



Palestine - Adventure in the footsteps of Abraham

May 10 - 15, 2018

Hiking | Cycling | Jeep touring | Cultural Touring

Masar Ibrahim Al-Khalil is Palestine's long distance cultural walking route. Extending 330 km from the village of Rummana in the northwest of Jenin to Beit Mirsim southwest of Al-Haram al-Ibrahimi (Ibrahimi Mosque) in Hebron. The route passes through more than fifty cities and villages where travelers can experience the legendary Palestinian hospitality.

The route is part of the longer Abraham Trail that connects the places where the prophet lived, spread over 1,200 kilometers beginning in from the Mesopotamian city of Harran in southern Turkey to Abraham's tomb in Hebron (al-Khalil).

Over 5 days, travelers will experience sections of this route (Masar Ibrahim), hiking and biking from the green hills of the northern West Bank passing through the desert south of Jericho to the holy city of Jerusalem. Actively traveling through the varied landscapes, biodiverse areas, archaeological remains, religious sites, and modern day lively villages, travelers experience rich Palestinian culture and heritage.

Palestinians, like their neighboring Arabs, are known for their welcoming warmth and friendliness, important values associated with Abraham (Ibrahim). There is plenty of opportunity to have valuable encounters with local communities who share the generosity of their ancestors along the way, often over a meal of delicious Palestinian cuisine. The food boasts a range of vibrant and flavorful dishes, sharing culinary traits with Middle Eastern and East Mediterranean regions.

Highlights:

- Experience Palestine from a different perspective – insights that go beyond the usual headlines
- Walk and bike in the footsteps of Abraham
- Witness history in Sebastiya, Jericho, Bethlehem, Jerusalem
- [Map of the route](#)





ITINERARY

Day 1 - May 10 :

Our trip begins today with a 9:00am pick-up at the Kempinski Ishtar Hotel Dead Sea, the location on AdventureNEXT Near East. We transfer to the Jordan/Palestine border at Allenby Bridge which crosses over the Jordan River. After border formalities we continue to Sebastiya, the ancient city later named Sebaste in honor of the Roman Emperor and sponsor of the city's renovation. After checking into our guesthouse, we visit the old city, the archeological remains, the visitors center, and the recently opened museum. The evening we have dinner followed by a Dabke (traditional Palestinian dance) demonstration by a local cultural group. *Lunch and dinner included.*

Accommodation name: Sebastiya Guesthouse (double occupancy)



Day 2 - May 11:

After the breakfast in the guesthouse, we take a hike through the green hills surrounding Sebastiya. The trail wanders along dirt roads through lemon orchards before ascending to the shrine of Sheikh Shaleh, originally a fortress strategically located to monitor traffic through the region.

Leaving the shrine, the path continues along a ridgeline through highland fields and farms in the direction of Mt. Ebal, the biblical "mountain of curses," opposite Mt. Gerizim, the "mountain of



blessings.” Before reaching Mt. Ebal, the trail descends into the city of Nablus, nestled in a deep valley between Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim. Settled before the Roman era, Nablus is located on an important trade route between Damascus and Jerusalem.

A visit to Nablus is not complete without trying the famous Nubulsi kunafe, the sticky pastry made of gooey sweet cheese sandwiched between layers of shredded pastry. After a short city tour through its stunningly beautiful Old City that rivals Jerusalem's, we visit the Taybeh brewery, the first microbrewery in the Middle East. Upon arrival at our home for the night in Kufr Malek, we enjoy a delicious meal prepared by the local women. *All meals included.*

Dinner: Homestay Kufr Malek

Accommodation: Taybeh hotel

Hiking: Distance: 12.10km (7.5 miles); **Time:** 3 hours; **Elevation Gain:** 623m **Elevation Loss:** 512m



Day 3 - May 12:

After a delicious breakfast prepared by the homestay owners, we begin our hike at Ain Samia. We pass the fields of zatar (a Middle Eastern herb) before following a path out of the valley bottom past the remains of an old Byzantine era church. After crossing a ridge, the path drops down into Wadi al-'Auja, a deep, rugged wadi that runs to Ein al-'Auja (Al-'Auja Spring) in the Jordan Valley. Wadi



Al-'Auja is home to an impressive array of plant life as it descends from the higher elevations of the Palestinian highlands to a point around 50m below sea level at Ein al-'Auja, a popular, local picnic spot. From Ein Al-'Auja, the trail follows the wadi and ancient Roman aqueducts, used divert water from Ein al-'Auja to Jericho. Our hike ends at the Al-'Auja Bedouin community, where we enjoy lunch. After lunch, we head to Jericho to discover one of the oldest cities in the world by bicycle. Jericho, with its calm atmosphere and rich heritage, is a true oasis. Highlights include the Mount of Temptation, Tell es-Sultan, and the winter palaces of Hisham and Herod the Great. A well-deserved Bedouin meal awaits the group at the Sea Level Community. The Bedouin leader and great storyteller, Jameel, lightens the evening with Bedouin legends and stories under a star-filled sky. *All meals included.*

Accommodation name: Sea Level Community Bedouin Tent

Hiking: **Distance:** 10.3km **Time:** 5 hours **Elevation Gain:** 124m **Elevation Loss:** 646M

Biking: **Distance:** 10km **Time:** 2-3 hours



Day 4 - May 13:

Today the trip continues with a relatively short hike through the Jerusalem desert. The winding trail takes us down into the Kidron Valley, full of various in size caves that in the Byzantine times were inhabited by monks. The trail ends at the spectacular Mar Saba Monastery, with few Byzantine wilderness monasteries matching its serenity and beauty. The cluster was named after Saint Saba (439-532 AD), who settled in a cave opposite the site to live in complete seclusion. from the



monastery, we transfer to Bethlehem. Highlights include sites such as the Church of the Nativity, the Milk Grotto, and the Shepherds Fields. *All meals included.*

Accommodation: Hotel in Bethlehem

Hiking: Distance: 8.4km **Time:** 4-5 hours **Elevation Gain:**460m **Elevation Loss:**270.



Day 5 - May 14:

This morning we transfer to the Bedouin community of 'Arab ar-Rashayida where jeeps take us on a drive through the desert to a viewpoint overlooking the Dead Sea. Lunch is served in the Bedouin tent of Abu Ismael. The second part of the day we tour Jerusalem, a holy city for three of the world's great religions - Islam, Judaism, and Christianity - which is also one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. We visit many important religious sites including the Dome of the Rock(Qubbat As-Sakhra) which is the third holiest shrine for Muslims, Al Aqsa Mosque known as Al Haram Ash-sharif, Mount of Olives, as well as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, containing the most holy sites of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. *All meals included.*

Accommodation: Hotel in Jerusalem



Day 6 - May 15: Transfer from Jerusalem to Amman, Jordan

After breakfast, we transfer to the Amman airport, Jordan for departing flights.



Accommodation: A mix of homestays in villages, locally owned guesthouses, a bedouin tent, and hotels in the larger towns. Expect double occupancy. Single occupancy may be provided based on availability.

Group size: 4-16

Inclusions:

- Transportation starting from the Dead Sea Hotel area in Jordan on Day 1 to the Amman airport on Day 6
- 5 nights accommodation as noted on itinerary
- Meals from lunch on day 1 through breakfast on day 6.
- English Speaking guide
- All activities as described
- Entrance Fees to all included sites

Exclusions:

- International airfare to/from Amman, Jordan
- Departure Taxes (Israel US ~\$45; Jordan ~US \$15)
- Travel Insurance
- Meals not specified above
- Beverages and personal expenses
- Tips and gratuities



Difficulty Rating: Moderate (3) -Good physical fitness required; ~4-6 hours activity/day on hiking days - Non-hiking days are easy active (level 2)

Weather

May is the end of spring in Palestine with warm days (highs in 80s to 90°F/32°C) and cool nights (upper 60sF/20°C).

Packing List:

Layering is key to remaining comfortable while on an active trip. To achieve maximum comfort with minimum weight, you need versatile layers that mix and match to create the right amount of ventilation, insulation, and weather protection. **Adequate sun protection is important!**

Palestine is a conservative country. Therefore, modest dress is preferable in the towns and cities as well as in rural area when interacting with Bedouins and other local people. Clothes should be loose fitting, shoulders kept covered, and full-length trousers/skirts are recommended.

<p>Luggage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium to large duffle or rolling soft sided luggage • Packing cubes/stuff sacks • Day pack (20L) – large enough to carry water, sunscreen, lunch, etc for the day <p>Clothing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Casual clothing/shoes for travel and city wear (lightweight, easily washable) • Water/wind proof jacket (lightweight) • Fleece/softshell jacket (cool evenings) • T-shirts • Long sleeve shirt (sun protection) • Hiking pants or capris • Underwear/sports bra • Sleepwear • Sun hat • Buff – sun, sand protection <p>Footwear:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lightweight hiking shoes (broken-in) • Hiking socks, synthetic or wool 	<p>Assorted Personal Items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water bottles/hydration bladder (should carry at least 3 liters while hiking) • Sunscreen (30 SPF) and lip balm with SPF • Sunglasses with UV filter • Personal hygiene items (toothpaste, toothbrush, etc) • Personal first aid kit, medications, blister kit • Bandana • Camera, memory cards, & battery • Charging devices for mobile phones and electrical devices • Insect repellent • Toilet Kit: Toilet paper, Ziplock bags (at least one for clean TP, one for dirty TP), wet wipes, hand sanitizer (You must pack out all toilet paper of out the wilderness) • Optional <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Earplugs and night-mask ◦ Binoculars ◦ E-book reader ◦ Collapsible trekking poles
--	--