

Wadi Rum

Wadi Rum (Arabic: وادي رم) also known as **The Valley of the Moon** (Arabic: وادي القمر) is a valley cut into the sandstone and granite rock in southern Jordan 60 km (37 mi) to the east of Aqaba; it is the largest wadi in Jordan.^[1] The name Rum most likely comes from an Aramaic root meaning 'high' or 'elevated'.^[2] To reflect its proper Arabic pronunciation, archaeologists transcribe it as *Wadi Ramm*.

1 History



Petroglyphs at Wadi Rum

Wadi Rum has been inhabited by many human cultures since prehistoric times, with many cultures—including the Nabateans—leaving their mark in the form of rock paintings, graffiti, and temples.

In the West, Wadi Rum may be best known for its connection with British officer T. E. Lawrence, who passed through several times during the Arab Revolt of 1917–18.^[3] In the 1980s one of the rock formations in Wadi Rum was named “The Seven Pillars of Wisdom” after Lawrence’s book penned in the aftermath of the war, though the ‘Seven Pillars’ referred to in the book have no

connection with Rum.

2 Geography

The area is centered on the main valley of Wadi Rum. The highest elevation in Jordan is Jabal Umm ad Dami at 1,840 m (6,040 ft) high, located 30 kilometres south of Wadi Rum village. It was first located by Difallah Ateeg, a Zalabia Bedouin from Rum. On a clear day, it is possible to see the Red Sea and the Saudi border from the top.

Jabal Ram or Jebel Rum (1,734 metres (5,689 ft) above sea level) is the second highest peak in Jordan and the highest peak in the central Rum,^[4] rising directly above Rum valley, opposite Jebel um Ishrin, which is possibly one metre lower.

Khaz’ali Canyon in Wadi Rum is the site of petroglyphs etched into the cave walls depicting humans and antelopes dating back to the Thamudic times. The village of Wadi Rum itself consists of several hundred Bedouin inhabitants with their goat-hair tents and concrete houses and also their four-wheel vehicles, one school for boys and one for girls, a few shops, and the headquarters of the Desert Patrol.^[5]

Recently, Geoff Lawton has achieved success in establishing a permaculture ecosystem in Wadi Rum.^[6]

3 Tourism

Wadi Rum is home to the Zalabia Bedouin who, working with climbers and trekkers, have made a success of developing eco-adventure tourism, now their main source of income. The area is now one of Jordan’s important tourist destinations, and attracts an increasing number of foreign tourists, particularly trekkers and climbers, but also for camel and horse safari or simply day-trippers from Aqaba or Petra. Popular activities in the desert environment include camping under the stars, riding Arab horses, hiking and rock-climbing among the massive rock formations. ATVs (All Terrain Vehicles) and Jeeps are also available and new camps have opened that offer adequate accommodation for tourists.

Dima and Lama Hattab coordinate an annual marathon in the region called Jabal Ishrin.