The Jordan Pass deep dive: what it covers, when it pays off, and how the visa waiver works

The combined ticket that bundles the visa fee with entry to Petra, Wadi Rum, Jerash, the Citadel, and 40+ other sites — when it actually saves money, and the small print about minimum stay.

Anas Hu · May 5, 2026

The Jordan Pass is the closest thing the country has to a national tourist passport. Buy it before you arrive (online, in JD or USD) and it bundles two things together: the entry visa fee that you'd otherwise pay at the airport, and admission to over forty sites across the country including Petra, Wadi Rum, Jerash, the Amman Citadel, Karak Castle, Ajloun, Umm Qais, Pella, and the Baptism Site. Three tiers vary by how many days of Petra entry you want. Used right, it saves significant money and the queue at the airport visa desk. Used wrong — if you don't stay long enough, or if you only visit one site — it costs more than paying à la carte.

Here's how to read it.

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1What the Pass is

The Jordan Pass is operated by the Ministry of Tourism & Antiquities. It's a digital ticket (QR code on your phone or a printout) that scans at site

entrances. It bundles a tourist visa cost with admission to most state-run heritage sites.[1] Notable inclusions:

- **Petra** (the big one — 1 to 3 days depending on tier)
- **Wadi Rum** Visitor Centre + protected area entry
- **Jerash, Ajloun Castle, Umm Qais, Pella** (the Decapolis sites)
- **The Amman Citadel + Roman Theatre**
- **Karak Castle, Shobak Castle**
- **Baptism Site at Bethany-Beyond-the-Jordan**
- **Madaba Archaeological Park** (the mosaic park; not the same as St. George's Church)
- **The Eastern Desert castles** (Qasr Amra, Qasr Kharana, Qasr Azraq)
- **Aqaba castle / fort**

2The three tiers

The three tiers — Wanderer, Explorer, Expert — differ only in how many days of Petra entry are bundled. All three include the same 40+ other sites. The base price varies by tier; check jordanpass.jo for current pricing in JD.

- **Wanderer.** 1 day at Petra. Best for travellers passing through Jordan briefly.
- **Explorer.** 2 days at Petra. The most-bought tier — gives time for both the main park and a high-place hike or Petra by Night.
- **Expert.** 3 days at Petra. For serious archaeology travellers who want time at the back-trails (Al-Madras, Wadi Sabra, the Monastery).

Petra by Night is **not** included in any tier — buy separately at the Visitor Centre.

3The visa waiver

The single most-valuable feature: **the Jordan Pass waives the tourist visa fee at the airport, but only if you stay at least 3 nights in Jordan.** Buy it before you arrive, present it at the immigration desk, and the visa fee is waived (the standard fee at airport visa-on-arrival is otherwise 40 JD). If you stay less than 3 nights, the airport will charge you the visa fee anyway, and your Pass becomes site-tickets-only.

The 3-night minimum is the rule. There's no exception for transit travellers.

> Three nights minimum or the visa-fee waiver doesn't trigger. The Pass is still good for site entry, but you'll pay the airport visa anyway.

4Does it pay off? The math

For most multi-site travellers staying ≥3 nights, yes. Run a quick comparison:

- **Pay à la carte.** Visa (40 JD) + Petra (~50 JD/day) + Wadi Rum (5 JD) + Citadel + Jerash + Karak + Ajloun (each ~3 JD). For a 5-day standard itinerary visiting 5–7 sites: roughly 110–130 JD per person.
- **Jordan Pass Explorer (2-day Petra) tier.** Typically saves 20–40 JD per person depending on how many sites you actually visit.
- **Where the Pass loses.** If you only visit Petra and one other site, the per-site costs alone add up to less than the Pass. Run the numbers for your actual itinerary.

5How to buy

- **Buy online before arrival.** Visit jordanpass.jo, select tier, pay (Visa/Mastercard/JD), receive QR code by email.
- **One per traveller.** Children under 12 enter Petra free regardless of Pass; adults each need their own.
- **Validity.** The Pass is valid for 2 weeks from first use. Plan your itinerary so you don't run out.
- **Save the QR code offline.** Screenshot it; you'll show it at sites without reliable phone signal (Wadi Rum, Pella).

> **For solo travellers**
>
> Almost always worth it. The Explorer tier (2-day Petra) is the sweet spot for an 8–10 day Jordan loop.

6Practical tips

- **Buy at least 7 days before arrival** for processing time on the visa-waiver registration.
- **Photo ID matches.** The Pass shows your name; the immigration desk checks that against your passport. Make sure they match exactly.
- **Don't lose your QR code.** Recover via email if you do, but the airport line will be slower if you can't show it on entry.
- **Skip Petra by Night separately.** The Pass doesn't cover it; buy at the Visitor Centre on the day.
- **Check current pricing** on jordanpass.jo before you go — the tiers' JD prices change.

References

1. Jordan Pass — official site

Verified by locals: TBD — this article will be reviewed by a Ministry of Tourism & Antiquities-affiliated guide before final publication. Drafted from the Jordan Pass official site and reader-traveller experience.