LEBANON & JORDAN: 
FROM CASTLES TO CARAVANS 
OCTOBER 31-NOVEMBER 11, 2019

Enjoy a rare opportunity to explore the crossroads of the Orient and the Occident and visit splendid historical sites representing a vast range of civilizations. Explore Byblos, the world's oldest continuously inhabited site, and Baalbek, the ancient Phoenician city where Roman columns tower over the Bekaa Valley. Fly into Jordan’s cosmopolitan capital city, Amman, and visit its restored amphitheater. Discover Petra, a city built over 2,000 years ago by the Nabateans, where temples and tombs are carved into pink sandstone cliffs. Stop off of King’s Highway along the way at Mt. Nebo, where Moses is said to be buried.

GROUP SIZE: 10-29 guests

PRICING: $7,595 per person, double occupancy / $1,565 per person, single supplement

STUDY LEADER: Joseph A. Greene. Deputy Director and Curator of the Harvard Semitic Museum. Dr. Greene received his Ph.D. in archaeology in 1986 at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. He completed eight seasons of fieldwork in Carthage (Tunisia), directing the Carthage Survey from 1980 to 1983. He has been a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellow in Jordan, a Fulbright Fellow in Cyprus, and has directed excavations and surveys in both countries. In 1987–88 he directed the USAID Cultural Resource Management Project in Jordan and in 2001 served as a consultant to the Petra National Trust, a Jordanian NGO devoted to the preservation of the archaeological site of Petra. He has been editor of the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR) Archaeological Reports Series (2003–2008) and of the ASOR Annual (2009–2014).

His research interests focus on archaeological survey and landscape archaeology of the Mediterranean/Middle East region with emphasis on the first millennium B.C./A.D., on cultural resource management in the Mediterranean/Middle East region, and on museums and the history of museums in Mediterranean and Middle Eastern countries. Since the 1980s, he has led tours in the Eastern and Western Mediterranean, most recently to Lebanon, Syria and Jordan in 2011 and to Turkey and Greece in 2013. In 2014–2015 he was a member of a Harvard-based consulting museum group working in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 31
DEPART U.S.
Depart the U.S. on independent flights to Beirut, Lebanon.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1
ARRIVE BEIRUT
Upon arrival in Beirut, transfer to Sofitel Beirut.
Dinner is at the hotel this evening.
Overnight: Sofitel Beirut (D)

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2
BEIRUT
Spend the day exploring the city. Begin with an introduction to Solidere, the private construction company responsible for the rebuilding of Beirut. In clearing its wreckage, Beirut is discovering, excavating, and restoring a number of long-buried vestiges of the past. Your tour this morning will allow you to learn more about what is being unearthed.
Lunch today is at the Tawlet Souk al Tayeb.
In the afternoon, visit the Archaeological Museum of Beirut whose collection covers the whole of antiquity and is considered one of the richest museums in the Middle East. Among its many treasures is the 13th-century BC tomb of King Ahiram discovered in Byblos. This sarcophagus of Ahiram’s bears one of the earliest alphabetical inscriptions. Other famous pieces in the collection include golden diadems from the royal tombs in Byblos, richly covered marble sarcophagi from Tyre and an enormous altar from the temples of Eshmoun near Sidon.
Enjoy a welcome dinner this evening.
Overnight: Sofitel Beirut (B, L, D)

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3
BEIRUT
This morning, drive south to Beiteddine, which is situated on a massive rocky spur overlooking a cascade of carefully-tended terraces.
Walk through the impressive anthropological collection of Beiteddine and enjoy the rich collection of Byzantine mosaics, which are exhibited in the stables of the palaces below the royal quarters.
Enjoy lunch at the beautiful town of Deir El Qamar.
After lunch return to Beirut and visit the Nicolas Sursock Museum, located in a 100-year-old private villa dedicated to works of contemporary Lebanese artists and permanent collections of modern art, Japanese engravings and Islamic art.
Overnight: Sofitel Beirut (B, L, D)

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 4
BEIRUT
After breakfast, drive north to Byblos, which is claimed to have been inhabited longer than any other town on earth. Upon arrival begin exploring the city where seven different civilizations have raised their buildings, accumulated their wealth, and buried their dead.
Today you will cover much of Byblos’ history, which began over seven thousand years ago. Your route begins in reverse chronological order at the Crusader Castle. The Crusaders were the last of the great builders in Byblos, and their castle, still impressively intact, forms the entranceway to the rest of the ruins. The view from the roof of the castle is superb - a sweeping panorama of 7,000 years of history, sandwiched between the sea and the mountains.
Continue on through the remains of the densely packed streets and houses of the Phoenician town where, from about 4,000 BC, the Phoenicians lived, worked and traded.
After lunch at the Fishing Club of Pepe Abed, return to Beirut where a special dinner has been planned at a charming French restaurant called “Le Relais de L’Entrecote Restaurant.”

Overnight: Sofitel Beirut (B, L, D)

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5
BEIRUT

Depart early and spend the day exploring the beautiful interior of Lebanon.

Stop first in Baalbek where the mountainous backdrop is all that can dwarf the size of this impressive archaeological site.

The Phoenicians were the first to build temples at Baalbek, which was on their caravan route from Tyre to Damascus and Palmyra. When the Christians arrived in the 4th century they objected to the worship of some gods and ordered the demolition of part of the main courtyard and the facade of the Temple of Jupiter and to build a basilica in honor of St. Barbara there. It was not until the 16th century that Baalbek was rediscovered by western travelers. A visit by Kaiser Wilhelm in 1898 prompted the beginning of excavations which have been taking place, on and off, ever since.

Enjoy lunch at a family owned restaurant before exploring the monasteries and chapels on the floor of the Qadisha Valle. After lunch drive to Bcharre to visit the cedar trees, which are the national symbol of Lebanon, where about ten trees over 1,000 years old still survive.

Visit the town of Bcharre, which is the birthplace of Khalil Gibran who was born here in 1883 and buried here in 1931. Visit the small museum adjoining his tomb which contains several original manuscripts, part of Gibran’s personal library, and a large collection of his paintings and drawings.

Visit the largest monastery in the valley, Deir Mar Antonis Qozhaya or the Monastery of St. Anthony’s, which was founded in the 11th century and has been continually in use since. There is a small museum housing a collection of religious and ethnographic objects and a printing press which pays homage to the fact that the first-known printing press in the Middle East was established here in the 16th century.

Return to Beirut. Dinner is at leisure.

Overnight: Sofitel Beirut (B, L)
Continue to a briefing by Sa’eda Kilani, head of the Arab Archives Institute, which works on media/press freedoms and human rights, including women’s issues. Ms. Kilani is also the Middle East representative for ARTICLE 19, a London-based human rights organization with a specific mandate and focus on the defense and promotion of freedom of expression and freedom of information worldwide.

Drive north to visit the site of Jerash, a remarkably well-preserved Roman provincial city. Prosperous and cultured, its inhabitants spent lavishly on their city, erecting buildings in a distinctive “oriental baroque” style. Enjoy a locally prepared lunch before exploring Jerash.

Return back to Amman late afternoon.

Enjoy dinner this evening with members of the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature at the Wild Jordan Center to learn more about their support of sustainable tourism projects. Prior to dinner there will be a brief presentation.

Overnight: InterContinental Amman (B, L, D)

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8
PETRA

Depart the hotel, stopping first at Mt. Nebo, where Moses is said to be buried. On a clear day it is possible to see the Dead Sea and the spires of the churches in Jerusalem. A group of Franciscan monks bought the site in the 1930s and have excavated the ruins of a church and monastery. Although little remains of the buildings that housed them, there are a number of spectacular mosaics.

Continue on to Madaba. Stop at a small craft center where men and women with special needs create replicas of well-known mosaics.

Visit the Madaba Archaeological Park and view the famous 6th-century map of Palestine, which is in the form of a mosaic. Although the map is now far from complete, many features can still be made out including the Nile River, the Dead Sea, and the map of Jerusalem showing the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Pay a special visit to the King’s Academy. Founded in 2006 by His Majesty King Abdullah II and modeled after Deerfield Academy in Massachusetts (which the king attended), this exclusive boarding school provides a unique, residential-based educational experience for high-school girls and boys. Enjoy a campus tour and lunch with some of the faculty and students.

After lunch and en route to Petra, stop at the relatively unvisited site of Um Rassas, located 30 kilometers southeast of Madaba. The Roman fortress, originally a Nabatean city, is a square walled town with very high walls supported by towers. Excavations here have uncovered some of the finest Byzantine church mosaics in the Middle East, including a large carpet depicting old and new Testament cities on both the east and west banks of the Jordan River. Another feature at Um Rassas’ walled settlement is a 15-meter Byzantine tower used by early Christian monks seeking solitude. Known in Arabic as Mayfa’ah this site is believed to be the place where the prophet Muhammad had his encounter as a child with the Christian monk Bahira. It is also where the Meccan Hanif Zeid bin ‘Amr heard the prediction that there would arise a great prophet in Mecca.

Upon arrival transfer to the Petra Movenpick Hotel.

Dinner at the hotel this evening.

Overnight: Petra Movenpick Hotel (B, L, D)

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9
PETRA

Spend the entire day at the site of Petra. Start by exploring the ruins, including the Amphitheater, the Royal Tombs, and the Temple of the Winged Lions.

Enjoy lunch on the site of Petra where you will be joined by staff from the Petra National Trust.

After lunch, continue exploring with a visit to the museum as well as a chance to hike to the Deir Plateau where there are wonderful views. Admire the great façade of the Deir which is
indeed, as Edward Lear so aptly wrote “a fit crown to the marvels of the ascent”.

Enjoy dinner tonight at Petra Kitchen. The group will be taught how to cook traditional food before dinner and then enjoy a chance to taste your cooking.

Overnight: Petra Movenpick Hotel (B, L, D)

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10
WADI RUM / DEAD SEA

Rise early this morning to drive to Wadi Rum where huge pillars of sandstone rock rise from the sandy desert floor, towering to heights of over 1,500 meters. Enjoy a one-hour jeep ride into this landscape made famous as the setting of David Lean’s epic film Lawrence of Arabia.

The dramatic combination of massive rocks and canyons, sandstone over basalt, and granite weathered into weird shapes and colors surrounded by desert sands, rivals Petra in its beauty.

Head north to the village of Dana, an enchanting honeycomb of tightly-knit roofs surrounded by fertile orchards. Before heading down the Wadi, explore a number of terraced gardens and enjoy a chance to meet local farmers, visit a traditional bakery and Dana’s Jam Factory.

After lunch continue on to the Kempinski Hotel Ishtar. The rooms here are set amidst gardens dotted with lagoons and waterfalls.

In the late afternoon experience the Dead Sea, the lowest place on the earth’s surface. Though many large wadi systems empty their silty floodwaters from the surrounding mountains here, there is no outlet for the water. Combined with hot air temperatures, this produces a high rate of evaporation—almost 10 million tons of water per day. The evaporation leaves a mixture of salts and minerals close to saturation point, giving the sea its glutinous surface.

Enjoy a special farewell dinner this evening.

Overnight: Kempinski Hotel Ishtar (B, L, D)

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 11
RETURN HOME

This morning, transfer to the airport to catch your independent flights home (B).