
Jordan

Study Abroad Semester at GJU in Amman

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Motivation

Seizing the opportunity to go abroad and experience a totally different culture during my studies was something I knew I didn't want to pass. From my perspective, the intercultural skills you gain while studying abroad and educating yourself about different cultures are a vital experience for future success in our globalized world. Thus I was super excited about the programs our university offers and decided to visit a country that none of my friends or family members went to before: Jordan.



I always knew I wanted to visit an Arabic country one day to learn the beautiful language (not that easy haha) and dive into a new culture. Although the countries surrounding Jordan are scene of many sad events, the Kingdom itself remains peaceful and is safe to travel.

Visa

With a German passport you don't need to worry about a visa before you enter Jordan, you can easily buy it at the airport (around 40 JD). It is valid for two months and can be extended for another two months at a police station in your neighborhood. For that, you also need to get some papers signed by your landlord and your university. I'd recommend going to the police station early in the mornings because it might happen that the officers are not in working mood after lunch any more. When you first arrive there you might be surprised by them carrying their weapons publicly because we are not used to that in Germany, but don't worry, they are usually super nice and you'll enjoy the Arabic hospitality.

Apartment

When I got accepted at the University, they immediately contacted me and offered help with organizing my semester abroad. I got invited into a Facebook group for all international students at GJU and could find all informations regarding the start of the semester, events and apartments there. I found a super nice apartment in this group and also some international flatmates who would start a semester abroad at the same time. Apparently, the University's main campus is not located in Amman, but in Madaba, which is around a 30 min drive away from the capital city. If you want to live close to University and enjoy traditional Jordanian „family“ life, you can find many affordable apartments there. But if you also want to go out in the evenings and have some fun on the weekends I'd recommend to live in Amman! There are plenty of options to enjoy your free time, just in any other capital city around the world. Most of international students lived in apartments around 8th or 7th circle, from there you can take a bus (1 JD) or taxi (4-5 JD when you share it) to GJU. There's also a GJU „Mitfahren“ group, where students offer a ride in their car to or from GJU, this way you can also make some new Jordanian friends :)

Our apartment was located around 8th circle. We had a huge living room, a big kitchen, two bathrooms and 3 bedrooms for which we paid 250 JD each. In general, Jordanian apartments are not insulated the way we are used to in Germany, so be prepared for some cold nights in winter and bring some warm sweaters!

The Language

Not everybody in Jordan speaks English, so I was happy that the university offered an Arabic class for beginners. There, we learned to read and write and some basic conversations. Let me just tell you, Arabic is not an easy language, but at the end I managed to take a taxi and explain the driver which way to take and I could even bargain at the markets. You cannot believe how proud I was when I finally managed to take the right bus to GJU because I could finally read what was written on the bus and I could explain where I wanted to go (I was late anyway haha)! I think it is super important to learn the language of the country you're living in, not only to survive every day live, but also to fully understand the culture and people's way of living. And I can guarantee you'll get some discounts when you try to speak Arabic on the markets ;)

The University

I spend one winter semester at the German Jordanian University. In general, it is more strict compared to German universities (at least for Jordanian students). They check attendance in all classes and there are not only final exams, but also midterms, tests, papers, presentations and group work. However, international students enjoy more freedom, especially when they explain that they want to discover the country. All students at GJU learn German and also spend some time in Germany, so they are all super interested in the culture and it is easy to make new friends during class. There were some interesting classes I took and Professors are also super nice but I would recommend to chose some easy classes so you don't spend your whole semester abroad behind books, because this way you'll never get to know the country ;)

Free Time

Jordan is an amazing country to visit and offers a lot of things to explore. It is home to one of the 7 New Wonders of the World, the ancient city of Petra, which is a magically place and a must-visit when you're in Jordan. You can furthermore have a trip to the Dead Sea which is only a 40 min drive away from Amman and enjoy the warmer weather there or visit the city of Aqaba, which is located at the red sea. I also recommend spending a night in the red desert at Wadi Rum and smoke a Shisha after having some traditional food prepared for you by the Beduins. There are always some Wadis to explore by hiking and day trips you can make to the green north of Jordan, Jerash or Dana. You could even plan a trip to Palestine, but this requires a bit more preparation due to the political situation. Anyway, there's also plenty of things to do in Amman: visiting archeological sites like the Roman Theater or the Citadel, shopping at traditional markets or in one of the many malls, visiting museums, going to concerts or festivals, having amazing food and a Shisha (the best you'll ever try!), having a coffee in one of the many nice cafes and playing cards, going out to have some drinks (alcohol is allowed, but super expensive), and you might even get invited to a traditional wedding!

Jordan and it's people will always hold a special place in my heart and I can only recommend to visit this amazing place. I could talk for hours about it, so if you got any questions please feel free to contact me! :)

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