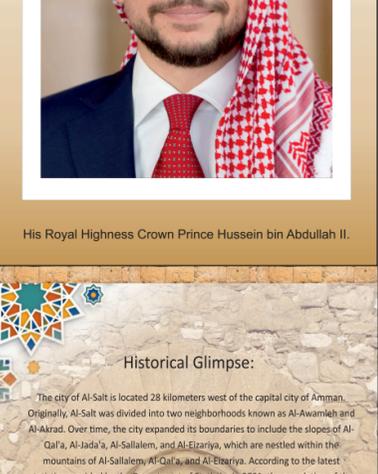


His Majesty King Abdullah II bin Hussein.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hussein bin Abdullah II.

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Historical Glimpse:

The city of Al-Salt is located 28 kilometers west of the capital city of Amman. Originally, Al-Salt was divided into two neighborhoods known as Al-Awameh and Al-Akrad. Over time, the city expanded its boundaries to include the slopes of Al-Qafa, Al-Jada'a, Al-Sallam, and Al-Ezariya, which are nestled within the mountains of Al-Sallam, Al-Qafa, and Al-Ezariya. According to the latest statistics provided by the Department of Statistics in 2021, the population of the Greater Al-Salt Municipality stood at 334,800 residents. The Greater Al-Salt Municipality covers an area of 135.44 square kilometers. The stone houses, arranged in clusters, were constructed on these mountains, forming a harmonious blend with the natural contours of the landscape. The valleys that stretch between these mountains have shaped the city's pathways and main streets. At the confluence of these valleys, nestled at the foot of the mountains, a central space emerged, which later became the main hub of the municipality. The mountainous terrain of the municipality has endowed it with natural fortification, rendering the need for city walls unnecessary. Moreover, the distinctive mountainous terrain has limited the municipality's horizontal expansion, resulting in buildings characterized by multi-level structures that conform to the contour lines. The buildings are interspersed with narrow and winding staircases. On the other hand, the mountainous nature of Al-Salt has bestowed a captivating architectural charm upon the municipality. Its buildings stand out with their yellow-hued stones, while the extensive use of arches and bridges adds to their allure. Stone quarries and stonecutting workshops have also proliferated on the outskirts of the municipality.

The discoveries indicate the presence of numerous archaeological remains that trace the history of the city back to the Stone Age. Among these remains are churches from the Bronze Age, including the church near Al-Hesba, (the central vegetable market), today, which is a decorated cave adorned with various paintings. Roman tombs were also discovered about three kilometers southeast of Al-Salt, characterized by narrow stone gates. These tombs date back to the third and fourth centuries AD.

In the heart of Al-Salt, baths were found beneath the walls of the municipal stores located in Al-Ain square. Although systematic excavations have not yet been conducted by archaeologists, there are significant archaeological sites such as Khirbat Al-Souq, located four kilometers south of Al-Salt, as well as KhirbatAyoub, KhirbatHazeer, and KhirbatAl-Deir. Another notable site is the Mosque of the Prophet Yusha "Joshua", situated northwest of Al-Salt, dating back only three or four centuries.

Al-Salt and its surroundings are rich in beautiful hills, abundant water sources, and archaeological sites. However, detailed information about its ancient history remains buried deep in its soil. Al-Salt is renowned for its traditional attire, known as "Al-Khalagah" for women and "Al-Keber and Al-Hatta" for men.

The geographical location of Al-Salt has facilitated the formation of agricultural settlements and the establishment of urban centers since ancient times. The city benefits from a transitional climate, situated between the western Jordan Valley and the interior desert, experiencing moderate summers and cold winters. The presence of springs in the city enhances its fertility, and it is famous for its grapes, pomegranates, and olives.

Furthermore, Al-Salt's elevated position along the roads leading to Palestine attracted many residents from Palestine, as well as agriculturists from Damascus and Morocco, who came to Al-Salt for agriculture, trade, and construction. This led to the expansion of the city and a significant increase in its population, making it the largest city in what is now known as the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Currently, Al-Salt serves as the capital of Balqa Governorate. It was on the verge of becoming the capital when the Emirate of Transjordan was established, but due to the limitations posed by its topography, the capital was moved to Amman. In the early 20th century, Al-Salt had a population of 25,000 residents, making it the largest city in Jordan at that time.

Urban planning, on the other hand, has been influenced by several factors, including social factors based on the division of the city into neighborhoods. A neighborhood is a district that consists of several alleys separated by main streets, with alleys branching off from them. Typically, a neighborhood is a residential gathering that includes ten or more closely related clans or families based on social ties and interests, regardless of religion and geographical origins. These neighborhoods were formed in the highlands and slopes of mountains, expanding and extending to meet at an intermediate location near the foothills. This location gained significant importance, making it an ideal place to establish the city center of Al-Salt. This was due to various reasons, including its central position within the city, its flat nature, and the abundance of springs in the area.

It is worth mentioning that the planning of Al-Salt city was coordinated with the planning of Islamic cities, such as the presence of a mosque, a government palace, water springs, commercial activity in the city center, schools, and the branching of streets and roads from this center to various parts of the city. The Turkish government built its administrative center, the "Saraya," in the main square of Al-Salt. They also constructed the Grand Mosque, which is considered the largest gathering place for religious activities in the city. Throughout its long history, commercial shops were built, and churches were located in proximity to this mosque, forming the commercial hub that branched out from the main streets of Al-Salt.

Unveiling the Origins of the name:

Al-Salt has been known by several names throughout ancient history:

- "Gadora" or "Gadara," which was first mentioned in Assyrian documents and mosaic inscriptions. The name is derived from "the wall" or "the fortification," possibly referring to the hill overlooking Wadi Al-Salt.
- "Al-Salt" meaning the "Clear Forehead"
- "Al-Salt," which is believed to be derived from the Latin word "Saltus," meaning "forest."
- "Al-Salt," which may refer to a type of tree, possibly oak and sandalwood, found in various areas of the city. It is common to interchange certain letters such as changing "s" to "sad," "d" to "t," and "ad" to "s."
- "Al-Salt" also means "oppression" or "severity" linguistically.
- It may also mean "Al-Salt," which means "oil" in general Arabic or "sesame oil" among the people of Yemen. It is more likely that the name is of Arabic origin due to the existence of a village named Al-Salt in Hauran and another village named Al-Salt in Yemen.

Nature's Beauty and Architectural Splendors in Al Salt

Al-Salt, in Jordan, is characterized by its ancient buildings made of yellow stone, scattered harmoniously on its hillsides. Most of these buildings date back to the city's golden age between 1890 and 1920. Al-Salt began to flourish in the government of Damascus restored order to the region. The 1867 House (Al-Saraya) was built in 1869 to the east of Al-Akrad neighborhood, and security was established. Al-Salt became a Qadaa (district) according to the Ottoman administrative regulations. The central square (Al-Sahab) became a center for official, social, and commercial activities. Trade expanded eastward through Al-Hammam Street, and urbanization spread north and south across the lower slopes of the castle mount block and Jada' block. By the 1940s, the slopes of the castle mount block, Jada' block, and the lower part of the stairs were rich with urban development.

Over the past hundred years, the architectural character and construction methods have changed from traditional rural houses built with local materials to those influenced by modern global styles, using new construction materials.

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The pre-1866 rural architecture was characterized by simple farmhouses began on the hill slopes.

The houses consisted of a single floor with front courtyards. These houses were built with local yellowish stone, with roofs made of tree trunks covered with mud and straw, supported by stone arches (Qanatair). They were distinguished by their height, reaching up to five meters.

The interior space of the house had corners and alcoves made of mud and straw used for grain storage.

Architecture and construction methods evolved after 1866, becoming more urban in character, influenced by the heritage of Nabataean and Jerusalem walls were built with courses of yellowish Salt stone, featuring intricate details such as projections, domes and intersecting walls in the gateways, and imported tiled roofs appeared in some important buildings. Steel balconies were used, and buildings rose to two or three floors. Examples include the Abu Jabbar Building, the Wall Complex, the House of Al-Qasbi, and others.

After the 1927 earthquake that hit the region, along with the migration of residents to Amman and the development of infrastructure and the use of concrete in construction, only around 850 of these heritage buildings remain, built with the distinctive yellow stone that distinguishes them from other cities in the Kingdom. It is worth mentioning that 23 buildings from this collection have been nominated for inclusion on UNESCO's World Heritage List.

There was a rapid growth after 1890, and the architectural character became more complex with the influence of European and regional influences. Religious and public buildings became important landmarks in the city. This period was characterized by the abundance of stone ornaments in the gateways, and imported tiled roofs appeared in some important buildings. Steel balconies were used, and buildings rose to two or three floors. Examples include the Abu Jabbar Building, the Wall Complex, the House of Al-Qasbi, and others.

Initially, there was no building, the wall thickness exceeded one meter to be able to bear the massive arches. Then, the construction system evolved due to civilization progress, and iron and cement began to be used.

Enshrined in the World Heritage List by UNESCO: Magnificent Areas of the Grand Municipality of Al Salt..

In a momentous decision during its 44th virtual session held in China, the World Heritage Committee, a branch of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), granted its approval for the inclusion of the Jordanian city of Al-Salt, known as the "City of Tolerance and Civilized Hospitality," on the prestigious World Heritage List. This historic announcement, made in July 2021, signifies Jordan's commitment to preserving and sustaining the outstanding universal value and unique characteristics of Al-Salt. The city's nomination journey began in 1995, with subsequent nominations in 2017, culminating in this long-awaited inclusion in 2021. This momentous occasion celebrates Al-Salt as a cultural treasure, renowned for its heritage, spirit of tolerance, and warm hospitality.

Education:

Salt is home to numerous schools, including the first public high school in Jordan, which dates back to 1868. The first secondary school in eastern Jordan was established in 1923 with funding from the local community, and its first graduating class was in 1926. In the early 1950s, several other schools were established alongside it, such as Tariq Ibn Ziyad School and Saeed Al-Bahra School, which was founded in 1954, and AdebWahbeh School, named after the first Minister of Education, as he, himself, is a Salti. There are also many private schools in Salt, dating back to the late 19th century, such as the Latin School and the Catholic School. The total number of schools in Salt is 113.

Salt is also home to the headquarters of the Holy Land Institute for the Deaf, a non-profit educational center that provides free services to people with hearing impairments. The city is surrounded by two universities: Al-Balqa Applied University, founded in 1997, and Amman University (Al-Man Ahiyya University), located on the highway that connects Amman to Salt.

Health:

In Salt, there are currently:

- 16 comprehensive health centers.
- 6 primary health centers.
- 5 sub-centers.

The total number of centers in Balqa Governorate is:

- 10 comprehensive health centers.
- 42 primary health centers.
- 15 sub-centers.

The number of hospitals in Balqa Governorate is 5, including:

- Al-Hussein New Salt Hospital.
- Prince Hussein bin Abdullah II Hospital.
- Princess Imam Mariam Hospital.
- Shams Al-Salt Hospital.
- National Center for Mental Health Hospital.

Historical Locations

Salt is home to the oldest important archaeological sites from different eras. It houses the largest museum in Jordan, the Archaeological Museum, which represents the history of Salt and contains various sections, including:

- Ancient artifacts, jewelry, antique clothing, and household tools.
- Ancient coins from different periods and civilizations.
- The Historical Museum of Salt (Abu Jabbar House).
- The Open Museum.
- The English Museum.
- Salt Secondary School for Boys.
- The Monument of the Unknown Turkish Soldier.
- Numerous religious shrines, including the shrine of the Prophet Joshua bin Nun, the shrine of Al-Khidr, the shrine of Prophet Shuayb, and the shrine of Prophet Jad (Al-Jadur), peace be upon them, and the shrine of Prophet Ayub (Job), peace be upon him.
- Al-Rammin Waterfalls, Salt Castle, Al-Jad, Old Salt Neighborhood, and Al-Skafiyah Market. All of these are very old buildings and ancient artifacts.
- The Royal Roman Cemetery in Wadi Shuab.

From 1890 to World War I, the city was influenced by European architecture, with the emergence of tiled roofs, iron balconies, and verandas. After the introduction of reinforced concrete and imported building materials, the city developed rapidly, containing more than 2,000 heritage buildings.

Al Salt: The City of Pioneers

The second Chamber of Commerce in the Arab world and the first Chamber of Commerce in Jordan, founded in 1882.

- The first engineer in Jordan, Abdul RazzaqFalahKhrisat.
- The first Agricultural Chamber in Jordan.
- The first secondary school in Jordan, Salt Secondary School for Boys, and the first high school graduate in 1926, Abdul Rahim Al-Wakid. The foundation stone was laid by Prince Abdullah bin Hussein in 1923.
- The third public lighting network for the city in 1923.
- The first appointed municipal council in 1881.
- The first elected municipal council in 1887 and the first branch of knowledge (education) in Jordan in 1887.
- The first mosque built through voluntary work and donations, Al-Salt Al-Sagheer Mosque, in 1905.
- The first rain gauge made at Salt Secondary School.
- The guest houses (madafih) were established in the city in 1812 to accommodate visitors.
- The first municipality in the history of Jordan, Salt Municipality, founded in 1881.
- The second hotel dedicated to training in Jordan, Saltos Hotel, chosen by the owning company, Zara Investment Holding Company, to be named after the city.
- Saltos Hotel aims to promote the cultural heritage of Salt and market it as a vibrant tourist destination due to its historical, archaeological, and touristic sites. It also supports the tourism infrastructure and supporting services in the city. In addition, the hotel was established to be part of the training process at a vocational training institution, serving as a model for other institutes offering hospitality training programs.

Exploring the Wonders of Al Salt...

- Cultural Tourism:
 - City Museum
 - Historical Museum of Salt
 - Archaeological Museum
 - Activities Museum
 - Salt Cultural Center
- Religious Tourism:
 - Islamic maqams (shrines) and mosques
 - Baptism site of Jesus Christ
 - Christian maqams and churches
 - The Shrine of Al-Khidr (visited by both Muslims and Christians)
- Natural and Environmental Tourism:
 - The Dead Sea, the lowest point on Earth, Wadi Salt, Wadi Shuab, Zai, Jalad, Umm Al-'Amad, Wadi Al-Hour, Historical sites
- Medical Tourism
- Rural Tourism
- Adventure Tourism

Journeying Through Al Salt's Tourist Trails...

1. Harmony Route:

The city of Al-Salt represents a vivid example of hospitality, the authenticity of its people, and the harmonious coexistence of different religious civilizations within one neighborhood. There are no establishments segregated by sect, religion, or ethnicity. Houses are clustered together, and the only difference lies in the location of worship, where mosques and churches are adjacent to each other. This unique harmony reinforces the idea that Al-Salt distinguishes itself through religious, cultural, and architectural coexistence despite its small size. Muslims and Christians live side by side in the same neighborhood and market without any distinction in attire or dialect. Men and women are loving brothers, brothers and sisters. The route consists of 10 tourist attractions, including churches and mosques, starting from Al-Ain Square, passing through the Al-Khidr Street and the historic Hamam Street. Some of the attractions on this route include:

- Historical Museum of Salt (Abu Jabbar House)
- Al-Ain Square
- Grand Mosque
- English Complex (Anglican Church)
- Latin Church and its school
- Qaish House
- Church of the Dormition of the Virgin Mary (Greek Orthodox Church)
- Church and Shrine of Al-Khidr and
- Hamam Street
- Small Mosque
- Small Church

Embracing Everyday Life:

The residents of Salt merge into one social system where their customs, traditions, daily lifestyles, and political and social ideologies are similar. They share social norms based on a set of prevailing values, standards, and customs. Revisiting these values through the daily life route is essential to introduce visitors and tourists to the richness of this ancient city, with a particular focus on the vibrant heart of the city, Hamam Street.

In general, the relationship among residents is based on geographical proximity rather than sectarian affiliation. The customs are unified, and there is no difference between them except that Muslims worship in mosques and Christians in churches. Some of the main tourist attractions on this route include:

- Enjoying the designs of heritage buildings and architectural arts along the route.
- Experiencing the traditional game of "Mandala."
- Trying popular sweets such as "Qatayef," "Awameh," "Shaabiya," and "Kunafa."
- Exploring henna, accessories, and gifts.
- Observing the traditional shoemaking and repairing of the shoe.
- Experiencing traditional tobacco production methods.
- Exploring traditional herbal medicine and alternative medicine.
- Visiting the popular vegetable market.
- Relaxing in popular cafes like Al-Iskandarani and Al-Osmali.
- Experiencing traditional Salti clothing in guesthouses.
- Indulging in popular local cuisine.

Pathways of Education...

The notable emphasis and interest of Salt's residents in the importance of education in improving and developing people's lives have made Salt a leading educational hub within and beyond the city. Salt Secondary School, established in 1923, is the first high school in Jordan and a source of pride for the people of Salt, as it has produced several prime ministers and a significant number of high-ranking civilian and military officials.

Some of the main tourist attractions on this educational route include:

- Al-Sayfiyah School, which dates back to the Mamluk era and produced judges who worked in Damascus and Jerusalem. It represented a vibrant neighborhood called "Haret Al-Saltiyah" in the 12th century.
- The Orthodox School
- Greek Orthodox School
- Latin School
- Salt Secondary School and Salt Girls' Secondary School, founded in 1908.

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