



SeeJordan.Org

E-Newsletter

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

March 23, 2006

Volume 25 , Number 1

Experience
Jordan Now!

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

Contact: **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**
Christine Moore Tel/469.688.5683 Email/christine@seejordan.org

Marwan Matar Tel/703.243.7404 Email/marwanm@seejordan.org

AMERICAN TOURISM TO JORDAN INCREASED 16% IN 2005

USA Travel Increase Triple the Growth From Europe, Asia

WASHINGTON, D.C. (March 23, 2006) – Travel to Jordan from the USA outpaced growth from all other markets in 2005, according to figures released by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MOTA). The 16% increase in travel from the USA in 2005 over 2004 is triple that of the strong European and Asian markets, with both showing a 5% increase in travel to the Kingdom.

“I think these numbers represent a convergence of many factors in this market,” said Malia Asfour, director of the Jordan Tourism Board, N.A. (JTBNA). “There is strong momentum on many fronts – our tour operators are selling more diverse packages with increased overnights; more religious groups are looking for unique experiences in the Holy Land; a very popular Petra exhibit has traveled North America these last two years; we have a growing MICE business, especially at our world-class Dead Sea resorts and convention center; and there is a growing curiosity and fascination among Americans for our part of the world in general, with a very strong spirit of friendship and support for Jordan in particular.”

97,618 Americans visited Jordan in 2005, 16% more than the 84,126 who visited in 2004. Some tourist sites showed an exponential growth rate of visiting Americans. For example, 41,153 Americans visited Petra in 2005, up 173% over the 15,074 Americans that visited in 2004; and Bethany-beyond-the-Jordan, the holy site referenced in the Bible as the place where John baptized Jesus, welcomed 7,887 Americans, a 46%

increase over the 5,419 who visited in 2004.

The strong American growth rate holds true for most of North and South America – with travel from the Americas averaging 15% growth. Some countries showed an explosion of growth in travel to Jordan – Chile showed an 97% increase; Mexico grew at 72%; Argentina grew at 33%; and Brazil grew at 31%. And travel from the Americas to some individual sites grew at an even greater rate. Petra – the UNESCO world heritage site considered the eighth wonder of the world – experienced strong growth rates across the board. In 2005, 5,843 Canadians visited Petra, a 213% increase over the 1,864 who visited in 2004. The rest of the Americas averaged a 120% increase in travel to Petra.

Jordan's Niche Markets

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

In addition to Petra and Bethany-beyond-the-Jordan, other top sites in the kingdom include:

- Wadi Rum, the moonscape desert described by T.E. Lawrence as “vast, echoing and God-like.”
- Jerash, the well-preserved ancient city remarkable for its unbroken chain of human occupation since Neolithic times, which was a member of the Decapolis, a dynamic commercial league of cities in Greco-Roman times.
- Mount Nebo, where Moses stood at the end of his long Exodus journey. The Bible says he is buried nearby in an unknown location.
- Aqaba, prized as Jordan's window to the Red Sea, known the world over for its pristine beaches and amazing coral reef.
- Umm Qais (ancient Gadara), site of the Biblical miracle of the Gadarene swine.
- Mukawir, Herod's Biblical hilltop fortress where Salome danced and where John the Baptist was imprisoned and beheaded.
- The Dead Sea, the lowest point on earth believed to be near ancient Sodom and Gomorrah, now home to some of the world's top spas and resorts.

In May 2005, 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 expected tourism to “equal or exceed the robust level posted for 2004.” These new MOTA figures make it official: the robust growth is continuing, and Americans are showing up in leaps and bounds.

JTBNA is a non-profit private-public cooperative that exists to promote tourism to Jordan.

-30-

Photo Editor: Photos available upon request.

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