

JORDAN

Country name	Jordan
State title	Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
Name of citizen	Jordanian
Official language	Arabic (ara) ¹
Country name in official language	الأردن (Al Urdun ²)
State title in official language	المملكة الأردنية الهاشمية (Al Mamlakah al Urduniyah al Hāshimīyah)
Script	Arabic is written in Perso-Arabic script
Romanization System	BGN/PCGN Romanization System for Arabic 1956 ³
ISO-3166 code (alpha-2/alpha-3)	JO/JOR
Capital	Amman
Capital in official language	عمان ('Ammān ⁴)
Population	9,814,995 ⁵
Area	88,794 km ²

Introduction

Jordan claimed its independence in 1946, when the United Nations (UN) approved the end of the British Mandate and recognised the Hashemite Kingdom of Transjordan as an independent country. In 1948 the name of the state was changed to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.⁶ Jordan lies on the East Bank of the Jordan River⁷, and is bordered by Israel and the West Bank to the west, Syria to the north, Iraq to the northeast, and Saudi Arabia to the east and south. Jordan also has a small coastline on the Red Sea⁸ (27 km).

Geographical names policy

Official geographical names in Jordan are found written in Arabic, which is the country's official language. The Arabic-script names found on official sources should be romanized using the BGN/PCGN Romanization System for Arabic⁹ and all diacritical marks should be included where possible¹⁰.

¹ The three-letter codes for languages provided in brackets in this document are the ISO 639-3 language codes.

² Although Al Urdunn is found in the Hans Wehr *Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* and Nigel Groom's *A Dictionary of Arabic Topography and Placenames*, official Jordanian sources show a single -n-, i.e. with no *shaddah* (doubling) on the final *nūn* (n).

³ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/320079/Arabic_Romanization.pdf

⁴ The capital is also referred to as Al 'Āṣimah 'Ammān, which translates to "The capital 'Ammān".

⁵ 2017 estimate, Jordan Department of Statistics (<http://www.dos.gov.jo>).

⁶ Library of Congress Country Profile: <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Jordan.pdf>

⁷ See page 6.

⁸ See page 6.

⁹ See note 2.

¹⁰ See page 2.

The primary source of geographical names for Jordan is mapping produced by the Royal Jordanian Geographic Centre (RJGC)¹¹. Supplementary information produced by the Jordanian Department of Statistics¹² may also be used. RJGC produces mapping in both Arabic and Roman-script. The RJGC Roman-script names may differ from the forms resulting from application of the BGN/PCGN Romanization System. Roman-script mapping and other products produced by the Jordanian government and RJGC use a Jordanian Romanization system, which, although similar, differs from the BGN/PCGN Romanization System for Arabic in some aspects. Consequently, some modifications would be required to official Jordanian Roman-script names to render them suitable for use on UK products.

Languages

Arabic (ara)¹³ is the official language of Jordan¹⁴. Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is used for written purposes (i.e. government, media and education). Jordanian Arabic, a variety of South Levantine Arabic (ajp), which contains influences from English, French and Turkish, is the principal dialect spoken in the country.

Other Arabic dialects spoken include include: Egyptian Spoken Arabic (arz), Mesopotamian Spoken Arabic (acm), North Mesopotamian Spoken Arabic (ayp), Najdi Spoken Arabic (ars), Levantine Bedawi Spoken Arabic (avl). Adyghe (ady) and Kabardian (kbd) are also spoken by diaspora communities from the Caucasus¹⁵. English is widely spoken throughout the country.

Although geographical names are written in Arabic script and the generic terms used will usually be Arabic, Jordanian toponyms may have their origins in or be influenced by other languages.

Inventory of characters (and their Unicode encodings¹⁶):

The **BGN/PCGN Romanization System for Arabic** contains the following letter-diacritic combinations in addition to the unmodified letters of the basic Roman script¹⁷:

Romanization	Unicode encoding	Romanization	Unicode encoding
‘	2018 or 02BB	ī	012A
’	2019 or 02BC	î	012B
Á	00C1	Ş	015E
á	00E1	ş	015F
Ā	0100	ı	0162
ā	0101	ı̇	0163
Ḑ	1E10	Ū	016A
ḑ	1E11	ū	016B

¹¹ <http://www.rjgc.gov.jo/default.aspx?lang=en>

¹² http://www.dos.gov.jo/dos_home_e/main/

¹³ The three-letter codes provided in brackets are the ISO 639-3 language codes.

¹⁴ http://cco.gov.jo/Portals/0/constitution_en.pdf

¹⁵ www.ethnologue.com

¹⁶ See www.unicode.org

¹⁷ Characters can be manually input into Microsoft word documents by typing in these character codes and then holding down the ALT key and pressing /x/. The code will change to the required character. The letter can be copied and pasted into other programmes if required. Alternatively the ‘Insert – Symbol’ command can be used; the code can be entered into the ‘Character code’ box which will show the corresponding letter.

A GeoNames Soft-Copy Keyboard can be downloaded from the NGA website and used to enter the required letter-diacritic combinations for a particular region: http://geonames.nga.mil/gns/html/gns_services.html.

Romanization	Unicode encoding	Romanization	Unicode encoding
Ḥ	1E28	Ḥ	005A+0327*
ḥ	1E29	ḥ	007A+0327*

*Note, the z + cedilla is not available as a single encoding.

Administrative structure

At first-order administrative level (ADM1) Jordan is divided into 12 governorates (Arabic: Muḥāfaẓah¹⁸), each of which is administered by a governor appointed by the king¹⁹. The governorates are sub-divided into 51 districts (ADM2) (Arabic: Liwā'), which are further sub-divided into sub-districts (Arabic: Qaḍā'). Sources differ as to the number of sub-districts.²⁰

1. 'Ajlūn (32° 20' 00" N 035° 45' 00" E)

Name in Arabic Script	عجلون
Long form name	Muḥāfaẓat 'Ajlūn
Long form name in Arabic Script	محافظة عجلون
Name of administrative centre	'Ajlūn
Name of administrative centre in Arabic Script	عجلون
Variant names	Ajloun
ISO 3166-2 code ²¹	JO-AJ
ADM2s	2 districts

2. Al 'Aqabah (29° 45' 00" N 035° 20' 00" E)

Name in Arabic Script	العقبة
Long form name	Muḥāfaẓat al 'Aqabah
Long form name in Arabic Script	محافظة العقبة
Name of administrative centre	Al 'Aqabah
Name of administrative centre in Arabic Script	العقبة
Variant names	Aqaba; Akaba
ISO 3166-2 code	JO-AQ
ADM2s	2 districts

3. Al 'Āṣimah (31° 35' 00" N 036° 20' 00" E)

Name in Arabic Script	العاصمة
Long form name	Muḥāfaẓat al 'Āṣimah
Long form name in Arabic Script	محافظة العاصمة
Name of administrative centre	'Ammān
Name of administrative centre in Arabic Script	عمان
Variant names of ADM1	Al Asimah; Amman; Amman City; Capital Governorate; 'Ammān; عمان

¹⁸ The Roman-script spelling of generics ending in 'ah' changes to 'at' when followed by a place name, e.g. Muḥāfaẓah but Muḥāfaẓat al 'Aqabah. This reflects the pronunciation of the words in this grammatical construction.

¹⁹ Administrative maps can be found on the Ministry of Municipality Affairs website (<http://www.mma.gov.jo/Maps/maps.aspx>) and on the Royal Jordanian Geographic Centre website (<http://www.rjgc.gov.jo/RJG.aspx?PID=6&lang=en>).

²⁰ Department of Statistics, Statistical Yearbook 2012: http://www.dos.gov.jo/dos_home_a/main/yearbook_2013.pdf; Ministry of Interior: <http://www.moi.gov.jo/Pages/viewpage.aspx?pageID=284>

²¹ ISO (International Organization for Standardization) 3166-2 codes are subdivision codes that represent the names of the principal subdivisions of countries coded in ISO 3166-1. The 3166-2 codes are based on the two-letter country code from ISO 3166-1 followed by a hyphen and up to three alphanumeric characters (<https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/#search>).

ISO 3166-2 code	JO-AM
ADM2s	9 districts

4. Al Balqā' (32° 10' 00" N 050° 45' 00" E)

Name in Arabic Script	البلقاء
Long form name	Muḥāfaẓat al Balqā'
Long form name in Arabic Script	محافظة البلقاء
Name of administrative centre	As Salt
Name of administrative centre in Arabic Script	السلط
ISO 3166-2 code	JO-BA
ADM2s	5 districts

5. Al Karak (31° 10' 00" N 035° 45' 00" E)

Name in Arabic Script	الكرك
Long form name	Muḥāfaẓat al Karak
Long form name in Arabic Script	محافظة الكرك
Name of administrative centre	Al Karak
Name of administrative centre in Arabic Script	الكرك
ISO 3166-2 code	JO-KA
ADM2s	7 districts

6. Al Mafraq (32° 20' 00" N 037° 55' 00" E)

Name in Arabic Script	المفرق
Long form name	Muḥāfaẓat al Mafraq
Long form name in Arabic Script	محافظة المفرق
Name of administrative centre	Al Mafraq
Name of administrative centre in Arabic Script	المفرق
ISO 3166-2 code	JO-MA
ADM2s	4 districts

7. Aṭ Ṭafilah (30° 45' 00" N 035° 35' 00" E)

Name in Arabic Script	الطفيلة
Long form name	Muḥāfaẓat aṭ Ṭafilah
Long form name in Arabic Script	محافظة الطفيلة
Name of administrative centre	Aṭ Ṭafilah
Name of administrative centre in Arabic Script	الطفيلة
Variant names	Tafilah; Tafila; Tafiela
ISO 3166-2 code	JO-AT
ADM2s	3 districts

8. Az Zarqā' (31° 50' 00" N 036° 50' 00" E)

Name in Arabic Script	الزرقاء
Long form name	Muḥāfaẓat az Zarqā'
Long form name in Arabic Script	محافظة الزرقاء
Name of administrative centre	Az Zarqā'
Name of administrative centre in Arabic Script	الزرقاء
Variant names	Zarqa
ISO 3166-2 code	JO-AZ
ADM2s	3 districts

9. Irbid (32° 30' 00" N 035° 50' 00" E)

Name in Arabic Script	إربيد
Long form name	Muḥāfaẓat Irbid
Long form name in Arabic Script	محافظة إربيد
Name of administrative centre	Irbid
Name of administrative centre in Arabic Script	إربيد
ISO 3166-2 code	JO-IR
ADM2s	9 districts

10. Jarash (32° 15' 00" N 035° 55' 00" E)

Name in Arabic Script	جرش
Long form name	Muḥāfaẓat Jarash
Long form name in Arabic Script	محافظة جرش
Name of administrative centre	Jarash
Name of administrative centre in Arabic Script	جرش
Variant names	Jerash
ISO 3166-2 code	JO-JA
ADM2s	1 district

11. Ma'ān (30° 20' 00" N 036° 35' 00" E)

Name in Arabic Script	معان
Long form name	Muḥāfaẓat Ma'ān
Long form name in Arabic Script	محافظة معان
Name of administrative centre	Ma'ān
Name of administrative centre in Arabic Script	معان
ISO 3166-2 code	JO-MN
ADM2s	4 districts

12. Mādabā (31° 35' 00" N 035° 40' 00" E)

Name in Arabic Script	مادبا
Long form name	Muḥāfaẓat Mādabā
Long form name in Arabic Script	محافظة مادبا
Name of administrative centre	Mādabā
Name of administrative centre in Arabic Script	مادبا
Variant names	Ma'dabā; مَادِبَا
ISO 3166-2 code	JO-MD
ADM2s	2 districts

TOPONYMIC FACT FILE

Other Significant Locations

PCGN Recommended Name	Name in Native Script (Romanization in brackets where differs from recommended name)	Conventional Name (if applicable) ²²	Variant Names/Spellings	Location	Feature Type
Jordan or Jordan River	نهر الأردن Nahr al Urdun (ara) [Jordan, West Bank & Syria] נהר הירדן Nahar HaYarden (heb ²³) [Israel]	Jordan or Jordan River	Jourdain; Nahr al Urdunn	31° 45' 48" N, 035° 33' 27" E	river
Red Sea	البحر الأحمر (Al Baḥr al Aḥmar) (ara) Badda Cas (som ²⁴) ቀይሕ ባሕሪ (Qeyyih bāhri) (tir ²⁵) ים סוף (Yam Suf) (heb)	Red Sea	Khalīj al Qulzum; Baḥr al Qulzum; Sea of Clysma; Bahr Hijāz	19° 00' 00" N, 039° 30' 00" E	sea
Gulf of Aqaba	خليج العقبة Khalīj al 'Aqabah (ara) מפרץ אילת (Mifraz̄ Elat) (heb)	Gulf of Aqaba	Gulf of Akaba; Bahr el 'Aqaba; Gulf of Elat; Gulf of Eilat	28° 47' 02" N, 034° 42' 56" E	gulf
Al Batrā' (Petra)	البتراء (ara)	Petra	Batrā'; Bitrā'; Betra; Batra	30° 20' 00" N, 035° 26' 00" E	ancient site
Dead Sea	البحر الميت (Al Baḥr al Mayyit) (ara) [Jordan, West Bank] ים המלח (Yam HaMelah) (heb) [Israel]	Dead Sea		31° 30' 00" N, 035° 30' 00" E	sea

²² For international features (i.e. features, such as rivers, which fall within more than one country), PCGN recommends using the conventional name.

²³ Hebrew – official language of Israel (co-official with Arabic)

²⁴ Somali – co-official language (with Arabic) in Somalia

²⁵ Tigrinya – official language in Eritrea

TOPONYMIC FACT FILE

PCGN Recommended Name	Name in Native Script (Romanization in brackets where differs from recommended name)	Conventional Name (if applicable) ²⁶	Variant Names/Spellings	Location	Feature Type
Qaşr al Azraq	قصر الأزرق (ara)	-	Kasr el Azrak; Qasr Azraq; Qasr el Azraq; Azraq	31° 53' 00" N, 036° 49' 00" E	ancient site
Al Azraq ash Shamālī	الأزرق الشمالي (ara)	-	Azraq Druze; Azraq ed Drüz; Azraq ed Duruz	31° 52' 56" N, 036° 49' 49" E	populated place (PPL)
Al Azraq al Janūbī	الأزرق الجنوبي (ara)	-		31° 48' 18" N, 036° 47' 44" E	populated place (PPL)
Ar Ruwayshid	الرويشد (ara)	-	Ruwaished; Ruwayshid	32° 30' 05" N, 038° 12' 15" E	populated place (PPL)
Jabal Nabā (Mount Nebo)	جبل نبا (ara)	Mount Nebo	En Neba; Jabal an Nabā; Har Nebo	31° 45' 44" N, 035° 44' 46" E	mountain
Maḥmīyat Ḍānā aṭ Ṭabīʿiyah (Dana Biosphere Reserve)	محمية ضانا الطبيعية (ara)	Dana Biosphere Reserve	Dana Nature Reserve; Maḥmīyah Ḍānā	30° 41' 0" N, 35° 37' 0" E	nature reserve
Wādī Ramm (Wadi Rum)	وادي رم (ara)	Wadi Rum		29° 40' 41" N, 035° 27' 17" E	wadi
Maḥmīyat ash Shawmarī (Shaumari Wildlife Reserve)	محمية الشومري (ara)	Shaumari Wildlife Reserve	Shawmari Wildlife Reserve; محمية الشومري للأحياء البرية (Maḥmīyah ash Shawmarī lil Aḥyā' al Barrīyah)	31° 44' 31.2" N 36° 46' 58.8" E	nature reserve
Wādī al Mūjib	وادي الموجب (ara)		Wadi Mujib; Wādī al Mawjib; Wādī el Mojob; Wādī el Mojib; Wadi el Mujeb; Wādī el Mūjib; Arnon; Arnon River	31° 28' 01" N, 035° 33' 49" E	valley/gorge
Umm Qays (Gadara)	أم قيس (ara)	Gadara	Gādēr; Mukes; Umm Qeis; Um Qeis; Qays	32° 39' 12" N, 035° 41' 03" E	ancient site & populated place (PPL)

²⁶ For international features (i.e. features, such as rivers, which fall within more than one country), PCGN recommends using the conventional name.

TOPONYMIC FACT FILE

PCGN Recommended Name	Name in Native Script (Romanization in brackets where differs from recommended name)	Conventional Name (if applicable) ²⁷	Variant Names/Spellings	Location	Feature Type
Araba Valley ²⁸	وادي عربة (Wādī ‘Arabah) (ara) [Jordan, West Bank] הערבה (Ha‘Arava) (heb) [Israel]	Araba Valley	Wadi Araba; Wadi Arabah; Arava Valley; Arabah Valley;	30° 27' 54" N, 035° 10' 38" E	valley
Al Mudawwarah	المدورة (ara)		Al-Mudawwara; El Mudawwara; Mudawwara;	29° 19' 24" N, 036° 01' 37" E	PPL & border crossing (to Tabūk-Saudi Arabia)
Yarmouk or Yarmouk River	نهر اليرموك (Nahr al Yarmūk) (ara) [Jordan, Syria] נהר הירמוך (Nahar HaYarmuk) (heb) [Israel]	Yarmouk River	El Yarmūk; Yarmuk; Hieromax; Shariat el Menādhirah; Sherī‘at al Menādire; Yarmuk River	32° 38' 51" N, 035° 33' 56" E	river
Mukhayyam az Za‘tarī (Zaatari Refugee Camp)	مخيم الزعتري (ara)	Zaatari Refugee Camp	Al Zaatari Refugee Camp; Zatari	32° 17' 35" N, 036° 19' 41" E	refugee camp (CMPRF)
Qaşr al Hallābāt	قصر الحلابات (ara)		Qasr el Hallābāt; Qasr al Halabat; Kasr el Hallabat	32° 06' 00" N, 036° 20' 00" E	ruins/ancient site
Qaşr al Hallābāt	قصر الحلابات (ara)		Qasr el Hallābāt; Qasr al Halabat; Kasr el Hallabat	32° 03' 55" N, 036° 22' 04" E	populated place (PPL)
Wādī Mūsá	وادي موسى (ara)		Petra, Aljī, Elji	30° 19' 15" N, 035° 29' 02" E	populated place (PPL)
Wādī Mūsá	وادي موسى (ara)			30° 27' 00" N, 035° 10' 10" E	wadi

²⁷ For international features (i.e. features, such as rivers, which fall within more than one country), PCGN recommends using the conventional name.

²⁸ Up until the early 20th century, this name was applied to what is today called the Jordan Rift Valley, running in a north-south orientation between the southern end of the Sea of Galilee (Lake Tiberias) and the northern tip of the Gulf of Aqaba, including the Jordan River Valley between the Sea of Galilee and Dead Sea, the Dead Sea itself, and what is commonly called today the Araba Valley. The modern use of the term is restricted to this southern section alone.

Useful references

PCGN: <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/the-permanent-committee-on-geographical-names>
US Board on Geographic Names GEOnet Names Server: <http://earth-info.nga.mil/gns/html/index.html>
www.unicode.org
International Organization for Standards (ISO): www.iso.org
ISO Online Browsing Platform: <https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/> (country and subdivision codes)
Languages: www.ethnologue.com, www.omniglot.com
Administrative divisions: <http://www.statoids.com>
Jordan Department of Statistics: www.dos.gov.jo
Library of Congress Country Profile: <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Jordan.pdf>
BBC Country Profile: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-14631981>
Royal Jordanian Geographic Centre: <http://www.rjgc.gov.jo/default.aspx?lang=en>
Amman GIS: <http://www.ammancitygis.gov.jo/ammancitygis/pages/>
Jordan GIS: <http://www.dls.gov.jo/dlsMap/dlsIndex/viewerAR.htm>
Ministry of Municipality Affairs: <http://www.mma.gov.jo/Maps/maps.aspx>

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