

Stargazing at Rummana Campground: the high- altitude alternative to Wadi Rum

1,250 metres above sea level on a Dana ridge, the RSCN-managed Rummana campground gives you Bortle-2 dark skies, cooler nights than Wadi Rum, and the tents are on platforms with proper mattresses. Open April–October.

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If Wadi Rum is the famous Jordanian stargazing destination, Rummana is the quieter alternative — and on a clear summer night, arguably the better sky. The campground sits at 1,250 metres on a ridge inside the Dana Biosphere Reserve, far enough from Aqaba and Petra that the only light pollution is the occasional Bedouin headlamp on the next ridge. Bortle Class 2 most nights, Class 1 in the deep summer when the air is at its driest. The galactic core comes up before midnight April through September; the Milky Way arches across a sky that would have been unremarkable to a Roman traveller and is rare to a modern one.

Three nights here is one of the best stargazing trips you can do in the Levant.

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1 Why Rummana over Wadi Rum

Both sites have very dark skies. Rummana wins on three counts:

- **Higher elevation (1,250 m vs Wadi Rum's 900 m).** Less atmosphere overhead. Better seeing.
- **Cooler summer nights.** Wadi Rum hits 25 °C+ in July nights; Rummana stays closer to 18–22 °C. More comfortable for a 4 am observation session.
- **Quieter.** Wadi Rum has hundreds of camps; Rummana has one. The sound of the desert here is wind and the occasional ibex.

Wadi Rum wins on accessibility (year-round, easier to reach) and on the desert atmosphere. Most travellers do both — one night each — for the comparison.

2 Month-by-month target calendar

April. Campground opens late March or April. Galactic core rises before dawn.

May. Core up by midnight. Antares visible in Scorpius. **June-July.** Peak galactic core season. Core up by 9–10 pm; reaches zenith by 1–2 am. **August.** Perseid meteor shower peaks Aug 12–13. Best night of the year for casual observers.

September. Air clarity at its peak. Cygnus / North America Nebula at zenith.

October. Last good month. Galactic core sets earlier; autumn constellations rise. Campground typically closes late October before the rains.

Higher and quieter than Wadi Rum. The galactic core arches over a single ridge campground.

3 The campground itself

Rummana is operated by the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN). The setup:

- **Tents on platforms.** Standing-height tents, real mattresses, sheets. More like a yurt experience than a backpacker tent.
- **Communal dining tent.** RSCN dinner — fresh bread, mansaf or maqluba, salads, mint tea.
- **No electricity in tents.** Solar lanterns. Charging at the dining-tent solar bank.
- **Toilets + cold showers.** Communal block. Clean.

- **Walking trails radiate from camp.** Short loops through the cypress forest; longer trails descend into the reserve.

4 Getting there

The campground is accessed via the RSCN office in Dana village, then a 15-minute 4×4 transfer up the ridge. From elsewhere:

- **From Amman.** 2.5 hours by car to Dana village, then RSCN-arranged 4×4 transfer.
- **From Petra.** 90 minutes north on the Desert Highway + 30 minutes detour to Dana.
- **Combined trip.** Stay 1 night in Dana village + 1–2 nights at Rummana for the full reserve experience.

For solo travellers

Solo single-tent rates are reasonable. Communal dining is friendly; bring a star-app (Stellarium) and you'll have company at the dinner table.

5 Practical tips

- **Open season.** April–October only. The reserve closes in winter; rain and wind make the ridge unsuitable.
- **Avoid full moon weeks.** Even a quarter moon washes out the Milky Way. Plan for new-moon ± 5 days.
- **Layers.** Even in July, temperature drops 15 °C from afternoon to 4 am. A fleece + windbreaker.
- **Star-app.** Stellarium (free) for tracking the galactic core position.
- **Photography.** Tripod required. ISO 1600–3200 + f/2.8 + 20 sec exposure for wide-field Milky Way.
- **Combine with.** The Dana village (separate post) for a 2-night Dana stay.

References

1. [Wikipedia — Dana, Jordan](#)

Verified by locals: TBD — this article will be reviewed by an RSCN-affiliated guide and an astrophotographer before final publication. Drafted from Wikipedia and observation experience.