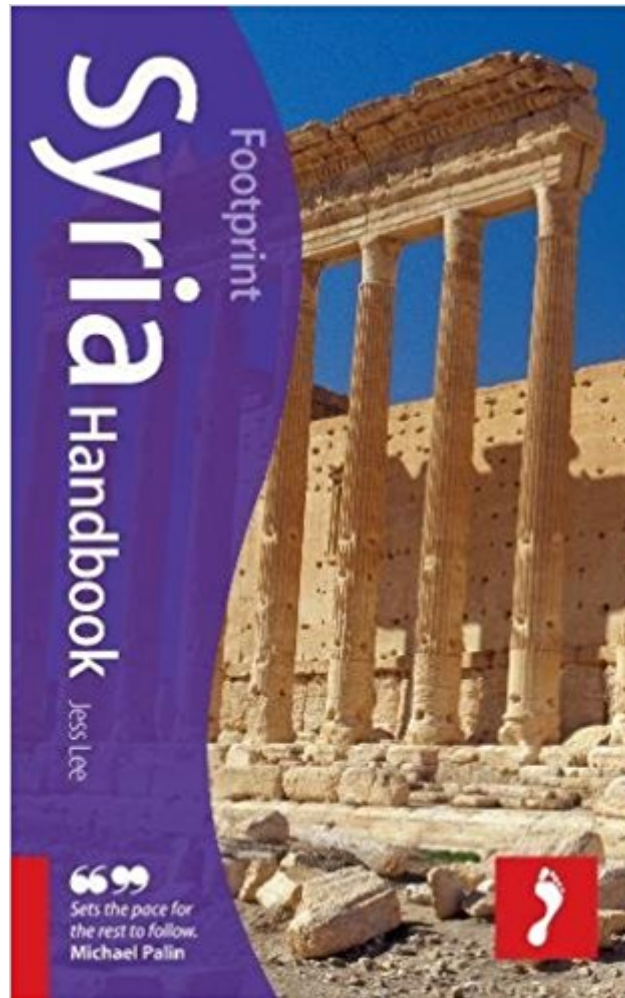




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Syria Handbook (Footprint - Handbooks)



Synopsis

Syria has always been a crossroads. Kings, caliphs, crusaders and conquerors have all carved their way through here leaving crumbling reminders of past glories scattered across the countryside. Vast ruins spread out over desert sands, fairytale castles perch on hill tops; Syria groans under a weight of monuments that few other countries can match. In the cities, thread your way deep enough into the belly of the souks and it feels as if the clocks stopped a few centuries back. Spice scents the air as donkeys, laden down with produce, plod their way down narrow alleys beneath buildings sloping precariously inward, reducing the sky to a blue sliver in between. But this nation is so much more than a living museum. Syrians, quick to smile and welcome strangers, are the real star attraction. Invitations to talk and drink tea, to come home for dinner, are daily occurrences for travelers, who discover that the legendary Syrian hospitality is the real highlight of a journey here.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Since deciding that growing up and getting a proper job was highly overrated at the tender age of 18, New Zealander Jessica Lee has travelled extensively in Asia, Africa and Latin America. A small obsession with humour and a large obsession with nomadic people led her to the Middle East in 2004 where she fell in love with the Arabic language and the incredible hospitality of the people. She has lived there full-time since 2007, working as a tour leader as well as a writer. When not on the overland trail between Cairo and Istanbul, she can usually be found among the fairy chimneys of central Anatolia where she is attempting to renovate a cave-house.

I work in the travel industry and have seen more than my fair share of guide books. This Footprints guide served us well during our 2 week jaunt through Syria and offered great off-the-beaten track advice (a few of which we would have never found on our own). The book is nicely laid-out, easy to follow and very honest in terms of its reviews...it is apparent that the author is passionate about Syria but also willing to discuss the bad with the good. I typically utilize LPs, Rough Guides, etc to get an overview of a place and for the maps but I found myself reading and referencing the Footprints guide frequently during our trip as it was really well-written and interesting. Guide books are just that- guides... it irritates me when people expect every single detail to be listed in a book and then follow it 100%. It takes the fun away from travel. This Footprints guide encourages you to put down the book and find your own trail- via its walking tours and other tips on transportation. Highly recommended. Note: A few of the listings were out of date, but that goes with any guidebook.

I was very excited that the new Footprint guide for Syria had come out since I was using the previous one for researching my trip there and found it to be excellent. However, I was quite disappointed immediately, with the hard cover which made it difficult to thumb through, and secondly with the lack of regional maps. Even the country map had only a handful (15-20 or so) cities and towns marked. This made it nearly impossible to figure out the best way to efficiently plot out a trip. Information about cities and attractions seemed pretty good but the practical info (hotels, restaurants etc) was grouped together with that of other cities several pages beyond for some reason, making it rather clumsy. Restaurant and hotel prices were lumped into letter categories which takes a bit of getting used to plus impossible to know where a place fell within a category (which of the hotels in category "C" for example were the cheapest). This guide was also smaller and far less comprehensive than the earlier edition. In all fairness I must say that I never actually used this guide or gave it a real thorough examination since I was immediately put off by it and wanted to maintain its new appearance so I could return it to the seller. Still a good guide, but I think it could have been far better.

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