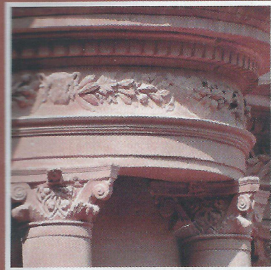
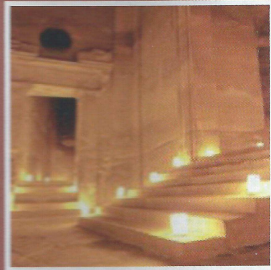
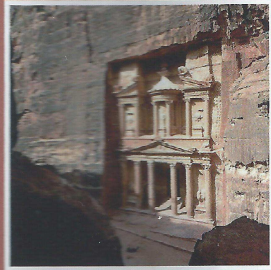
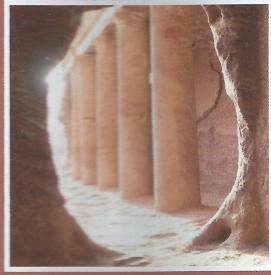


History

The Nabataeans, one of the most gifted people in history, were ancient Arab tribes who originally came from the Arabian Peninsula, more than 2200 years ago, and settled in southern Jordan. Before arriving in southern Jordan, they had lived for a considerable time in north-western Arabia, a strategic area that lay on the ancient Arabian trade routes linking China and India to the Mediterranean coastal cities and their ports. While in north-western Arabia, the Nabataeans achieved a certain degree of sedentarization and came under the influence of major foreign cultures, due to the fact that they were engaged in the caravaning business. This activity was heightened by the time they extended their area of influence to southern Jordan and Hauran. They became the undisputed masters of the region's trade routes, levying tolls, protecting caravans laden with Arabian frankincense and myrrh, Indian spices and silks, African ivory and animal hides.

Profits from the caravaning business enabled them to establish and organize a powerful kingdom that stretched to Damascus and included parts of the Sinai and Negev deserts, effectively ruling the greater part of Arabia. This was no easy task when we consider that the whole region was under the



domination of the rival Greek factions, the Hasmonaeans and later the Romans. They fought vicious wars or resorted to cunning diplomacy to preserve their independence and civilization, but the all too powerful Roman Empire was not willing to tolerate a strong native kingdom, and the inevitable had to happen, in 106 AD, as the Nabataean kingdom was annexed to the Roman Empire. But even though, Petra and the Nabataean civilization managed to flourish and prosper for many more years, until the sources of its riches decreased due to such factors as the shift in trade routes and lesser demand for frankincense as Christianity replaced pagan religions. Eventually, the glorious Nabataean achievements and Petra fell to ruins.

The Nabataeans were clever and practical people, they never believed in national exclusiveness, were open to outside cultural influences, absorbed them and added to them their own native touch so that the final outcome of this interaction was a wonderful cultural melting pot. A short walk down Petra attests to this. Look at any carved monument and you will discern classical (Graeco-Roman), Egyptian, Mesopotamian and local styles, all fused into one unified artwork. Petra reeks of foreign and local cultural influences. The city was throbbing with life, crisscrossed by paved roads, agricultural terraces, water harvesting systems, artwork and temples, not to mention theatres. After reaching its historical peak though, Petra was gradually abandoned and after the 14th century it was completely lost to the West, until a Swiss traveler named Johann Ludwing Burckhardt rediscovered it in 1812.

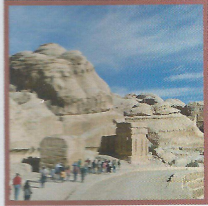


Four hours drive from Amman and you are at the gate of Petra; to explore it would be an unforgettable experience. Petra is a huge archaeological site and most tourist simply do not have the time to cover it. Three days are needed for honest exploratory coverage. Here are the most important attractions of this ancient city:

Obelisk Tomb & Bab As-Siq Triclinium **2**

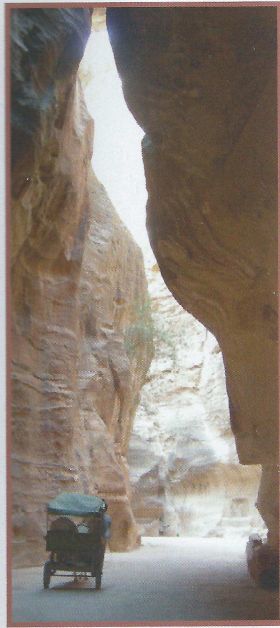


A beautiful monument and a perfect example of the artistic intermarriage of styles between East and West. The obelisk is obviously an Egyptian influence; the niche between the obelisks is a Graeco-Roman influence. The triclinium is a chamber with three benches, the purpose of which, being Nabataean, was the calibration of the sacred feasts, which took place every year in honour of the dead.

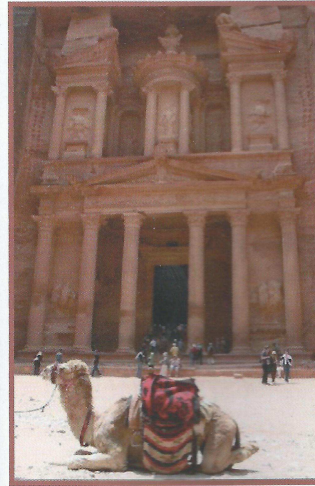


As-Siq **6**

The ancient main entrance to Petra. An impressive 1200 m long, deep and narrow gorge of stunning natural beauty. The Siq is hemmed in by cliffs soaring up to 80 meters. Suffice it to say that passing through it, one gets to see all the typical Petraean features, bizarre-looking geological formations, colorful rocks, agricultural terraces, water channels cut into the cliffs, dams, and votive-niches carved into the rock.



Al-Khazneh (Treasury) **7**



Just when you think you have seen enough dazzling sights in the Siq, emerging from it you suddenly come face to face with Al-Khazneh... the pride and joy of Petra and the most beautiful monument there.

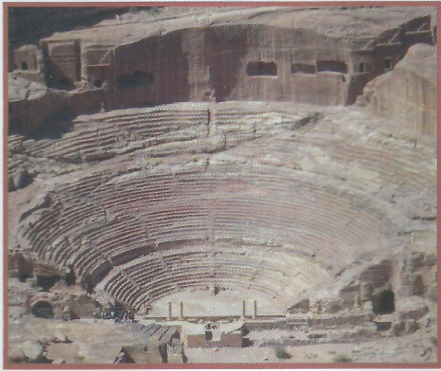
The architectural style of it was quite unique in the ancient world. Main inspiration was Hellenistic, Alexandrian Hellenistic, plus that unique encompassing Nabataean artistic touch. On-looking tourists usually feel dwarfed by the huge size of the façade (30 m wide and 43 m high). It is truly breathtaking, so much so that no amount of descriptive prose does it justice, it is better-experienced first-hand. It was carved in the 1st century BC as a tomb of an important Nabataean king; some scholars believe it was later used as temple. The elaborately carved façade represents the Nabataean engineering genius.

High Place of Sacrifice **31**

Accessible after a hard but enjoyable mountain climb during which the tourists climb up flights of steps cut into the rock. Once you have reached the top, you will be rewarded with the spectacular view of Petra down below. The High Place, which is well preserved, was the venue for important religious ceremonies honouring Nabataean gods. It was perhaps also used for funeral rites.



Street of façades & the Theatre 9,10



East of Al-Khazneh and the adjacent Outer Siq, we come to the street of Façades, rows of Nabataean tombs with intricate carvings.

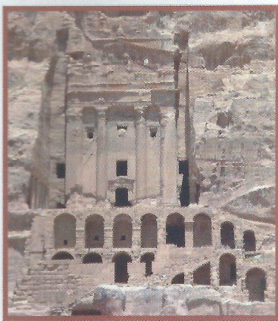
The theatre looks Roman but was executed by the Nabataeans in the 1st century AD, as the shadow of Roman influence hung over the Near East. It is carved into solid rock except towards the front on either side, where part of it was built freestanding. Initially it could seat 3000 people, but was later extended to finally hold about 7000.

Royal Tombs 11 - 15

The impressive Royal Tombs, before erosion took its toll on them, once rivaled Al-Khazneh in beauty and grandeur, carved to house the tombs of Nabataean dignitaries.

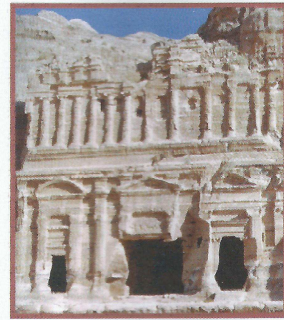
- Urn Tomb 11

The largest of the Royal Tombs, its immense courtyard and main chamber, 17 x 18.9 m in size, are imposing. Believed to have been carved around 70 AD, it was altered in the mid-fifth century as it was reconsecrated to serve as a Byzantine church. Above the doorway are three chambers. A stone presumed to be a depiction of the man buried inside blocks the central chamber.

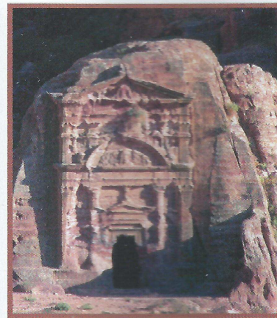


- Palace Tomb 14

An exquisite carved monument has the appearance of a palace, hence the name. Badly eroded yet it still looks magnificent, composed of three levels, richly decorated with columns and pillars.



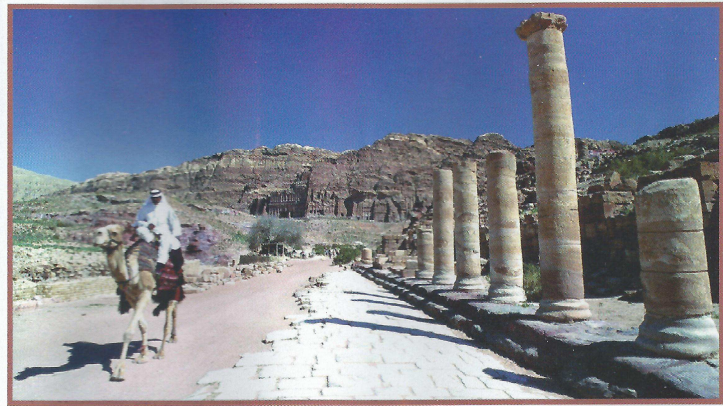
- Sextius Florentinus Tomb 15



The Latin inscription over the doorway makes it the only tomb in Petra we know for sure who it was built for. Sextius was the Roman governor of the province of Arabia and, as the inscription tells us, wished to be buried in Petra. His elaborate tomb was carved around 126-130 AD.

Colonnaded Street 19

A beautiful colonnaded street, which led through the city centre, flanked by temples, public buildings and shops. A nymphaeum once adorned the street, the marble pavement still visible today.

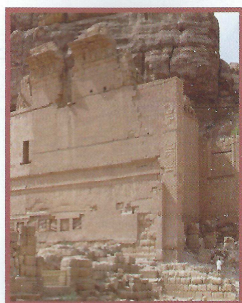


mountains; it is a secluded site of steep rocky slopes, towering craggy mountain tops and high cliffs, into which most of the celebrated tombs, façades, theatres and stairways are carved... Nature and architecture concur into conferring a mythical aura to the site.

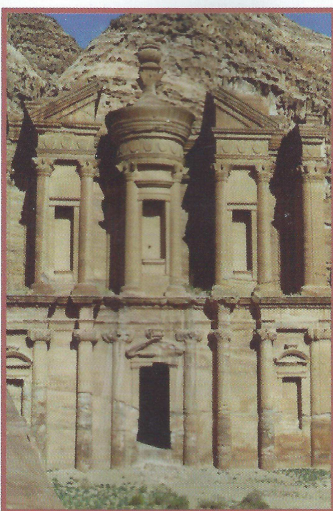
Most people, when asked, will tell you that Petra is an ancient city carved into solid rock by the Nabataeans, whose capital it became. This is not good enough. To fully appreciate the site we must know something about its builder.

Qasr al-Bint 22

Probably the main temple of the Nabataean capital, it is the only freestanding building in Petra to have survived centuries of earthquakes and floods. Its solid-looking silhouette dominates a large paved holy precinct (Greek: temenos), which was open to common worshippers, while the temple itself and the altar in front of it were the realm of the priests.



Ad-Deir (Monastery) 34



A flight of 800 stairs cut into the rock takes you up the mountain of Ad-Deir, marvelous mountain scenes along the way up. And when you reach the top you will encounter Petra's second most famed attraction... Ad-Deir. Huge in size yet beautifully awesome. The overall design resembles that of Khazneh, but the architectural embellishment is simplified.

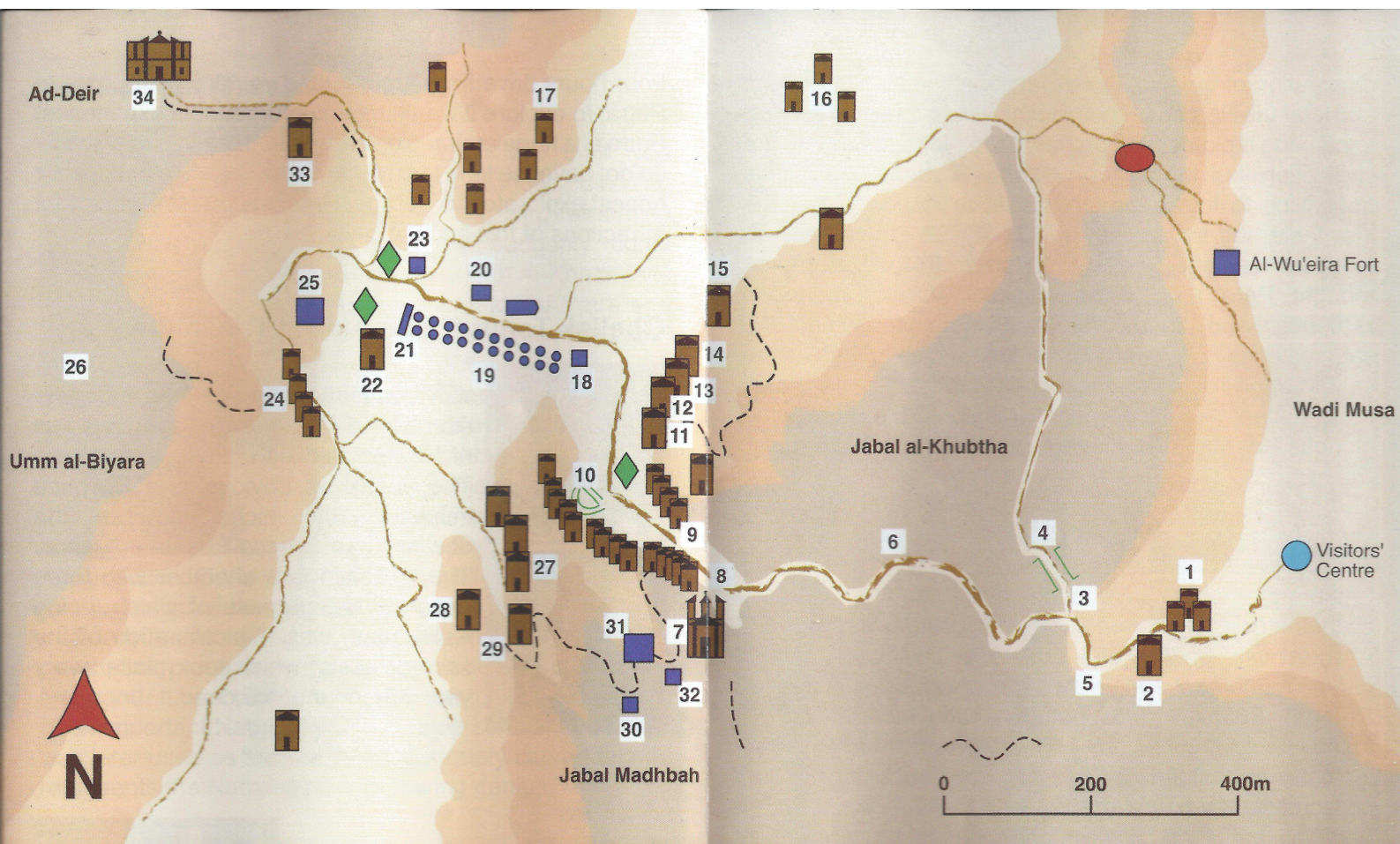
Either tomb, temple or both – the Deir used to be an important pilgrimage site, the way up the mountain serving as processional route and the open area in front of the monument as gathering place. Later, in Byzantine time, it was probably used as a church.

Where to eat & stay

Petra boasts a number of hotels to suit every taste and budget. Advance reservation is recommended for all.

★★★★★	Tel.(03)	Fax(03)
Grand View	2156871	2156984
Mövenpick Resort Petra	2157111	2157112
Nabataean Castle	2157201	2157209
Petra Marriott	2156407	2156407
Sofital Petra Taybet Zaman	2150111	2150101
★★★★★		
Growne Plaza Resort	2156266	2156977
Golden Tulip Kingsway	2156799	2156796
Petra Panorama	2157398	2157389
★★★★		
Edom	2156995	2156994
Petra Palace	2156723	2156724
Petra Rest House	2156266	2156977
Silk Road	2157222	2157244
Pizza Hut	5512620	











Map Legend

1. Djinn Blocks
2. Obelisk Tomb & Bab as-Siq Triclinium
3. Dam
4. Al-Muthlim Tuunnel
5. Al-Madras
6. As-Siq
7. Al-Khazneh (Treasury)
8. The Outer Siq
9. Street of Facades
10. Theatre
11. Urn Tomb
12. Silk Tomb
13. Corinthian Tomb

14. Palace Tomb
15. Sextius Florentinus Tomb
16. Mughar an-Nasara
17. Turkmaniyya Tomb
18. Nymphaeum
19. The Colonnaded Street
20. Temple of Winged Lions
21. Temenos Gate
22. Qasr al-Bint
23. Museum
24. Columbarium
25. Al-Habis Fortress
26. Umm al-Biyara
27. Triclinium
28. Roman Soldier's Tomb
29. Garden Temple Complex

30. Lion Monument
31. High Place of Sacrifice
32. The two Obelisks
33. Lion Triclinium
34. Ad-Deir (Monastery)

-  Aqueduct/Tunnel
-  Restrooms/Restaurant
-  Visitors Centre
-  Nabataean Tomb
-  Steps
-  Footpath