



JUSTICE FOR PALESTINE WALK

PEACE TRAIL

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WALK

November 2017

ITINERARY 1

From Rainbow street to Via Dolorosa

Itinerary no.1 - Amman (East Bank) to Jerusalem (West Bank)

Jordan is a country of refugees. Over 60 percent of the population is Palestinian. They come from the west, while Iraqis come from the east and Syrians from the north. The variety of rights and statuses makes them "second class" citizens. It is good to visit one of the camps where they "permanently" reside, and talk to people about their realities. Jordan is not among the parties to the UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and is therefore not making it possible for refugees (when they cannot return to their original homeland) to gradually build a life like Jordanians. However, Jordan is a place, heavily funded by the "North" in order to remain a buffer zone among the troubled surrounding areas. In spite of its appearance of a westernized consumer society, it hides underneath the many racist, conservative and class-rooted views. It is also beautiful and full of kind people.

This itinerary links the spaces and people on both sides of the fertile Jordan valley, the east bank in Jordan and the west bank of Jordan river - Palestine, occupied by Israel since 1967. If you don't speak Arabic, it is a good idea to get a book and attempt to learn at least a phrase per day. You may also hire a

guide/interpreter, we especially suggest this for the West bank side, from Jericho on, as the trail gets a bit more confusing to walk on your own. However, with a good Google/Michelin map/Maps.me/paper print out it is also possible to do it on your own. In order to avoid carrying the heavy luggage, find a solution, either by asking someone to bring it to you every evening or maybe arrange to have a donkey. If you travel really light and if you do not take the very difficult paths, you may of course carry it yourself.

Day 1:

You start at the 1st circle/Rainbow street junction.



On day 1 we learnt and often used how to say: **HAPPY DAY** - yaum saeed -

سعيد يوم



Tools

We recommend to use

<https://www.viamichelin.com/web/Maps> and click on the small map on the right to use the OUTDOORS version, and check the SATELLITE one to understand the geography. Michelin map also recognizes Palestine.

<https://www.facebook.com/justiceforpalestinewalk/>

<https://www.facebook.com/Gibanje-za-pravice-Palastincev-304730176266465/>

PROJA - zavod za uresničevanje dobrih idej, Hrdeckega 4, Ljubljana, www.proja.org

Coffee, tea and other supplies are around in abundance, and this continues more or less to the 3rd circle, after which it will be difficult to buy water or to find a bathroom (hamam in Arabic), at least until the 8th circle and around/on the other side of the highway crossing the 8th circle. The trail from the 1st to the 8th circle goes east-west and follows the "spine" of Amman - its 8 circles. If you are not too early, you may get one of the best falafel sandwiches before you start, on Rainbow street, at the famous Al Quds (opens around 10am) tiny place.

You may continue further from the 8th circle toward the west, to the edge of the town, before the path starts to descend to Wadi al Seer. If you end the walk for the day, it will be around 11 km. There is no place to sleep there and you can go back to Amman for the night, by one of the many buses that run from there, or a taxi (cheap, by taximeter!!!). This is only a 2-3 hour walk, so alternatively you may decide to continue and do the day 2 itinerary on the same day, another 15 km.

Day 2:

You start at the 8th circle or further west where you left on day 1, about here:



This is the last traffic light before you start descending into the valley, leading to the destination of the day, Iraq al Amir (about 15km downhill, occasionally a bit up as well). It is a tarmac road, also served by small buses or taxis. It is beautiful as you are leaving the remaining of Amman suburbs and entering the Wadi al Seer (wadi=valley), with vegetable gardens, olive trees and various bougainville blossoming

After a few km you will pass the center of the village Seer (Sira on Michelin map), with shops for food and water but also a very kind phone appliances shop keeper who has a decent bathroom (remember, it is called hamam) to offer (as this is a "rare to find" around there), right in the center of the main square with buses and shops. It is next to



the small fruits and vegetables shop, this is how it looks:

You then walk deeper into the valley on a steep descending road and after about 9km of the walk you reach the bottom, the village is called Al Bassah. You find a couple of charming restaurants on the right, opening hours are not clear but it is certainly opened on the weekends as you are getting close to the tourist site of Iraq al

Amir. If low on sugar it seems one can always ask for at least coffee or tea.



A good 5 km further down the road you will reach the village of Iraq al Amir (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq_al-Amir) of which the highlight is an impressive old Greek-Persian ruin.



On a couple of unclear occasions you just have to follow the main road or the signs, or if in doubt, ask the locals passing by. In the center of the village the owner of the only shop is extremely kind and he might treat you with a drink if you send him greetings from the Slovenian marchers for Palestine. Please do so. He does not speak much English but can point you to the local mosque and to the nearby Women's cooperative located to the left from the main road.



Here, you can also find a place to sleep in a living room of one of the cooperative's members, just next door from the cooperative. Sleeping costs 10 JD (about 12 EUR) per person and it is about the only option as there are no guesthouses in town. The visit to the cooperation is a must, incredible pottery, paper items, embroidery and jars of food to buy, such as olives, cheese and

Zaatar. The ladies do not speak English but it is possible to call Manar (tel no. 07 7207 6451), a local lady living in Amman (who speaks some French and a word of English or so) and she can arrange a reservation in advance. The ladies can also prepare delicious food, dinner and/or breakfast if you like (order in advance).

On day 2 we learnt and used the greetings:

Good morning - Sabah alKheyr - **الخير صباح**

Good evening/afternoon – Masaa' alKheyr - **الخير مساء**

Day 3:

Start early as you will be walking in the desert and there is no shade on your way. Walk down towards the ruins from the only shop in the village (make sure you have your supplies of water) but turn right after around 50 m and walk up the slope on the upper side of the ruins, it is quite steep. As you walk you might find a woman making what is called Damascus bread, thin bread pancakes, and she might offer them to you.

When you reach the top you are at the highest point of the day.



The house on the left belongs to one of the ladies from the cooperative, Fadiya, and her husband Hani. If they are around they will offer you a cup of morning tea. Make sure you take the correct path: always ask for the road to Al Kafrayn. The correct path is the one going down the tarmac. You will descend from here on and keep left on a couple of the following crossroads.



After approximately 5 km the road will become a dirt road, passable only by 4x4. And the moon-like scenery without a trace of life, apart from one or two Bedouin shepherds guarding

their herds. As you continue to descend it becomes hotter. Yet when you see the big artificial lake in the distance you know you are winning the day. Soon after the lake you will reach the tarmac road again and the desert dream is over. Up to that point you will have done about 15km but count on at least 4 hours.



The nearest towns are Al Kafrayn, a few km north on the main road, and Al Shun, further north (altogether about 6km on the tarmac), to where you can catch one of the mini buses for a couple of JD, if you don't feel like walking along the busy tarmac.

After you have reached the last town Al Shun you have to take a taxi to the border (costs about 5 JD). Special protocols are in place between the Jordanians and Israelis who are controlling the border on the Jordan river as well as all the occupied territory. Be very cautious on Fridays and Saturday as the last bus crosses the Allenby/King Hussein bridge at 11am. The border procedure is lengthy and there is an exit tax from Jordan which costs 10JD but there is no entry fee for Israel. It is best to have a reservation for some hotel in Jerusalem or possibly names of some Israeli friends, if you have any. You will be asked questions as to your stay and purpose. Good luck!

You successfully crossed the border and you should consider taking a taxi to Jericho, although it is just a couple km, as you might not be allowed to walk immediately after the border. While the best food in town is found just around the main square from/to where shared taxis depart, we suggest you spending a night in a hostel run by a very nice owner Sami.



Hostel Sami is located within the refugee camp Aqbat Jaber, around 2km of the town in the direction of Jerusalem, and it will give you an idea of how the displaced Palestinians live. The hostel has everything you need, including a kitchen to use.. A bed in a dorm costs 50 shekels (about 12 EUR), a supermarket across the street is open 24/7.

You can book online or call or write a mail: +972 2 2324 200, info@sami-hostel.com, <http://samihostel.com>

On day 3 we learnt and used the following question and answer:

How are you? - Keyf alHaal? - **المهل؟ كيف** :

Praise to Allah,good. – Hamdulillah - **الله الحمد**

Thank you very much. - Sukran Jazilan - **جزيلًا شكرًا**

Day 4:

In the morning you first head towards the north to catch the western edge of Jericho (Al Qasab) and the old road towards Jerusalem. You cross it at the tourist sight - the ruins of Herod's palace - from where you enter the valley Qelt (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wadi_Qelt). Cross the dry river bed and walk up on the donkey path so that the canyon/valley will be on your left. You continue like this for about 1,5 hours, passing several small or abandoned Orthodox Greek dwellings/monasteries, reaching the majestic St. George monastery .



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monastery_of_St._George_of_Choziba (open for visitors).

All along the path you will also observe the remainings of the old aqueducts and surely meet some tourists who trek to visit the monastery.

From the monastery you continue on the same side and walk the stairs high up to the top of the mountain, from where the views are great. If you are walking in the dry season and the river bed is dry it is possible to walk there too. Nevertheless, the marked path goes as described, high up on the right bank, you follow a concrete-made new aqueduct and even if you lose it or get off a bit, you cannot really get lost.. There is nothing around but hills, an occasional tree or a goat, and great views. After another 1,5 hour or so you will start descending and you will see a couple of houses and plenty of green, an oasis on the river and there will actually be water in it. So you come to what is called the source or Ein el Quilt (Qelt). This is a famous pic-nic spot and it is reachable also from the main, dirt road on the other side, or by foot from the close-by settlement Mitzpe Yericho and others further west. You will be able to witness a spot where mainly Palestinians come for fun, although some Israelis, most likely settlers, also show up. Some of the latter are even armed with a gun.

From here you cross a little bridge and turn south, following a dirt road and a steep tarmac road until you reach the main (new) road no. 1, connecting Jerusalem and the Dead sea. As you approach the road, you will start seeing villages or rather Bedouin camps. The Bedouin tribe Jahalin was expelled by the Israelis from the Negev desert in the 1950s. So they settled in the area of Khan al Ahmar (more about the story https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khan_al-Ahmar) where Israelis later built the main highway (no.1), surrounded by many settlements.. Today Israelis want to displace the Bedouins by demolishing their villages, including the famous "tyre school", while most of the international community supports the Bedouins in opposing such actions. It is a good idea to visit and talk to the people living there so

you can get a good picture of the situation and understand their reality. Ask for the spokesman of the Jahalin tribe, he speaks English, or write to him to EidJahalin@gmail.com to inquire in advance. You should be able to find him near the tyre school or under a large tree where he will be sitting with other elderly people.

With a sleeping bag it should be possible to sleep under the tent there but the option tested was to cross the highway no.1 earlier, soon after the Israeli settlement Mitzpe Yericho, and walk past other Bedouin camps called Sea-level community – Sateh al Bahr (on about the Mediterranean sea level, given that the Dead sea is about 430m below the sea level) towards the south. After about an hour of walking on a dirt road you will reach a high point with a view over the Jordan Valley and the Dead sea on one side and Jerusalem on the other (far west). You can camp there under the stars, there is not shelter but the area is beautiful.



You will have done about 23km to this point or around 20km if you sleep with the Bedouins near the road. It is possible to do this part of the trip without a guide but we strongly recommend you to take one, especially because the maps for this area are not so clear. Moreover, the more you will be approaching Jerusalem the day after, the more you will be lost amidst the many small roads and passages that cross them, the many old roads that are no longer allowed to be used, the many illegal Israeli settlements that are surrounded by barbed wire and walls and just, before Jerusalem, also the Wall itself. Also, on the southern part of the highway there is no more trail marks. On the contrary, there are many trail marks along the Wadi Qelt, mostly they consist of two white lines and a black or green line in the middle. Last but not least, if you are not fluent in Arabic, the guide will translate your communication with the local people and tell you much more.



There is a very scenic and well prepared trail marked by the Palestinians and runs North - South of the West Bank. It is called the heritage trail, (Masar Ibrahim al Khalil, <http://masaribrahim.ps/en/>) and while some parts are still in the making, you will be walking small parts of the trail also on your way to Jerusalem. If you wish to do more you may combine it with this suggested itinerary. Please check the website for more information.

There are also specially trained guides available for the trail and if you are lucky, you will find a good one. Telephone numbers are on the web. But we may suggest one that we loved. Nasser, a Bedouin from the area of Al Auja, north of Jericho. He is also an English teacher so he is not always available, mostly on the weekends (Friday and Saturday) and on holidays. Write him a mail in advance: nasermkq@gmail.com or call: +972 595862711 or +972 524286015. The cost of a guide per day is around 130 USD (for the whole group) and 20USD if a car is needed to bring your gear, water and food in the evening.

On day 4 we learnt and used:

Peace from the land of peace – Salam min ardi Salam - السلام
السلام أرض من

Day 5:

This day starts with the morning trek back to the highway 1. Preferably take a short cut north-west so you don't walk too long along the highway. The Khal al Ahmar is just after the big junction with the Alon and Kfar Adumim settlements, on the right side, heading towards Jerusalem. You will have to use the under-road tunnel which brings you to the right side of the road, and the village with the tyre school is just there, overlooking the big road.



It will take a good hour but if you slept in the Bedouin camp you are already having your morning tea.

From here you continue along the highway but not right next to it as most of the time there is a trail – a dirt road about 50m to the right. This is up and down so if you get tired, you may also walk on the banks of the tarmac road, there is usually enough space. From Khan al Ahmar you will have about 15km for the day, mostly uphill.

Walk up for about 2 hours, past the sign/road for Maale Adumim (huge settlement) to the left and a Police station sign to the right. As your surrounding gets greener and greener after the Maale Adumim settlement you will reach the point of a big crossroad: the road on the right leads to Az-Za'ayem, the last Palestinian village with a check-point to enter East Jerusalem. This is on the main highway (no.1) so not really walkable. The left road leads to Al Eizaria, the last Palestinian suburb (behind the Mount of Olives) from where there are buses or taxis to Jerusalem. When you are in front of that junction which is almost at end of the valley you walked along the road, get off the road on the right side onto the dry riverbed, and just follow the valley for maybe 10 minutes. When you will be under the main road you will find a long and rather narrow tunnel at the end, used only for animals or pedestrians. This will lead you to the other side. You will find yourself in a beautiful, green valley, with Bedouin children taking care of their herds, quite surreal. You continue walking on the old, unused tarmac road, that will start to wind up after a few hundred meters and will lead

you to the top of the hill Jabal al Baba, in about one hour or less. This is a small hill, squeezed in between the suburbs of Jerusalem and the big roads. One Bedouin tribe still lives there. As you come up you will find



your first wall blocking the road. This is to prevent the locals from using the old roads, linking the Palestinian villages that surround Jerusalem..

This is the end of your trip. You may walk some more to the center of Al Eizariya, get yourself some tea and a good shisha/water pipe. From here you can take buses or shared taxis to Jerusalem /through the check-point/ or to any place in Palestine, Betlehem, Ramalla, back to Jericho, and on to Hebron. Enjoy Palestine and post on FB about your walk, please!!!

On day 5, we learnt and used:

Palestine is a beautiful country. - Filistin balad jamil - فلسطين
جميل بلد

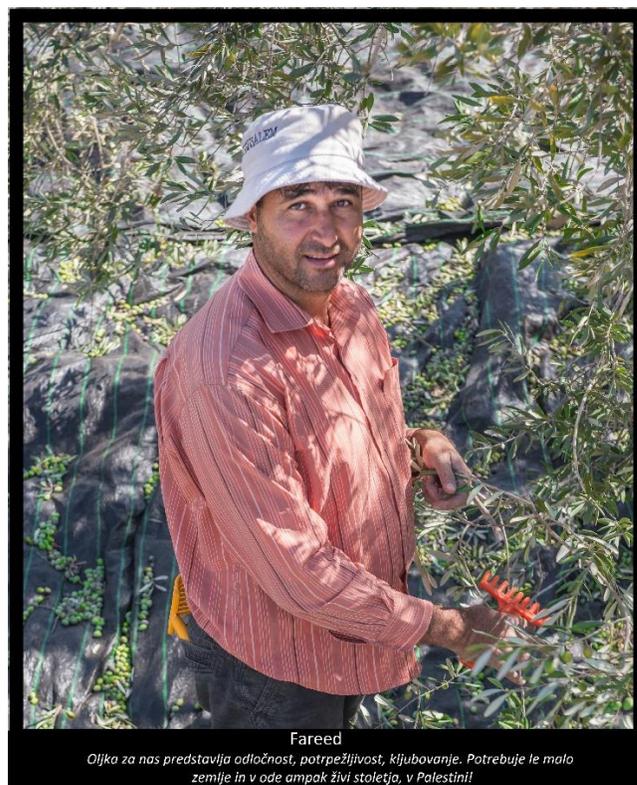
Palestine, a hope – Filistin alAmal - أمل فلسطين،

Free Palestine - Filistin alHorra - الحرية فلسطين



JUSTICE FOR PALESTINE WALK

In commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the Partition Plan of Palestine which resulted in the Nakba, the expulsion of 750 000 Palestinians from their homeland in 1948, of 100 years from the Balfour declaration and on the 50th anniversary of the occupation of Palestine, we made a small, symbolic walk from Amman (east bank of Jordan river) to Jerusalem (west bank). We walked because we are against the Israeli apartheid, against the occupation of Palestine and for equality and justice of the Palestinian people. But we also walk for all other people who are oppressed and cannot live in freedom. We will continue to walk whenever and wherever we can, and we invite you to join us!



Fareed

Ojka za nas predstavlja odločnost, potrpežljivost, kľubovanje. Potrebuje le malo zemlje in v ode ampak živi stoletja, v Palestini!

On our way, we met many wonderful people. And we collected their good thoughts. Among them, there was Fareed Taamallah, a journalist and activist, also a farmer in his free time. We were welcomed to his home and helped with the olive harvest. It was great fun and useful too. We intend to do so in the future and maybe see you in Palestine next autumn?



Zavod za uresničevanje dobrih idej
Hradeckega 4, 1000 Ljubljana
www.proja.org (for Peace trail) and
fareedt99@yahoo.com (for olive harvest)



Breakfast in the olive grove and Palestinian hospitality