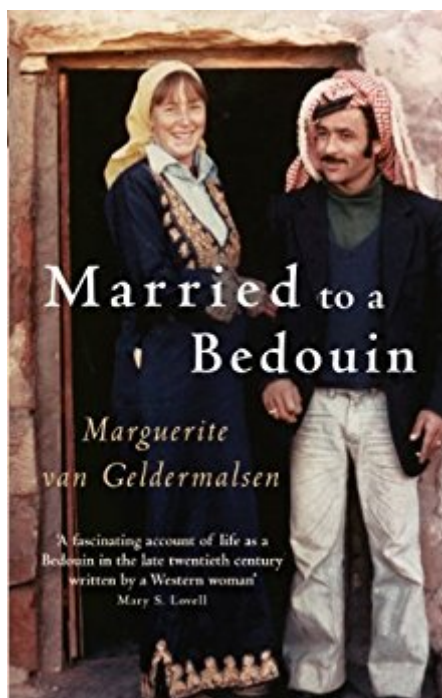


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# Married To A Bedouin



## Synopsis

"Where you staying?" the Bedouin asked. "Why you not stay with me tonight - in my cave?" Thus begins Marguerite van Geldermalsen's story of how a New Zealand-born nurse came to be married to Mohammad Abdallah Othman, a Bedouin souvenir-seller from the ancient city of Petra in Jordan. It was 1978 and she and a friend were travelling through the Middle East when Marguerite met the charismatic Mohammad who convinced her that he was the man for her. A life with Mohammad meant moving into his ancient cave and learning to love the regular tasks of baking shrak bread on an open fire and collecting water from the spring. And as Marguerite feels herself becoming part of the Bedouin community, she is thankful for the twist in fate that has led her to this contented life. Marguerite's light-hearted and guileless observations of the people she comes to love are as heart-warming as they are valuable, charting Bedouin traditions now lost to the modern world.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

We recently returned from Jordan and Petra, and I saw this book displayed everywhere in Petra. I bought it on our return to the states and looked so forward to reading it as we found the Bedouins and Jordanians extremely friendly. While interesting due to our being there, I found the story lacked

cohesion and almost nothing is written about the relationship of the author and her Bedouin husband nor information about her children. Several places in the book a story is given and the author repeatedly says, "he laughed"--that's it. Nothing about the feelings of her husband when they traveled to visit her family in New Zealand (imagine he had never traveled before) or her family's feelings toward their visit to Petra. The book is filled with little stories about Bedouin relatives, the food, buying a car, everyday occurrences living in a cave but all separate stories unto themselves--no flow. Even still, if you have traveled to the area you would probably find the book worthy of reading.

I met Marguerite van Geldermalsen this past June in Petra. She's attractive and charming, and appears very Western. It's hard to believe that she spent years as part of the community in Petra. Her book--and her life--are fascinating. Through her love for her husband, and the lives of their three children, she adapted to life in a cave, and to all the customs of her adopted community. She's an amazing woman. She currently sells jewelry in Petra, some of it made in a local workshop funded by Arthur Joukowsky, the former chancellor of Brown University. Art's wife, Martha, headed the Brown University Great Temple excavation. "Married to a Bedouin" is a marvelous read. I highly recommend it!

I found out about this book while I was vacationing in Jordan & was blessed to be able to visit Petra. Our tour guide mentioned Marguerite & we found her selling her books, as well as jewelry, etc, in Petra. She is such a sweet person & courageous. Her book, which I not only purchased an autographed copy, but I also purchased on kindle, is fantastic. I gave the autographed one to my daughter. She writes the book in a simple, factual manner. It is almost like a documentary on National Geographic except you can feel the love that she has for Mohammad & their community. It traces her slow but eventual love for the people & their customs. She doesn't go in to many sad things that happened except near the end of the book. She tries to keep it light & entertaining & you can feel yourself in her place, living her life. She wrote with her heart & although she speaks through Mohammad's illness & death quickly, you still catch the poignant pain that she is feeling. Walk a mile in her shoes. That's what I did by reading it, although it was....only a mile. Thanks Marguerite. Your love is amazing to have done what you did & Mohammad's was true also, as he tried to "westernize" some of your surroundings, in order to make you comfortable & feel loved. I am sorry for your loss of him, but remember, his love will always remain with you.

Well written and filled with beautiful word pictures of the landscape, life, traditions and family oriented Bedouin people of Petra. It was really interesting to read about this amazing young woman who was willing to leave the comforts of her western world for life in a cave in Jordan. Their true love made it all possible! It was so nice to be invited into Marguerite's life as she learned the customs and language of her new husband and family. Very enjoyable read.

We visited Petra and met Marguerite's son in their store....she was napping back at the cave. Getting the lowdown on her life and how it all came about was truly fascinating. Highly recommended!

Chose 4-stars because it needs more info on daily life, of a Moslem couple, living in Petra. More explanation of Arabic words and sayings.

After a trip to Petra, I downloaded this book and it brought Petra alive once again. Wish I would have read it before the trip and known the stall in Petra where I saw it advertised was that of the author who sponsors Bedouin women to produce jewelry. The photos and the glossary at the end were very helpful. The author did a wonderful job describing the day to day life of Bedouin people living in the Petra caves in 1970s to 2000.

I heard about this woman while in Petra. She wasn't in her open-air "shop" that day, but my daughter and I met her son, and we both bought beautiful sterling silver necklaces made by Bedouin women (a project she started some years ago). As soon as I returned home, I ordered her book. If you read it before you go, you will have much better insight and appreciation of the Bedouin's you meet; if you read it after your visit, you will be able to picture many of the places she writes about in her daily life. If you've never been to Petra, and never plan to go there, doesn't matter--it's still a fascinating read!

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