Ajloun Forest Reserve

Located in the Ajloun Highlands in the north of Jordan, this beautiful nature reserve consists of 13 km² of rolling hill country dominated by open woodlands that are home to a diverse collection of plant and animal species. The rich greenery makes Ajloun a popular spot for picnickers and hikers, especially in the spring, when the reserve is coated in a wide variety of wildflowers.

Ajloun Forest Reserve was established in 1987 to help conserve the important Evergreen Oak forest ecosystem. Its trees account for a significant part of Jordan’s forested area, which covers only about 1% of the country.

After the reserves establishment, RSCN initiated a captive breeding program aiming to reintroduce the locally extinct Roe Deer in 1988. RSCN has managed to release a number of Roe Deer into the reserve, where they have continued to grow within their natural habitat.

Lodging is located in a large grassy clearing enclosed by carob, oak, pistachio, and strawberry trees. There are 5 cabins offering private facilities and small terraces open all year round and so four-person tented bungalows with nearby showers and toilets that are open from mid March to the end of October. Near the campsite, you will find a visitor center, restaurant, meeting room, and The Nature Shop that is full of creative handicrafts made by the local people living in and around RSCN’s nature reserves. You can also find peaceful seclusion in the Biscuit House B&B located in Orjan village deep in the fig and pomegranate laden valley, offering 2 rooms with a capacity of 8-9. The B&B is open year-round.

Ajloun Handicrafts from Nature

Make sure to visit Ajloun Houses that are located in the nearby Rasun and Orjan villages.

The Soap House

At the Soap House located in Orjan village, local women use a variety of local ingredients, including lavender, geranium, mint and pomegranate, to create high-quality handmade natural olive oil soaps called Orjan Soap. Orjan soaps are all produced using pure olive oil, combined with other natural oils, plant extracts, and pure essential oils.

The Biscuit House

The Biscuit House located in Orjan village is the kitchen where Tasali Jordanian delights are created. These products are handmade by local women and consist of natural ingredients, some of which are produced by the local community. Tasali presents a new spirit of Jordanian delights. Products include molasses and tahini sandwich cookies, olive oil crisps, and energy bars.

The Nature Shop

Browse through the Nature Shop and find truly original gifts and souvenirs. This shop contains nature crafts produced by the local people at the reserves.

Reserve and Trails Guide | Map

Your Evergreen Escape

Staying in Ajloun Forest Reserve

The Soap House

The Nature Shop that is full of creative handicrafts made by the local people living in and around RSCN’s nature reserves. You can also find peaceful seclusion in the Biscuit House B&B located in Orjan village.

The Biscuit House B&B

The Biscuit House is open year-round.

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**Activities**

**Soap House Trail**  
(year-round)  
Guided or self-guided  
Grade: Moderate  
Distance: 6-7 km  
Time: 2-3 hours  
Group size: 4-18 people  
Description  
This short circular trail starts at the campsite and offers great views over the reserve. Not far from the campsite you will find an old stone wine press before you pass one of the oldest strawberry trees in the Reserve on your way down into the valley. The trail climbs to 1000m above sea level at Eagle's View Point, and then descends to the Soap House where local women follow the traditional process of making Orjan pure olive soap.

* You can continue walking  
The Houses Trail or the Village Tour once you have reached  
The Soap House

**Orjan Village Trail**  
(year-round)  
Guided only  
Grade: Moderate  
Distance: 12 km  
Time: 6 hours  
Group size: 4-18 people  
Description  
Continuing from the Soap House, this tour takes you through wooded valleys to the lush green orchards of Orjan village, giving you the chance to discover the rural lifestyle of the region.

**The Houses Trail**  
(year-round)  
Guided only  
Grade: Moderate  
Distance: 6-7 km  
Time: 3-4 hours  
Group size: min. 4 and above  
Description  
This trail takes you through a tour of Ajloun’s popular three houses; The Soap House and The Biscuit House in Orjan village and the House of Calligraphy in Raoum village. From the Eagle’s View Point you can descend towards the House of Calligraphy, then wind your way to the other two houses. An alternative route takes you first from the Soap House. At the House of Calligraphy, you can take the first steps towards learning how to write some Arabic words. At The Biscuit House, you can visit the workshop where Tasali Jordanian delights are created.

**Rockrose Trail**  
(year-round)  
Guided only  
Grade: Moderate  
Distance: 8 km  
Time: 4-5 hours  
Group size: 4-18 people  
Description  
Named for the flowers that can be seen around the trail every spring, this hiking loop passes through thick woodlands, farms and villages in and around the reserve. It offers beautiful views of the West Bank, Syria, and the Jordanian countryside. About halfway through the hike, observe the vine and olive press from the Byzantine and Roman eras, and just before reaching the end of the trail, rest in the shade of a large Maloul tree. Each season has different vegetation to enjoy.

The first half of the trail is uphill and the second half is downhill; there are steep scrambles en-route that demand a reasonable level of fitness.

**The Prophet’s Trail**  
(year-round)  
Guided (donkey assisted)  
Grade: Moderate  
Distance: 8.5 km  
Time: 4 hours  
Group size: 4-18 people  
Description  
This hike takes you from Ajloun Forest Reserve Visitor Center to Mar Elias, the ruins of one of Jordan’s oldest churches. It is named for the Prophet Elias, or Elijah, to whom Mar Elias is dedicated. The trail leads through fig and year orchards, amongst forests of oak and oriental strawberry trees. The stone walls that cross the valley guard the farmers’ crops inside from both the winter rains and wild boar. Relax in the shade with a glass of tea before climbing to the hilltop ruins, which provide sweeping views of the surrounding area. The hike also includes a locally prepared picnic lunch near the ruins.

**Nearby Attractions**

**Ajloun Castle Trail**  
(year-round, except during Ramadan)  
Guided (donkey assisted)  
Grade: Difficult with steep inclines  
Distance: 18 km or 9.5 km from Mar Elias  
Time: Full day or 4 hours from Mar Elias  
Group size: 4-18 people  
Description  
Once you have reached Mar Elias, you have the option of continuing on this challenging trail, which takes you by small farm house and their adjacent orchards on your way to Ajloun Castle, built between AD 1184-1188 by Salahadin’s nephew. In the first section of the trail you can enjoy views of the West Bank and Syria, before you descend into a wooded valley. The final difficult uphill is rewarded by the incredible castle and the marvellous views that accompany it. The hike also includes a locally prepared picnic lunch.

**Jerash**  
(Around 22 km east of Ajloun)  
Jordan’s second most important tourist site. This famous Roman City, Gerasa, belonged to the ten cities of the Decapolis and is regarded as one of the finest examples of Roman architecture outside Rome.

**Um Qais & Yarmouk Nature Reserve**  
(60 km north of Ajloun), Um Qais another Roman site on the northern border of Jordan, overlooking the Golan Heights and the Sea of Galilee. Yarmouk Nature Reserve, is one of the newly established reserves in Jordan and home to Jordan’s national tree “Al Maloul”. It is an area that speaks volumes about who we are both as a nation and as a people and, thanks to the conservation efforts of RSCN, it will continue to bear witness to our history for generations to come.
Activities

Highlights

The Prophet’s Trail
Hike towards the beautiful church mosaics of Mar Elias and savor a locally prepared lunch.

Ajloun Castle Trail
Continue on from The Prophet’s Trail through orchards to reach the historical Ajloun Castle.

Roe Deer Trail
Short trail offering great views, a visit to the old stone winepress, and a chance to spot roe deer.

Soap House Trail
Take in the sights at the Bagle’s View Point and watch local women produce natural olive oil soap.

The Houses Trail
Visit Ajloun houses; The Soap House, House of Calligraphy and The Biscuit House in the villages of Orjan and Rasun.

Orjan Village Trail
Hike through the reserve, visit the Soap House, and enjoy a traditional homemade brunch.

Rock Rose Trail
Pass through heavily wooded valleys and ridges, offering beautiful panoramic views of the West Bank and Syria.

The Prophet’s Trail
Hike towards the beautiful church mosaics of Mar Elias and savor a locally prepared lunch.

Ajloun Castle Trail
All of the trails begin from the Reserve’s visitor center. Trails availability vary according to weather conditions and Ramadan, so it is always recommended to check before you book any hike.
Stay on the trails with the guide and do not wander alone in the Reserve; camp and climb only in official sites.

Protect all nature; no hunting or collecting of plants, animals, rocks, artifacts, or firewood. Leave things as you find them.

Avoid damaging trees and shrubs; do not add graffiti anywhere within the reserve.

Respect nature; keep noise to a minimum, be kind to living creatures.

Respect the lifestyle of the local people and ask before taking pictures.

Keep the area clean and deposit your litter in the appropriate place.

Keep your vehicles in the parking area.

Hiking Tips
Hit trails early for the best chance of seeing wildlife and to avoid being exposed to the sun during the hottest part of the day.

Stay on trails to avoid injury.

To get through a heavy day’s hike, rest at regular intervals and enjoy the views. Don’t overdo it!

Weather
Ajloun has a mild, Mediterranean climate, with warm summers and cool, damp winters. The hottest period is between June and September, when average temperatures are around 30 degrees Celsius, while rain and snow are common from December to February.

What to Bring
Cap, sunscreen, bathing suit, comfortable shoes and clothes, drinking water, snacks, backpack, flashlight, extra clothes, binoculars, ID, wildlife guides, first aid kit.

The Reserve is not responsible for the loss of any valuable belongings.

Useful Arabic Words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Word</th>
<th>Arabic Pronunciation</th>
<th>Arabic Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hi</td>
<td>Mashala</td>
<td>جزمنا</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome</td>
<td>Ahlan wa Sahlan</td>
<td>اهلاً و سهلاً</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good morning</td>
<td>Sabah al Khayr</td>
<td>صباح الخير</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>Sahab al Neer</td>
<td>صباح النور</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good evening</td>
<td>Mas' al Khayr</td>
<td>مساء الخير</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>Mas' al Neer</td>
<td>مساء النور</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your name?</td>
<td>(male) Shu Ismak?</td>
<td>ما هو اسمك؟</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My name is...</td>
<td>I'mi...</td>
<td>اسمي...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are you?</td>
<td>(male) Keef Halik?</td>
<td>كيف حالك؟</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(female)</td>
<td>(female)</td>
<td>كيف حالك؟</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am...</td>
<td>Ana...</td>
<td>أنا...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fine</td>
<td>Kwaish(eh)</td>
<td>في纠正(eh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please</td>
<td>Low samah</td>
<td>لو صمت</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank you</td>
<td>Shukran</td>
<td>شكراً</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>You're welcome</td>
<td>يمكنك مساعدة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodbyes</td>
<td>Masalama</td>
<td>مغادرة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>La</td>
<td>لا</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm sorry</td>
<td>Ausfich</td>
<td>اسف(eh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Problem</td>
<td>Mafi Mushkila</td>
<td>لا مشكلة(eh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Aywa</td>
<td>نعم</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much?</td>
<td>Gdais or Adaish</td>
<td>كم(eh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I need help</td>
<td>Bidi mustahah</td>
<td>مشاكل(eh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't understand</td>
<td>Mish fahem(eh)</td>
<td>لا أستطيع(eh)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Amman, the trip to Ajloun is 85 km and takes about an hour and 15 minutes. Go to Irbid, taking the ring road (Jordan Street) out of Amman. Once you reach Irbid, follow the signs to Ajloun. Enter Ajloun City and at the Ajloun circle, go straight toward Eshtafena. 5 km from the Ajloun circle you will find the Eshtafena junction. At the junction, turn left towards Ajloun Forest Reserve. Follow the signs to the site.

Rules and Regulations

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- Protect all nature; no hunting or collecting of plants, animals, rocks, artifacts, or firewood. Leave things as you find them.
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