in the evenings, reaching as low as 50's °F.

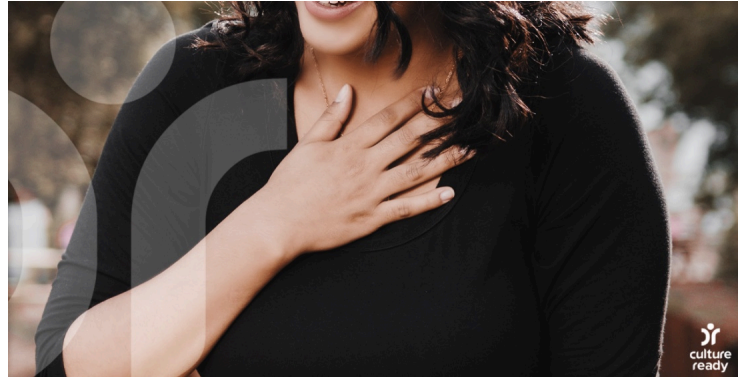
Winter (December through February): Winters in Jordan are typically short and cool. January is the coolest month, with temperatures of 41-50°F (5-10°C). 70 percent of the average rainfall in the

country falls during this period. Amman can be especially cold in January and February and snow is not uncommon. During these months the Jordan Valley and the area around Aqaba are reasonably warm during the day, with cooler evenings. Winter in the Eastern Desert, however, can be bitterly cold and dry. The central spine of hills can receive snowfall during winter months.

CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

Experiencing different cultures is one of the joys of traveling. Please take note of the information below to better understand and respect these cultural differences in Jordan.

Greetings: Shaking hands is even more common in casual interactions than it is in the west. It is acceptable and polite to shake hands when meeting and being introduced to someone. Some conservative individuals (especially women in veils) may not wish to shake hands with the opposite sex. It is therefore best to withhold until the other person initiates a handshake. One can place their hand on their heart in lieu of a handshake (see photo).



Women, especially those who know each other well, mutually greet one another by several pecks on the cheek (up to 5). The first kiss is typically on the left. It is not typically expected of foreign visitors, however, it is a sign of warmth, and best not to be caught off guard if greeted with a small kiss on both cheeks (try to let the person greeting you “lead”!).

Signs of Respect: When meeting people for the first time, a sign of respect is to stand up to say hello. This can be done for both men and women and shows respect and goodwill. Whenever someone enters the room, particularly someone older, you are expected to stand. Similarly, do stand when you are being introduced.

Avoid eating with your left hand, as it is considered rude.

Coffee Culture: When drinking Arabic coffee, to show to the host that you would like more coffee, shake the cup from side to side. It is polite and appropriate to then hold the cup out to the person who is serving the coffee. This is specific to Bedouin culture. However, in most homes in Jordan when coffee is offered by a host, it is polite and respectful to accept.

Religion: Jordan is a tolerant, Islamic state that welcomes all religions. You will notice that the local culture is deeply influenced by Islam. Visiting Jordan is a great opportunity to (respectfully) ask questions and gain insights into the Islam religion and values.

A majority of Jordanians are Muslim, about 92% are Sunni Muslim, and 1% are Shia or Sufi. Cities in the south of Jordan, have the highest percentage of Muslims. Christians, living mostly in Amman or the Jordan Valley, make up 6% of the total, with 1% representing other religions. Jordan is home to many historical religious sites and some of the world’s earliest known churches.

Note: Muslims in Jordan are called to prayer 5 times each day, starting at 5:00 AM. Be mindful of those praying outside in public spaces. It is common for Muslims to pray outside, and they should not be

interrupted or passed in front of. Additionally, please avoid staring at individuals while they are praying. During religious holidays such as Ramadan, it is best to be respectful by not eating, drinking, or smoking in public areas.

Public Displays of Affection: Couples traveling together should be aware of Jordanian social norms. Public displays of affection between men and women are not considered acceptable. Even if you're married, walking arm-around-waist or arm-over-shoulder, touching each other's face or body or kissing each other are likely to be viewed as distasteful. It is possible occasionally to see husbands and wives walking hand-in-hand, but it is rare.

Begging: As in many developing countries and countries with large refugee populations, begging is common in Jordan. We advise strongly against giving money to children, since it just perpetuates the cycle: if kids receive money, they may be forced to continue to beg rather than go to school. Some children work for thieves or in situations where the money never benefits them directly. See our Responsible Travel Tips section below for more information.

Dress: Dress is one facet of interaction between locals and western tourists that is most open to misunderstandings on both sides and has a great propensity to widen the cultural divide. Clothes that are unremarkable at home can come across in Jordan as being embarrassing, disrespectful, or offensive. Generally, it is best to show as little skin as possible. Long pants and sleeves that are not too tight or form-fitting are ideal for men and women. Generally, Jordanians place an emphasis on personal grooming and it isn't common to see individuals dressed in torn or scruffy clothes. There is no need to wear headscarves anywhere. In touristic places, you should wear comfortable clothing and shoes as you may be spending a lot of time walking while exploring the sites.

Most Mosques in Jordan will provide a full length, hooded cloak to wear. Anyone who enters a Mosque may be asked to wear this and remove their shoes.

Smart Traveler Tip!

Dressing modestly is a sign of respect and part of the regular decorum in Jordan. Especially when visiting religious areas, rural communities, or public spaces, wearing conservative clothes is encouraged.

Note for females: To garner mutual respect in Jordan, you may have to go to greater lengths than men to adjust your normal style of dress, although it is possible to do so without compromising your freedom and individuality. Loose-fitting, opaque clothing that completely covers your legs, arms, and chest are ideal. On women, shorts and leggings may appear provocative and inappropriate. Additionally, traveling with a thin cotton scarf can be a helpful tool when trying to cover up the nape of your neck, and typically when this is required to enter a religious site (mainly a Mosque), cloaks are provided by the Mosque (see note above).

Bargaining: Gentle bargaining is generally acceptable in souqs (markets) in Jordan. Vendors sometimes will open with a high price they don't actually expect you to pay. Counter their offer with a lower number, and reach an agreement somewhere in between. You can usually negotiate the price down by about 15% to 25%. Throughout your interaction, keep a light-hearted attitude. Remember that this should be fun! It can be a great way to connect with locals.

Language

Modern Standard (Levantine) Arabic is the official language of Jordan, but in most tourist places people understand and speak some English. There are many Jordanian Arabic colloquial dialects that are used more frequently in daily, casual conversation. Hospitality is a very important part of Jordanian culture, because of this people will be helpful when you need assistance. Even so, it is always appreciated when visiting someone's home that you are able to learn a few words in their language - and that kind of language exchange is a great way to connect with people when you travel!

English Phrase	Arabic
Hello	Salam - Marhaba
How are you?	Keef halak? (m) Keef halek? (f)
Please	Min fadlak
Good morning	Sabah El-Khair
Good evening	Masaa El-Khair
Thank you	Shukran
You're welcome	Afwan
Yes	Na'am - Aaywa
No	La'a
Excuse me (I'm sorry)	Aasif
What is your name?	Sho Ismak? (m) Sho Ismek? (f)
My name is ____.	Ismi ...
Nice to meet you.	Tasharraft bi muqabalatik
Where is the Toilet?	Ayn Al Hamman
Bless your hands (use when being served)	Yislimoo
God willing (hopefully)	Inshallah
Goodbye	Ma'assalama
Beautiful	Jameel

Photography

Jordan is a beautiful country, and you will want to take lots of pictures. When photographing people, always ask permission first - this is a sign of respect. You can do this with gestures or ask your guide to translate. The only exception to this is when you are photographing a public scene with a lot of people in it, aiming at no one in particular. Because so many local people are asked for permission to be photographed, many will expect a tip or an outright fee for this. (In fact, some "professional posers" make a living this way.) Always be considerate of anyone's desire not to be photographed. There are some places where photography is prohibited, and these areas are usually marked. If you are uncertain about whether or not photography is permitted, your guide will be there to advise you.

If you are interested in learning how to engage in ethical photography during your travels, check out our blog post, [“Nine questions to help decolonize your photography”](#).

Please keep in mind, photographing women, especially Bedouin women, is considered an extreme invasion of privacy. Please be sensitive to these special considerations.

Note: Do not take photographs of military installations, borders, or airports. If you are uncertain about whether or not photography is permitted, ask. Taking photographs when permission is not granted is inconsiderate at best and may result in the confiscation of your camera.

Human Trafficking in Travel

Elevate Destinations has signed *the Code of conduct for the protection of children from sexual exploitation in travel and tourism* and expects all of its partners to refuse involvement, both direct and indirect, in the commercial sexual exploitation of children. A “child” is defined as a person younger than 18 years of age, according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We encourage our travelers and suppliers to report the sexual exploitation of children. Information, even the smallest amount, can represent the missing piece of an ongoing investigation by law enforcement. If you are uncomfortable with leaving your name and contact information, you can report anonymously to law enforcement or NGOs. Report a concern [using this form](#); alternatively, you can email protect@ecpat.net to report sexual exploitation of children.

Read about Elevate’s values & vision, our [sustainability commitment](#), our programs that give back, and more on our website at www.elevatedestinations.com. Our team members are always excited to share more on this topic. We acknowledge that it is an ongoing learning and practice to maintain truly sustainable travel programs. We continue to monitor our programs on the ground in order to improve them, and welcome your thoughts, feedback, and encouragement!

Responsible Travel Tips

Elevate Destinations takes pride in its leadership in the field of responsible travel. We take care in selecting our local partners that share our environmental and social values and are avid supporters of locals working in the tourism industry as they are both the most impacted and impactful players at the local level. All of your ground costs on this trip are carbon offset using [Native Energy's Carbon Calculator](#). The Barr Foundation will pay for the offsets to the international flights.

Here are a few tips that can help enrich your experience as a responsible traveler:

- **Keep an open mind:** Try to observe local customs and respect traditional cultures and people.
- **Language:** Learn a few basic greetings and “thank you” in the local language.
- **Local economy:** Support locally owned businesses, restaurants, and other services. Shop from local artisans to promote traditional crafts and encourage contemporary arts.
- **Pay a fair price:** Bargaining is acceptable on this trip and a great way to engage with locals. Try to have fun and not be overly aggressive in bargaining for souvenirs.
- **Respect:** It is important to acknowledge the privacy and dignity of others and ask before photographing or filming people. Ask permission before entering sacred places, homes or private land, and take heed of local customs (i.e. remove shoes, hats, cover hair with shawl, etc). Please ask your guide if you are unsure; they are there to support your introduction to the culture!
- **Community and environment:** Contribute to organizations that support traditional cultures and protect the natural environment. Keep to designated trails, and do not disturb plants and animals or their natural habitats.
- **Animal products:** Avoid purchasing crafts, clothing, furniture or other products that are derived from members of protected or endangered animal species.
- **Properly dispose of trash:** Avoid using plastic bags and try to minimize the use of other disposables. When traveling in areas away from cities, make sure to take out what you take in. Try using a reusable water bottle and treating your own drinking water when possible – check out what our friends at [Travelers Against Plastic](#) are doing!
- **Don’t give “handouts”:** You will likely encounter instances of poverty and people asking for donations. We discourage giving away money or items as it can accentuate an unequal relationship between visitors and locals. Children that receive money, gifts, and sweets may feel encouraged to stick around for more, rather than to be in school. As difficult as it can be to turn down direct requests, sometimes giving your friendship and respect to locals can be the best gift of all. If you want to help, consider giving to a trustworthy charity, non-profit, or local school.
- **Tip housekeeping staff:** Many of the the staff cleaning hotel rooms are on the bottom of the economic pyramid. We suggest leaving a daily tip of \$3-4 USD in the local currency. This is an easy way to ensure some of your money reaches the hands that need it the most. It is advisable to do this each day because housekeeping staff may change each day.

Smart Traveler Tip!

In travel, especially in the developing world, things happen. Expect the unexpected! Keep an open mind, be flexible, and enjoy the moment. Sometimes the best memories come out of the unplanned.