



See Jordan.Org

E-Newsletter

Jordan Tourism Board North America (JTBNA)
6867 Elm St. Suite 102 McLean, VA 22101
(877) SEE-JORDAN Fax:: (703) 243-7406

June 16, 2005

Volume 23, Number 1

Experience
Jordan
Now!

GOOD NEWS FROM THE MIDDLE EAST: TOURISM ON RISE;

JORDAN TOURISM BOARD CO-OPS WITH U.S. TRADE TO CONTINUE TREND

42% Increase in U.S. Tourism to Jordan Part of Upward Trend Across Middle East;

“Road Show” Gets Big Response from U.S. Trade Viewing Jordan as Growth Market

WASHINGTON, D.C. (June 13, 2005) – Jordan tourism officials, buoyed by the resurgence of tourism from the U.S. market to pre-9/11 numbers, will hold workshops in several American cities this summer in a two-tiered “Jordan-USA Road Show” program that will educate eager travel executives as well as religious leaders about Jordan. The program will begin June 15 at the Jordanian Embassy in Washington.

“We have experienced a surge of inquiries over the past year from travel agents who have not previously sold Jordan as a destination or who would like fresh information on what we have to offer, so the time is ripe to personally connect with these agents to help them get better acquainted with our rich product offering and diversity,” said **Malia Asfour, director of the Jordan Tourism Board, North America (JTBNA)**. “At the same time, we are continuing to receive demand from the religious market here, so it is only natural to use our time in various cities to meet with local religious leaders, who represent a large niche market for us.”

In May, the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) released its 2005 Travel and Tourism Forecasts for the Middle East, which projected the rise in tourism to the region would continue climbing at a growth rate of 4.8%, leveling out after a phenomenal regional growth rate in 2004 of 9.1%. The WTTC forecast for Jordan expects tourism to “equal or exceed the robust level posted for 2004.” The news that tourists are discovering Jordan is good indeed for Jordanians, who know tourism is a vital component of their national economy. In 2004, His Majesty King Abdullah outlined a national tourism strategy that seeks to double the kingdom’s tourism economy by 2010. Already, tourism contributes more than US\$800 million to Jordan’s economy and accounts for about 10 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP).

The Jordan-USA Road Show, co-sponsored by Royal Jordanian Airlines and several large U.S.-based tour operators, will feature in-depth workshops for travel agents seeking certification in JTBNA’s new “Jordan Expert” program. **William Maloney, Executive Vice President and CEO of the American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA)**, has called Jordan a “must-see for U.S. travelers,” and many ASTA members along the road show route have enrolled. In addition, seminars for religious leaders will give them a chance to learn more

Jordan Tourism
Board North
America (JTBNA)
6867 Elm St. Suite
102
McLean, VA 22101
(877) SEE-
JORDAN
Fax: (703) 243-7406

info@seejordan.org
www.seejordan.org

about Jordan's biblical sites (including Mount Nebo, from where Moses saw the Promised Land; and Bethany-beyond-the-Jordan, where Jesus was baptized), hear testimonials from peers who have been to Jordan, and find out how they can host a religious tour.

Religious Niche

A key niche market in Jordan's tourism strategy is the religious market, which has already experienced a steady increase of U.S. visitors thanks in large part to marketing efforts by JTBNA and a **grassroots group of U.S. Christian leaders who have formed the non-profit "Friends of Jordan" (FOJ) network.** Rev. Dr. Graham F. Bardsley, a Presbyterian pastor and adjunct faculty member of Virginia Theological Seminary who **co-founded FOJ**, which has taken hundreds of Christian leaders to Jordan the past several years, will help JTBNA kick off its road show in Washington, D.C. when he hosts a gathering of pastors interested in learning about Jordan as a Holy Land tourism destination.

"Jordan is the best kept secret in the world as a travel destination, especially for people of faith," said Dr. Bardsley. "It is a safe land; the food is exotic and wonderful; the people are gracious and friendly; the accommodations are first rate; many of the sights are unparalleled anywhere in the world. So many of the sights are as they were seen by Moses, Alexander the Great, Saladin, Marco Polo, John the Baptist, and Jesus Himself. Best of all, it is a land where one can be touched by God. Any pastor wanting a deep, abiding spiritual opportunity for his people could not provide a more meaningful experience."

JTBNA is bringing in one of the top tour guides in Jordan, Ibrahim Abdelhaq, to help tell its story. Abdelhaq, who has hosted many U.S. tour groups over the years, has built a reputation for sharing the Jordan experience in a style and jargon that connects with American tourists. **Gisele Abrahao of JTBNA**, who is managing the road show, is confident that participating travel agents will make a similar connection.

"Agents will experience a virtual tour of Jordan firsthand from one of our top guides," said Abrahao. "This will help them to get a much better feel for our various niche markets so that they can more knowledgeably and easily sell our product."

Jordan's other niche markets are cultural heritage (archaeology); eco-tourism; health and wellness (spa); adventure; leisure; meetings, incentives, conferences and events (MICE); and cruising.

Road Show Schedule

- June 15, Washington D.C.
- June 27: Detroit
- July 6-7: Chicago
- July 7-8: Denver
- July 11: San Francisco
- July 12-14: Los Angeles
- July 14-15: San Diego
- July 18-19: Dallas

Related Highlights

- The American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA), the world's largest association of travel professionals, held its annual ASTA Chapter Presidents Meeting in Jordan in February.
- "Petra: Lost City of Stone," an exhibition on the ancient rose-red city and its inhabitants, moved in April to its third U.S. destination – Calvin College in Grand Rapids – after a sensational six-month run in New York and three months in Cincinnati. The exhibit runs through August 15 before heading off to Canada.
- A World Economic Forum (WEF) Summit was held in May in Jordan at the Dead Sea resort of Shuneh. Participants included First Lady Laura Bush and Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Shimon Peres, who both expressed optimism for the Middle East's future.
- His Majesty King Abdullah II hosted an array of Nobel Laureates and key world personalities in May in Petra, the UNESCO World Heritage Site, to share their views and create new insights into global concerns. Participants included former President Bill Clinton, the Dalai Lama and Richard Gere.
- Jordan's Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities announced in May plans to invest more

than \$60 million in the immediate future to develop new and existing tourism sites in the Kingdom.

For more information or to participate in a road-show workshop, please call JTBNA at 703.243.7404.

If you would like to remove your email address from the list simply reply to this e-mail with the word UNSUBSCRIBE.