

SYRIA (11 Days / 9 Nights)

Day 01

Depart from the USA

Day 02

Arrive in Damascus, Syria
Transfer to hotel.

Day 03

Damascus Orientation tour of Damascus. You will see the National Museum where, among other treasures, tablets bearing the thirty characters of the Ugaritic alphabet (one of the oldest alphabets in the world) are displayed. The 18th century Azem Palace is a splendid example of Damascene houses. The Umayyad Mosque is a palace of exceptional beauty. It also houses the shrine of John the Baptist's head. Walk among the ruins of Straight Street, the former main link between east and west Damascus. Stop at St. Paul's Chapel, which is where St. Paul fled by being dropped in a basket through a window. The church of Annanias, the one who restored Paul's sight in Acts 9:17, is nearby.

Day 04

Damascus, Krac Des Chevaliers, Ebla, Aleppo Stop at the Crusader-era fortress of Krac Des Chevaliers, once commending the only significant pass of its time between Turkey

and Lebanon. T.E. Lawrence called it the "finest castle in the world". Continue to Ebla, an ancient city, dating to at least 2400 B.C., one of Syria's most important archaeological sites. Arrive in Aleppo at the end of the day.

Day 05

Aleppo, rich in history, was a thriving caravan stop for centuries. Visit the medieval citadel, the National Museum, the suq (covered by stone archways for 30 kilometers), public hammams (baths) and the Al-Fardoss School.

Day 06

Aleppo, Resafa, Halabiye, Deir ez Zor Following the Euphrates, stop in Resafa, an improbable pilgrimage town. Its walls are fortified by about 50 towers of various sizes and shapes, thus a good site for a 9th century BC Assyrian military camp. Also visit Halabiye, a well-preserved Byzantine fortification, before arriving at the excavation site of Deir ez Zor.

Day 07

Deir ez Zor, Dura Europos, Mari, Palmyra Stop in Doura Europos, an ancient city of worship, also rich with unique history. It was the greatest border fortress of the Graeco-Roman period, as well as a major

caravan stop and port town along the Euphrates. Nearby Mari was also a rich trading center. But, in about 1760 the town fell to Hammurabi of Babylon who, three years later, knocked down the beautiful palace walls and had the rooms filled with earth, therefore preserving the contents. Continue to Palmyra, yet another wealthy caravan stop along the Silk Road.

Day 08

Palmyra, Damascus As the most important archaeological site in Syria, Palmyra's well preserved ruins have many tales to tell. See the Sanctuary of Bel, the Colonnade, the theatre, the agora, baths and tombs. Continue to Damascus for overnight.

Day 09

Damascus (Southern Syria) Travel to Southern Syria: fertile land colorful with modern life and studded with ancient ruins. Visit Shahba, a modern Druze town built around the Roman ruins of Philippopolis. Nearby Qanawat was a city of the Decapolis (as was Damascus). Here you can visit the beautiful remains of ancient basilicas. First noted by ancient Egyptians, Bosra later briefly became the capital of the Nabataean Kingdom (A.D. 70-106),

but the town can thank most of its antiquities to the Roman period.

Day 10

Damascus Day at leisure.

Day 11

Departure Transfer to the airport.

IMPORTANT NOTE! Please make sure that your passport does NOT contain Israeli border stamps or any other stamps indicating travel to Israel in the past! This includes entry or exit stamps issued at (but not limited to) borders between Jordan and Israel, or Egypt and Israel. Any stamps indicating a visit of Israel will result in denial of your entry (and possibly denial of entry for the entire group) into Syria.

