

At the entrance to the site there are numerous shops and stalls selling drinks, headgear and other items. There are many Indiana Jones souvenirs here as well due to the "Temple of Doom" movie being shot here. [A tip is to ensure that you have at least 1 drink each, as it is over a kilometer before you get to another drinks vendor]

We'd recommend that you dress for the occasion appropriately, since you will be in scorching sunlight at times, walking over uneven paths for over 10 kilometers, and if you visit the 3 high monuments you could tackle over 2,000 steps. Comfortable walking shoes and light coloured loose fitting clothing made of cotton are the order of the day. We saw some people in real distress wearing high heeled shoes, open backed vests and sported uncovered heads, so be properly prepared to ensure you enjoy this 7th wonder of the world.

If all of that walking isn't "your cup of tea" there are horses, ponies and carts available to hire at the entrance, these will take you the first 2 km's of your journey and drop you off at the Treasury.



As we walked through the early stages of the site we started to realise just how large this city once was. As you pass the main landmarks on the way through the city there are information boards describing the name, use and time period for each item. There are 2 buildings here that are synonymous with Petra; they are The Treasury (Al-Khazneh) and The Monastery (Ad-Deir).

The first of these pictured above left is the Treasury. After walking down the initial footpath you turn left and start downhill where the footpath has been carved out from between the sheer rock face. As you turn a slight left hand bend after approximately 1.4 km you see the rocks part and the fascia of the treasury simply springs into view in the most breathtaking of ways.

Souvenir and refreshment stalls are evenly spread throughout the city from here on in, including several restaurants should you wish to break up your walk with a long rest and a nice lunch. Buildings that remain in superb condition simply surround you as you continue your journey through the valley.

Other highlights include the Amphitheatre, pictured opposite, the Colonnaded Street pictured below right and the hidden Temple of Winged Lions.

The second of the iconic buildings is the Monastery. This is an amazing building in its own right, but is breathtaking when you take into consideration that it was built so high up in the mountains.

The walk up to the Monastery seemed extremely long with over 700 steps to climb but is well worth the walk, just to know that you have accomplished it without the use of a donkey or any other means is worth every ache and pain that you know will hit you the next day. Make sure that you look at the exhibits on your way back out of the city, as the changing daylight really does change the appearance of the buildings.

In total we spent over 6 ½ hours walking through this real life history book and it was worth every step.

After this epic walk some people will not feel up to the long drive back to the Dead Sea, but you need not worry as Petra town has plenty of hotels to suit all budgets including the Crowne Plaza and the Movenpick.

After we drove back we enjoyed another relaxing dinner at the hotel, before retiring to our comfortable room.

The following day was spent relaxing at the infinity pool, which overlooks Israel. We were really surprised at how close the two countries are together, not realizing how narrow the Dead Sea was.

The Dead Sea resorts are popular due to the fabled properties contained in the sea water and contents of the "sea bed mud", whose salts and crystals help treat numerous skin conditions.

The sensation of floating in the Dead Sea is surreal and is one not to be missed. After you have cleansed yourself in the sea there are buckets of the therapeutic mud on the shoreline for you to cover yourself in. After letting the mud dry you just shower it off at one of the nearby showers.

The Zara spa has a world renowned reputation for treating a variety of skin conditions and we met people from all over the world who were returning to the hotel for repeat treatments.

After watching the sunset one last time, we enjoyed another great meal before retiring for our last night.

The following morning we returned to the airport for our return journey back home to Riyadh.

[A final tip here is to ensure that you leave plenty of time for returning your hire car, especially in the morning as the booking office staff also handle all vehicle returns and don't know the meaning of the word hurry.]