

World Tourism Day 2025: Jordan's Journey Towards Sustainable and Inclusive Transformation

September 30, 2025



As the world marks World Tourism Day 2025 under the theme “*Tourism and Sustainable Transformation*”, Jordan reflects on its unique journey. With its rich cultural heritage, diverse landscapes, and central position in the region, Jordan has worked to shape a tourism sector that not only attracts visitors but also supports communities, safeguards traditions, and prepares the industry for long-term resilience and growth.

Tourism's Economic Role and Recovery

Tourism has long been a cornerstone of Jordan's economy and a reflection of its rich cultural identity. In 2019, Jordan welcomed 5.36 million visitors, generating about JD 4.1 billion (~USD 5.8 billion), roughly 13 percent of GDP (Jordan Times, CBJ). The COVID-19 pandemic year 2020 brought a 77% decline in visitors and 76% in receipts (fell to about JD 1 billion), yet the sector demonstrated its role as a shock absorber, sustaining jobs and stabilizing the economy.

Recovery came quickly. By 2022, international arrivals had already climbed to 5.04 million, and tourism income reached JD 4.12 billion. By 2024, visitors increased further to 6.10 million and revenues to JD 5.13 billion, roughly 13.5 percent of GDP, despite regional headwinds, surpassing Economic Modernization Vision (EMV) targets.

Today, tourism provides tens of thousands of direct and indirect jobs across hospitality, transport, cultural heritage management, and allied industries, underscoring its enduring economic and social importance.



Aqaba

Diversifying and Modernizing Tourism

Tourism in Jordan is no longer limited to sightseeing at Petra or the Dead Sea. Visitors are increasingly drawn to adventure and outdoor activities that connect them with local communities. From cycling through mountain routes to hiking in remote valleys and exploring Wadi Rum's desert trails, these experiences highlight Jordan's commitment to responsible tourism that protects nature while creating new income opportunities for residents.

As part of Jordan's broader efforts to improve and modernize policy making for more transparent, accountable, participatory and impact-driven through its good regulatory practices and Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) framework, the Adventure Tourism Instructions were developed following a full pre-assessment process supported by the Reform Secretariat through the Jordan Growth MDTF*. This work came after the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA) team participated in a specialized training on RIA guidelines, ensuring that the new regulations are evidence-based, practical for operators, and aligned with international safety and sustainability standards.

Digital transformation is also reshaping the visitor journey. MoTA is rolling out a data management platform, expanding digital services, and using analytics to inform policy. These efforts complement existing tools like Jordan Pass and site-specific solutions, and they are part of a broader program to make services fully digital.

Reform Achievements and Future Outlook

Jordan's Economic Modernization Vision (EMV 2023–2033) sets a clear path to develop competitive tourism products, upgrade site infrastructure, improve multi-modal transport, and empower local communities with skilled jobs.

Between 2023 to 2025, Jordan's tourism sector has taken bold steps to strengthen its competitiveness and visitor experience and enhance its resilience. The Tourism Law was amended in 2024 to modernize the ecosystem by shifting from traditional licensing to clear classification standards and streamlining procedures. In 2025, the Tourism Development and Promotion Fund was launched to empower small and medium enterprises and boost the sector's resilience.

Innovation has touched every corner of the visitor experience with the e-Visa system making travel simpler for more nationalities, electronic ticketing being piloted at major archaeological sites, and new attractions such as the Ajloun Cable Car drawing fresh interest. Recognition on the global stage came when Umm al-Jimal was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2024, while new agreements with low-cost carriers are expanding air connectivity from key European markets to Amman and Aqaba, supporting both recovery and sustainable growth.

Since 2019, Jordan's Reform Matrix has guided structural improvements. Through the Jordan Growth Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) Jordan advanced a cost-structure analysis of the tourism value chain, a Gender Inclusion Action Plan, establishment of new functional units at MoTA, a social and environmental impact assessment of the National Tourism Strategy, streamlined licensing and updated legislation to encourage private investment (now consolidated under the amended law and forthcoming bylaws).

In parallel, MoTA has delivered additional milestones consistent with the Matrix and EMV, including the "Kingdom of Time" national brand; air-service incentives that attracted LCCs; a tourism data management platform; a relaunch of "Urdunna Jannah" domestic tourism; and targeted support measures to bolster sector resilience amid regional shocks.

Ongoing work on site management plans, preservation/restoration and hotel classifications, and sectoral bylaws (e.g., Travel Agents & Tour Operators Bylaw No. 114)

Looking ahead, the sector's priorities under EMV and Reform Matrix and aligning with global sustainability goals involve implementing sustainable site-management plans for cultural, adventure, and religious sites; establishing national classification standards to enhance quality and safety; accelerating digital transformation through expanded e-services, analytics, and evidence-based decision making; scaling up green and eco-tourism along climate-aligned strategies; empowering communities, including rural hubs and women-led SMEs; and broadening the MICE, medical, and wellness tourism segments.



Mount Nebo - Madaba

A Shared Responsibility

Tourism is a cornerstone of Jordan's economy and a true expression of our identity and resilience. On World Tourism Day 2025, Jordan reaffirms its commitment to developing a tourism sector that serves citizens, supports communities, and protects our cultural and natural heritage for the generations to come.

From mountain trails and religious journeys along the Jordan River, to family holidays at the Dead Sea and international gatherings in Aqaba, tourism continues to connect people and open opportunities that strengthen local communities and safeguard the nation's treasures.

According to the World Bank, sustainable tourism not only creates quality jobs and attracts investment, but also drives conservation and protects cultural heritage. Jordan's ongoing reforms reflect this vision, aligning with global good practices and confirming the sector's role in supporting inclusive growth and resilience.

On this World Tourism Day (27 September), Jordan invites travelers, investors, and citizens alike to celebrate progress, share responsibility, and work together toward a sustainable future for the tourism sector.



Hamam Street - As Salt

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*The Jordan Growth MDTF is a multi-donor financing mechanism co-chaired by the World Bank and MoPIC through the Reform Secretariat, supporting the implementation of the Jordan Reform Matrix.