Camel trekking overnight in Wadi Rum: what to expect and how the Bedouin route the trip

An overnight camel trek in Wadi Rum is the slow alternative to the 4×4 day. Five hours of walking pace, sunset on a high dune, dinner at a Bedouin camp, and the option of a second-day return on foot.

Anas Hu · May 5, 2026

If a 4×4 tour is the way to see Wadi Rum efficiently, a camel trek is the way to see it slowly. The pace is roughly 4 km/h — about half walking speed — and an overnight trip covers maybe 18 km of desert in two half-days. You arrive at the camp by sunset, sleep under stars, and either ride out at dawn or walk back depending on what you arranged. The Bedouin operators know the routes; the camels know the routes too.

For travellers willing to give up speed for atmosphere, it's the most authentic way through the protected area.

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1Why a camel trek vs a 4×4 tour

Wadi Rum's 721 km² protected area is too large to walk and most of it is too remote for a self-drive day-trip.[1] Two main ways travellers cover ground: 4×4 tours (fast, lots of stops, more sites in a day) or camel treks (slow, fewer stops, more time at each).

The camel trek wins on one metric: the experience of being in the desert at 4 km/h. You hear the camel's footfalls on sand, the wind, your own breathing. The 4×4 wins on coverage; the camel wins on presence.

2Typical overnight routes

Three standard one-night routes the Bedouin operators run:

- **Visitor Centre → Lawrence Spring → camp at the seven pillars (~6 hours).** The classic introductory route. Lunch at the spring; afternoon trek to the camp; sunset on a dune.
- **Visitor Centre → Khazali Canyon → Burdah saddle camp (~7 hours).** The ambitious version. Adds the Nabataean inscription site and overnight near the highest natural arch.
- **Disi Village → desert camp → Visitor Centre (one-way, ~5 hours each leg).** A 2-night version. More remote, less visited.

Most travellers do route 1. Routes 2 and 3 require fitter riders and longer time in the saddle.

3The reality of riding

Riding a camel for the first time is awkward. The pace is rolling — the camel's gait is a sway you have to find, not resist. After 30 minutes most riders settle. After 3 hours, your hips and lower back will tell you the truth. Dismounts are dramatic — the camel kneels in three jerky motions and you brace forward each time. The first time is alarming; by the third it's routine.

You're not riding alone — your Bedouin guide walks alongside or rides ahead. The camels are well-trained; they follow without being led most of the way. You don't need to know how to ride.

> A 4×4 day shows you Wadi Rum. A camel night lets the desert show itself.

4The overnight camp

Most overnight treks end at one of the standard Bedouin camps — goat-hair tents, communal fire, mattresses on sand inside the tents. Dinner is zarb (an

underground pit-cooked meat-and-vegetable stew), bread, salads. After dinner, the storytelling night around the fire. Stars start at 8 pm in summer.

For the storytelling-night details and stargazing approach, see the dedicated Wadi Rum stargazing post.

> **For solo travellers**
>
> Camel treks fill best with 4–6 people; solo travellers usually pair up at the Visitor Centre. Negotiate a shared trek or pay a single supplement. Solo on a camel is fine — the Bedouin guide is the conversation.

5Practical tips + packing

- **Layers.** Hot days, cold nights. A windbreaker + fleece for the evening is essential even in summer.
- **Long sleeves + trousers.** Sun on bare arms after 3 hours is brutal. Closed-toe shoes; sandals fail you.
- **Wide-brimmed hat + sunglasses.** The reflected glare off sandstone is intense.
- **Water.** Your guide carries it but bring a 1-litre personal bottle.
- **Day pack.** Small pack with water, sunscreen, lip balm, phone, headtorch, snack bar. Rest in the saddle bags.
- **Tip the guide.** 10–20 JD per traveller for an overnight. Cash, in JD.
- **Best season.** March–May or September–November. Avoid July–August (40 °C+).

References

1. Wikipedia — Wadi Rum

Verified by locals: TBD — this article will be reviewed by a Wadi Rum Bedouin camel-trek operator before final publication. Drafted from Wikipedia and traveller experience.