

# Interesting Facts About Petra



Sundeep Shukla + February, 2016

**PETRA**      Constructed around 312 BCE as the capital of the Nabataeans, Petra truly reflects the heritage of Jordan. This wonder of the world is half-built and half-carved into the rock. It is a small desert valley covered by towering sandstone cliffs on the edges of the Wadi Araba desert.

## 1. Meaning of Petra (البتراء)

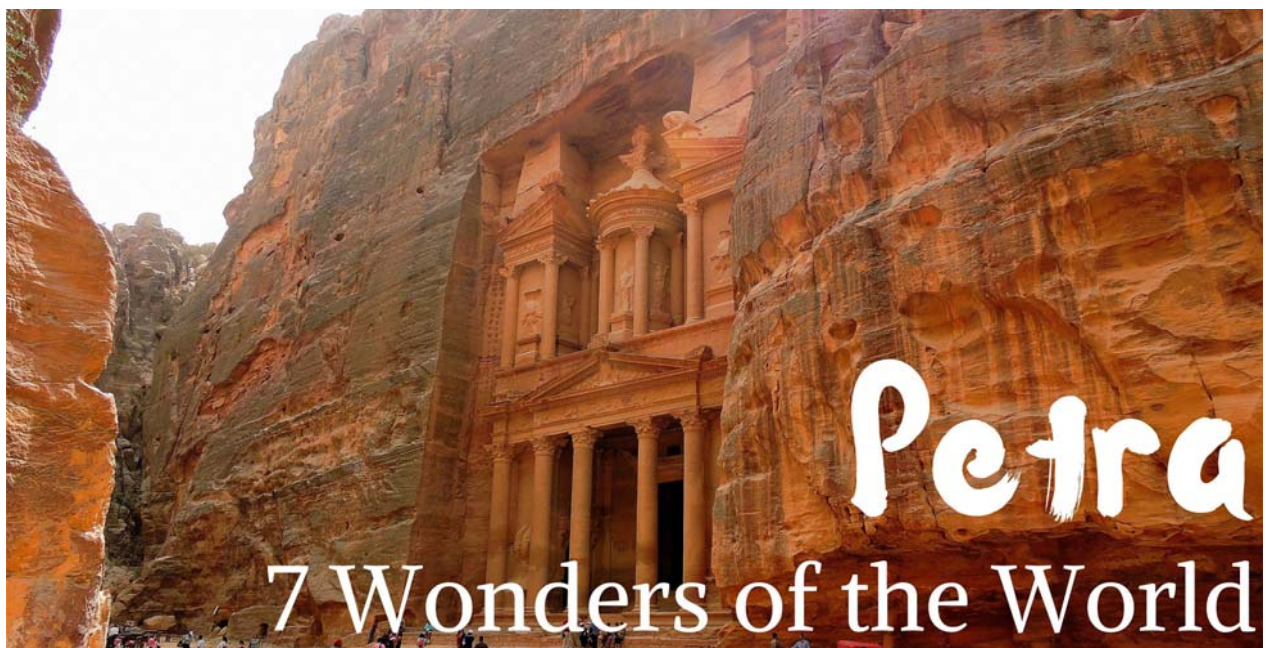
Petra got its name from a feminine Greek word “petros” which means “rocks”. Its other name is Al-Batra in Arabic, but Petra is more popular.

## 2. A man from Switzerland discovered it

Johann Ludwig Burckhardt, a Swiss explorer discovered Petra in 1812. As it was an unknown entity for about 5 centuries, it is also called the ‘Lost City’.

## 3. Who made the Petra?

An ancient civilisation called the Nabataeans. The Nabataeans, an ancient southern Arab people made the city of Petra as a trade route to connect to southern Asia and Greece. They arrived in Jordan in around the 6th century BC and were the creators of one of the most remarkable ancient civilizations.



#### **4. Nabataeans were worshipers of Sun**

European studies found that The Nabataeans built this city to track the astronomical movements of the sun and also built an altar on the top their house.

#### **5. The “Dead Sea” is eroding it**

Continuous salt blowing from the Dead Sea is solidifying the pores of the sandstone and slowly hampering the structures.

#### **6. This desert was an abundant source of water**

Because of the water conservation system at that time, there was sufficient amount of water for around 30,000 people. There was also enough water in this desert region to have lush garden, they managed to grow lush green gardens in the desert.

#### **7. Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade was filmed here**

A scene from Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade filmed at Petra. Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade, a famous American adventure film of 1989 was filmed here. The fictional Canyon of the Crescent Moon was filmed on the eastern entrance of the Petra.

#### **8. Earthquake was behind its destruction**

In May, 363 A.D. a pair of severe earthquakes destroyed half of the city. Many buildings and their water systems were highly damaged.

#### **9. Is a World Heritage Site**

Because of its historic importance and sensitive structure, it was declared as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1985.

#### **10. Petra was made in 3 periods**

Majority of the Petra was made in 3 different pats i.e. the Edomites (18th-2nd century BC), the Nabateans (2nd century BC- 106 BC) and the Romans from (106 – 395 BC) but the remains left are mainly of the Nabateans period.

