

Tor al Taboun – the longest limestone cliff in Jordan!

Location

Below the north rim of Wadi Hasa and East of the idyllically located village of Um al Yanabia' approximately 20km south of Kerak.

GPS

31° 0'28.67"N 35°39'49.72"E at 850m alt. See Google Earth.

Approach

From Kerak, follow the King's Highway for approximately 13km to El Mazar then fork right for 4km to Majra telecom tower. Here, turn west towards Taibah close to the north rim of Hasa. After 1.7km, go sharp L by bus shelter just after a small school and follow a road down long hairpin bends. Keep right at T junction, and continue on, ignoring minor tracks to L until just after passing between pines on L and olives on R. Go L onto a track and follow it down to pass between cliffs of Tor Taboun reaching the Campsite Area below cliff. (The track which the Jordan Trail goes down continues along and down, winding all the way to Wadi Hasa. Keep left at a junction half way down to reach Burbeita Hot Springs)

The cliff

This superb limestone cliff extends west to east for around 2km. It is (at the moment!) the longest cliff so far discovered in Jordan. The height, almost throughout, is close to or over 20m. The rock is mostly excellent and usually around vertical offering great potential for hard sport and trad routes.

To the W of the approach track there are some good looking overhangs and other features including walls, cracks and free-standing towers, one of which has an interesting looking possible climb up its inside shaded wall up flowstone like a melting candle.

To the E, there are camping areas either near the cliff or a little further on where a track goes left. Beyond there the cliff is more broken for a short distance, after which it once again presents walls, cracks and overhangs including the Tufa Roof. There is an easy way up or down about half way along. Further on there

are some nice boulders, 4 to 8m high, beyond which the cliff continues further E. eventually deteriorating

Ethics

The numerous crack lines offer opportunities for trad routes with protection from cams and wires and should be left this way so that people can enjoy 'clean' climbing either for it's own sake or for preparation for bigger things such as Wadi Rum. The many superb walls and roofs will mostly be sport climbing terrain. The cliff top, whilst being generally clean has very few belay points so bolted lower-offs will probably be the way to go. Grades, as always in Jordan, are French. Enjoy!

The Routes

Only one at the moment, just right of the point where the approach track goes beneath the cliff. Sadly it's all we had time for. We had been exploring tracks for the Jordan Trail, so finding this cliff was a real bonus, hence the name:

Bonus Track 17m 5a

Climbs the obvious trad line of the corner crack in the centre of the Campsite Sector. Classic jams, laybacks and bridging with good pro all the way. Good belay 20m above on large block.

9 April 2014 A Howard, M Khano, D Taylor

(Climbed and cleaned on top rope as no trad gear with us.)