Rainbow Street: the half-kilometre walk that contains modern Amman

From the First Circle to Mango Street, the most-walked thoroughfare in Jabal Amman — old residences of King Talal and Zaid ibn Shaker, the Friday souk, and where to drink coffee.

Anas Hu · May 5, 2026

Rainbow Street runs east from the First Circle to Mango Street across the spine of Jabal Amman, and on a Friday afternoon it is the most photographed half-kilometre in the city. Old stone villas with arched verandas — built when Trans-Jordan was a young emirate — sit shoulder to shoulder with cafés, art shops, the British Council, and the residence that was once King Talal's. If you only have a single afternoon in Amman, this is where you spend it.

Originally called Abu Bakr al Siddiq Street, the road carries more modern Jordanian heritage in 500 metres than most cities pack into a square kilometre.

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1Why visit Rainbow Street

Jabal Amman became the upscale residential hill of the new capital after Trans-Jordan was declared in the 1920s. Many of the original families built single-storey stone houses with deep front porches in the early 20th-century Levantine style. Rainbow Street is where most of those houses survive intact and reused. The street's attractions include the residence of King Talal (Teta Alice's House) and the former home of military leader and Prime Minister Zaid ibn Shaker.[1]

2The walk, in order

Start at the First Circle (the western end) and walk east. Notable stops:

1. **The Wild Jordan Center.** RSCN's craft + café centre on the south side. Nature-reserve products, fair-trade coffee, and a rooftop view down over the Old City.
2. **The British Council building.** A converted villa with regular cultural events.
3. **King Talal's house (Teta Alice's House).** Heritage building, partly visible from the street.
4. **The Books@Cafe.** The oldest internet café and one of the few late-evening institutions on the street.
5. **Mango House and Souk Jara square.** The eastern end. The square hosts the Friday market.

3Souk Jara on Fridays

From late spring through autumn, the Jabal Amman Residents Association runs **Souk Jara**, a Friday market in the square at the eastern end of Rainbow Street. Local artisans, food vendors, live music. It is the day to visit if you want to see Amman in its weekend mood — busy, family-oriented, and unselfconsciously social. The market closes during the hottest summer weeks; check before you go.

> If you only have one afternoon in Amman, walk Rainbow Street on a Friday.

4Where to drink coffee

Rainbow Street is the city's café spine. Three styles to choose from:

- **Rooftop with a view.** Several restaurants on the south side have rooftops looking down over the Old City, the Roman Theatre, and the Citadel across the wadi. Sundown drinks here are an Amman ritual.
- **Café-bookshop.** Books@Cafe has good Wi-Fi and stays open late.
- **Traditional ahwa.** Smaller mid-street places where you can sit with locals over Turkish coffee and a backgammon board.

> **For solo travellers**
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> Walk it slowly. The cafés are friendly to solo readers; rooftops are quieter on weekday afternoons than weekends.

5Practical tips

- **Best time of day.** Late afternoon to evening — the rooftops come alive after 5 pm.
- **Friday evenings** are the busiest; get to Souk Jara by 4 pm if you want a table.
- **Combine with.** Citadel (15-min walk uphill, 1.5 km) or the Roman Theatre (20-min walk downhill).
- **Photography.** Tripods are fine on the public sidewalks; ask before photographing inside private cafés.

References

1. Wikipedia — Rainbow Street

Verified by locals: TBD — this article will be reviewed by a Jabal Amman-resident editor before final publication. Drafted from Wikipedia.