**2023 Global Adventure Trip Proposal Summary and Risk Assessment**

**Hike the Jordan Trail to Petra and Beyond - April 2-15, 2023 (tentative)**

Overview

Jordan, an Arab nation on the east bank of the Jordan River, is defined by ancient monuments, nature reserves and seaside resorts. It’s also home to the famed archaeological site of Petra, the Nabatean capital dating to around 300 B.C. During early April when we plan to go, wildflowers will be blooming in profusion and the weather will be mild, perfect for trekking!

This adventure consists of trekking for 9 days along some of the most interesting sections of the country’s new Jordan Trail, including hiking in the Grand Canyon of Jordan - Wadi Mujib, walking a ‘back door’ route into Petra, and walking up Jordan’s highest peak in the spectacular Wadi Rum. We will also have days set aside to tour historic Amman as well as some of the most interesting archaeological sites (including Jarash, Madaba, Mt Nebo, Petra and Wadi Rum), to swim or do an optional snorkel in the Red Sea, and to frolic in the Dead Sea! We will also include visits to two community based enterprises focused on building economic opportunities for the country’s women.

Hiking days will range from shorter 3-4 hour explorations around unique historical sites, to a hike deep in the Grand Canyon of Jordan Wadi Mujib (could involve walking in water at times), to hikes up to 12.5 miles and 4000 feet gain and descent along sections of the Jordan trail. Altitude on both segments remains under 800m (except the one optional peak climb up to 1854m (a bit over 6000’). No technical climbing or scrambling skills are required but good balance and sound joints are required due to very rocky, sometimes steep trails. Walkers will need to be fit hikers in order to walk extended distances on rugged uneven surfaces for multiple days in a row. The trails are not always well marked and water supplies can be obscure. Heat can be a factor so we will be concentrating our hiking in the morning even during this early season, and we will always be carrying extra water.

To ensure that we stay on planned and safe routes, avoid local hazards, and provide the group the greatest possible cultural and historical information, an experienced local outfitter will be used and a guide and driver will accompany us every day. If a participant becomes ill or otherwise does not want to go on the next walking section, they have the option to ride in the van to the next camp or lodging. Transport along the route is provided in comfortable private vans by professional drivers. We will be spending about half our nights at supported wilderness camps with our overnight gear transferred for us, so we will only need to carry daypacks.

On emergency plans for the trip: Jordan doesn’t have search and rescue helicopters per se - the civil defense department acts as a search and rescue team when needed, and in case of very serious accidents, they would use military helicopters to transfer injured people from the nearest road/helipad to the nearest hospital. As part of our outfitter’s emergency plan, injured people are transferred to the nearest road (by trucks or donkeys in some cases), and then transported to the nearest large hospital by car or ambulance (depending on the case and situation). There are many old roads that are used by Bedouins and farmers that are accessible by 4WD cars, and our guides are familiar with these roads and the nearest emergency exits in case of emergencies.

Jordan is a relative center of peace in a tumultuous region. Still, there are many sources of domestic strife and demonstrations can happen in different locations at any time. Our experienced local guide will remain vigilant for any issues as we move along, and we will avoid crowds and any threats. Jordan is at a CDC Level 1 at present for Covid-19 risk, and there are few remaining restrictions.

**Leader:** Cheryl Talbert

**Leader Qualifications:**

* Has backpacked for 30 years. Currently is chair of the Foothills Hiking and Backpacking committee and is an instructor for several hiking and backpacking courses including our new leader seminar. Has led dozens of domestic group backpacking trips from local overnights to extended trips in the Sierras, Cascades and Rocky Mountains for Mountaineers and private groups.
* Mountaineers member since 2009, and Global Adventures leader since 2012. Has led 16 successful Global Adventures with no injuries, including Peru, Nepal, northern, central and southern Patagonia, New Zealand, Portugal, Turkey, Iceland and the Alps and Dolomites. This will be her first trip in the Middle East.
* Current with Wilderness Navigation and Wilderness First Aid; Instructs for the Wilderness Navigation and Staying Found seminars and the regular New Hike-Backpack Leader Seminar.
* Managed a large business operation for 20 years with a strong emphasis on risk management and safety. Member of Mountaineers Risk Management Committee.

**Primary Measures to Minimize Risk of Participant Injuries and Risk to the Mountaineers**

* Rigorous screening of participants for fitness, experience with challenging hiking, and good balance/experience on rugged terrain.
* Each participant will be expected to submit a medical information form and certify that they have no pre-existing conditions that put them at elevated risk on this itinerary.
* Each participant will be asked to initial and sign a trip agreement indicating that they understand and accept the primary hazards and risks on the trip and the expectations of participants. This will include ensuring that they understand that they are responsible for their own safety. In addition, each participant will be required to sign a Release of Liability form and will be required to hold medical and emergency evacuation insurance sufficient to transport them back to the US if needed.
* The itinerary is designed with periodic low-intensity days and options for participants to skip some activities as well as to exit easily if needed due to illness or injury. Every night we will be at a supported camp where a driver would be able to take someone out if needed.
* A vehicle is at our disposal every day, and reasonably good public and private hospitals are located within 1.5 hours’ drive all along our route.
* The leader will provide in-depth pre trip communications to participants with conditioning and with planning of gear and logistics in advance of the trip, and attentive support to the group during the trip including daily briefings on the day’s trek and hazards to watch out for, keeping the group together and under observation throughout our walks, and regular check-ins with each participant multiple times a day to ensure that any issues are caught and addressed before they get serious.
* The leader will prepare and follow a safety and emergency response plan including daily contact info for emergency services for the group and info on where we will be and how we can be contacted by our designated emergency contact people at home. A primary contact will be designated at home who we will contact on an agreed interval and who will be instructed to follow up if they don’t hear from us.
* Professional, experienced local guides will be hired for the entire route provided by an outfitter with decades of experience leading hiking groups in Jordan. The outfitter will be within phone contact of the driver and guide at all times and will provide administrative and logistics support to the group all through the trip.
* The group will carry a satellite communicator and our guide will be able to connect with the outfitter’s office and other services by cell phone throughout the trip.
* AT ANY TIME, if the route, weather or other conditions become dangerous, we will turn around and exit or find a safer alternative route.