The Ancient Incense Route

The Ancient Incense Route incorporated a network of major ancient land and sea trading routes linking Eastern and Southern sources of incense, spices, and other luxury goods with the Mediterranean world. The fabled route flourished from the 7th century BC to the 2nd century AD, stretching from India through eastern Africa and Arabia across the Levant and Egypt to Mediterranean ports.

Roughly 10 km northwest of Petra, a relic of the ancient Incense Route lies hidden in the vast foot-hills of the breathtaking esh-Shera mountain range that dots the eastern border of Wadi Araba. Bir Madkhur, a site that holds special significance in the history of trade and development of human cul-ture, was a major caravan station along the famed Spice Route that connected Petra in southern Jordan with the Mediterranean port of Gaza. Ancient civilizations such as the Nabataens, Romans, and Byzantines lived at Bir Madkhur, a trade depot that provided their empires with incense that was essential for cultural and religious rituals through-out the known world.
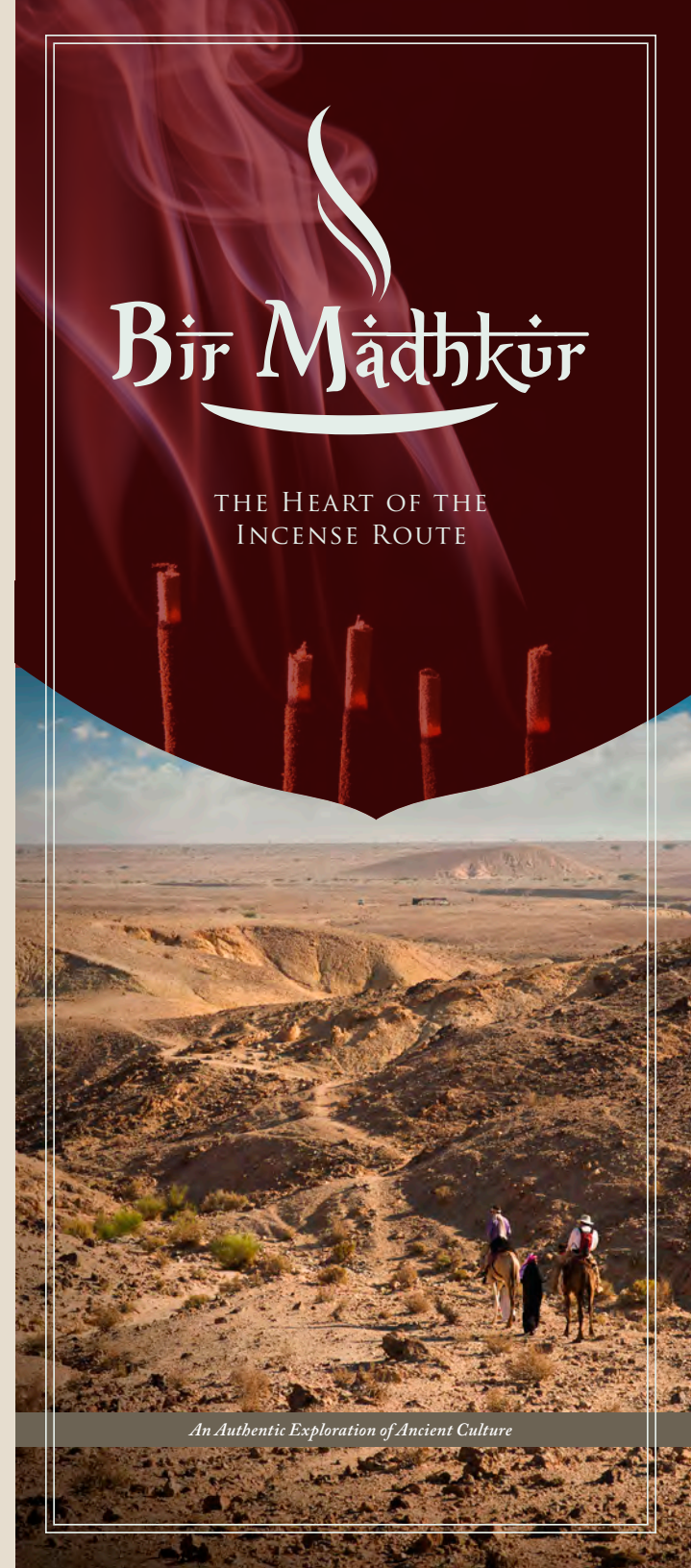
Come, visit an ancient center of social, economic, and cultural interaction, and travel a path taken, many, many times before.

Bir Madhkur

Address

Phone

Website

Bir Madhkur

THE HEART OF THE INCENSE ROUTE

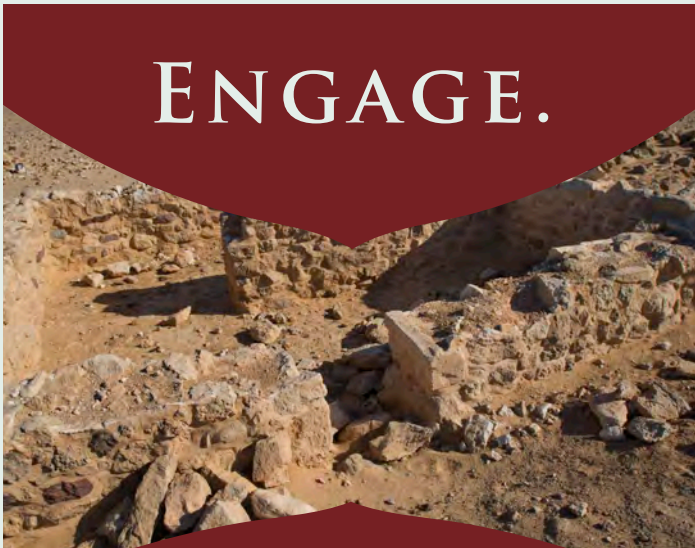*An Authentic Exploration of Ancient Culture*

EXPLORE.

Delve deep into the mystic desert.

Trek. Climb the cliffs, hike the mountains, or trek the tranquil deserts of the scenic and historical Wadi Araba.

Tour. Voyage across a sea of sand, a range of hills, and discover not only the wildlife of such a beautifully fragile ecosystem, but the ancient rock shelters, stone piles, and stone circles that dot the wadi.

Ride. Set out on a historical reenactment of the legendary Nabataean and Roman caravan route, trading in exotic spices and aromatics along the way. Travel the desert on camel back, the way it has been done for thousands of years.

ENGAGE.

Witness history unfold as you travel back to ancient times.

Archaeology. Bir Madhkur lies along the famed Incense Route once used by the Nabataeans, en route from Petra to Gaza. Bir Madhkur features a wealth of historically significant sites; a Late Roman/Byzantine army fort, a domestic settlement surrounding the fort, as well as a Roman bath complex. Other sites nearby include caravan stations, farmhouses, and nomadic encampments.

The Bir Madhkur Cultural Heritage Center. The Cultural Heritage Center, in cooperation with the George Washington University and the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities / Department of Antiquities of Jordan, works to preserve and protect the cultural heritage of Jordan and provides the public a unique glimpse of cutting edge archaeological fieldwork.

Visitors to the center are invited to be an archaeologist for a day by taking part in interactive archaeological exhibits and simulations. Excavate historic rooms, wash ancient pottery, and sift sand for artifacts. There's also plenty to see and do at the Archaeological Research Lab where you can watch archaeologists at work during the field season, as they document and study artifacts they've discovered. Afterwards, relax at the café and roam the gift shop.

EXPERIENCE.

Walk in the sandals of a Bedouin.

Nomadic Lifestyle. Live out your Arabian nights feasting on the renowned local dish mansef, dancing rhythmic movements that spans generations, and chanting songs that have been sung since the dawn of time. Do all this as the Bedouin do and immerse yourself in the cultural experience of a lifetime.

Camel Racing. Be a spectator and guess which camel has the quickest legs as you eagerly cheer on your favorite to win. Or if you fancy yourself as a commandeer of the "ship of the desert," take one for a ride and see how far dtoward the finish line you can get.

Camp Under the Stars. Behold the serene desert nightfall as you gaze into the star- and moonlight above silhouetted mountains. All the while your Arabian tent, the embodiment of hospitality, will serve your every need and desire from dusk to dawn.