Tour Code
SY10

ADVENTURESABROAD

SYRIA

'The World's Homeland'

9 days

Created on: 16 Nov, 2026

Day 1 Arrival in Damascus

Assalamu alaikum! (Peace be upon you!) Welcome to Damascus, the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world. Tomorrow, we'll begin our explorations through the ancient streets and landmarks of Damascus, exploring its fascinating history, stunning architecture, and vibrant markets. The centre of Damascus remains intact after the war; only a small part outside the centre remains off-limits.

Overnight in Damascus.

Included Meal(s): Dinner

Day 2 Damascus: City Touring

Today we begin our exploration (by bus and on foot) with a drive up Mount Qassioun.* As we ascend, you'll notice the city of Damascus gradually spread out below us. Upon reaching the summit, we'll take a moment to appreciate the panoramic view. It's a great opportunity to get a sense of the city's scale and history, and maybe even find a good spot for a photo or two. It's not about 'unforgettable experiences', but rather a chance to simply observe and reflect on the city's layout.

Next, we'll drive down to the National Museum. Here, we'll wander through the exhibits, taking in the archaeological treasures that offer a glimpse into Syria's long and varied past. It's a chance to connect with the region's history, and perhaps learn a little something along the way. After the museum, we'll stretch our legs with a short walk into the old town of Damascus. You'll see remnants of the city's fortifications, including walls, towers, and gates, and of course, the imposing Damascus Citadel.

Continuing our journey, we'll visit the Hidjaz Railway Station. This historic site, built in the early 20th century, served as a key hub for the Hijaz Railway, connecting Damascus to Mecca. It's a reminder of a time when railways played a crucial role in transportation and pilgrimage. Then, we'll move on to Marjeh Square, the heart of Damascus. This bustling public space holds significant historical and cultural importance for the city. It's a place where you can observe daily life unfolding, and perhaps get a feel for the city's vibrant energy.

From there, we'll delve into the Souq al-Hamidiyeh, a renowned covered bazaar and ancient marketplace. Here, local culture comes alive. We can wander through the stalls, taking in the sights, sounds, and smells of this bustling market. It's a great place to pick up a souvenir, or simply observe the local commerce.

Next, we'll visit the Umayyad Mosque, an iconic landmark and a significant cultural and spiritual centre. Inside, we'll see the Shrine of John the Baptist. Adjacent to the mosque, we'll also pay a visit to the Mausoleum of Saladin, a historical figure of great importance. We'll then stop at the Al-Seida Raqiyeh Mosque, an important Shia pilgrimage site. It's a place of devotion and reflection, and a significant part of the city's religious landscape.

Finally, we'll wrap up our day with a stop at the historic Al Nafoorah coffeehouse. Here, we can relax, enjoy a traditional coffee or tea, and reflect on the day's experiences. It's a chance to soak in the atmosphere and perhaps chat about what we've seen. We'll be able to watch the world go by for a relaxing end to our day.

* If the route is closed due to ongoing upgrades, we will begin our day at the National Museum.

Overnight in Damascus.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 3 Damascus: Touring Continued

Today we begin by descending into St. Ananias Chapel (today's sightseeing will be conducted on foot). It's a humble space, but one with a strong sense of history. This 1st-century Christian place of worship is believed to be where the Apostle Paul regained his sight after his experience on the road to Damascus. Next, we'll visit St. Paul's Church, a significant pilgrimage site for Christians. It's connected to the

conversion of the Apostle Paul, a figure whose transformation had a profound impact on early Christianity. You can see how this space has been important to people over many years.

We'll then take a stroll along Straight Street, once known as the Roman-era Via Recta. Walking here, you'll get a sense of the city's long history. It's a place where we can imagine the many people who have travelled this route over centuries. Our next stop is Al-Zeitoun Church, the headquarters of the Greek Catholic Patriarchate. Inside, we'll take a look at the grand vaulted ceilings and the sturdy basalt columns.

After that, we'll wander through the winding alleys leading to the Jewish Quarter (Harat al-Yahud) in old Damascus. This neighbourhood has a rich Jewish history, with synagogues, shops, and homes that were once a part of the city's social and cultural fabric. We'll continue towards Maktab Anbar, an architectural gem within the historic precincts of Damascus. Built in the mid-19th century by Anbar Anbar, a wealthy Jewish businessman, it showcases Damascene architectural style. You'll see ornate embellishments, stonework, and a charming courtyard that reflect a mix of Ottoman, Levantine, and European influences.

Then, we'll walk along Midhat Pasha Street, a vibrant thoroughfare in Damascus. This street is known for its rich history and lively atmosphere, it's a place where you can see the city's blend of tradition and modernity. Next, we'll visit Khan Assad Pasha, an impressive caravanserai. This building stands as a testament to the region's rich trading heritage. Our final structured visit will be to Azem Palace, an architectural gem showcasing the beauty of Damascene craftsmanship. It currently houses the Museum of Popular Traditions.

Finally, we'll have some free time to explore on our own. You can revisit a favourite spot, browse the shops, or simply relax and soak in the atmosphere at your own pace.

Overnight in Damascus.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 4 Damascus - Palmyra - Wadi al-Nasara

Today we depart the capital and travel by road north to Palmyra, once a thriving cultural hub of ancient times.* As we walk through the ruins, we'll bear witness to the historical significance of this ancient city, which was once a major center of trade and culture. Unfortunately, Palmyra fell under the control of Islamic militants during the war, resulting in significant damage to its architectural marvels. We'll see the remnants of the magnificent Temple of Bel, the striking Temple of Baal-Shamin, and the remarkable Roman-era tombs, all of which were tragically destroyed. We'll also visit the ancient theater and the grand Monumental Arch, which suffered partial demolition. Is it still worthwhile to visit? YES! The site's aspect is very dramatic and the ruins that remain are evocative of what the place must've looked like in antiquity. Plus our Syrian guide does well in bringing this fascinating place to life.

Finally, we'll head to Wadi al-Nasara, or the "Valley of Christians", a picturesque mountain resort region nestled amidst breathtaking landscapes. As we explore the valley, we'll discover numerous Christian villages, each with its own distinctive charm and character. The serene and peaceful atmosphere of the valley offers a welcome respite from the hustle and bustle of city life, and we'll have the chance to relax and unwind in this beautiful setting after a full day of travel and sightseeing.

* This is a full day, partly due to the fact that Palmyra's handful of hotels have not yet been repaired/rebuilt, which makes over-nighting here impossible.

Overnight in Wadi al-Nasara.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 5 Wadi al-Nasara - Krak des Chevaliers - Homs - Hama - Aleppo

We have another full day of travel and sightseeing, taking us first to the magnificent Krak des Chevaliers, a medieval castle that stands as a testament to Syria's rich history. Perched on a hilltop overlooking the Homs Gap, this awe-inspiring fortress is renowned for its strategic significance and architectural grandeur. As we explore the castle's imposing walls and towers, we'll gain a deeper understanding of the region's complex history and the importance of this medieval stronghold. Luckily, mostly owing to its centuries-old sturdiness, the castle is only slightly damaged from recent warfare.

Next, we'll head to Homs, a city where the echoes of conflict are still palpable, yet the local community is working tirelessly to rebuild and restore their city. As we walk through the streets, we'll gain a deeper understanding of the profound impact of past adversities on the city and

its people. We'll also witness the resilient spirit of the local community, who are determined to restore Homs to its former glory. We'll also visit the Khalid Bin Al Walid Mosque, one of Syria's most significant religious sites, named after the renowned Islamic general Khalid ibn al-Walid. Unfortunately, the mosque sustained damage during the Syrian civil war, but it remains an important place of worship and pilgrimage.

Next, we'll visit the Khalid Bin Al Walid Mosque, one of Syria's most significant religious sites, named after the renowned Islamic general Khalid ibn al-Walid. Despite sustaining damage during the conflict, the mosque remains an important symbol of faith and community. We'll also explore Hama, a city located on the banks of the Orontes River, famous for its colossal wooden waterwheels known as Norias. These architectural marvels are a testament to the ingenuity of the city's ancient engineers.

Next, we'll head to Hama, a city located on the banks of the Orontes River in western Syria. Here, we'll discover the city's distinctive architectural marvel: the colossal wooden waterwheels known as Norias. These ancient wheels, some of which date back to the 14th century, are a testament to the ingenuity and craftsmanship of Hama's ancestors. Unlike other nearby cities, Hama remains entirely intact.

Finally, we arrive in Aleppo, one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. During our stay, as we explore the city's ancient streets and landmarks, we'll witness the juxtaposition of beauty and destruction that defines this storied city. Despite the ravages of war, Aleppo remains a city of immense cultural and historical significance, and we'll have the chance to experience its rich heritage firsthand.

Overnight in Aleppo.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 6 Aleppo & St. Simeon

This morning we'll travel north of the city to explore the fascinating history of Saint Simeon, a significant figure in Christian history known for his ascetic lifestyle. In the 5th century, Saint Simeon chose a unique dwelling – he spent 37 years atop a pillar. The site of Saint Simeon, also known as Qala'at Sim'an or the Church of Saint Simeon Stylites, consists of the remains of a 5th-century Byzantine church, which was built around the pillar where Saint Simeon lived. The pillar, which is about 4.5 meters tall, still stands today, although it's surrounded by the ruins of the church and other ancient structures. Despite being a ruin, the site remains an important pilgrimage destination for Christians and a fascinating archaeological site that provides a glimpse into the history of early Christianity in Syria.

Back in the city, we'll visit the Citadel of Aleppo, a UNESCO World Heritage Site that has stood the test of time. Perched atop a hill, this ancient fortress has witnessed countless battles and struggles for freedom, earning its reputation as a symbol of resilience. As we walk along its walls, we'll gain a deeper understanding of the city's complex history and the significance of this iconic landmark.

We'll also explore the Great Mosque of Aleppo, an architectural marvel that reflects the city's rich Islamic heritage. Although the mosque was destroyed during the civil war, it remains an important place of worship and a testament to the community's enduring faith. As we walk through its ruins, we'll gain a deeper appreciation for the profound loss felt by the community and the importance of preserving the city's cultural heritage.

Finally, we'll wander through the old markets of Aleppo, a testament to the city's rich history and resilience. These vibrant centers of trade were once filled with textiles, spices, and handcrafted goods, and their stunning stone arches and narrow alleys created a unique atmosphere. Although the markets suffered extensive damage during the Syrian Civil War, restoration efforts are underway to revive their traditional architecture and character. As craftsmen return to the markets, breathing new life into the area, we'll witness the enduring spirit of the people of Aleppo, committed to preserving their heritage and rebuilding their city.

Overnight in Aleppo.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 7 Aleppo - Maaloula - Sednaya - Damascus

Leaving Aleppo behind, we travel southward back to Damascus with a couple stops en route.

Our first visit is the enchanting town of Maaloula, one of the last remaining Aramaic-speaking enclaves in the Middle East. As we wander through the town's narrow streets, we'll hear the ancient language of Jesus Christ still spoken by the locals. We'll explore Maaloula's rich history, from its Roman-era pagan temple, which was later repurposed into a church, to the Byzantine artefacts that dot the landscape.

We'll also marvel at the architectural wonders of the Deir Mar Taqla, a stunning Greek Orthodox monastery, and the Deir Mar Sarkis, a beautiful Greek Catholic monastery with elements dating back to the 5th and 6th centuries. As we visit these ancient monasteries, we'll gain a deeper understanding of the region's complex history and the importance of these sacred sites.

Next, we'll head to Sednaya, a picturesque town nestled atop a hill. Here, we'll visit the iconic Greek Orthodox Our Lady of Sednaya Monastery, which offers breathtaking panoramic views of the surrounding countryside. Inside the monastery, we'll see an ancient icon of the Virgin Mary, believed by many to possess miraculous powers. As we explore the town, we'll also visit some of its more than 40 chapels and monasteries, each with its own unique charm and character.

We continue back to the capital for dinner and overnight.

Overnight in Damascus.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 8 Damascus: Ezra'a & Bosra

Today, we'll embark on a day trip from Damascus to explore the ancient treasures of Ezra'a and Bosra (not to be confused with Basra in Iraq). Our first stop will be the 1500-Year-Old Church of St. George in Ezra'a, a true architectural masterpiece that stands as a remarkable testament to the region's rich heritage. Constructed of sturdy basalt stone, this historic church has preserved its original fabric to this day, making it one of the world's architectural marvels.

After exploring the church, we'll head to Bosra, a UNESCO Site that holds immense historical significance. As we wander through the ancient city, we'll discover a treasure trove of historical monuments, showcasing a captivating blend of Roman and Byzantine ruins, alongside impressive examples of early Islamic architecture. We'll explore the well-preserved 2nd-century Roman theatre, with its grand colonnades and seating tiers, providing a glimpse into the ancient Roman entertainment culture. We'll also see remnants of early Christian heritage, with the ruins of ancient churches bearing witness to the city's vibrant past.

Return to Damascus for farewell dinner and overnight.

Overnight in Damascus.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 9 Departure from Damascus

Departure from Damascus.

Masa'a Khayr - Bon Voyage!

Included Meal(s): Breakfast