

Israel Tour Information

TRAVELING WITH A GROUP

We are so excited to have you travel with us to Israel. This promises to be an exciting adventure where we will be challenged in our faith. There will be a large group of us taking this trip and you will make many new friends on the journey. Due to the size of the group and the destination we will need your cooperation and flexibility. Keep in mind that we are in a different country with a different culture and things will not always be the way you might expect, travel with an attitude that this is a wonderful adventure! We will do everything we can to make traveling smooth and enjoyable for each person. For things such as seating on the aircraft, hotel room assignments and bus seating we are unfortunately not be able to accommodate special requests.

WHERE WILL WE STAY?

When we arrive in Israel we will be met at the airport by our guide who will escort us by motor coach to our hotel for the night. We will spend the first evening relaxing, shaking off the jet lag and getting a good nights rest in a deluxe quality hotel. The next morning we will pack-up, meet for a large buffet style breakfast, our luggage will be loaded into our motor coach and we will be off for our first day of walking where Jesus walked. At the end of the first day we will arrive in Tiberias where we will spend several nights on the Sea of Galilee. One night will be spent at a spa hotel on the Dead Sea and the remaining nights at our hotel in Jerusalem.

WHAT WILL EACH DAY BE LIKE?

We will travel by deluxe motor coach each day. Some days will have short rides between stops and some days will take us to regions a bit farther away. At each site our guide will explain the historical and cultural significance of the location and our host pastors will give us the biblical perspective of what God's Word records about the events that took place.

A realistic expectation of this trip would be an awareness that you will need to be prepared to do a significant amount of walking each day. The Fitbit measured our steps at 5-7 miles per day. There are some opportunities to sit and rest while the guide is talking. There are not always benches or chairs available so at times we stand, sit on steps, or walls. Please assess your ability to keep pace with the group before registering for this tour as it will impact our ability of the entire group to see everything listed in our itinerary.

The terrain is often uneven and rocky with many steps and stairs to navigate. Be aware that our tour includes walking through tunnels and tight spaces. Any tour member needing assistance navigating will need to be accompanied by a helper. Other tour members and leaders cannot be responsible for assisting travelers with special needs. The ancient sites are not handicap accessible. We ask that you please be aware of any limitations you might have and be willing to make accommodations for the progress of the group. Tour members will be asked to stay on schedule and be prompt to be at departure points on time at each stop of the day.

A typical tour day: Breakfast will be served buffet style at each hotel in which we stay. You will be asked to be on the bus and ready to leave around 7:30 a.m. each morning. Our day is a mixture of bus travel between sites and walking from place to place as our guide explains the historical significance and Pastor Don gives us biblical devotionals and insights. At some point we will stop for lunch. We will return to our hotel around 5:30 p.m. each day and enjoy the provided buffet dinner.

CLOTHING

Pack loose-fitting, lightweight clothes for comfort. You will not need any dressy or formal clothing for this tour! Pack light!

1. Cotton and lightweight garments will keep you comfortable and can be easily hand laundered. Layer with a sweater or fleece jacket for cool mornings and evenings. Take long and short-sleeved T-shirts, casual pants/capri's or jeans, sunglasses and a hat. It is suggested that you plan to wear long pants, however long shorts are acceptable on the days when we are not in Jerusalem.

A few cultural notes on clothing: Please be aware that we will intersect with many different religious and cultural beliefs. Out of respect and to protect our group from unwanted attention please consider the following guidelines.

- * Please do not wear clothing items that have a US flag or the words USA printed on them.
- * Always carry a sweater or scarf to cover bare arms (women) when advised to do so.
- * Please do not wear low cut tops or bare midriff tops.
- * If wearing tight jeans or leggings please wear a long, loose tunic type top to cover your bum.

4. A fleece jacket is perfect for cool mornings and evenings. A lightweight water-repellent jacket or poncho for inclement weather could also come in handy.

5. Pack comfortable walking shoes or sandals for sight-seeing.

6. Bring a modest swimsuit with you. There are pools at the hotels, a beach in Tel Aviv (Med. Sea), a beach at the Sea of Galilee and an opportunity to float in the Dead Sea. Remember to bring **sun block**.

8. Feel free to bring snacks. Meal times vary and it is nice to have a little something along to munch on. Granola bars, trail mix, etc. will be appreciated.

TIP: When packing your carry-on bag for the flight be sure to include all necessities, such as your passport, a change of clothes, all medications, spare contact lenses or glasses, all forms of money and any important documents. Pack to accommodate your needs in the event a flight is delayed or luggage misplaced.

MONEY MATTERS

A buffet breakfast is included so we suggest eating a large breakfast. A buffet supper is also included in the price of the tour. The lunch meal is not included in the tour price. We will be at moderate establishments but prices are higher in Israel so expect to pay \$12+ for lunch. Individually tip the lunch restaurant staff (10-12%) each day.

At the end of the tour we collect an optional love offering (tip) for our bus driver and our guide in addition to the base tip that is included in your tour cost. Please consider participating to show your appreciation to them. Tips for hotel staff and other service personnel have been included in the price of your tour. There is no obligation to give an additional amount unless you so wish or request extra services.

You may want to bring some spending money as there will be opportunities to shop and buy snacks along the way. Payment is accepted at all establishments in US dollars (although you will receive shekels for change).

- Not advised: Travelers Checks can be difficult to cash in the marketplace and you will always receive shekels, not U.S. dollars. Travelers checks get a less favorable exchange rate than cash, and can only be exchanged at the hotels.
- Credit cards are commonly accepted for purchases. The exchange rate will be calculated on the day it clears the bank, not on the day of purchase, there may be a service fee, check with your card provider
- If you plan to use a credit card on the trip, please call your credit card company before your departure to let them know that you will be traveling and using your card in Israel. Ask them to add a 'travel notice' to your account. Without this call they may decline your account for fear it has been stolen.
- Do take some small bills with you. Take around 20 - \$1.00 bills for easy access to small things along the way, including water on the bus.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

Please make certain that you have a valid passport that is valid at least six months past our return date. No Visa's are required for tourists entering Israel for less than 30 days.

You will not be able to depart without your passport.

We recommend that you keep a photocopy of your passport in your purse or wallet. Keep a second copy with a trusted friend or family member at home so it can be faxed if needed. Tip: Take a picture of the front page of your passport (with your information) and keep it on your phone.

If you take any kind of medication, please make certain that you pack it in your carry-on bag. Do not pack medicine in any luggage which you plan to check to Tel Aviv.

Never leave your passport, valuables or money in your hotel room, unless placed in the safe.

Always carry your passport with you in a safe location. Do not leave it in the hotel room, please carry it on your body at all times in a security pocket or money belt. All valuables should be under your clothing, out of sight. Keep a small amount of walk around money accessible and separate from where you keep your passport, credit card and bulk of your cash.

There are days when our tour takes us to areas that REQUIRE your passport, so always make sure it is with you!