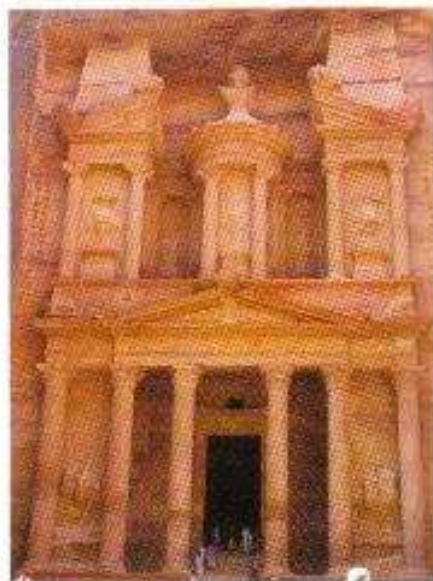
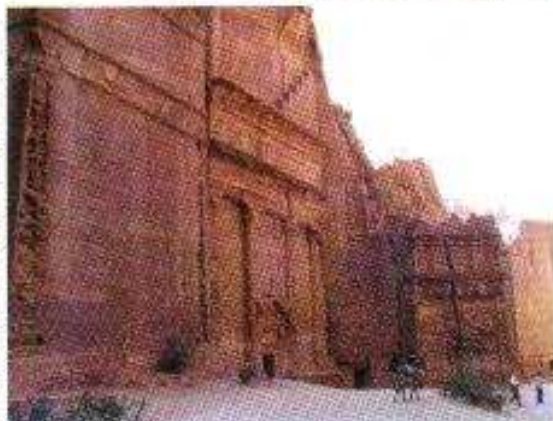


J O R D A N

While Jordan is a country for all seasons, it is most often visited during spring and fall, between the temperature extremes of winter and summer. The best weather is in April and October, while winter snows are not unknown in Jordan



Amman, the capital, boasts a Roman amphitheater and a museum. The so-called Kings' Highway, a well-paved but winding road, makes for an interesting full-day drive between Amman and Petra, Jordan's primary tourist attraction. Heading south, Madaba is the first stop. A church there contains the oldest known map of Palestine, which is depicted in mosaic on the floor. Farther along, the Biblical site of Mt. Nebo features lovely examples of mosaics in its small museum. There is also a fabulous overlook of the Dead Sea, situated far below in the Wadi Araba. The final tourist site on the Kings' Highway is Kerak, where there is a well-preserved Crusader-era castle. Tourists then sleep at Petra and begin their sightseeing there the following morning.



Settled by the Nabataeans in about 500 B. C., rock-carved Petra was the capital of a mighty empire which at times stretched as far north as Damascus. It is thought that the Nabataeans extracted transit fees from passing trade caravans. Whatever the case, Petra grew rich as a trading metropolis, reaching its zenith around the time of Christ. In 106 A. D. Trajan incorporated the Nabataean kingdom into the Roman empire as the province of Arabia Petraea. Petra's decline began in the third century, and then it was forgotten from the Middle Ages until being rediscovered by the Swiss adventurer Burckhardt in 1812.

The height of the siq, a gorge several miles long which forms the entrance to Petra, is as much as 300 meters. Yet in some places it is only a few meters wide. Many tourists elect to ride horses or horse carriages through the siq while others walk. At the end of the siq, visitors suddenly come upon the remarkable pink sandstone facade of the so-called Treasury, probably dedicated to one

