



WORLD DISCOVERY
— HISTORY CULTURE WILDLIFE —

Syrian Panorama



The ancient water-wheels or 'norias' of Hama

DAY 1 – Arrive Damascus.

On arrival in Damascus you will be met by a representative of World Discovery outside immigration and customs and taken by private car to your hotel.

DAY 2 - Damascus.

After breakfast your guide will meet you at the hotel and take you for an morning's sightseeing in a city that is believed to be the oldest continually inhabited in the world. You will visit the old city including the **Omayyad Mosque**, originally built in the 8th century as a Byzantine Cathedral, and also the **Tomb of Saladin** dating from 1193. Afternoon at leisure.

Meals included: Full breakfast.

DAY 3 - Damascus.

Further visits this morning will include the **Street Called Straight**, mentioned in the Bible, the **National Museum** and the **Azem Palace**, a magnificently decorated former home of the Governor of Damascus (18th century). The afternoon is at leisure.

Meals included: Full breakfast.

DAY 4 - Sednaya, Maalula, Krak des Chevaliers.

After breakfast you will head north to the small village of **Sednaya** to visit the Greek Orthodox convent which contains a famous icon of the Virgin Mary claimed to have been painted by St Luke. Continue to **Maalula**, where Aramaic (the language of Christ) is still spoken, before reaching the highlight of today's sightseeing - the imposing crusader castle of **Krak des Chevaliers**. T. E. Lawrence called Krak "the finest castle in the world" and it is certainly one of the best-preserved, testimony to the skills of the crusader monks who built it. You will spend overnight at a hotel in the city of **Homs**.

Meals included: Full breakfast.

DAY 5 - Hama, Apamea, Ebla. Drive to Aleppo.

Your first visit of today is to **Hama** on the Orontes River, where you will see the famous 'norias' or ancient wooden water-wheels which have become the symbol of the town. A short drive takes you to the archaeological site of **Apamea**, capital of the Seleucid Empire dating from the 2nd century B.C. Less well known than other classical sites, Apamea is nevertheless one of the wonders of Syria. Built of grey granite on a wide and windswept plain, its importance is clearly seen from the scale of its kilometre-long main colonnaded street. After your visit, continue to **Ebla**, where thousands of clay tablets in cuneiform script dating back to 4,000 B.C. have been found. Visit the Royal Palace and the Acropolis. Your final destination today is Aleppo, Syria's second city, where you will stay for 2 nights.

Meals included: Full breakfast.

DAY 6 - Aleppo, St Simeon.

Dominating the city from its manmade earthen mound stands the 12th century Citadel. Explore the interior, now largely in ruins, before heading off for a walk through the fabulous old souk (bazaar) of Aleppo, one of the most colourful in the Middle East. Also visit the Great Mosque. In the afternoon drive out to the 5th century basilica of **St Simeon**, built around the pillar on top of which the saint spent the last 37 years of his life.

Meals included: Full breakfast.

DAY 7 - By road to the banks of the Euphrates.

Travel eastwards through the Syrian Desert to visit the imposing walled Byzantine city of **Resafe**, the pilgrimage centre of Sergiopolis during Roman times. Continue to **Halabiye**, an ancient fortress city perched dramatically above the calm waters of the Euphrates, before ending your journey in **Deir Ez-Zour**.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch.

DAY 8 - Doura Europos, Mari. Drive to Palmyra.

Whilst Deir Ez-Zour has little in itself to offer the tourist, it is the perfect base for exploring the sites of the northeast, and this morning you will explore the Hellenistic caravan city of Doura Europos, strategically located on a bend of the Euphrates, and **Mari**, Syria's most important Mesopotamian site, dating from the 3rd millennium B.C. In the afternoon drive to the oasis city of **Palmyra**, where you will stay for the next two nights.

Meals included: Full breakfast.

DAY 9 - Palmyra.

A full day to explore the impressive ruins of Palmyra, city of Queen Zenobia, an extensive site in a superb desert setting with an abandoned hilltop Arab castle as a dramatic backdrop. This great caravan city flourished under the Assyrians, Greeks and Romans and has a wealth of

attractions including the Temple of Bel, an impressive colonnaded street entered through a monumental arch, and a well-preserved theatre. You will also visit the Necropolis with its unique tower tombs.

Meals included: Full breakfast.

DAY 10 - Return to Damascus.

Drive back to Damascus for your final night in Syria.

Meals included: Full breakfast.

DAY 11 - Depart for home.

Private transfer to the airport for your flight home.

Meals included: Full breakfast.