

Saudi Arabia

Migrations, Mecca and Mosques

PART I

Every autumn the skies over my house fill with the flapping of wings and the honking of geese as they fly south in V's. I've never counted them all, but I suppose their numbers are untold.

Did you know that every year millions, yes, *millions*, of people migrate to one spot on earth, remain for as long as twelve days, and then disperse back to their homes throughout the world? Are your eyes keen, your memory sharp and your faith strong? Let's see where this endless swarm of people travels!

If you'll look on your map, you'll find we've landed in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (for yes, it is ruled by a King) occupies nearly all of the Arabian Peninsula in the Middle East. Looking at your atlas, you will see that Saudi Arabia is bordered by the Red Sea on the west, and by the Persian Gulf on the east. What shape do you see in Saudi Arabia's borders: perhaps the head of a wolf, its nose set towards the Persian Gulf? Actually, the border that outlines the tip of the wolf's nose is undefined. Saudi Arabia is one of a very few



Kingdom of Saudi Arabia map, created by Norman Einstein, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0.

countries in the world in which it has not been determined where some of its borders end and where neighboring countries begin.

Can you see what is missing on your map of Saudi Arabia? There are no pools or snaking lines of blue, and very little green! God created Saudi



Millions of Muslims from around the globe journey to Mecca for the Hajj. Photo by Fadi El Binni, CC BY-SA 2.0.

Arabia with no lakes, no permanent rivers and no expanse of forests. Nearly one quarter the size of the United States of America, Saudi Arabia is thought to be the driest large country on the face of the earth.

While we won't find many families with permanent homes in the vast, dry interior of Saudi Arabia, did you know that one out of every six people on this planet - more than one billion people scattered around the world - consider Saudi Arabia to be their *spiritual* homeland? Since Mecca, Saudi Arabia is the birthplace of the Islamic prophet Mohammed, Muslims worldwide regard this region of the world as their home. Every year during the Islamic month of *dhu al-Hijjah* millions of Muslims from over 70 countries, in the largest annual gathering at one place in the world, make pilgrimage or **hajj** to Saudi Arabia. Once having

the most restrictive travel rules in the world, visitors like you and I are now permitted to visit the country - but only if we have a tour guide. Our tour guide, Saleh, meets us at the airport, wearing his white robe, called a **throbe**, and a flowing head covering of red and white checks called a **guttra**. His guttra is held in place by a black cord called an **egal**, traditionally used to tie camels. "*Marhaba!*" greets Saleh, "Welcome to Jeddah, Bride of the Red Sea and the gateway city to the land of the Holy Mosques."

Today, the mass of Muslim pilgrims crush by us and into the world's second largest airport terminal used only once a year during the annual pilgrimage. Look at the sweeping roof of the terminal. Doesn't it look like the draping tents of the desert Bedouin tribes? But no, says Saleh, Jeddah's airport terminal roof is not actually a

A Child's Geography

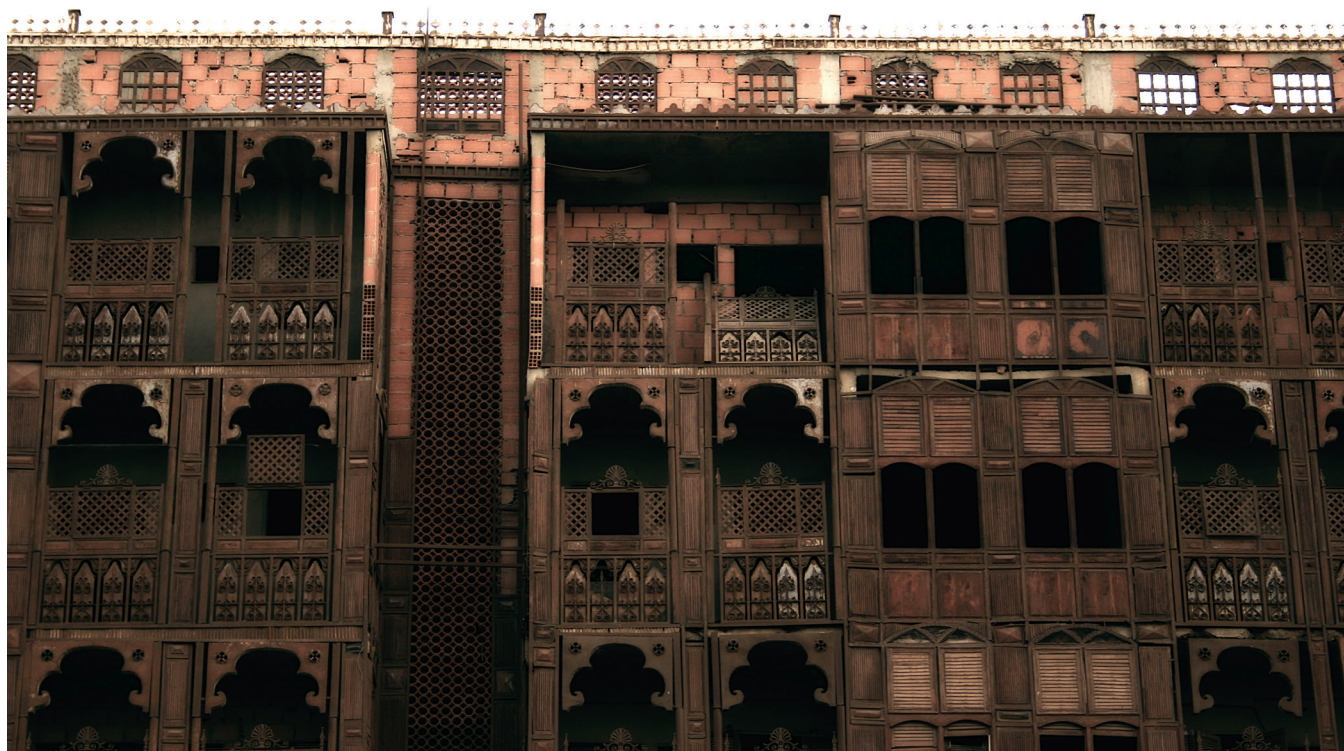
tent, it is made of a fiberglass fabric and is said to be the largest roof in the world. But we don't feel hot under its cover, do we? Designed to be like a shady forest in the middle of glaring hot desert, the white roof reflects most of the sun's heat. Mankind often copies how God created the home of Earth when constructing buildings of our own.

Saleh waves for us to follow him through the crowd of pilgrims and out into the palm-lined streets of Jeddah. Eight lane highways whisk us past tall skyscrapers and modern hotels, flat-roofed homes

built of coral, and mosques with slender minarets pointing into the desert sky. Fountains, some of the highest in the world, spray plumes of water that can be seen far off in the distance. Every traffic round-about seems to uplift a work of art: giant sunflowers, a block of concrete with several cars poking out of it at unusual angles, a marble sculpture of Arabic words. Saleh tells us

that the city of Jeddah is thought to be the largest outdoor art gallery in the world. But you'll notice that none of the sculptures are of people in this Islamic city. This is known as **aniconism**, the Muslim law forbidding representation of living creatures in art work. Muslims fear that such art might become idolized.

The Islamic religion is an all-encompassing way of life in Saudi Arabia, Saleh explains. The country's flag, flapping there in the wind, declares the Muslim faith: "*There is no god but Allah; Mohammad is the messenger of Allah.*" Saleh points to an older man with a red-dyed beard walking down the street with camel whip. He is one of the religious police, the **mutawa**, who make sure that all women have their arms covered and their skirts fall to their ankles—otherwise they may receive a whipping on bare skin. Saudis practice strict Islam. While your mother may wear clothing of her choice when she goes shopping, all



The intricate wooden facades of this building in Old Jeddah are known as rawasheen. They were created to disperse the sun's glare while allowing cool breezes in. Photo by Nouf Kinani, licensed under CC BY 2.0.



A Saudi woman wearing a traditional niqab. Photo by Walter Callens, licensed under CC BY 2.0.

Saudi women must wear the billowing black abaya in public, which covers them from head to ankle. Many Saudi women further cover themselves by veiling their face so only their eyes may be seen. Face veils were worn traditionally by desert women to protect their faces from windblown sand and the harsh sun, but Saudi women now cover themselves for modesty.

Do you hear the melodious song of the muezzin through the loudspeakers of the minaret, calling the country to prayer? It's a sight we've not likely seen near our homes: rows of men outside the supermarket or wherever they are, bowing towards the city of Mecca in prayer. Do you see the sign hanging there in a shop window, "Sorry, Closed for Prayer?" Saleh tells us that all Saudi Arabian offices

Field Notes

Did you ever imagine such a migration of PEOPLE? I want to hear about everything you've seen so far.

PRESS RECORD AND TALK TO ME

- ◇ **About the geography of Saudi Arabia:** *Which peninsula does Saudi Arabia cover? Which bodies of water border Saudi Arabia?*
- ◇ **About the migration of people to Mecca:** *What is the hajj? How many people travel to Mecca each year? Why are they traveling to Saudi Arabia? Can you describe the airport?*
- ◇ **About Jeddah:** *Is Jeddah a modern city? Can you describe some of the buildings? Tell me about the art work.*
- ◇ **Religion in Saudi Arabia:** *What is the religion of the Saudi people called? What are the religious police, or mutawa, watching for? What do Muslim women wear? What does the muzzein's call mean?*

and shop close for up to 30 minutes during the daily prayer times. As the caretakers of Islam's two holy mosques, Saudis pride themselves in carefully following all of these Islamic teachings.

In the creeping traffic of cars and yellow buses, we make our way south on the modern multi-lane highway from Jeddah towards Mecca, where the pilgrims are journeying. Looking out our windows at the mountainous landscape, Saleh informs us that Jeddah and Mecca lie in the geographical area known as the Hijaz. Hijaz means "barrier," an apt name for the rugged mountains God has sculpted in the northern half of Saudi Arabia's west coast. The mountains of the Hijaz, running parallel to the Red Sea, act as a jagged barrier between the great northern central plateau of Saudi Arabia and the Red Sea coast. The Hijaz also contains the slip of low lying coastal plain known as the Tihamah, where the port of Jeddah is located.

When I was a kid, the neighborhood boys had a clubhouse. All the community kids knew the rules: "No Girls Allowed!" Their boys-only rule was not meant to be offensive to girls but to allow a safe, special gathering place for the boys. Saleh explains how the entire city of Mecca is considered so holy that non-Muslims are strictly forbidden to enter it. Since Mecca was once a city where Muslims were driven out, when Mohammed reclaimed the city he declared it a place for every Muslim to feel safe. Can you see the special highway over there that diverts non-Muslims around the city?

When we reach the archway to Mecca, shaped like the large book of Koran, Islam's sacred book, we non-Muslims can go no farther. Saleh must simply describe the hajj to us. For more than 1,300 years Muslims, no matter where they live in the world, have been fulfilling the requirements of Islam by making the pilgrimage to this city in Saudi Arabia. To try and picture how many pilgrims migrate today to Mecca, can you imagine the crowd packed into a stadium for a Super Bowl

football game? Now think of twenty of those stadiums full of people all in one place!

Before entering the city, male pilgrims change into **ihram** clothing: a white, unsewn sheet with unsewn sandals; Saleh tells us that this is to show that all Muslims are equal before Allah. Women simply cover their heads. Can you imagine seeing thousands upon hundreds of thousands of men all dressed alike? Next, the pilgrims enter the city of Mecca where it is strictly forbidden to hurt people, animals or plants. Yes, says Saleh, Muslims are not even allowed to kill a stinging mosquito during hajj!

What draws Muslims to Mecca? In the center of the city sits a mosque, in the center of the mosque sits a stone cube-shaped structure, and in the foundation of the cube building sits the Black Stone, which is the center of the religion of Islam. With 48 entrance gates, and 9 towering minarets pointing to the clouds, Mecca's Grand Mosque is not only a masterpiece of Islamic design, but nearly a million people can stand within its beauty at one time! "*Labbayka Allahumma Labbayak*," ("Here I am at your service, O Allah, here I am.") the sea of pilgrims chants over and over again as they arrive at the Grand Mosque. Here in the center of this magnificent marble mosque, we will find the cube-shaped building draped in a black silk cloth. Saleh explains that Muslims believe that the cube, called the **Ka'abah**, was built by Abraham and his son Ishmael more than 4,000 years ago. To Muslims, the Ka'abah, also known as the House of Allah, is the holiest place on Earth. Saleh explains that the mass of pilgrims march around the Ka'abah seven times, stopping to kiss one of the cornerstones of the Black Stone. Is it true that the Black Stone is a **meteorite**? We'll never know. But we understand that the Ka'abah is the geographic and spiritual center of the Muslim world. No matter where a Muslim lives on the planet throughout his lifetime, he must always face towards the Ka'abah during the five daily prayers.



The Mosque of the Prophet. Photo by Omar Chatriwala, licensed under CC 2.0.

Have you ever had a special time of reflection at a grave of someone you care about? Many of the hajj pilgrims next travel north to Medina to visit the tomb of the Prophet Mohammed. Passing by the slopes of the mountains near Medina, the pilgrims will look out upon dry wadis carved out by long ago rivers, and see herds of grazing camels. But their eyes will be set upon the site of the sole green dome of the Prophet's Mosque, under which

lies Mohammed's resting place. Known as the land of the two holy mosques, Saudi Arabia's Prophet's Mosque, magnificent with its marble, minarets, and 24 white domes, is the second most holy site in Islam after the Grand Mosque in Mecca. As non-Muslims, we can only envision the colorful tiles and small pillars of the older part of the Prophet's Mosque, and the gleaming white marble of the newer section.

A Child's Geography

On a farm close to where I live, most summer afternoons would find a cow quietly chewing cud in a clover pasture and bees humming from flower to flower. The next day, however, a look at the same pasture might find it transformed into a vast tented city, thousands of people perusing the wares of each tent. Perhaps something similar happens in a field near your home when the fair comes to town?

In the fields near Mina, a town three miles [4 km] south of Mecca, a similar tent city sprouts during the hajj. The deluge of pilgrims streams in from Medina and Mecca to stay the night in the blanket of white tents, explains Saleh. Leaving the massive tent city at dawn's first light, the massive sea of pilgrims swarm east to the Plains of Arafat. Some 820 feet [250 meters] above sea

level, surrounded by mountains on all sides, these plains are where Muslims believe Mohammed gave his last sermon. During the Hajj the plains fill with pilgrims praying under the hot sun, asking Allah to forgive them. Thousands of sprinklers atop poles spray a cool mist on the weary pilgrims. After sunset, each pilgrim gathers at least fifty pebbles the size of chickpeas at the base of nearby mountains. Saleh tells us that the pilgrims then carry their handful of stones to Mina, a city just east of Mecca, to hurl them at three walls. Being careful not to be trampled by the mass of people, or to accidentally hit a fellow pilgrim in the head with the pebbles, each pilgrim believes that the pelting of their pebbles is the 'stoning of the devil,' as Muslims believe that Abraham pelted a tempting Satan at this site.



Tens of thousands of pilgrims perform sunset prayers at the Great Mosque, Islam's holiest shrine, in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. Photo by Menj, licensed under CC BY-ND 2.0.

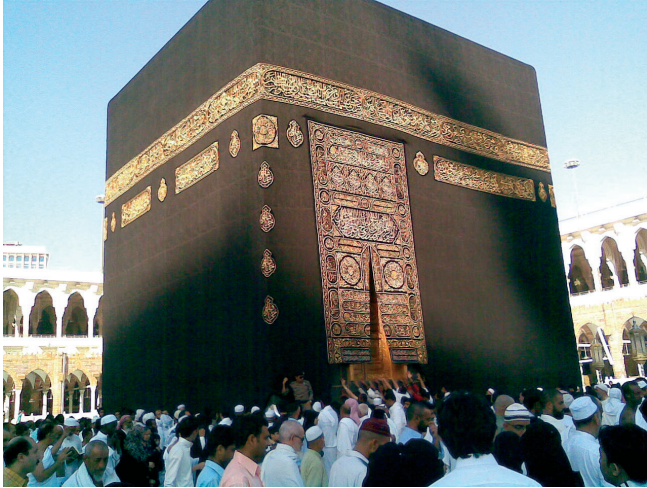


Photo of the Ka'abah. Photo by Yousefmadari, in the public domain.

The final act of the pilgrims' hajj is to again encircle the Ka'abah of Mecca's Grand Mosque seven times. Can you imagine the colors, the smell, the languages of millions of people from all over the earth gathered in this one place in Saudi Arabia? Can you hear the chanting in heavy Turkish accents? Do you see the African women kneeling? Or the group of Asians, wrapped in their white outfits, singing, their feet shuffling to the rhythm? The Hajj pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia, the land of the two holy mosques, may be the world's largest annual migration of people - but did you know that someday there will be a far larger gathering? Someday, *"all nations whom Thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and they shall glorify Thy name"* (Ps. 86:8). Think of that gathering! Where *"at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father"* (Phil. 2:10)! While Saleh could only describe the Muslim hajj to us, I can hardly wait to actually be one of the "[m]any peoples [who] will come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob'" (Isa. 2:3). Can you?

Field Notes

It was fascinating to walk through Mecca with the Muslim pilgrims, don't you think? I look forward to the day when you and I will meet before Jesus' throne!

PRESS RECORD AND TALK TO ME

- ◇ **About Mecca:** *Who is allowed inside? How do non-Muslims get around the city? What is the Hajj? What kind of clothing must the men wear inside the city? the women? What would you do if a mosquito landed on you inside Mecca?*
- ◇ **About the Grand Mosque:** *How many gates does it have? How many people can fit inside? What is in the center? What do the pilgrims do inside the mosque?*
- ◇ **About Medina:** *Whose tomb is here? What does the Prophet's Mosque look like?*
- ◇ **About Mina:** *Why does the town fill with tents each year? Where are the pilgrims going from here? What do the pilgrims gather on the Plains of Arafat? What do they do with the things they collect? Why?*
- ◇ **About the end of the pilgrimage:** *What is the last thing pilgrims do? Can you describe the gathering in the Bible that is even bigger than the Hajj?*

Travel Log

USING YOUR GLOBE OR ATLAS, DRAW AN OUTLINE MAP OF TURKEY



As we travel, let's make record in our very own travel log of the places we've visited and the unusual sights we've seen! Make your map large enough to hold all of your discoveries! *Don't worry about making a perfect map, just do your best. Drawing the basic shape yourself will help you remember it better. Or use the map provided on the CD-ROM.*

Map Notes:

Let's record the locations of:

- ◇ Red Sea
- ◇ Persian Gulf
- ◇ Jeddah
- ◇ Mecca
- ◇ Medina
- ◇ Mina

If you'd like, draw pictures or symbols on your map representing:

- ◇ **Airport** (*a striped tent?*)
- ◇ **Black Stone at Mecca**
- ◇ **Prophet's Mosque at Medina** (*a green dome?*)
- ◇ **White tents at Mina**

Travel Notes: Geographers write what they've seen in order to share the adventure with others—and so they can revisit the places in their memories! **On the next page of your travel log, record three important sights you want to remember from your photos of Saudi Arabia.**



Bringing It Home

SIMPLE IDEAS TO BRING THE WORLD TO YOUR DOOR

Using These Forms:

ART | BOOKS | FOOD | MUSIC | POETRY

Art:

Calligraphy is an important art form in most Arab countries. Artists are amazingly creative in their use of calligraphy and their work is extremely intricate. One interesting style is *zoomorphic calligraphy*. An artist uses letters and words to “draw” the image of an animal – some believe this art form originated because Islam prohibits images of living beings, and this was one way of depicting animals without breaking the prohibition. In the illustration at left, the calligrapher has used Arabic letters to form a lion. Let’s see if we can’t use their ideas to make our own art!

First, on a piece of paper, write the name of an animal you’d like to draw, and a list of words describing or related to that animal. (For example: Zebra: black, white, stripe, four legs, swishing tail, run fast, lion escape, graze, grass, etc.)

Now draw a simple outline of your animal on a different piece of paper and begin to fill in the outline with the words you have listed. Make your letters big or small, wide or narrow, stretch them out or separate the letters, write them in a curvy line, and repeat them; whatever you need to do to fill the outline of your animal. (Perhaps the words “black” and “white” could become the stripes on the zebra’s fur, etc.)

Once you have a little practice, maybe you could use the letters in your animal’s name to draw the outline of the animal! (Could the “Z” in zebra become a couple of ears? Or legs?) What happens if you use wide markers? Or thin markers? Colored pencils? Or calligraphy pens?

The possibilities are endless!

Music:

Music captures so much of a land and people. Introducing your children to Saudi music is a simple way to transport yourselves around the world. Why not check out these sites while your young geographers notebook and map and let the music play while they recount their travels?

<http://music.calabashmusic.com/world/middle-east/saudi-arabia#>

There will come a day when... “At the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:10)

~Ghazi A. Algosaiibi Gr. 1-6

Saudi Arabia

Treasures of a Hidden Kingdom

PART II

When I was kid, I glued together a construction paper crown, draped a bathrobe over my shoulder and waving a measuring-stick scepter, became the queen of a vast kingdom. At the heart of every kingdom lies hidden jewels, guarded secrets, and wonders untold. You may envision Saudi Arabia as a kingdom of wiry camels roaming across wind-blown sands, and in the distance, a mirage of

gurgling water; but don't open your eyes quite yet. Envision troops of baboons, wild flowers carpeting valley floors, apricot orchards sweet with blossoms and a very surprising ancient palace. Could this be the desert kingdom of Saudi Arabia? Now open your eyes and come discover the treasures of the hidden kingdom!

Saleh, robed and bearded with his *gutra* flapping in the wind, guides us south from Mecca

where a gap in the mountains marks the end of the Hijaz region and the beginning of the steep, rugged geographical region known as the Asir. Looking at these jagged mountains, Saleh tells us of an Asir farming community, called the Hanging Village of Habalah, connected to the outside world for centuries only by a single rope. Meaning "rope ladder" in Arabic, Habalah was a tiny stone village clinging to the side of a sheer cliff, home to more than sixty families. The only way for families to travel the impossibly steep slopes of

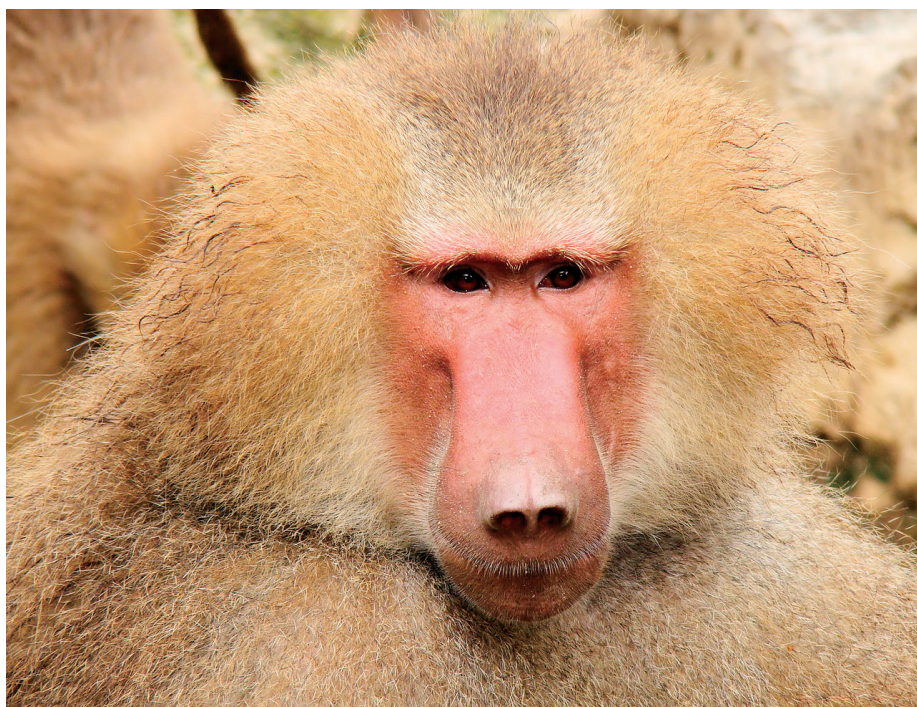


Photo of baboon by Tørrissen Christian Bjørn, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0.



Habala Valley near Abha, Saudi Arabia. Photo by Wajahatmr, licensed CC BY-SA 3.0.

the Asir Mountains was to be lowered on ropes attached to iron posts that had been driven into the edge of the cliff. Saleh explains that since the government couldn't offer schools and medical care for the families at the bottom of the 600 ft [183 m] gorge, the Saudi Arabian king recently built the residents a new village. This is the first of the desert kingdom's treasures: inaccessible, hanging Habalah.

Traveling southward along the steep **precipices** that rise out of the narrow plain, we find the cooler air a reprieve from Saudi Arabia's desert temperatures. Saleh notes that the Asir highlands are not only a popular vacation retreat for heat-weary Saudis, but are one of the most populated regions of the kingdom. Gazing out our window, the reason is apparent: an ocean of mountain **pinnacles** with valleys grayish-blue in the distance, and sharp-eyed **kestrels** hovering in the cool, clear air. This fertile, mountainous region of Saudi Arabia begs the question, "*Who covereth the*

heavens with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow on the mountains?" (Ps. 147:8). Why, our glorious creator God, of course!

How has God created such a lush green region in a desert country? By sending rains to fall generously on this southwest corner of Saudi Arabia. Whereas the Hijaz region of the west coast is dry, the Asir highlands lie just within the range of the southwest monsoon rains from the Arabian Sea and India. A **monsoon** is a very heavy, yet nourishing rain that sweeps in from the south. 12-20 inches [30-50 cm] of rain falls in the Asir during the summer, more than anywhere else in the kingdom, and any winter snows that descend melt immediately. Standing on this mountain ridge with our handful of flowers, we can't help but think that these breathtaking mountain peak views, a surprising selection of plants, and the roaming of animals like baboons, hyraxes, and the rare leopard, make the Asir region an unexpected jewel in Saudi Arabia's crown.

A Child's Geography

Back in our vehicle, we watch as farmhouses cluster on **terraces** which are giant fields like steps up the mountainsides. Amazed to see these farms stepping up the mountain slopes, especially in a land known for its deserts, Saleh informs us that the farmers of the Asir grow crops such as varied as wheat, apricots, pears, tangerines, grapes and pomegranates. From these terraces fashioned from soil and rock, Asir farmers have been growing and exporting coffee for more than 300 years!

The thick walls of the farm houses are made of stone and mud, dotted with small window openings and painted a pristine white. The rooftops, doors and windows are painted with vibrant colors and patterns, making a picture. Traditionally, Saudi women made paints naturally, boiling indigo plants for dark blues and squeezing the juice of pomegranates for flaming reds. Everywhere we travel we see firsthand how geography influences

homes, and how the resources God has given in that place sustains and enriches people's lives.

Before departing this region of the Kingdom, Saleh says we must experience the famous souqs of Asir. Open in a different town each day of the week, and named accordingly, we visit Abha's *Suq al-Thaluth* or "Tuesday Market." Amongst the vendors selling brightly painted clay **incense** burners, silver Bedouin jewelry, and perfumes like frankincense, jasmine and musk, we find in contrast to Saleh's plain thobe, the Najran Saudis wearing bright colored **izars**, (a garment tied to the waist and covering the lower half of the body), topped with black embroidered jackets. The Najran is a region 3 hours drive southeast of Abha. The Najranis live south of Abha in mud towers up to 11 stories tall with tiny windows high on the **ramparts**. Their fort-like homes are like an impenetrable hidden



Dir'iyah is the ancient hometown of the House of Saud, the family of Saudi Arabia's king, by Xristoph, CC BY-SA 3.0.



Masmak Castle is in Riyadh. “Masmak” means strong, thick, or fortified. Aren’t these mud walls just that? Photo by Francisco Anzola, licensed under CC BY 2.0.

kingdom in the far southwest corner of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia! Will you remember how God uses geography to create groups of people with different and interesting homes, clothes and foods?

Driving northwest now, we see that the mountains of the Asir and Hijaz taper off in the east to a vast irregular plateau. Does this harsh landscape look like the home of a king? Across the central heartland of Saudi Arabia, we travel endlessly over barren sands, passing clusters of mountains and yet see no towns or villages. Of course, says Saleh, for only a hardy few could live in this sandswept region of Saudi Arabia. Yet the tribe of the first King of modern Saudi Arabia,

the House of Saud, called this Najd region home. Najd means “highland” in Arabic, which perfectly describes this rocky desert sloping away from the coastal mountains. (This region can also be described as an elevated plateau.) Saleh tells us that a number of wadis cross the Najd from west to east.

Dir’iyah, the hometown of Saudi Arabia’s king, was built on an **escarpment** overlooking a wadi. Looking like the sand castles I used to build at the beach, Dir’iyah is a maze of towers, walls, mosques and palaces made of mud and straw. Who ever heard of a king living in a palace of mud? Saleh tells us that the columns around the king’s courtyard were actually trunks of palm trees and the roofs of



Kingdom Tower photo in the public domain.

the palace were of mud spread on palm branches. These old Dir'iyah palaces we've discovered are another guarded jewel in Saudi's kingdom!

You may be wondering where Saudi Arabia's king lives now? We'll find the King in the capital city of Riyadh. Meaning "a place of gardens and trees" in Arabic ("rawdah"), Riyadh is an oasis city

and was founded at the meeting of many wadis. As we look out at these bustling streets and the Kingdom Center, a graceful skyscraper and the tallest building in Saudi Arabia, it's hard to believe Riyadh, one of the fastest growing cities in the world, this city began started out as a tiny mud village not so very long ago.

Saleh next points out Masmak Castle in Riyadh, the ancient mud-brick fort where the king's family lived long ago. Beyond the fort is a spacious tiled area called as-Sa'ah Square where locals gather in the evening to talk and drink tea. Come Friday morning, however, as-Sa'ah Square becomes Chop Chop Square. With one of the highest execution rates in the world, the Saudi Arabian government beheads an average of 2 people a week for crimes such as robbery, murder...or the crime of being a Christian. Saleh tells us that in Saudi Arabia passing out Bibles is a crime punishable by death. We've haven't seen any churches in our exploration of Saudi Arabia, have we? That is because one of the King's spokesman recently declared that "there are no churches [in Saudi Arabia], not in the past, the present, or future."

We call the king of Saudi Arabia 'king,' but Saudis call him "The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques." As the caretaker of Islam's two holiest sites, Saudi's King believes he is keeping his country pure by prohibiting all other religions in the kingdom.

There is a strange mix of past, present and future in Saudi Arabia, isn't there? Camel markets in the same city as skyscrapers, mud-houses alongside shopping malls, long-robed kings and princes living among fast cars, neon signs, and young Saudis talking on cell phones. Before leaving Riyadh, Saleh asks some of us if we'd like to actually go visit Saudi Arabia's kingking. Any man can! The king holds a regular **majlis** or court where any male in the entire kingdom may come before the king with a personal appeal or request. If you could go before Saudi Arabia's king, would you be nervous? It might help you to remember our Heavenly King and know "*there is none like unto thee, O LORD; thou art great, and thy name is great in might. Who would not fear thee, O King of nations?*" (Jer. 10:6-7).

Field Notes

Isn't Saudi Arabia an amazing, diverse land? I love to learn about her people.

PRESS RECORD AND TALK TO ME

- ◇ **About the Asir region:** *Tell me about Habalah. What are the Asir highlands like? What is a monsoon? What are terraces? What kinds of produce are grown in this region? What kinds of flowers will we find? What animals might we see?*
- ◇ **About the village farmhouses:** *What are they made of? How are the houses decorated? Where does the paint come from?*
- ◇ **About the souqs:** *Are they open in the same place every day? : What kinds of things are sold there? Tell me about the Najranis:... their houses and their clothes. What are they selling at the souq?*
- ◇ **About the Najd region:** *How do we describe the geography? Tell me about Dir'iyah. Can you describe the palace?*
- ◇ **About Riyadh:** *Tell us Wwhat important person lives here and what you know of him.? What is as-Sa'ah Square? Tell us what you know of Could you own a Bible or go to churches in Saudi Arabia? Why not? Could we visit the King?*

A Child's Geography

Have you ever gone a whole day with nothing to drink? How about an entire week? Doesn't just thinking about it make your tongue stick to the roof of your mouth and your throat feel parched? Don't you feel desperate for a cold glass of God's life-giving water? Go ahead. Saleh and I'll wait here until you go quench your thirst. Saleh has deep, dry, dangerous places to take us to next. Whatever you do, don't forget your water bottle. Your life will depend upon it!

Leaving Riyadh, we drive northeast across the desert towards Dammam. Is that a train of camels we see trekking across the desert off in the distance? No, says Saleh, that is actually a train of iron! In the desert? Yes, says Saleh, presently Saudi Arabia's only railway tracks across the sands between Riyadh and the Gulf Port city of Dammam. The King and his government have recently planned the railway to snake farther west across Saudi Arabia's dry dunes, through a gap between the Hijaz and Asir mountains to Jeddah on the opposite side of the country. Instead of cargo ships rocking the waves of the seas for 5-7 days around the Arabian Peninsula, freight trains will carry the goods from the Red Sea to the Persian Gulf in 18 hours, less than one full day.

Who needs a water-conserving camel when one can take the train that requires no water at all? Saleh laughs.

Saudi Arabia may have scant water resources, but it produces *rivers* of fuel! Saleh points to the tower stretching like a crane out of the sands near Dammam. Is it a windmill pumping water? No, it's an **oil rig** pumping up streams of black oil from underneath Saudi Arabia's sands. God tucked more than one quarter of the world's known supply of oil under the Saudi Arabian desert. Pumping out more than 10 million barrels of oil per day, the Saudis then heat the oil so that nearly half of it becomes refined and changes into gasoline. Saudi Arabia sells its oil, or "black gold," to other countries all over the world, and with that tremendous wealth, Saudis have built a flourishing economy.

Saleh waves us towards the eastern coastal plain to find the most flourishing, verdant greens, an island of growth in the sea of desert sands. There ahead of us----- Have you ever seen so many date palm trees in your life? This is the Al-Hasa Oasis, home to more than half a million people and not only the largest oasis in Saudi Arabia but one of the largest in the world's. (If you find the

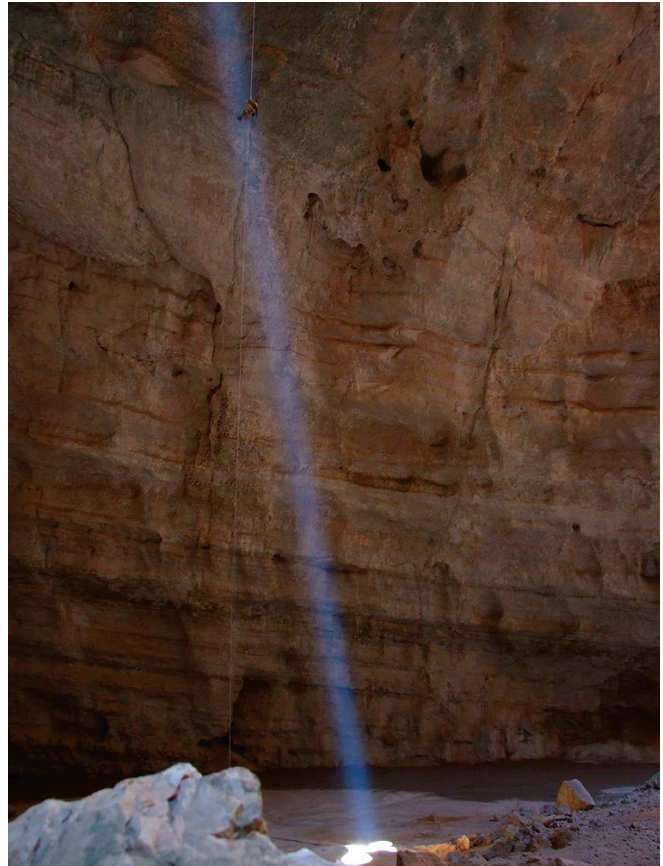


The oasis of Al-Hasa. Photo by Shijan Kaakkara, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0.

city of Al-Hufuf on your atlas, you've found the principal city of the Al-Hasa oasis.) Actually, the eastern, coastal plain, the fourth region of Saudi Arabia, (do you remember the other three: Hijaz, Asir, and Najd?) is sometimes called the Al Hasa after the great oasis. While some of the world's largest oil fields can be found in the sands around the oasis, the Al Hasa produces a different kind of desert wealth: food! Over 3 million palm trees find water for their roots from the sixty springs of water that bubble up here. Everywhere we look in Al Hasa, a name meaning "drinking" in Arabic, we see water courses carrying water to farms of rice, corn and citrus fruits. Did you know that more than 100 million eggs a year are produced on poultry farms here in the oasis? In a country of sand with an average rainfall of only 4-5 inches [10–12 cm] per year, lush Al Hasa produces food eaten by Saudis all over the country.

When I was a little child, I once went exploring in a cave. Inky black, pierced only by a shaft of sunlight, the cave was full of unknown mysteries. My father laughed that bears lurked ahead, my brother suggested snakes, and I wondered if it wasn't time to go home! Do you think its time to explore some more of Saudi Arabia's mysterious treasures? Nodding, Saleh smiles and drives us south west.

Driving to Al Kharj, south of Ridayh, (check your map!) we watch as circles of green dot the rocky desert. Saleh reports that large irrigation systems, much like your lawn sprinkler, rotate to water huge circular fields of alfalfa. Why all that alfalfa in the desert? Saleh laughs and says we are driving on what locals call "Milk Road." Do you see all the cows under special awnings, shaded from the intense desert sun? Saleh tells us that a dairy farm near Al-Kharj holds the title of the world's largest integrated dairy, milking more than 30,000 cows and producing enough milk to give a city of 100,000 people more than a gallon [3.78 liter] jug of milk everyday! Yes, as difficult



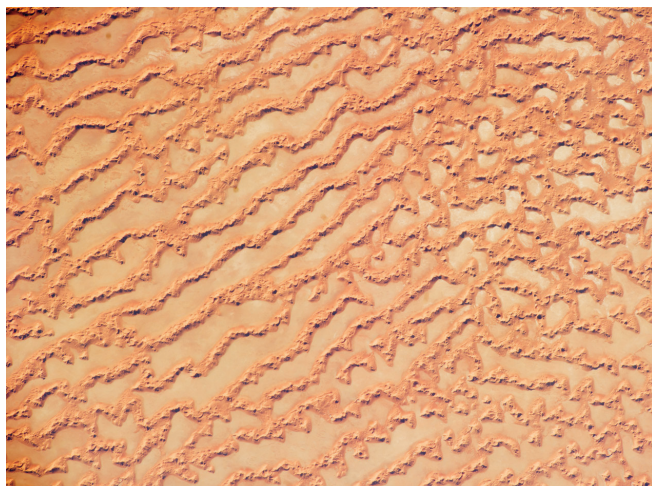
A climber descending to the cave floor. Photo by Michael McAndrew, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0.

as it is to imagine, the world's largest dairy farm is in the middle of the Saudi Arabian desert! But where does the water necessary for the crops and cooling the cows come from? That is part of the mystery says Saleh.

Underneath the Saudi sands God created **aquifers** of water. Farmers near Al-Kharj have dug thousands of wells, some as deep as a mile [1.6 km] into the earth, to pump out water so hot it is close to the boiling point! The water is cooled in ponds before being sprinkled on cows or crops.

Saleh asks if we would like to go diving in the desert to explore these aquifers of water. Diving into underground water in the desert? Yes, says Saleh, come!

Ahead of us a massive rocky cliff rises out of the desert, a huge black slit at its base beckoning us to come explore below. This is a **dahl**, which is



The Empty Quarter sand dunes as seen from space, courtesy of NASA, visibleearth.nasa.gov.

the Arabic word for “cave,” a sinkhole in the sand. Named Ain Hit, “*ain*” meaning spring, this is one of the most famous dahls in the kingdom. Watch the sharp limestone boulders that cover the cave’s floor. Notice that the walls of the cave’s entrance are a grey-blue rock called **anhydrite**. Carefully scramble down the crumbly slope through a small opening——such blackness! Turn on your flashlight: ah, there is the water. Isn’t it the clearest, stillest water you have ever seen? The bottom of the underground lake shimmers light green around a black hole, the entrance to an underwater cave. Saleh tells us that in earlier times, the clear waters of Ain Hit were just below the surface, making it a watering hole for thirsty camel caravans. The irrigation of farms like those on Milk Road has caused the **water table** to dramatically decline, with Ain Hit’s water level now dropping far into the darkest reaches of the cave. We have no scuba diving equipment with oxygen tanks so instead of diving we settle for simply dipping our feet in the cool water. On our way out of the dahl, we wave hello to a Saudi family with three children coming to explore the underground waters of the sinkhole. Their father beckons them to come further down into the cave. But they only cling tighter to their veiled mother’s

black abaya. Children in Saudi Arabia feel just like I did about caves as a child!

Driving east, we watch the landscape grow increasingly barren, and the sand dunes grow higher, like towering mountains! Saleh informs us that sand dunes in this region of Saudi Arabia may peak as high as 1,083 feet [330 meters] high (that is about 30 times taller than your house!) Doesn’t this fifth region of Saudi Arabia look different than the regions we’ve visited before? This is the Rub al Khali, literally meaning “the quarter of emptiness,” one of earth’s harshest regions. Saleh says Saudis simply refer to this area as the Sands, the largest expanse of sand in the whole world! The countries of Spain, Belgium and the Netherlands would fit into this Empty Quarter and there still would be room to spare. Almost entirely uninhabited, even the Bedouins only skirt the edges of this forbidding territory because its summer heat is too extreme.

The smothering heat of the Empty Quarter makes it hard to breathe. There is no way to escape the scorching heat; no shade to find cool relief. Quench your dry throat with a long drink from your water bottle. Too bad we aren’t dhabs, Saleh mutters. A **dahb** is a bulky lizard up to 25.5 inches [65 cm] long. The dahbs of the Saudi Arabian Peninsula live their entire lives without drinking even a single drop of water! All the water they require is supplied by the dry, salty plants they eat on the edges of the deserts. Saleh suggests that perhaps we should be like a dhab and dig ourselves a tunnel 7 feet [2.2 meters] down into the sand to escape the relentless rays of the sun! Actually, God designed dahbs to become the same temperature as their environment with their skin color acting a bit like a thermometer: dark grey at night, beige as the day warms, and bright yellow when it is so hot that only a dhab would trot across the sands. Saleh tells us that the nomadic Bedouins of Saudi Arabia eat the dhab as desert delicacy which tastes much like chicken!



Underneath the vast sands of the Empty Quarter are millions of barrels of oil. Photo in the public domain.

Saleh squints about. It is so easy to lose direction in the Empty Quarter with nothing to serve as landmarks. But we can't afford to get lost with such a scant water supply. Wait! What is that over there on the horizon? A tribe of Bedouin nomads are riding a long string of camels off in the distance, and due to the extreme heat, they look as if they are walking on air. Saleh is certain that the Bedouins will be able to direct us—Bedouins can even tell by their footprint in the sand whether a traveler was male or female! As we approach, we see that the Bedouins are setting up camp for a meal. With large white smiles, they wave us into their tent, out of the sun's 131 F [55 C] noonday temperatures. A circle of tribal women, entirely cloaked in black, faces hidden behind veils, sit on pillows and rugs off to the side, away from the men. An elderly Bedouin presents us with a big white bowl filled with frothy warm milk—camel's milk! Doesn't it taste rich, creamy and slightly sweet?

As we travel eastward into the late afternoon, the wind—"hawa"—sweeps in. Over the howl of the gusting wind, Saleh tells us that yes, uninhabited Empty Quarter sands lie before us, but what lies below that is the largest oil field on the entire planet: the Ghawar. Ghawar stretches one hundred and fifty miles [240 km] long and twenty-five miles [40 km] wide across desolate desert. Thousands of meters below these dunes lies more than 70 billion barrels of oil patiently waiting to be pumped out of the 3, 400 wells punched down into it. Saudi geologists came in search of oil here because of that anhydrite rock discovered at Ain Hit—and indeed found, far below the barren landscape, an excellent anhydrite seal over immense lakes of thick, rich oil. The Empty Quarter is not empty at all!

As the sun sets, Saleh, smiles that brilliant smile of his. He's given us the grand tour of Saudi Arabia. From Jeddah as the gateway city to the Hijaz's Mecca, up through the cooling heights of

Field Notes

It's hard to imagine a more different world than our own, isn't it? Let's talk about all you've seen today.

PRESS RECORD AND TALK TO ME

- ◇ **About Dammam:** *Tell me about the railway. How does the government hope the railroad will help goods reach Saudi Arabia? What does the train replace? What liquid will we find in abundance under Dammam? What is it used for?*
- ◇ **About Al Hasa:** *What is an oasis? What trees grow here? What bubbles up from the ground? What food is harvested? What else is produced here?*
- ◇ **About Al Kharj:** *What is "Milk Road"? What familiar animals live here? Tell me about the water these animals drink.*
- ◇ **About Ain Hit:** *What is a dahl? How do we find the water at Ain Hit? What color are the cave's walls?*
- ◇ **About Rub al Khali:** *What does the name mean? What do Saudis call it? Why? How big is it? Do many people live there? Why or why not? What is a dhab? How does a dhab tell us the temperature? Whom might we meet in this Empty Quarter?*
- ◇ **About the Chawar:** *What lies below the expanse of sand? How is it brought to the surface?*

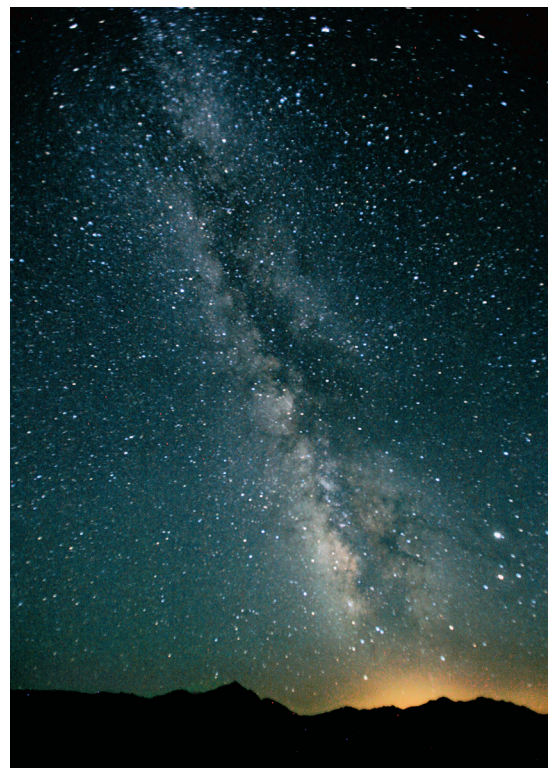


Photo of the Milky Way by Steve Jurvetson, licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0.

the terraced terraced Asir mountains, across the rocky, gravelly central plain of Najd, slipping along the eastern region of the Al-Hasa with its lush oasis, and down into the Empty Quarter. What jewels we've discovered in this kingdom and such fascinating people we've met! What has been your favorite gem? Oh, look up! Do you see the twinkling diamonds God hasis sprinkleding across the Saudi Arabian skies? Maybe these starry heavens on a hushed night in the Empty Quarter are the most memorable sight of all?

"Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light...Kings of the earth, and all people, princes...and children: Let them praise the name of the Lord" (Ps. 148:3, 11-13).

Travel Log

USING YOUR GLOBE OR ATLAS, DRAW AN OUTLINE MAP OF TURKEY

We've seen things today that simply must be mapped, so that they will never be forgotten!



Map Notes:

Let's record the locations of:

- ◇ Asir region
- ◇ Abha
- ◇ Najd region
- ◇ Dir'iyah
- ◇ Riyadh
- ◇ Dammam
- ◇ Al Hasa
- ◇ Al Kharj
- ◇ Ain Hit
- ◇ Rub al Khali
- ◇ Chawar

If you'd like, draw pictures or symbols on your map representing:

- ◇ A rope ladder for the Hanging Village of Habalah
- ◇ Monsoons in the Asir highlands
- ◇ A market at Abha
- ◇ A mud castle in Dir'iyah
- ◇ Skyscrapers in Riyadh
- ◇ A train winding through the desert
- ◇ Palm trees at Al Hasa (*and eggs?*)
- ◇ Cows at Al Kharj
- ◇ Caves at Ain Hit (*a black hole? scuba gear?*)
- ◇ The Empty Quarter (*dahbs? a Bedouin tent? camels?*)

Travel Notes: Geographers write what they've seen in order to share the adventure with others—and so they can revisit the places in their memories! **On the next page of your travel log, record three important sights you want to remember from your photos of Saudi Arabia.**

Bringing It Home

SIMPLE IDEAS TO BRING THE WORLD TO YOUR DOOR

Using These Forms:

ART | BOOKS | FOOD | MUSIC | POETRY



Books:

Traveling Man: The Journey of Ibn Battuta 1325-1354 by James Rumford

A beautifully written work that will kindle further exploration, this book follows the travels of 14th century Muslim Ibn Battuta from Morocco, through Arabia, to China and back, including a pilgrimage to Mecca. Eloquent text: *"Traveling it leaves you speechless, then turns you into a storyteller."* *"Traveling it had captured my heart, and now my heart was calling me home."* Grades. 1-6

Ali and the Golden Eagle by Wayne Grover

Fiction. Grover uses his experience living in Saudi Arabia to write this story of an American who

befriends a Saudi boy. Together they raise a baby eagle and train it to compete in a falconry contest.

****older readers: Grade 4+

The Children's Encyclopedia of Arabia by Mary Beardwood

Recommended as a beautifully illustrated book for a wide range of ages. This book covers history, culture, plants, animals and people of the region. What lives in the largest sand desert in the world? Which architectural structure breaks all world records? How long can a camel live without water? A gorgeous, thorough presentation that is most worthwhile. *All ages.*

Poetry:

*I sing a happy song
happier than the sunrise
on another shore;
happier than the smile
a birthday-child smiles;*

~Ghazi A. Algosaibi

Born in Eastern Saudi Arabia, Ghazi A. Algosaibi, a widely known Saudi poet, is the Saudi Arabian ambassador to the nearby country of Bahrain, while writing of a simple Arab life.

Food:

I hope you like coffee! Saudis consider the ritual of preparing and serving coffee the first rule of hospitality. In the past, each time coffee was served, men would roast the beans over a fire on a long-handled spoon and then grind them with a mortar and pestle. Once prepared, the coffee is poured in small cups without handles and filled half-way. To be polite to our hosts, we must restrict ourselves to three servings and shake the cup with a quick movement of our wrists to let them know when we are finished. (In case you don't like coffee, we've included a recipe for mint tea also!)

Arabic Coffee

2 cups cold water
6 teaspoons ground coffee
6 cardamom pods (crushed) or ¼ - ½ tsp ground cardamom
Cloves
A few strands of saffron

Put the coffee, cardamom seeds, cloves and saffron into saucepan with the water, bring to a boil and allow to simmer for about 30 minutes. Allow coffee to settle for a minute or two, and then pour a small amount into coffee cups.

Mint Tea

1- 2 tea bags (or loose leaf tea if you have it)
2 tablespoons fresh mint leaves
4 cups boiling water
Sugar cubes

Place the teabags (or loose tea) and mint into the bottom of a saucepan, crushing the mint against the bottom. Fill the pan with boiling water and allow to stand for a few minutes. This tea is usually drunk very sweet, so add plenty of sugar cubes!



Arabic Coffee

Now that we have our tea or coffee ready, let's cook up some **Lahooh Bel Loaz (Almond Pancakes)**. Put the flour in a bowl and add milk, eggs, baking powder, yeast and water and mix thoroughly. Set batter aside to rise.

4 cups flour
1 cup milk
2 eggs
3 tablespoons oil
1 teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon yeast
water
1 cup confectioner's sugar
1 tablespoon ground cardamom

Grease frying pan or griddle with a little oil, pour half a ladle of batter into the pan. Spread the batter quickly into a thin pancake and fry over medium heat until the top bubbles, then flip and brown the other side. Repeat using all batter.

Mix together the sugar, cardamom and almonds. Stuff each pancake with the mixture and roll the pancakes into cylinders. Arrange on a serving dish and sprinkle with more ground almonds. 10-12 servings.

Go into all the world...

a walk of prayer

We were astounded when we took a peek inside Saudi Arabia. We not only found a land full of ancient wonders, we found that Saudi Arabia is full of boys and girls who are much like us. They were created by a God who loves them dearly—just as He loves you.

Will you and your family join me in praying for the Saudi people?

Lord, give us Your love for the peoples of the world, and help our family to live in a way that shows our love for them.

Father, Saudi Arabia is a land that is completely foreign to most of us, but You understand and know her very well. May Your will be done in Saudi Arabia.

~We pray for **the pilgrims** who come from every corner of the globe to worship in Saudi Arabia. May Your light shine on them and may their hearts hear Your voice.

~In a country of vast oil **wealth**, we remember those who do not benefit from the natural resources You supplied this nation. While there are many rich in Saudi Arabia, there are also many **poor**. We remember those who have less. Please be their provision.

~We pray for **Christians living in Saudi Arabia**. Lord, it is a crime to worship You in that nation. May Your people have boldness to serve You and courage to walk the way of Christ. May they be protected and sheltered under Your wings. Please keep them from harm and help them to honor Your name.



~We ask for **strength** for those who are persecuted in Saudi Arabia. May they not grow weary, but may they have joy and peace even in the midst of suffering. We ask that You would move on the hearts of the government and religious leaders to allow **freedom of religion** in Saudi Arabia.

~We pray that **the peoples of Saudi Arabia** may taste the goodness and grace of You, Father. Kindle a passion for You in their hearts. Rain down Your love, mercy, and hope on that land.

We love you, Lord, and the people who are living in Saudi Arabia today. May the Light of our Savior dawn over all nations today. Draw us all closer to You, Father. In Jesus name, Amen.

15

Jordan

The Highway Men Came Riding

PART I

As a farm girl, I have lived my whole life on gravel country-roads with potholes and puddles. Yet a few times a year, my family would drive down what was called the “401 Corridor,” a hallway of highways, winding through

metropolitan cities and tangles of traffic, carrying us out to Grandmother’s raspberry pies and Grandfather’s knee-slapping tall tales. Whenever my brother and I would drive through imaginary worlds, it was always on the 401 Highway.



King's Highway, Jordan. Photo by Kyle Taylor, licensed under CC BY 2.0.

A Child's Geography

Did you know that there is a highway in the Bible? Numbers 20:17 records the words of Moses, *“Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country: we will not pass through field, or through the vineyards...we will go by the king’s highway.”* Where might we find this biblical highway? If you will, gently spin your globe again to the Middle East and find Israel’s Jordan River Valley. Now stand on its western bank and look over to its eastern bank: there is the country of Jordan...where one of the oldest communication routes in the world, the King’s Highway, twists and turns through rocky highlands and barren desert. Are your eyes of faith focused, your memory strong, and your faith ready to see evidence of God down every road we travel? Jordan awaits!

The Kingdom of Jordan (for it is governed by a king) is the middle country in the Middle East.

Approximately the size of the American state of Kentucky or the European country of Hungary, Jordan has the longest border (of 148 miles or 238 km) with Israel of any other Middle Eastern country. Tracing Jordan’s borders, can you make out the shape of a duck’s head, opening its mouth wide to the east to snap up something tasty for lunch? Actually, some call the “v” shaped jolt in the southeastern border between Saudi Arabia and Jordan “Winston’s Hiccup” since the British leader who was assisting in drawing up boundary lines had just had more than a satisfactory lunch. While the story is a myth, perhaps you’ll remember that Jordan’s boundaries are about opening wide for lunch...and then hiccup!

Geographically, God has created the landscape of Jordan as mostly harsh arid desert with few natural resources. **Natural resources** are raw



T.E. Lawrence wrote of his passage through the Wadi Rum, “Our little caravan grew self-conscious, and fell dead quiet, afraid and ashamed to flaunt its smallness in the presence of the stupendous hill.” As we watch the sunrise over these rocks, we think of our own smallness and the stunning magnificence of our God: “The LORD liveth; and blessed be my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted.” Ps. 18:46. Photo by Daniel Case, CC BY-SA 3.0.

materials that God has created in nature that are essential and useful to people, such as minerals, oil, fishing and forestry. While not rich in natural resources, Jordan is, however, positioned like a bridge of land, connecting Africa with Europe and Asia. Following the precious resource of freshwater from the Jordan River, trade caravans, wandering peoples, and marching armies have used Jordan as a highway through the desert throughout the centuries.

Like the landscape outside my passenger window changed as we rolled along the highway to my grandparent's, so the highway through Jordan is one of diverse scenes. Jordan's geography can be divided into three main regions: the western Jordan Valley, the northern Highlands and the Desert, called the Badia region in the east and Rum Desert in the south.

Can you point to the “beak” of Jordan’s outline? Jordan’s eastern desert fills the duck’s “beak.” Tracing our finger down the western border, we find the Jordan River running like water off the duck’s back. Don’t you think it quite apt that open-wide-for-lunch Jordan has a River Valley called its “food bowl”? This valley, known as the *Ghor* in Arabic, with its warm, year-round agricultural climate, fertile soil, winter rainfall and summer irrigation, produces much of Jordan’s food. The Jordan River Valley is a small food bowl, however, comprising only 6% of Jordan’s land.

Right in the middle, between the eastern desert and the Jordan River valley, we find Jordan’s Highlands. This narrow high plateau is the home



Map of Jordan. Photo courtesy of the CIA, in the public domain.

of Jordan’s three largest cities, including its capital, Amman, situated about where the duck’s eye would be. Let’s land in Amman!

Peering out on this city perched on the hillside, we immediately understand why Amman is often times referred to as the ‘white city.’ A canvas of outstanding whites, beiges and ochres, Amman’s buildings are constructed from the whites stone found in Jordan. Do you notice that we are looking at nearly all apartment buildings or condominiums? Amman has few homes where only one family lives; only members of the royal family and a few high ranking officials live in large, single-family dwellings.



A Jordanian man wearing keffiyeh. Photo in the public domain.

Originally built on seven hills, just like Rome, Amman now blankets 19 hillsides as the city grows with families leaving other Middle Eastern areas of conflict. The sounds of car horns in the crowded streets give way to the Muslim call to prayer echoing from stately minarets gracing Amman's skyline. With each neighborhood named after the *jabal* or mountain upon which it sits, we wind our way through the district east of Jabal Amman, through kebab stalls with roasting meat, spice shops, the air thick with strong aromas and cafes with men sipping rich Arabian coffee in the warm sunshine. In a typical gesture of Jordanian curiosity, an older man wearing a **keffiyeh**, the checkered head piece of Jordanian men, asks us where we live and our plans for the day. In Arabic custom, he embraces

us with a flourish, introducing himself as Malek. Might he show us the wonders of Jordan? Malek doesn't consider this an intrusion of privacy for in his Arabic language the closest word for privacy is "lonely." Malek doesn't want us to be lonely! Let's explore Jordan with our Jordanian friend.

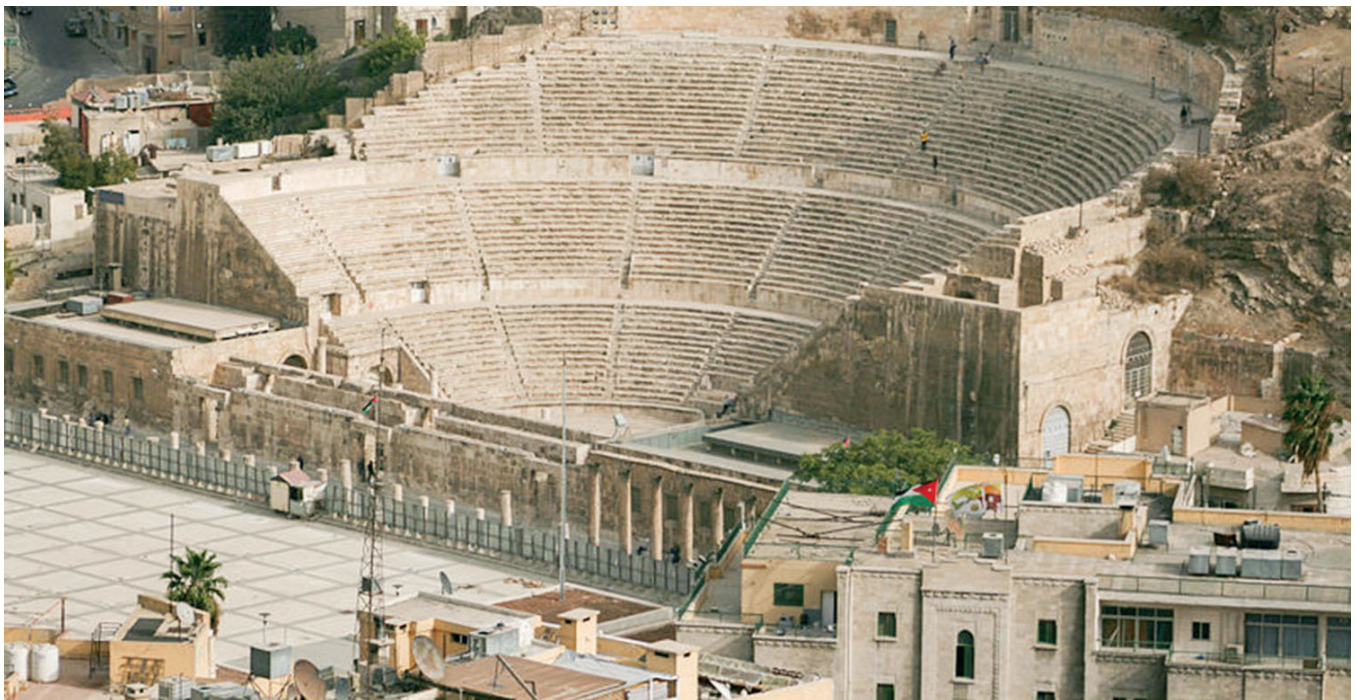
Our newfound guide invites us to stop for some sweet pastries and to watch the locals play a game of backgammon. Why are all those Jordanian men sucking on long wooden pipes with hoses connected to an ornately decorated stand? Malek explains, in his thick Arabic accent, that many Jordanian men smoke the **argeeleh** or "hubble bubble" after eating out, sucking up a sweet-smelling smoke which causes a bubbling sound, hence the name.

Leaving behind the hub-bub and hubble bubble of Jebel Amman, Malek leads us to the top of the L-shaped hillside of Jebel al-Qala'a, to Amman's ancient acropolis. Aren't the wadis that surround this hill deep and steep to climb? In ancient times, families fled to this hill for protection, drinking water from the strong spring bubbling there, the source of the Jabbok River. 2 Sam. 12:26-27 reads, *"And Joab fought against Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and took the royal city. And Joab sent messengers to David, and said, I have fought against Rabbah, and have taken the city of waters."* Do you know you are standing in the same place of that Biblical event, where the spring gurgled up? The Bible's name for Amman is Rabbah Ammon and every time you read of the Ammonites in Scripture, you are reading of the ancient inhabitants of Ammon. Some think that it was here on this hill in Ammon that Uriah was killed by David's order (2 Sam. 11:16-17).

What fixes our attention from this hilltop, however, was built long after David's time. Malek

points to the massive Roman theater made of stone at the foot of the hill, which seats over 6,000 spectators. Perhaps you are instead gazing upon the remains of the Temple of Hercules? Built by the Romans nearly 200 years after Jesus' time, these remnants and ruins of ancient people stand amidst the homes of Amman today where children are playing in the streets. Malek beckons us to wander south out of Amman on the ancient King's Highway. What historical sites, geographical landscapes and friendly people might this 5,000-year-old King's Highway take us to?

If you'll trace your finger along the King's Highway on your map, can you see that many of Jordan's towns and cities sprung up along this ancient trading route? Passing wheat fields that have been cultivated since the ancient biblical kingdom of the Ammonites, we arrive in the first city south of Amman, Madaba. Named Medeba in Scripture, meaning *"waters of quiet,"* this modern city is rebuilt on the Biblical Moabite town (Num.



An ancient Roman theater sits alongside modern buildings in Amman. Photo by Bernard Gagnon, CC BY-SA 4.0.



The Mosaic Map of Madaba originally covered a staggering 51 [15 m] by 16 [5 m] feet. Only one third of the map remains today. Photo by Disdero, CC BY-SA 2.5.

21:30), which was given to the tribe of Rueben (Josh. 13:16). I have a tattered map of my local countryside that has been torn into a few pieces but taped back together. Madaba, however, has a map that was made of 2 million little pieces—and not of paper, but of vividly colored local stone!

Come, step into the Greek Orthodox Church in Madaba's city center. Isn't what we find on the church's floor captivating? The floor is tiled with pictures of plains, hills, valleys, and a smattering of villages stretching from Jordan in the north, to Egypt in the south.

The famous Mosaic Map of Madaba, designed during the reign of Justinian, around 570 A.D., is the oldest surviving map of the Holy Land in the

world. Can you see the huge fish swimming down the tiles of the Nile River? We are looking at one of the best topographical representation, or best picture maps of the features of the lands of the Bible. Perhaps earlier pilgrims, making their way through the Holy Land, wandered into this church to look at this map also?

I once pulled up the old linoleum flooring in my house to the delightful discovery of a pumpkin gold hardwood floor underneath. But that was nothing compared to what Madaba's residents have uncovered! Madaba may look like any other East Bank Jordanian town with flat roofed, stone houses, except for what is hiding under its floors: dazzling Byzantine mosaics!



A panoramic view of Amman from atop the Amman Citadel overlooking the Roman amphitheater. Doesn't Jordan's capital city of Amman indeed look like the "White City?"
 Photo by Edgardo W. Olivera, licensed under CC BY 2.0.

Perhaps your eyes of faith would like to behold the panoramic view of the actual Holy Land today, instead of an artful mosaic? Driving 10 minutes west of Madaba, we pass a few black sheep peppering a flock grazing in the rolling countryside. Can you see the Bedouin tent, there in the distance? Although very few Jordanians now live in tents, Malek tells us that Bedouin women weave strips of goat's wool on outdoor looms, then sew the strips together to make these goat-hair houses. Malek describes how the floor of the tent will be covered with large carpets, while smaller carpets, also woven of sheep, goat or camel wool, will be used as prayer rugs. A shape of an arrow, woven into the rug's end, points towards Mecca as the Muslim Bedouin says his daily prayers, no matter where his tent may be. Would you like to live in a goat-hair house?

The Bedouin camp fading behind us, we coil our way up the lonely, windswept Mount Nebo. Standing atop this highest peak in the Moabite mountain range, we read from Deuteronomy 34:1-7: *"Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo... and the Lord shewed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan, and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and the land of*

Field Notes

Wouldn't you like to travel the King's Highway?

PRESS RECORD AND TALK TO ME

◇ **About the geography of Jordan:**

What shape does the country resemble from above? What is "Winston's Hiccup"? What is the landscape of Jordan like? Does Jordan have many natural resources?

◇ **About the "food bowl":** *Which area of Jordan is named the "food bowl"? What is produced here?*

◇ **About the Highlands:** *Which important city is on this plateau? Why is Amman called the "white city"? Do most of Jordan's families live in houses or apartments? Describe some of the sights we might see in Amman. ; What food might we eat? What smells are in the air? What are the people wearing? What games are they playing?*

◇ **About Madaba:** *What is on the floor of the Greek Orthodox Church? When was this map made?*



The Brazen Serpent Sculpture, created by Italian artist, Giovanni Fantoni, stands atop Mount Nebo. David Bjorgen, CC BY-SA 3.0.

Judah, unto the utmost sea, and the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of the palm trees, unto Zoar. And the Lord said unto him, This is the land which I swear unto Abraham...So Moses the servant of the Lord died there.” Our feet now stand where Moses’ once did. From right where you are, God showed Moses the Promised Land that he himself would never enter (Do you remember why? Numbers 20:12-14). Malek sweeps his hand across the breathtaking view of the Jordan Valley out to the Dead Sea. What God has created is far more magnificent than the mosaic map of this scene! Can you make out the rooftops of Jericho, the spires of the churches in Jerusalem and the hills of Bethlehem on the horizon?

We can hardly comprehend that, close to where we now stand, God Himself buried Moses. The Holy Scriptures of Deuteronomy 34:6 are true: “*but no*

man knoweth of [Moses’] sepulcher unto this day.” We may not know exactly where God trod on this soil when he buried Moses, but we see evidence of Him everywhere: the sight of earth and sky meeting at the horizon, the smells of soil and growth in the spring breeze, the foreign languages of friendly tongues that fill our ears. The same God that showed Moses this land from atop Mount Nebo is the same God who meets with us to show us His world today.

Malek turns our attention to the sculpture of the Brazen Serpent. While the geographical location of the event lies further south in Jordan (Num. 21:4-10), this bronze serpent monument atop Mount Nebo reminds us of God healing those who, bitten by poisonous snakes, looked upon the bronze snake that Moses erected. The sculpture also reminds us that when we look upon the Cross of Christ, we too find healing and wholeness.

Isn’t your birthday one of the happiest days of the year? Did you know one of the saddest birthday parties in history happened in Jordan? Just a few miles southwest of Mount Nebo, the King’s Highway winds us up the stark slopes to the palace of Marchaerus, overlooking the waters of the Dead Sea. Looking down this steep hillside, we can easily appreciate how the geography of the land was used to best advantage: the deep wadis on three sides of the hill were a natural defense, protecting the fortress from attack. Malek asks if we can see the caves and cisterns halfway down the eastern hillside. While the cisterns held life-sustaining water for the fortress, the caves are believed to have been about death: a prison for captives.

Looking out where King Herod’s lonely fortress crowned this imposing mountain, we can envision Herod’s delighted face as his daughter danced for his birthday. Imagine his horrified visage when, upon offering his daughter anything her heart desired, she responded with “*I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist*” (Mk. 6:25). Brought from one of the caves, John the Baptist was executed here at



This structure protects the ancient remains of the Basilica of Moses atop Mount Nebo, Jordan, also by David Bjorgen

Machaerus. Malek tells us that the Arabic name for Machaerus is Al Mashnaqah, or “The Gallows.”

As we take one last magnificent look out to the Dead Sea, Malek explains that just south of the Dead Sea lies the hot, dry Wadi Araba, a spectacular valley known for its sheer, barren mountains. Here Jordanian families support themselves with the mining of potash. Malek explains that Jordan’s economy largely centers around the mining of such natural resources as phosphates (a kind of salt) and potash (used as a fertilizer). Jordanians then sell or export these resources to countries all over the world. An **economy** is the organizing of people as consumers, workers, business owners to generate wealth for a community. Isn’t it interesting that we call this area the Dead Sea region but God created natural resources here and throughout barren Jordan to serve as the very life of Jordan’s economy?

As Malek tours us yet further south on the King’s Highway, he tells us how this Highland region, separating the Jordan Valley from the plains of the eastern desert, receives more rainfall than other areas of Jordan, sprouting green growth after the rains. The rains may come down through wadis, all of which intersect this highland plateau.

The view out our window stills our tongues. Creasing sandstone hills, brushed with muted hues, loom, crest and roll away. This is Wadi Mujib, Malek announces, one of Jordan’s most magnificent sights and often called the Grand Canyon of the Middle East. Since creation, God has scoured Wadi Mujib’s sandstone deeper and deeper with coursing water, forming a spectacular, gnarled gorge. We read of this very place in Numbers 21:13, “Arnon...is in the wilderness that cometh out of the coasts of the Amorites: for Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites.”



Field Notes

It would be amazing to stand on the top of Mount Nebo where Moses stood, don't you think?

PRESS RECORD AND TALK TO ME

- ◇ **About the Bedouin camps:** *What are the houses made of? What covers the floors?*
- ◇ **About Mt. Nebo:** *Why is this mountain mentioned in the Bible? What sculpture stands atop the mountain? What does it represent? What can be seen from the top?*
- ◇ **About Marchaerus:** *Which King built a fortress here? What were the caves used for? What famous prisoners died at Marchaerus?*
- ◇ **About wadi Mujib:** *What is this wadi often called? How was it formed? How low is the park? What animals might we find here?*

Can you find the King's Highway that snakes more than 1300 feet [396 m] down through Wadi Mujib Photo by F. Higer, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0.

The Bible's name for Wadi Mujib is the Arnon River, north of which the Israelite tribes of Reuben and Gad once settled.

Today we find Wadi Mujib as the lowest nature reserve (or park) in the whole world, some 1,345 ft. [410 meters] below sea level. Malek tells us that if we look carefully up on the sandstone cliffs, perhaps we'll catch a glimpse of an **ibex**, one of the most graceful of mountain goats, or perhaps a prowling **caracal**, a medium-sized cat graced with unique black and white ear tufts. Do you see any caracals in the rocky valley of Mujib, leaping with amazing skill to catch airborne prey?

Hasn't the King's Highway led us to the most intriguing places? Which was your favorite thus far? You should see what marvels Malek is eager to show us further down this winding road through Jordan. Traveling the high way of the King promises treasures untold—in more ways than one!



The peak where Herod's Machaerus fortress once stood with the Dead Sea in the background. Photo by Thomas Bantle, in the public domain.

Travel Log

USING YOUR GLOBE OR ATLAS, DRAW AN OUTLINE MAP OF TURKEY



As we travel, let's make record in our very own travel log of the places we've visited and the unusual sights we've seen! Make your map large enough to hold all of your discoveries! *Don't worry about making a perfect map, just do your best. Drawing the basic shape yourself will help you remember it better. Or use the map provided for you on the CD-ROM in the back of your book.*

Map Notes:

Let's record the locations of:

- ◇ Jordan River
- ◇ Chor Valley
- ◇ Amman
- ◇ Jebel al-Qala'a
- ◇ Madaba
- ◇ Mt. Nebo
- ◇ Marchaerus
- ◇ Wadi Mujib

If you'd like, draw pictures or symbols on your map representing:

- ◇ "Winston's hiccup" (*a sandwich?*)
- ◇ Veggies and fruit in the "food bowl"
- ◇ Wwhite buildings in Amman
- ◇ Roman Theater in Amman in the district of Jebel al-Qala'a (*maybe a costumed character? Or a pair of theater curtains?*)
- ◇ Mosaic map at Madaba (*a scattering of tiles?*)
- ◇ Serpentine cross on Mt. Nebo
- ◇ An ibex and caracal in wadi Mujib

Travel Notes: Geographers write what they've seen in order to share the adventure with others—and so they can revisit the places in their memories!

On the next page of your travel log, record three important sights you want to remember from your photos of Jordan.



Bringing It Home

SIMPLE IDEAS TO BRING THE WORLD TO YOUR DOOR

Using These Forms:

ART | BOOKS | FOOD | MUSIC | POETRY



Books:

Would you like to make your own **mosaic** art like the Mosaic Map of Madaba?

Choose a number of different colors of paper – plain, wrapping paper, magazine pages, foil, textured papers, whatever you have on hand. (You also might want to draw and color on a plain piece of paper for an interesting effect.)

Cut your papers into strips $\frac{1}{2}$ inch [1.2 cm] wide and then cut the strips into small squares.

Lightly draw a design on a piece of background paper (such as construction paper). (Perhaps you want to draw a map of your town?) The fun

part comes next! Lay your mosaic pieces on your design and glue them in place on the background paper. (A simple method is to use spray mount glue which allows you to reposition your pieces as much as you want. If you use regular glue be sure to plan your design carefully!) If you'd like, laminate your finished project and preserve it for a long time. (It probably won't last as long as the Mosaic Map of Madaba though!)

Music

Music captures so much of a land and people. Introducing your children to Jordanian music is a simple way to transport yourselves around the world. Why not check out these sites while your young geographers' notebook and map and let the music play while they recount their travels?

Listen to samples of music from Jordanian artists:

http://worldmusic.nationalgeographic.com/worldmusic/view/page.basic/country/content.country/jordan_817?fs=www3.nationalgeographic.com

With singing:

http://worldmusic.nationalgeographic.com/worldmusic/view/page.basic/artist/content.artist/bedouism_5322

Poetry:

*In that good and distant city
in a courtyard full of grass
all things sing
and everyone dances*
~Ibrahim Nasrallah

Ibrahim Nasrallah was born in a Palestinian refugee camp in Jordan in 1954. Mr. Nasrallah is a poet, novelist, professor, painter, photographer, and journalist. He has won many awards for his poetry.

Books:

Jordan (Enchantment of the World) by Leila Merrill Foster

The Enchantment of the World series provides well-written overviews of various countries. Children will get a taste for the history, geography, politics and religion of Jordan in this book by Leila Foster. *Good for all ages.*

The Space Between Our Footsteps by Naomi Shihab Nye

An anthology of poetry focused on 19 countries of the Middle East. Themes of homeland, family, nature, war, and love are all explored in this collection. Colorful paintings are interspersed throughout the book making this a treat for eyes as well as ears. ***older readers Grades 7+

Jordan: Past and Present by E. Borgia

Explore ancient Jordan, Petra and Amman in this clever book. Illustrations show ruins in the present day and then overlays show the ruins at the height of their beauty. *A treat for all ages.*



Jordan

Rock of Ages

PART II

As a farmer's daughter, I have grunted and groaned over thousands and thousands of rocks in my lifetime, hauling off sparkly-flecked granites and chalky, powdery limestone. There is something exceptional about each stone; how God crafted its shape, its color, its feel. You too have likely paused on an

afternoon jaunt to bend over and claim as special little stone as your own? The land of Jordan has stones of its own... breathtaking, stupendous stones, unlike anything you've ever seen or imagined. Focus your eyes of faith, and sharpen your attentive memory—this is one adventure you won't want to miss!



Rocky landscape near Petra, Jordan. Photo by Daniel Case, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0.



Karak Castle, the second largest castle in the Middle East, by Teo Blancato, PD.

The window rolled down on this average summer day of 89 F [32 C], Malek's *keffiyeh* blows in the breeze as he winds and weaves us further south along Jordan's King's Highway. As we gaze out on the rolling Jordanian hills, Malek tells us that Jordan has a Mediterranean climate with a long, hot, dry summer and a wet cool winter from November to April. If you checked the closets of Jordanians living in the northwestern highlands (such as in Amman), you'd definitely find winter coats: white snowflakes blanket the ground several times during the winter and frost is fairly common. Yet the month before and after the blistering, parched summer finds Jordanians choking in great clouds of sand and dust, stirred by the gale force winds that they call the ***khamisin***.

What is that we see rising ahead of us, Malek? Like a massive ship sailing the crest of a steep hill over deep, plunging valleys, a castle rides high on the skyline above a city. Even higher mountains rise above the imposing city. With a great flourish, Malek announces that we have arrived in Karak. (Arabs are well known for their grand gestures and body language.) A modern city of 200,000 people, Karak is built on a triangular plateau with the towering Karak Castle on the brow of the narrow southern tip. The dark, roughly shaped stones of the castle walls we now look upon date back to the 12th century and knightly Crusaders, when the castle's lord grew rich from charging road-tolls on the travelers of the King's Highway. Yet a fortress has dominated this landscape



Jordan's national dish of mansaf. Photo by Ji-Elle, licensed CC BY-SA 4.0.

since biblical times. If you open your Bible you'll read of this place as Kiharaseth, meaning brick fortress, one of the strongholds of the Moabites.

2 Kings 3:25 tells us that the King of Israel, Jehoram, ravaged Moab and besieged its king, Meshua, in a fortress in this place: *"And they beat down the cities...only in Kirharaseth left they the stones thereof."* The trapped Moabite king then *"took his eldest son...and offered him for a burnt offering upon the wall...So Israel departed from him and returned to their own land"* (2 Kings 3:27). Our God, full of compassion, says *"...mine heart shall mourn for the men of Kirheres"* (or Karak) (Jer. 48:31). Isaiah 16:7 reads, *"Lament and grieve for the men"* (or, using a play on words, "raisin cakes") *of Kir Hareseth."* (Was this play on words used since raisin cakes were a local specialty to Karak in Biblical times?) Exploring the tunnels and passages of the castle's depths with our flashlights, we touch these cold stone walls and know that the just as God loved the people of ancient Karak, so He loves the people of this place today.

Eating in the rest house next to the stone castle, Malek doesn't order us raisin cakes but Jordan's national dish, ***mansaf***, for which Karak is famous. A steaming platter of rice atop thin bread covered with lamb meat and dried goat's milk and a crowning sprinkle of pine nuts is set before us and we heartily eat from the communal dish with our hands. (But we don't dig in to Jordan's national dish with both hands—remember that Arabs only eat with their right hand!) True to Arab hospitality, Malek ensures we are overfed before we continue down the King's Highway.

Traveling south out of Karak, Malek points out greenhouses covering acres of precious Jordanian farmland. Do you recall how the outline of Jordan's boundaries looks like a duck opening its mouth wide? Think of the thirsting duck looking for water! One of the ten most water-deprived countries in the world, most of Jordan receives less than 7.8 inches or 200 millimeters of rain per year. In such an arid country, Jordan's farmers harvest something that doesn't grow up from the soil, but falls from the sky: water! Malek explains that farmers harvest rainwater by collecting runoff rain from roofs and ground surfaces, or building dams across wadis to collect water from sporadic torrential rainfall. Malek tells us that farmers harvest rain so that they may grow, irrigate and harvest other crops such as wheat, barley, tomatoes, melons, cabbage, bananas and potatoes.

Do you see the Bedouin tents camped there near the King's Highway? Malek tells us that while very few Jordanians now live like those Bedouin, a nomadic lifestyle of tents and herding, Bedouin culture lives on in every day Jordanian life. While dinnertime around your family table finds both males and females eating and talking together, a meal with a Bedouin family separates females and males. Activities between males and females are generally segregated in Jordan. As



Wheat, barley, and fruits such as olives, figs, and apricots are grown on farms in Jordan. Photo by Dale Gillard, licensed under CC BY 2.0.

most marriages are arranged in Bedouin tribes, so most Jordanian weddings are arranged also.

Do you ever imagine your wedding day? What will you wear? You likely have no idea who you will marry. If you lived in Jordan, you might imagine wearing a black dress you sewed yourself and marrying your first cousin! First cousins are considered the best pairing, and the traditional wedding dress is black, handmade by the bride over the course of a year! Malek explains that it takes that long to carefully handstitch the elaborate embroidery—but only on the left side of the dress. The right side of the dress has coarse simple designs, since babies are traditionally carried on the right arm.

Small towns stream by our window, the towering minarets of each mosque punctuating the sky. Can you read the road signs along the King's Highway? English place names and directions are written under the Arabic words in their elegant script. While you may read the sign from left to right, Malek reads the signs the

opposite way, right to left. Malek smiles as he informs us that he also begins a book from what we would call the back. Arabic has no capital letters and modern standard Arabic, the style of Arabic of Malek's newspaper, does not use the marks that indicate vowels with short sounds. That is like you reading your English newspaper without any of the short vowels printed: "hat," "hit," "hot," and "hut" would all be spelled "ht"!

We do not need to read any sign to know that the scenery outside our window truly is a sculpted landscape of brilliant magnificence! Just north of Shobak on the King's Highway, Malek announces we are driving through the Dana Nature Reserve. Can you see the ancient village of Dana nestled quietly amidst these craggy colored mountains? Strikingly different than most Jordanian villages of cement blocks, the stone village of Dana was slowly being abandoned by villagers for lack of water. Malek tells us that a new spring has revitalized the ancient village and steeply terraced gardens now



The Dana Nature Reserve is home to more than 25 different endangered or vulnerable animal species. Photo by Bernard Gagnon, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0.

grow lush in the warm sunshine. After hiking trails of the Dana Reserve's stunning sandstone structures and taking in the memorable views of the canyon-like wadi, let's slip into the village for some of their renowned apricot jam.

Do you lose keys, socks, and a shoe every now and then? I have heard of lost snakes, lost boats... and even, the worst, a teary-eyed lost child. But a lost city? How could a whole city disappear and no one know where it went?

As it is always best to retrace one's step to the beginning when looking for something lost, let's go back to what we know of this lost city. This southern region of Jordan was once Edom, inhabited by Edomites, descendants of Isaac's son, Esau. Moses stood in this "Red Land" and asked the King of Edom, *"Let us pass, I pray thee through thy country...We will go by the king's highway...And if I and my cattle drink thy water, then I will pay for*

it" (Num. 20:17-19). The King of Edom came out from his rock dwelling and said, *"Thou shalt not go through."* Makel tells us that the Biblical Mount Hor is nearby, where it is believed that Aaron died and was buried (Num. 20:23-29), and the area's main water source is named Ain Mousa (Spring of Moses) as some think it is here that Moses smote the rock to quench the thirst of the parched Israelites.

The prophet Obadiah declares, *"Thus saith the Lord GOD concerning Edom...The pride of your heart has deceived you, you dweller in the refuges of the rock [Petra, Edom's Capital], whose habitation is high..."* (Oba. 1:3 Amplified Bible). From Biblical times, the Edomites were known to live in the clefts of these rust red rocks. Eventually, the Edomites were displaced by a people called the Nabateans who, creating more sophisticated rock dwellings, grew wealthy from caravans bringing incense, myrrh, and precious stones from Asia



Try to imagine what it might have been like for the Biblical Edomites to live in these rocks, followed by the architectural genius of the Nabateans, and then the recent Bedouin tribes. Berthold Werner, PD.

and the Arabian Peninsula to be traded in the west. Some believe that the three kings who came with gifts to worship Jesus may well have stayed in this rock city. By the 7th century after the time of Jesus, the Nabateans experienced a massive earthquake in their rock homes and moved away. Slowly, the outside world forgot about these rock dwellings. Yet the local Bedouin tribes always knew of the rock city, keeping it a closely guarded secret, just as you may keep the location of a special hideout a mystery. Until one day in 1812, a young explorer from Switzerland heard locals speaking of a hidden “lost city” in the mountains of the Wadi Mousa, the Valley of Moses. Malek beckons us to come see what sights the speechless explorer (re)discovered.

Field Notes

How I wish I could see the amazing rocks of Jordan for myself! Would you like to come with me?

PRESS RECORD AND TALK TO ME

- ◇ **About Jordan's climate:** *What are the summers like? And the winters? Would a Jordanian ever need a winter coat? Do you remember what a khamsin is?*
- ◇ **About Karak:** *When was Karak castle built? What Biblical nation was Karak the capital of? What is mansaf? How is it made?*
- ◇ **About water in Jordan:** *What important resource do Jordan's farmers harvest? How do they collect the rainwater? For what purpose?*
- ◇ **About Jordanian culture:** *Describe meal time in a Bedouin family. Why might a Jordanian woman wear a black dress? Whom might she marry? Tell me about reading in Arabic. How is it different from reading in English?*
- ◇ **About the “Lost City”:** *Who were the Edomites? The Nabateans? When was the city re-discovered by non-Jordanian people? Who discovered it?*

A Child's Geography

Malek leads us through the dark shadows of a long gorge called the Siq whose towering stone sides almost entirely block out the sun. Malek tells us that the Siq, meaning “shaft,” is so narrow—less than six feet in places—that the Nabateans could easily defend their rock dwellings. Suddenly the gorge breaks open and, framed in a narrow sunlit slit in the cliffs, we catch a glimpse of not a simple cave house but the most spectacular intricately carved masterpiece, the *Khasneh*, (the treasury of the Nabateans), glowing in the late afternoon sun. Like all visitors, we stop short here with a gasp: the lost city of Petra is strikingly worth finding!

Hidden behind a barrier of rugged mountains, the rock hewn city of Petra is a breathtaking wonder of the world. The traveler and poet Dean Burgon offered an oft-quoted description of Petra, “*Match me such a marvel save in Eastern clime, a rose-red city half as old as time.*” Ancient Petra may still be called the “Rose-Red City” but, looking at the God-brushed color of these stones, we may well call it the “rose, blueberry, curry, slate and chocolate city!” Such hues! Exploring the city’s carved building, hundreds of tombs, and canyon locations, we hardly know what is more remarkable: the obscure location? the narrow

entrance through the gorge? the monumental architecture? the ingenious network of channels that carried life-giving water to this secluded place, allowing the city to thrive? Perhaps what is most mind-boggling is not that this entire city was carved out of rock by hands just like yours, but that the same Hand that chose the color of your eyes, is the Hand of God who painted this canyon such a staggering array of colors.

Would you like to live in this hidden rock city, glowing like molten copper when lit by the fiery sun?

Until recently, local Bedouin families lived in Petra, but the Jordanian government has moved them now to live in nearby modern housing.

As Malek tours us further south on the descending King’s Highway, past cement block villages dotting worn hillsides, he reaches into his pocket to finger a string of little stones. While your father may reach for an aspirin when feeling stress, Muslim men throughout the Middle East click along what they call “worry beads,” 33 beads of mother-of-pearl, coral, date pits, ivory, or amber, one for each of their names for Allah. A practice that dates back to the 9th century, Malek says that many Muslim men feel undressed without their worry beads!



The end of the Siq with a dramatic view of Al Khazneh (The Treasury), Petra, Jordan. Photo by Bernard Gagnon, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0.



Photo of sandstone rock-cut tombs in Petra. Photo by Etan J. Tal, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0.

Yet watching the landscape change outside our window, we have no worries—simply awe! Mammoth rocks rise up from the desert floor. Malek tell us that this is Wadi Rum, the most dramatic desertscape in Jordan...perhaps in the world! Don't you think the scene looks a bit like streets of sand through a city of monolithic, window-less buildings of rock? Yet there are no skyscrapers, stores or houses lining paved streets through Wadi Rum. Some visitors refer to this majestic region of Jordan, with its massive cliffs and reddish sands, as the Valley of the Moon. T.E. Lawrence, the renowned British soldier and adventurer, explored Wadi Rum and wrote, "*We entered Rum at last, while the crimson sunset burned on its stupendous cliffs and slanted ladders of hazy fire down the walled avenue.*"

Wadi Rum is a place of paradox, hinted at even its name. While wadi means "valley" in Arabic, iram means "high point." Is Wadi Rum a highpoint valley? It would be more accurate to think of Wadi Rum as a high tableland plateau, with immense pillars of massive granite and sandstone rock formations breaking up through the sands.

Driving through clouds of reddish sands whipped across the desert in the hot winds, Malek escorts us to the sole inhabitants of Wadi Rum, the Bedouin. Living a semi-nomadic lifestyle, the Bedouins of the Wadi Rum graze their flocks of nibbling sheep and goats for months at a time in one vast location before moving on to greener pastures. While we see camels wandering around the encampment, we also spot expensive four wheel drive vehicles and convenient cell phones.



*This Jordanian man is fingering the black and red stones of his Islamic prayer beads.
Photo by James Gordon, licensed under CC 2.0.*

Malek explains that the money generated from guiding tourists from around this world through this remarkable scenery has influenced the Bedouin way of life. These modern conveniences, however, do little to change the ancient tradition of generous hospitality.

A Bedouin man named Nasser, dressed in traditional garb, warmly greets us with embraces and welcomes us into one of the black tents, *bayt ash-sha'ar*, literally meaning 'houses of hair.' Shall we have some mint tea or cardamom-flavored coffee? Malek informs us that a traditional serving of Bedouin coffee involves 3 cups of the brew; one for the soul, one for the sword and one because you

are a guest. Don't ask for a fourth, or you'll be considered greedy!

Sitting next to the Bedouin campfire, we are struck by the overwhelming quiet of the Wadi Rum. Who can resist sleeping out under the stars in this place? The Bedouin serenade the night's first twinkling lights with traditional Arabic music. While Bedouin women sit in rows facing each other, singing lyrics back and forth, Malek explains that the tradition instruments of the Bedouin are the *shabbaba*, a sort of flute made out of a metal pipe, and the *rababa*, a one-string violin. Yet the most beautiful instrument of all is the voices of the women, their lilting poetry echoing off the towering rocks.

Come morning, Malek promises memorable explorations of the rocks of Wadi Rum, including one of the world's highest natural arches, Burdah Rock Bridge. Are you adventuresome enough to scale the 1800 ft [550 m] sheer walls of the Rum's sandstone crags?

Some mountaineers climb Wadi Rum's Jabal Rum, the highest peak in all of Jordan at 5,689 ft. [1, 734 m] If you would prefer to hike instead of climb, Nasser offers to guide us down trails where water trickles out of rocks like a crack in a big clay jar. Like leeches clinging to their host, roots of wild fig trees stretch along the rock in search of drops of water. Rare rains in the Rum can germinate seeds that have lain dormant for years, carpeting the wadi in a profusion of flowers. Nasser's description of tranquil "hanging gardens" and desert blooms in the midst of the dry Wadi Rum whets our appetite to perhaps explore trails with him tomorrow. Whether we chose trails across the Rum's sands



Do you think the Wadi Rum looks like the Valley of the Moon Photo of Wadi Rum, Jordan by Daniel Case, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0.

or scaling its cliffs standing like sentinels, Malek assures us that we'll bring several jugs of pure water with us, drawn directly from the great aquifer of underground water that lies under the Wadi Rum, and supplies much water to Jordan.

Smiling, Malek and Nasser express how pleased they are that a young person such as yourself came to explore Jordan. Do you know that Jordanians view children as so important that mothers and father traditionally change their names after the birth of their first child? (If your name was Mahmoud, upon your birth, your Jordanian father would become "Abu Mahmoud" [literally, 'father of Mahmoud'] and your mother become "Umm Mahmoud" [literally, 'mother of Mahmoud'].) Smiling back at our Jordanian friends, we will remember Jordan as the country that has warmly welcomed young and old alike down through the centuries, its rocks declaring the wonder of the Rock of Ages.

"The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower." ~Ps. 18:2

Field Notes

What a marvelous country! Petra, the Siq, the Wadi and its Stone Bridge...what an amazing country God has created.

PRESS RECORD AND TALK TO ME

- ♦ **About Petra:** *Describe a trip through the Siq. What other name is Petra called? Why? Can you share some of the history of Petra? What do you find most amazing about the "Lost City?"*
- ♦ **About Wadi Rum:** *What interesting geography prompts some to call this area the "Valley of the Moon?" What surprising modern conveniences do the Bedouin of Wadi Rum have? How many cups of Bedouin coffee might our friendly hosts share with us? What are shabbaba and rababa? Would you like to cross the Burdah Rock Bridge? Why or why not? What lies hidden under the ground of Wadi Rum?*

A Child's Geography

How I love adventures. Don't you? Perhaps you too feel sweet sadness when a journey draws to a close. Our travels through the Holy Lands have led us to such wonders. Haven't we seen evidence of God's glory everywhere? And the people we have met! How God loves them. May you take His love on all your future travels.

*May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you,
wherever He may send you.
May He guide you through the wilderness,
protect you through the storm.
May He bring you home rejoicing
at the wonders He has shown you.
May He bring you home rejoicing
once again into our doors.*

~Celtic Prayer



Tourists passing a Bedouin tent near Petra.



Burdah Rock Bridge, Wadi Rum. Photo by Bgabel, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0.

Travel Log

USING YOUR GLOBE OR ATLAS, DRAW AN OUTLINE MAP OF TURKEY



Map Notes:

Let's record the locations of:

- ◇ Karak
- ◇ Shobak
- ◇ Petra
- ◇ Wadi Rum
- ◇ Jabal Rum

If you'd like, draw pictures or symbols on your map representing:

- ◇ **Karak Castle**
- ◇ **Greenhouses south of Karak**
- ◇ **Bedouin tents throughout Jordan**
- ◇ **Dana Nature Reserve** (*colorful gardens in the sandy desert?*)
- ◇ **The Siq** (*this will require some creativity! Perhaps an arrow pointing to the Lost City?*)
- ◇ **Music and stars in the Wadi Rum** (*perhaps some singers, or musical notes?*)
- ◇ **Burdah Rock Bridge** (*remember to make it high among the rocks!*)

Travel Notes: Geographers write what they've seen in order to share the adventure with others—and so they can revisit the places in their memories! On the next page of your travel log, record three important sights you want to remember from your photos of Jordan.



Bringing It Home

SIMPLE IDEAS TO BRING THE WORLD TO YOUR DOOR

Using These Forms:

ART | BOOKS | FOOD | MUSIC | POETRY



Books:

Jordan (Enchantment of the World)

by Leila Merrill Foster

The Enchantment of the World series provides well-written overviews of various countries. Children will get a taste for the history, geography, politics and religion of Jordan in this book by Leila Foster. *Good for all ages.*

The Space Between Our Footsteps

by Naomi Shihab Nye

An anthology of poetry focused on 19 countries of the Middle East. Themes of homeland, family, nature, war, and love are all explored in this collection. Colorful paintings are interspersed throughout the book making this a treat for eyes as well as ears. ***older readers Grades 7+

Jordan: Past and Present

by E. Borgia

Explore ancient Jordan, Petra and Amman in this clever book. Illustrations show ruins in the present day and then overlays show the ruins at the height of their beauty. *A treat for all ages.*

Poetry:

*In that good and distant city
in a courtyard full of grass
all things sing
and everyone dances*

~Ibrahim Nasrallah

Ibrahim Nasrallah was born in a Palestinian refugee camp in Jordan in 1954. Mr. Nasrallah is a poet, novelist, professor, painter, photographer, and journalist. He has won many awards for his poetry.

Food:

Have you ever unpacked a bag of groceries and found that on the trip home the loaf of bread got squished and unusable? Bedouins in the Middle East - who pack up their homes and travel all the time - came up with an ingenious way to solve this problem. They make **pitas!** Pita bread is a staple in nearly all Arabic countries. A flat round bread, it is easily made, very portable, can be sliced in half for sandwiches or even used in place of a fork and spoon for eating other foods!

Why don't you try making some of your own?

1 package of yeast

1/2 cup warm water

3 cups all purpose flour

1 1/4 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon granulated sugar

1 cup lukewarm water

Pour yeast into warm water, stir until dissolved. Add sugar and stir until it is also dissolved. Stand for 10-15 minutes until water is frothy.

Combine flour and salt in large bowl and make a well in the center of the mixture. Pour the yeast mixture into the well.

Slowly add an additional 1 cup of warm water, and stir until the dough is elastic.

Remove dough from bowl, place on floured surface and knead for 10-15 minutes or until no longer sticky and dough is smooth and elastic. Place dough in large bowl coated with olive oil, turning once to coat top. Cover and let rise in warm place

until doubled in size. (1 hr – 3 hrs depending on temperature of room.)

Gently deflate dough after it has doubled and roll it into a long rope. Pinch off 10-12 small pieces and place on a floured surface. Allow to rest, covered with a towel for 10 minutes. Place a baking sheet in the oven and preheat to 500 F with rack on lowest oven rung.

Roll each ball of dough into $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick circles (about 5-6 in [12-15 cm] across). Place circles on hot baking sheet and bake for 4 minutes until the bread puffs up. Turn over and bake for an additional 2 minutes. Remove pitas with a spatula and gently push down on the puffed up part. Store in plastic bags.



Go into all the world...

a walk of prayer

Didn't we discover Jordan to be a land of sights and sounds of the Bible? From Bedouin tribes to friendly Jordanians in the capital city of Amman, the people of Jordan warmly welcomed us to walk ancient ways to wondrous places. We found that Jordan is full of boys and girls who are much like us. They were created by a God who loves them dearly—just as He loves you.

Will you and your family join me in praying for the Jordanian people?

Lord, give us Your love for the peoples of the world, and help our family to live in a way that shows our love for them.

Father, Jordan is a country of influence among the Middle East. May You grant her people wisdom as they work for peace.

~We pray for **the many refugees** who come from across the Middle East to Jordan seeking peace. We ask that You bless the country of Jordan for being a place of shelter. May those who enter her borders find jobs, food, and shelter to provide for their families. May they also find rest.

~We pray that this dry country may have enough **water resources** to meet the needs of the families who live in Jordan. May they have tools to be wise stewards of their current water supplies, and may You bless Jordan with resources to develop further water supplies.

~We pray that you may **prosper the families** of Jordan, a country with few natural resources, little water, and little land suitable for agriculture.



Everything every nation, family, person has is a gift from Your hand. Thank you for meeting the needs of Jordanians.

~We thank You for the freedoms that Christians have in Jordan. We ask that You would preserve those freedoms and make an even broader way for those who long to serve You. May **Christians** boldly worship You and lift up Your name.

~We ask that You would be with the many **young people** who live in Jordan. May they grow in wisdom. We ask that You raise up peace-loving leaders from among these young people and help them to influence the future direction of the Middle East.

We love you, Lord, and the people who are living in Jordan today. May the Light of our Savior dawn over all nations today. Draw us all closer to You, Father. In Jesus name, Amen.

Appendix

A CHILD'S GEOGRAPHY: EXPLORE THE HOLY LAND

Fast Facts



Turkey resides in two continents: Asia and Europe. It borders Bulgaria, Greece, Georgia, Armenia, Iran,

Azerbaijan, Iraq and Syria; the Black Sea, Aegean Sea, Sea of Marmara and Mediterranean Sea.

Capital city: Ankara

Remember: Ankara, Istanbul, Bosphorous Strait, Anatolian Plateau, Mt. Ararat, Lake Van, Haran, Tarsus, Izmir, Ephesus, Lake Tuz, Cappadocia, Fairy Chimneys



Israel resides at the convergence of Africa, Europe and Asia. It borders Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Egypt. It

also borders the Mediterranean Sea.

Capital city: Jerusalem

Remember: Galilean Hills, Judean Hills, Samarian Hills, Sea of Galilee, Coastal Plain, Haifa, Tel Aviv, West Bank, Jerusalem, Negev Desert, Jordan River and Valley, Dead Sea



Egypt resides in Africa, although it is considered a Middle Eastern country. It borders Libya, Sudan, and

Israel; the Mediterranean and the Red Seas.

Capital city: Cairo

Remember: Sinai Peninsula, Suez Canal, Eastern Desert, the Nile River and Delta, Cairo, Giza, Alexandria, Western Desert, Black and White Desert, Great Sand Sea



Iraq resides in Asia. It borders Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria, Turkey and Iran. It also borders the Persian Gulf.

Capital City: Baghdad

Remember: Baghdad, Babylon, Nineveh, Ur, Zagros Mts., Mosul, Kirkuk, Najaf, Tigris and Euphrates River, Marshes, Basrah, Persian Gulf



Saudi Arabia resides on the Arabian Peninsula but is considered part of Asia. It borders Jordan, Iraq, Kuwait,

Qatar, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Oman and Yemen. It also borders the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea.

Capital city: Riyadh

Remember: Jeddah, Hijaz Mts., Mecca, Medina, Asir Mts., Abha, Najd, Riyadh, Al Hasa, Rub'al Khali (the Empty Quarter), Ghawar, the Persian Gulf



Jordan resides on the Arabian Peninsula, but is considered to be part of Asia. It borders Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Israel. It

also borders the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba.

Capital city: Amman

Remember: Amman, the King's Highway, the Highlands, the Jordan Rift Valley and River, Mt. Nebo, Petra, Wadi Rum Desert, Mt. Nebo

Appendix

A CHILD'S GEOGRAPHY: EXPLORE THE HOLY LAND

Definitions

Turkey Part 1 – Directions to Eden, Please?

» Definitions:

- **Bazaar** — A bazaar (the Persian word for “market”) is a market lining a street with shops and stalls, especially in the Middle East
- **Climate** — The meteorological conditions, including temperature, precipitation, and wind, that characteristically prevail in a particular region
- **Continent** — One of the principal land masses of the earth (The seven continents are Africa, Antarctica, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, and South America)
- **Dam** — A barrier constructed across a waterway to control the flow or raise the level of water
- **Geography** — The word “geography” comes from the Greek language and simply means “to write about the earth”
- **Kilim** — A kilim is a brightly colored Turkish rug, woven with geometric designs
- **Lake** — A large inland body of fresh water or salt water
- **Plateau** — An elevated, comparatively level expanse of land; a tableland
- **Sea** — The continuous body of salt water covering most of the earth's surface
- **Strait** — A narrow channel joining two larger bodies of water
- **Temperate** — Characterized by moderate temperatures, weather, or climate; neither hot nor cold

Turkey Part 2 – Houses for sale: An Ark, a Beehive, a Fairy Chimney, and a Salt Pan!

» Definitions:

- **Algae** — Primitive, mainly water-dwelling organisms without roots, stems or leaves
- **Ayran** — Traditional Turkish drink made of yogurt and water
- **Basalt** — A dark, volcanic rock with a glassy appearance
- **Combine** — A harvesting machine. It cuts, threshes and cleans the grains
- **Flood** — Water overflowing onto land that is usually dry
- **Mountain** — A land mass that rises out of the earth's surface. It usually has steep sides and is larger than a hill Abbr. Mt., Mtn. or Mount
- **Pide** — A round, flat Turkish wheat bread
- **Plain** — An expanse of level, or nearly level, land
- **Silt** — Mud, clay or rocks left behind by a body of water
- **Sulfur** — A yellow, nonmetallic element
- **Textile** — Fabric manufactured by weaving or knitting

Turkey Part 3 – Wandering and Wrestling, Whirling and Worshiping!

» Definitions:

- **Allah** — The muslim name for God
- **Athan** — Muslim call to prayer
- **Dervish** — A member of a muslim order, some of which perform whirling dances
- **Islam** — The religion of muslims based on the teachings of Muhammed
- **Minaret** — A slender tower with balconies, attached to a mosque

- **Mosque** — A muslim house of worship
- **Muezzin** — The muslim official who calls worshippers to pray five times a day
- **Ramadan** — The ninth month (Islamic calendar), in which muslims fast from sunrise to sunset
- **Seker Bayrami** — Four-day family holiday immediately following Ramadan. Traditionally children are given candy and simple gifts

Israel Part 1 – Houses for Sale: An Ark, a Beehive, A Fairy Chimney, and a Salt Pan!

» Definitions:

- **Christianity** — The Christian religion, based on the life and teachings of Jesus
- **Coastal** — Land running alongside an ocean or large body of water
- **Convergence** — A meeting place, or the point of meeting
- **Current** — Continuous, onward movement of a body of water
- **Elevation** — Height, or the raising of the land
- **Felafel** — Ground chickpeas and spices shaped into balls and fried
- **Greenhouse** — A structure for growing plants, usually made of plastic or glass for controlling temperatures
- **Gorge** — A deep, narrow pass or valley with steep sides
- **Harbor** — A sheltered area in a body of water allowing ships to anchor.
- **Ketubah** — A Jewish wedding contract
- **Judaism** — The Jewish religion, based on the Torah and the Talmud
- **Mediterranean Climate** — The particular, usual weather of the Mediterranean region Generally defined by dry summers, wet winters and mild temperatures
- **Mizrach** — “East”; a sign hung on a wall to remind Jewish families to pray east – towards Jerusalem
- **Mountain** — A landform rising above the surrounding countryside, with steep sides
- **Plain** — A broad, flat, low-lying expanse
- **Port** — An area on the water’s edge for receiving ships and their cargo
- **Tehina** — a sauce of ground sesame seeds common in the Middle East
- **Wadi** — A dry, rocky, river bed that remains dry until the rainy season

Israel Part 2 – The Extraordinary Ordinary: Farms in the Desert and the Healthy Dead Sea

» Definitions:

- **Aquifer** — An underground pool of water
- **Bedouin** — A member of the Arab nomadic desert tribes
- **Brackish-water agriculture** — Brackish water is saltier than fresh water, yet not as salty as sea water. Agriculture is the process of raising plants for food and products
- **Calcium carbonate** — Colorless or white crystalline compound used in manufactured products such as chalk or medicine
- **Coral reef** — A massive rock-like structure built by the secretions of calcium carbonate from millions of very small marine animals
- **Desalination** — The process of removing salt from water or soil
- **Desert** — A dry, sandy geographical region with little rainfall, extreme temperatures, and sparse vegetation
- **Erosion** — The wearing away of soil and rock by natural processes
- **Evaporation** — The process by which water transforms to vapor
- **Fault line** — A line indicating a crack in the earth’s crust, created by motion in the crust
- **Fertilizer** — Natural or synthetic compounds worked into the soil to stimulate plant growth
- **Fossil** — A remnant of a plant or animal from long ago, such as a skeleton or leaf imprint, preserved in the earth’s crust

- **Halvah** — A treat made of crushed sesame seeds and honey
- **Irrigation** — The watering of crops with a source other than rainfall
- **Karst crater** — A bowl-shaped depression made in the earth by water pressure
- **Kibbutz** — A community farm or settlement in Israel
- **Loess** — A yellowish or gray fine-grained soil which is very fertile when watered
- **Migration** — The movement of animals or people from one location to another
- **Mineral** — An inorganic element, such as calcium, iron, potassium, sodium, or zinc, that is essential to the nutrition of humans, animals, and plants
- **Mirage** — An optical illusion that creates the appearance of water from a long distance
- **Natural resources** — Resources that are a part of creation, such as water, wood, minerals
- **Neghev** — Hebrew word meaning dry
- **Plates** — Sections of the earth's crust
- **Potash** — One of many compounds containing potassium; used as fertilizer
- **Pita** — Round, flat Middle Eastern bread, also called pocket bread
- **Rift** — A narrow chasm in a rock, or the breaking of friendly relations
- **Tap** — Another word for the source or beginning of a river
- **Tourist** — A person who travels for recreation
- **Sea level** — A complex measurement of the sea's level, used to determine land elevation
- **Strike-slip fault zone** — An area in which the fault is nearly vertical, with the walls on either side tending to move left and right

Israel Part 5 – Howdy Pilgrim!

» Definitions:

- **Arch** — A structure shaped like an inverted U and supporting the weight above it as in a doorway or a bridge
- **Beatitude** — A declaration of blessing made by Jesus in the sermon on the mount
- **Dome** — A vaulted roof, usually in a half-moon shape
- **Limestone** — A common sedimentary rock used as a building stone
- **Mosaic** — A picture or design made from arranging small pieces of stone or tile
- **Pilgrim** — One who travels to far off lands or journeys to sacred places
- **Octagonal** — Having eight sides and eight angles
- **Roman bathhouse** — A building used by the Romans for bathing
- **Sepulchre (or sepulcher)** — A burial chamber
- **Shrine** — A building that houses items considered holy
- **Souq** — An Arab market
- **Western Wall** — A section of the second Jewish Temple that is still standing and a pilgrimage site for Jews
- **Via Dolorosa** — The path Jesus walked to His crucifixion

Egypt Part 1 – Wearing Egypt

» Definitions:

- **Canal** — An artificial waterway
- **Canyon** — A narrow chasm with steep cliff walls
- **Cartouche** — An oval shape enclosing hieroglyphics representing a Pharaoh's name
- **Chasm** — Deep, steep sided opening in the earth
- **Cliff** — A high, steep face of rock
- **Compass** — A device with a magnetic needle, used to determine geographic direction
- **Dredger** — A machine used to deepen waterways
- **Gulf** — A large area of ocean (or sea), partially enclosed by land

- **Isthmus** — A narrow strip of land that connects two larger masses of land
- **Mag'ad** — 'Sitting place' section of the Bedouin tent
- **Maharama** — 'Place of women' in a Bedouin tent, where women cook, receive female guests
- **Ma'nad** — A woven curtain dividing a Bedouin tent
- **Manuscript** — A book or document written by hand
- **Monastery** — A community of monks, bound by religious vows and living together in at least partial seclusion
- **Peninsula** — A large section of land jutting out into a body of water
- **Pollution** — The contamination of soil, water and air with harmful substances
- **Pyramid** — A massive monument of ancient Egypt having a rectangular base and four triangular faces ending in a single point, built as a tomb for the Pharaohs
- **Ravine** — A deep narrow valley made by running water
- **Senet** — An ancient Egyptian board game
- **Tamiya** — Egyptian meal made of fava bean patties

Egypt Part 2 - Navigating the Nile

» Definitions:

- **Burqa** — A loose, long garment worn by Muslim women that covers the entire body, including the face
- **Dam** — A large barrier across a waterway that controls the flow of water
- **Fellahin** — A farm worker in an Arab country
- **Felucca** — A sailing vessel used on the Nile or Mediterranean Sea
- **Galabea** — An ankle-length, loose shirt
- **Parasite** — An organism that grows and feeds on another organism but does not contribute anything to its host
- **Reservoir** — A natural or artificial lake for storing water
- **Zabbaleen** — People who work as garbage collectors in Cairo

Egypt Part 3 - Digging for Good Dirt

» Definitions:

- **Caravan** — A group of travelers, traveling together
- **Crystal** — A transparent mineral
- **Delta** — The triangular area where a river divides before entering another body of water, rich in sediment
- **Depression** — An area that is lower than its surroundings
- **Dune** — A hill of wind-blown sand
- **Khamsin** — A hot northern wind that creates a sandstorm in the desert
- **Limestone** — A common sedimentary rock often used as a building stone
- **Mecca** — The birthplace of Muhammed, the founder of Islam, and a pilgrimage site in Saudi Arabia
- **Monastery** — A community of monks, bound by religious vows and living together in at least partial seclusion
- **Oasis** — An area of water and green plants in the desert
- **Quartz** — A very hard mineral found in many different types of rocks, usually colorless or white
- **Sheaf** — A bundle of cut grass or straw bound in the middle with twine or straw
- **Sickle** — A tool with a semicircular blade used for cutting tall grasses
- **Silica** — White or colorless crystalline compound
- **Spring** — A small, natural stream of water
- **Topsoil** — The upper layer of soil
- **Turban** — A long scarf worn by Muslims that is wrapped around the head
- **Water table** — The level below ground that is completely saturated with water

Iraq Part 1 - Tell-ing the Past

» Definitions:

- o **Abaya** — Traditional long, black cloak worn by Arab women
- o **Archaeologist** — A person who studies the life and culture of peoples of the past
- o **Cuneiform** — Early wedge-shaped writing system used in Mesopotamia and Persia
- o **Halal** — Meat that has been prepared according to Islamic law
- o **Haram** — “Forbidden” under Islamic law
- o **Inscription** — Words engraved or carved on something
- o **Kebabs** — Cubed meat cooked on a skewer
- o **Shamal** — Summer wind
- o **Sharqi** — Southeasterly wind from the Persian gulf in winter
- o **Souk** — An Arab market
- o **Tell** — Mounds, especially in the Middle East, made up of the rubble of ancient cities
- o **Ziggurat** — A pyramid-like tower from Babylonian times

Iraq Part 2 - River Ride

» Definitions:

- o **Foothills** — Hills found at the base of a larger mountain range
- o **Gorge** — A deep, narrow valley with steep sides
- o **Kibbeh** — Small dumplings filled with minced lamb or beef, nuts, raisins and spices
- o **Kurds** — A nonArab minority group that lives a largely pastoral or agricultural life
- o **Madrasa** — School
- o **Matzgouf** — A grilled fish dish made of carp with peppers, onions and spices
- o **Muslin** — A sturdy cotton fabric
- o **Ostath** — School teacher
- o **Pollarding** — Cutting back the limbs of tree to promote a bushier growth
- o **Precipitation** — Any form of water that falls to the earth's surface
- o **Steppe** — A vast grass-covered plain
- o **Throbes** — An ankle length robe with long sleeves worn by men
- o **Tributaries** — Streams that flow into larger bodies of water
- o **Zlabiya** — A sweet pastry that looks like a pretzel

Iraq Part 3 - Mixing Water and Oil?

» Definitions:

- o **Alluvial** — Relating to sediment deposited by flood waters
- o **Bunni** — A carp-like fresh water fish
- o **Distributary** — A river branch that flows away from the main river
- o **Irrigation** — To water dry land with artificial means through ditches, pipes or streams
- o **Ma'dans** — A semi-nomadic Iraqi people who until recently lived in the marshlands
- o **Marshes** — Many times a transition area between water and land; a wet, soft land area
- o **Mashuf** — A long, flat-bottomed boat made of reeds
- o **Mudhif** — A cathedral-like house for Ma'dan tribal gatherings
- o **Oil** — An organic substance far underground that is used for fuel and plastics
- o **Organic** — Coming from a living organism
- o **Pore** — A small open space in a rock
- o **Sediments** — Small bits of organic material, such as rock, carried by water
- o **Sheik** — A leader of an Arab family or village
- o **Soil salinity** — The measure of salt in soils

Saudi Arabia Part 1 - Migrations, Mecca and Mosques

» Definitions:

- **Aniconism** — The Muslim law forbidding representation of living creatures in art work
- **Egal** — A black cord used for tying on the gutra
- **Gutra** — Red and white checked head scarf worn by Saudi men
- **Hajj** — The annual Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca
- **Hijaz** — Mountain range on Saudi Arabia's west coast
- **Ihram** — A state of spiritual preparation for male pilgrims before they enter Mecca
- **Ka'abah** — A cube believed by Muslims to be built by Abraham and Ishmael, and viewed as the holiest site in Mecca
- **Meteorite** — A mass of matter fallen to earth from space
- **Mutawa** — The religious police

Saudi Arabia Part 2 - Treasures of a Hidden Kingdom

» Definitions:

- **Anhydrite** — A light colored, or colorless mineral
- **Bay** — A body of water nearly enclosed by land but with a mouth opening to the sea
- **Dahb** — An Arabian lizard that lives in the desert without drinking water
- **Dahl** — A sinkhole in the sand
- **Calligraphy** — Fine handwriting as an art form
- **Escarpment** — A steep slope
- **Gulf** — A large area of ocean nearly entirely landlocked except for access through a strait
- **Incense** — An aromatic substance that is burned to produce a pleasant scent
- **Izars** — A garment tied to the waist and covering the lower half of the body
- **Kestrel** — A small falcon
- **Monsoon** — Very heavy seasonal rains
- **Pinnacle** — The highest point
- **Precipice** — An extremely steep rock, such as a cliff face
- **Ramparts** — A means of protection or defense using an embankment
- **Terrace** — A raised area of earth with steep or sloping sides
- **Turrets** — A small tower on a building

Jordan Part 1 - The Highway Men Came Riding:

» Definitions:

- **Argeeleh** — A device that Arab men use for smoking
- **Caracal** — A wild cat
- **Cistern** — A container for water
- **Economy** — The organizing of people as consumers, workers, business owners to generate wealth for a community
- **Ibex** — A wild goat
- **Keffiyeh** — A cloth headdress worn by Arab men

Jordan Part 2 - Rock of Ages

» Definitions:

- **Mansaf** — A national dish of lamb, goat's milk, rice and pine nuts
- **Rababa** — A one string violin
- **Shabbaba** — A sort of flute made from a metal pipe

About the Authors

A CHILD'S GEOGRAPHY: EXPLORE THE HOLY LAND

Ann Voskamp has been lost all of her life. Which is a good reason to write about geography. She was a lost young teen when God graciously found her. She was lost behind long hair and glasses, wandering the library stacks, when her future husband found her. And her children now usually find her curled up on the couch, calling them to come get lost in a good book with her.

As a high school student, she proposed that Mr. Hammond's World Geography class sponsor a child through World Vision, a sponsorship which Mr. Hammond's class then annually honoured. As her fascination with geography and God's glorious globe continues decades later, so too does Ann's support of Compassion International, the whole of the royalties of A Child's Geography donated to their work around the world.

With a background in Education and Child Psychology from York University and the University of Waterloo, Ann's educational pursuits have focused on elementary education, her passions on the Maker of heavens and earth. This project marries both.

She and her best-friend husband raise corn, six kids, and soybeans, as full-time farmers in Ontario, Canada. She writes of their life at www.aholyexperience.com.



Tonia Peckover loves words; all her life she has been traveling and dreaming through the pages of books. Stories of colorful locales and fascinating people fired her imagination as a young teenager and propelled her forward at a church camp altar call to tell God she'd go anywhere He sent her - even Africa. In His wisdom, He sent her to rural Oregon instead. That is where Ann found her, scribbling words on the internet, dreaming of taking God's love into every exotic, captivating corner of the world. A Child's Geography brings together her passions for both and, through World Vision, allows her to invest in people all over His earth.

Tonia and her husband, Mark, live in a kooky old farmhouse on the edge of a forest where they raise ducks, enjoy the rain and homeschool their four soccer-crazy children.