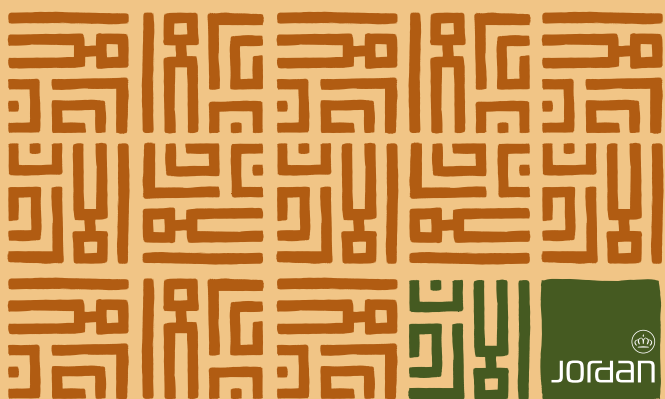
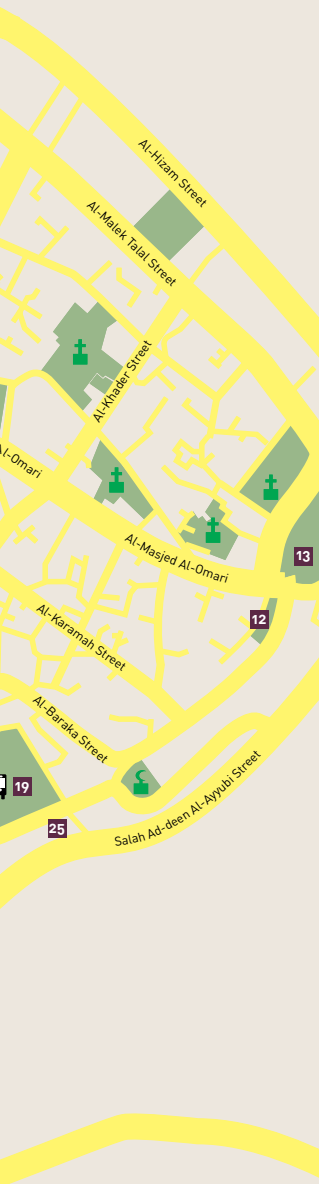


Al Karak





Map legend

- 1 Prophet Noah's Shrine
- 2 Italian Hospital
- 3 Children's Park
- 4 Public Health Center
- 5 Historical Pool
- 6 Directorate of Education
- 7 Greater Karak Municipality
- 8 Al-Shaheed Haza'a Hall
- 9 Post Office
- 10 Directorate of Communication
- 11 Karak Municipality
- 12 Civil Defence
- 13 Health Center
- 14 Information Centre
- 15 Police Station
- 16 The Touristic Village
- 17 Visitors Centre
- 18 Al-Khader Shrine
- 19 Al-Barakeh Bus Station
- 20 The West Tower
- 21 Karak Castle
- 22 Alburj al da'eri
- 23 Habes Al-Majali Park
- 24 Amman Bus Station
- 25 East Gate



Church



Mosque



Bus Station



Police



Information Center



Hotel



Al Karak





Al Qasr

Al Qasr is yet another city that parades its glorious palace from the period when Oriyanus or Antonios ruled. Ancient stones are decorated with amazing drawings of gazelles, lions and lion heads.

Lot's Cave



The Karak province is also home to the cave of Prophet Lot, which is located in Ghaur Al Safi in the Jordan Valley. It is believed that Prophet Lot lived here more than 5000 years ago. Originally, this ancient location was formed by nature. It was used for the first time in the early Bronze Age and in the Byzantine period. Christians built a church around the cave, which they believed was the place where the Prophet Lot and his daughters took refuge after the demolition of the city of Sodom.



was found here, along with a 30 – 33 centimeter-thick granite stone that illustrates the Moabite king receiving a scepter. Seven kilometers from Karak is Ader, a town named after Emperor Adriyanus who passed through it when he opened Victory Road, going from Basra Al Sham to the Red Sea.

Al Smakiyyeh

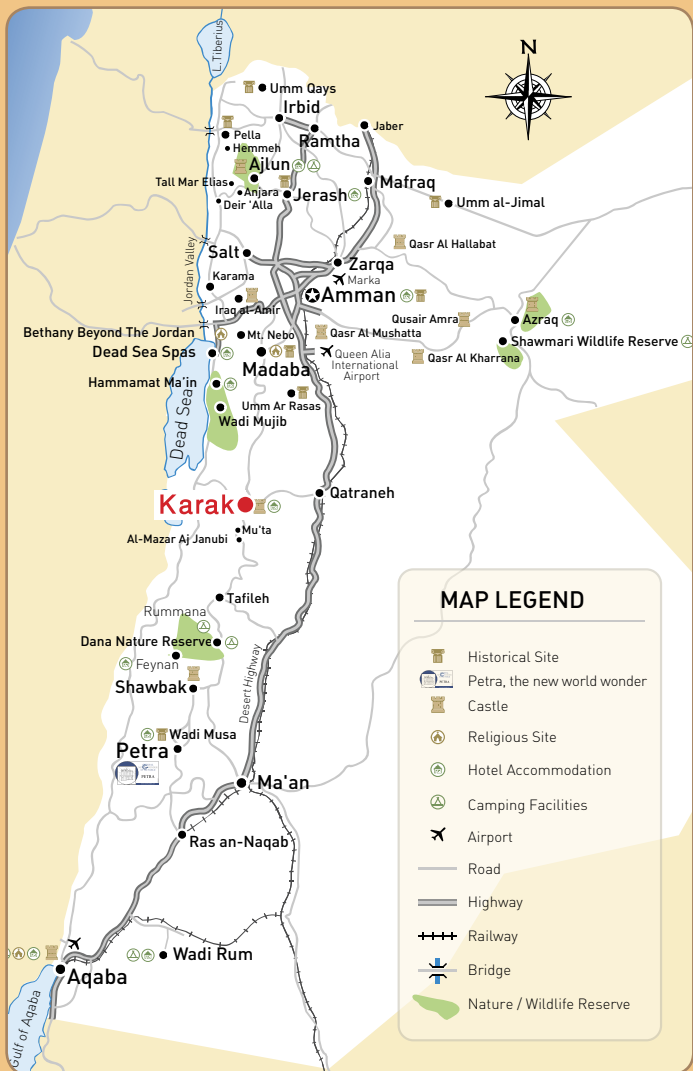


Another ancient city, Al Smakiyyeh is located 18 kilometers away from Karak. Here you can see the most important ruins that date back to the Iron Age, which is Al Aliya (or Al Maarajah). Al Aliya contains a fortified castle that was constructed with the aim of protecting the southern boundaries of Moab. In Al Smakiyyeh you can also see several caves from the Bronze and Iron ages, Nabateans cemeteries, and an olive press from the Byzantine period.

That Ras

To the northeastern side of the Dead Sea lies That Ras, a Nabataean city that was built 150 meters above sea level. The three temples found here testify to the religious significance of this site. Roman cemeteries and a grave containing gold jewelry dating to the second and third centuries were also found here.





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Jaafar Bin Abi Taleb and Abdulla Bin Rawaha. Just head south to **Al Mazar**, 15 kilometers south of Karak and just three kilometers from Muta.

Muslim rulers paid special attention to the shrines of the companions of the Prophet Mohammed. They covered them with domes of marble plaque. One of the northern gates of Jaafar Bin Abi Taleb's shrine has an inscription which dates back to the Mamluk era. Later on, the construction of such mosques became more developed. In 1973, an Islamic museum - the first of its kind - was established beside the mosque of Jaafar.

From here you can head on to **Al Balu'a**, 25 kilometers north of Karak. This city was built by the Moabites to protect the royal road. In 1930 an obelisk that dates to 1200 BC





On the northwestern side of Al Qatraneh is **Absheer Palace**. This palace is a square building with a square tower at each of its corners. The wall on the southwestern side is penetrated by a huge gate, which leads to the palace yard. The gate is decorated with a Latin inscription that dates the palace to 293 BC.

One of the most exciting elements about Karak is the



wealth of stories that originate from its rich history and legacy of civilizations and conquests. If you head to the south of Karak to a village named **Mu'ta**, you will be standing exactly where the first war between Muslims and Greeks took place. Muslims realized the importance of this region as being the southern boundary of the Byzantine Empire and the only passageway to fight Greeks and expel them from the Levant.



Two kilometers from Mu'ta, you will find a spacious mosque embracing the **Tomb of Jaafar Bin Abi Taleb (Jaafar Al Tayyar)**.

With familiarity of this first Mu'ta battle, you might be eager now to head on and visit the shrines of the three leaders; Zaid Bin Haretha,



Places to see near Karak

When in Karak you may wish to pass by **Al Rabba**, which used to be known as Maab or Rabbat Maab. It was conquered by the Muslim leader Abu Obaidah Bin Al Jarrah, and was considered an important city in Moab due to its location on the Sultan's Road. Karak flourished during the Nabataean era, as indicated by the pottery found there, which dates to the first century BC. Karak was a hub of architectural growth under Roman rule, as demonstrated by the Roman ruins and a temple with elaborate columns that are found there. When you enter and look to either side, you will see two small naves, which used to house a statue of Emperor Dueoqlsanus on the south side and a statue of Emperor Maximyanus on the north side.

If you continue 22 kilometers to the northeastern part of Karak, you will arrive at **Al Lajjun** fortress, which used to be a Roman camp. At the northwestern side, a watchtower was discovered with three half-circle shaped rooms. Barracks were also found there accommodating 2000 soldiers, which were later destroyed by an earthquake. The most important ruins here are a group of buildings that date back to the Ottoman period, in addition to a set of monuments from the Bronze age.

Qatraneh Castle

This castle is about 90 kilometers south of Amman and is situated along the desert highway. It dates back to mid sixteenth century AD. The castle is rectangular in shape, and comprises two stories. It is in good condition.





Karak was called Karkha, this town has witnessed a number of significant events.

In AD 1099 Crusaders occupied Jerusalem and needed a stronghold to firmly establish their control over the strategic and defensive areas surrounding Jerusalem. In AD 1142, Karak Castle was rebuilt and used as a fortress. Salah Al Din, ruler of Syria and Egypt, tried to invade the town to put an end to King Arnat who was known for his recklessness and barbarism. In his second attempt in AD 1188, Salah Al Din was finally able to lay hands on Karak after a year and a half of blockade. In 1262, Karak Castle fell under Mamluk control after Al Zaher Baibars invaded it and transferred his treasures and supplies there. He entrusted Arab tribes to secure the route between the castle and Al Hijaz. Once again, Karak encountered another occupation attempt by the Ottomans, and after AD 1566, the town became a center of rebellions. Later, Nasoh Pasha went to Karak and in AD 1727 mines were placed around Karak city walls, which caused their collapse. During the First World War, Karak served as an administrative traffic center and the gate you see today was rebuilt in 1963.

Karak Museum of Archaeology

While visiting Karak Castle make sure you stop by the museum, which contains historical artifacts from the Karak region dating back as early as the Stone Age all the way to the Islamic Era.





One of the three pools in Karak is located just outside the southern wall of the castle. Before you enter the castle, study the map at the site entrance for it will give you some good background on the castle's history and you'll have a better bearing of your surroundings. Once inside this Crusader castle, you'll find it is not very lit as it winds with many tunnels and passages.



History aside, this area is also the site of the recent Hollywood blockbuster by Ridley Scot entitled '**The Kingdom of Heaven**', starring Orlando Bloom. But while numerous scenes were based in and around this Crusader castle, the castle itself was not used during filming.



Face to face with changing history

The town of Karak owes its strong fortification and security to nature, with its rising plateau surrounded by deep ditches; and to human construction of walls, tunnels, water channels and wells. From the Assyrian invasion in the 7th century to becoming part of the Persian Empire in 331 – 539 BC to the Hellenistic Period where



AL KARAK

The fortified town

Welcome to the fortified town of Karak, a town that has witnessed several battles and events that have changed the course of history.

Are you ready? Let your journey begin

You are 130 kilometers south of Amman, on the mountaintop that embraces **Karak Castle** and sits 960 meters above sea level.

Valleys surround the mountain on three sides; Al Set to the east, Al Ifrang to the west, and Al Karak to the north. All three valleys meet near Sarah spring, which is two kilometers



away. As you can see, the town of Karak is built on this mountain with the castle rising in glorious wonder on its southern tip. Two ditches separate the castle from the town: one ditch is in the north and the other in the south.