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Tour Notes

Israel and Palestine – A Journey to the Dawn of Time

Tour Duration – 9 Days



Tour Rating

Fitness ●●○○○ | Off the Beaten Track ●●●○ | Culture ●●●●○ | History ●●●●● | Wildlife ●●○○○

Tour Pace - Busy

Tour Highlights

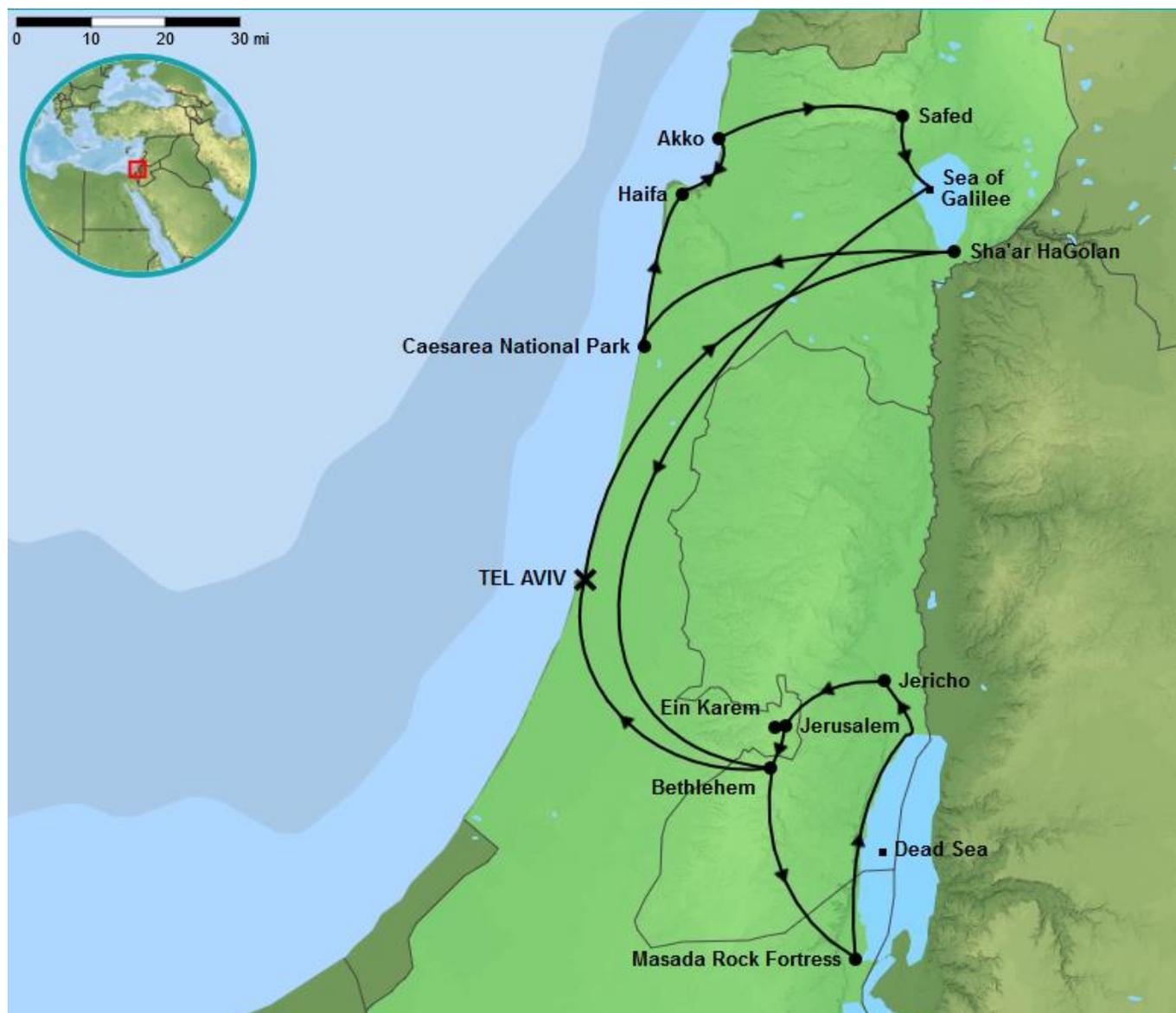
- ✓ Explore the fascinating city of Tel Aviv, a city of contrasts where old meets new
- ✓ Spend a full day at a kibbutz at the foot of the Golan Heights observing local traditions
- ✓ Learn the methods of Israeli viticulture and visit a winery dating from the late 19th century
- ✓ Stroll amongst the well preserved medieval remains of the old city of Akko (UNESCO)
- ✓ Experience the vibrancy of cosmopolitan Haifa in the far north of Israel
- ✓ Imbibe the artistry on display in the narrow streets of Safed
- ✓ Marvel at the views of Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives and take in the old city
- ✓ Walk in the serene Jerusalem hills and unwind in the village of Ein Karem
- ✓ Visit the iconic church of the Nativity and immerse in the colourful markets of Bethlehem
- ✓ Round off the tour in Jericho, the oldest continually inhabited city in the world





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Tour Map – Israel and Palestine – A journey to the Dawn of Time



Tour Essentials

- Accommodation:** Mixture of simple but comfortable small hotels and guesthouses and 1 night in a kibbutz
Included Meals: Daily breakfast (B), plus lunches (L) and dinners (D) as shown in the itinerary.
Group Size: Minimum 2 - Maximum of 12
Start Point: Tel Aviv
End Point: Tel Aviv
Transport: Minivan or Minibus depending on group size
Countries Visited: Israel and Palestine



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Israel and Palestine – A Journey to the Dawn of Time

In a land awash with ancient cultures and modern confidence, this small group tour takes you on a mesmerising journey back through time to uncover some of the incredible truths behind the fashioning of this region. Beginning at Tel Aviv's cosmopolitan vibrancy, cutting-edge skyline and pulsating streets, we reveal some of the contemporary culture that encapsulates Israel's relatively young state, from renowned wineries to the communal kibbutz lifestyle. Winding the clock back, you will experience the mediaeval grandeur of Akko and Caesarea's Crusader and Saracen-fortified ports and the hill-top citadel of Safed, experiencing timeless markets and winding streets where little has changed for centuries, before casting back to biblical times amidst the fabled sites of Jerusalem and Bethlehem. Finally, we end at Jericho, oldest city on earth and the extraordinary Dead Sea, one of the lowest points on Earth. A truly thrilling trip that slices through history.

Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested and on occasions alternative accommodation, of a similar standard to that named below, will be used.

Tour Guide

Our guides are a key strength, chosen for their knowledge of and passion for the areas in which they work. All of our guides are carefully hand-picked, and are not just passing through these countries, but are usually locally born. Unlike some companies it should be noted we do not send a guide or tour leader from Undiscovered Destinations in the UK as we have every confidence in our locally appointed representative who is responsible for operating the tour on our behalf. Where possible you will have the same guide throughout your trip but on occasions it may be necessary to change the guide at one or more points during the tour.

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival Tel Aviv

Arrive in Tel Aviv and transfer to your hotel where the rest of the day will be at leisure ahead of the tour briefing tomorrow at breakfast. No meals or guided services today. Overnight the White House Hotel or similar. No meals are included today.

Tel Aviv

The juxtaposition of old and new is common in Israel and nowhere is this more apparent than in the city of Tel Aviv. The towering skyscrapers and state-of-the-art architecture in this cosmopolitan metropolis stand in stark contrast to the cobbled streets and old-world charm of the surrounding areas. Tel Aviv is the financial, technological and economic hub of Israel. Known as a "party capital", the city is the perfect destination for the hedonistic traveller looking to play in a vibrant, dynamic city that never sleeps. Visitors spend time marvelling at the plethora of contemporary art galleries, engaging in retail therapy at artisan boutiques, or relaxing in the sun on one of the blissfully balmy beaches, before heading to Tel Aviv's many restaurants, bars and exclusive nightclubs after dark.

Day 2: Tel Aviv – Neve Tzedek - Jaffa

After breakfast and the tour briefing with your guide you will head into Tel Aviv first exploring the areas known as the white city constructed between the 1930's and 1950's and designated one of the first 'modern' UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the world in 2003 representing the worlds' largest collection of Bauhaus style buildings. Marvel at the iconic architecture and stroll along vibrant Rothschild Boulevard.



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You continue to Neve Tzedek, one of Tel Aviv's oldest districts, and head to the legendary Jaffa Flea market to enjoy an authentic lunch at one of the city's most famous restaurants - Dr. Shakshuka. Thereafter, you will have some time at leisure to roam around the thronging flea market in search of a bargain. You then continue to the ancient port city of Jaffa -also known as Yafo, impressively regenerated with atmospheric narrow streets and courtyards. Overnight the White House Hotel or similar (BL)

Old Jaffa

One of the oldest port cities in the entire Mediterranean basin and precariously situated on a 40-metre-high cliff overlooking the shimmering expanse of the Med, Jaffa boast a history of over 4000 years and its strategic importance has seen it to succumb to numerous invaders. Nowadays Jaffa has a predominantly Arab feel and offers a truly fascinating and eclectic mix of historical sites, bars/restaurants and boutiques all set in amongst a snaking labyrinth of ancient alleys.

Neve Tzedek

Situated to the southwest of Tel Aviv, Neve Tzedek was the first neighbourhood established in 1887, some 20 years before the city of Tel Aviv was officially founded. At the beginning of the 20th century, Neve Tzedek was a thriving cultural hotbed of many artists and writers, allowing the neighbourhood to flourish. Years of neglect and disrepair followed, but since the early 1980's, Neve Tzedek has once again rediscovered its original verve, the combination of beautiful old houses lovingly restored to grandeur, and a once again prosperous arts, shopping and culinary scene, making Neve Tzedek an atmospheric and enjoyable part of the city.

Day 3: Tel Aviv - Sha'ar HaGolan (Approximate overall driving time today is 2 hours)

Today you will get the chance to visit Kibbutz Sha'ar Ha Golan where you will enjoy a tour of the kibbutz itself. Enjoy waking amongst the verdant scenery of the kibbutz and gain an understanding of life in the kibbutz and its organisational structure. The area also affords wonderful vistas towards Jordan, the Golan Heights and Syria. Visit the museum exhibiting Neolithic findings from Yarmukian culture. Overnight at the Sha'ar HaGolan kibbutz (BL)

Sha'ar HaGolan

Situated at the southern extent of the Golan Heights in the Jordan Valley and only a stone's throw from the Sea of Galilee, Sha'ar HaGolan is renowned for its archaeological discoveries and its agro tourism industry. The museum of Yarmukian Culture showcases an array of prehistoric Neolithic findings from along the Yarmuk River. Excavations have unearthed an 8000-year-old village, once an important cultural and artistic centre of the Ancient Middle East, boasting a collection of fascinating artefacts, female clay figurines and beautifully decorated vessels for which Sha'ar HaGolan is renowned.

Day 4: Sha'ar HaGolan - Caesarea National Park – Carmel Winery – Akko (UNESCO) – Haifa (Approximate overall driving time today is 3 hours)

This morning your first stop will be Caesarea National Park, one of the most impressive archaeological sites in the country set amidst a backdrop of the azure waters of the Mediterranean. The beautifully restored harbour is a particular highlight. You will then enjoy an Israeli wine tasting experience at one of the most unique wineries in the Region, the Carmel Winery. Learn about Israeli viticulture and the authentic, traditional and innovative technologies now used to produce wine. You will also have a change to visit the cellars. Next we visit Akko, steeped in history and the remains of crusader and ottoman fortresses. You will also have time to visit the old Shuk, where vendors continue to enthusiastically selling their wares as they have done through the ages. You will then continue to Haifa for the overnight stop. Overnight Caramella Boutique Hotel (BL)



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Caesarea

Idyllically located against the shimmering expanse of the Mediterranean coast of Israel, Caesarea is home to an extensive archaeological site of Caesarea preserving the remains of numerous time periods, including fascinating Byzantine Archive Buildings, bath-houses, a renowned Roman amphitheatre and a historical harbour. Perhaps most interesting of all Caesarea's sites is the Ancient Caesarea Maritima, a giant city and port created over 2000 years ago by King Herod. Much of this Roman city remains, including an aqueduct, theatre, as well as countless of excavated houses, mosaics, palaces, balustrades and towers.

Old City of Akko

A UNESCO World Heritage site, the Old City of Akko features the remains of a town dating back from the Crusader period, from about 1104 to 1291. The ancient medieval remains of the town lie above and below the present-day street level and have been found to be remarkably well-preserved. Featuring the remains of fortresses, churches, mosques and halls, the site offers an amazing perspective on the Crusader capital.

Haifa

Situated on Israel's Mediterranean coastline and stretching up the slopes of Mount Carmel, the thriving port city of Haifa is a high-technology industrial hub as well as Israel's third largest city. The city is blessed with stunning beaches and a thriving seaside promenade. Haifa is also something of a cultural hub boasting many museums and art establishments. Explore the world's longest hillside gardens on display at the Baha'i Complex. The complex is home to the golden-domed Baha'i Shrine and provides spectacular views of Haifa Bay and the glistening Mediterranean Sea beyond.

Day 5: Haifa – Safed – Sea of Galilee - Bethlehem (Approximate overall driving time today is 4.5 hours)

This morning you will visit the port city of Haifa. Imbibe the breathtaking panorama of the Bahai Gardens and Temple, as well as the Haifa Port., after having lunch you will drive to visit Safed, the city of Kabalah and the highest city in Israel situated at over 900m elevation. You will have time to wander in the old city, enjoying the artistic vibe emanating from the old streets. From Safed you will drive to the Sea of Galilee for a relaxing boat cruise on the tranquil waters before continuing south to Bethlehem for your overnight stay. Overnight Hosh Al Syrian or similar (BL)

Safed

Having been conquered and inhabited by various nations, Safed has survived to represent an eclectic mixture of ancient and modern. Safed offers you the opportunity to roam in the old city's narrow alleys and to marvel at the historical architecture and then in to the artistic quarter. Built amidst the old city's rich history the quarter buzzes with collective and private art galleries and workshops featuring oil and watercolour paintings, silver-work, jewellery, glass-work, weaving and artistic Judaica.

Day 6: Jerusalem and the Old City (UNESCO) – (Approximate overall driving time today is 1.5 hours)

Today you explore the mystical city of Jerusalem. Starting at the Mount of Olives, enjoy the breathtaking panorama across the old city of Jerusalem, with the gleaming magnificence of the Golden Dome of the Rock prominent. On entering the city's walls one can immediately feel the history oozing from every angle. Experience the cultural convergence of the four quarters (Muslim, Christian, Jewish and Armenian) and visit some of the most iconic and important sites such as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Dome of the rock (esplanade only) and the Western Wall. You will also have time to explore old city alleys and the Arabic Bazaar where you may haggle for a bargain if you wish. Overnight Hosh Al Syrian or similar (BL)

Jerusalem

Jerusalem holds high significance for three major religions (Islam, Christianity and Judaism) and as a result offers a multitude of historical attractions to interest both pilgrims and secular tourists.



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The walled Old City, with its narrow cobble-stoned alleyways, beautiful bell towers, and charming hidden courtyards, is the epicentre of Jerusalem. Despite being on a relatively small scale, the Old City is blessed with a plethora of remarkable ancient and sacred sites. These include the Garden of Gethsemane; the Western Wall; and the Dome of the Rock from which Muhammad is said to have ascended to heaven. All of these historical sites contrast to make Jerusalem a fascinating and inspiring travel destination.

Day 7: Bethlehem – Mahne Yehuda Market - Ein Karem (Approximate overall driving time today is 2 hours)

This morning you will visit the beautiful and historical icon that is Bethlehem, visiting the church of Nativity, of course a place of immense religious significance, but also notable for its superb architecture. You will also have a chance to stroll in the Arabic market in the old alleys surrounding the church. Your next stop is the atmospheric vibrancy of Mahne Yehuda Market, the largest market in Jerusalem with hundreds of vendors selling all manner of goods and this is also a great place to also enjoy some street food if you wish. You continue to the more tranquil surrounds of the village of Ein Karem birthplace in Christian tradition of St John the Baptist, surrounded by olive groves in amongst the charming Jerusalem Hills, seemingly a world away from the thronging streets of Jerusalem. You will take a walk around the village and visit the Roman Catholic Church of the visitation. You finish the day with a visit to the Israel Museum, boasting a remarkable and broad collection of pieces of artistic and archaeological significance. Overnight Hosh Al Syrian or similar (BL)

Bethlehem

A small but busy and picturesque hillside city overlooking the Judean desert and situated some 10 km south of the Old City of Jerusalem, Bethlehem is of course home to the iconic and achingly beautiful Church of the Nativity, marking the birthplace of Jesus Christ according to Christian tradition. Brimming with churches and minarets, Bethlehem oozes religious significance and attracts pilgrims throughout the year and particularly so during the periods around Christmas and Easter. However there is much to interest even the non-religious, the lively old city, the bustling bazaar and the street art scene to name but a few. Although no longer a little town as depicted in the carol, Bethlehem is undoubtedly a must-see addition to any West Bank itinerary.

Ein Karem

Ein Karem is an ancient village of the Jerusalem District, located in a peaceful valley between mountains and hills. According to Christian tradition, John the Baptist was born in the village of Ein Karem, leading to the establishment of many churches and monasteries. Ein Karem is a well-known pilgrimage site for Christian visitors to Jerusalem.

Day 8: Masada (UNESCO), Jericho and the Dead Sea (Approximate overall driving time today is 4 hours)

An early start to ensure we can enjoy the spectacular rock sky fortress of Masada (UNESCO) in the soft early morning light. You will then continue Jericho, reputedly the oldest continually inhabited city in the world and the scene of many biblical stories. Here you will visit Mount Temptation and the monastery of the same name. View the sycamore tree climbed by Zacchaeus to gain a better view of Jesus as he entered the city. Finally head to one of the lowest points on earth to the shores of the Dead Sea, where you will have the optional opportunity to dip into the saline waters or simply to contemplate your journey into this incredible and thought provoking region, before returning to Bethlehem for your final evening at leisure. Overnight Hosh Al Syrian or similar (BL)

Masada (UNESCO)

An astonishing historical site dramatically perched on a mountain overlooking the solitude of the Judean Desert and further to the Dead Sea; Masada is a rugged natural fortress of impressive proportions. Built by Herod the Great, Masada was a classical palace complex built in the style of the early Roman Empire. The site is of exceptional archaeological importance and lay untouched for centuries until it was unearthed in the 1960's.



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Masada was the scene of the last stand of Jewish patriots attempting to quell the advance of the might of the Roman army in 73A.D. Much of the siege works remain remarkably intact. In addition to the remarkable historical significance, the views from the lofty summit of Masada are quite breathtaking.

Jericho

Asserted by many to be the world's oldest continually inhabited city, there can be little doubt that with its location beside the fertile Jordan River, that Jericho, 'the City of Palms' has been a hive of human habitation for millennia. Despite its somewhat fragile geopolitical location, Jericho is a relatively peaceful and alluring destination with a plethora of sites of historical and religious significance.

Day 9: Departure from Israel (Approximate transfer time is 2 hours)

Transfer from Bethlehem to the airport in Tel Aviv for your onward flight. (B)

Tour Inclusions/Exclusions

Inclusions

Arrival and departure airport transfers
All accommodation as per the itinerary or similar
Land transportation in minibus/minivan or similar vehicle
Services of an English-speaking guide/tour leader
Meals as listed (B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner)

Excluded

International flights
Travel Insurance
Items of a personal nature
Drinks
Tips (discretionary)

Important Information

Foreign Office Travel Warnings

We constantly monitor the advice posted by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). In particular we will always advise clients of any travel warnings. At the time of writing there are no travel warnings in place for areas that travel to on this tour.

It should be noted that this information applies to British citizens. Other nationals are asked to check the current position of their respective government.

Accommodation and Meals

Accommodation rating

On this tour you will be staying in simple small to medium scale but comfortable accommodation with private bathroom facilities on each night.





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We welcome solo travellers and single rooms will be allocated subject to the applicable tour supplement. Please note that on occasions you may not always be allocated a double or twin room, as some hotels have designated single rooms. These may be smaller in size. However, the supplement payable takes this into consideration.

Hotel Check-in Times

As a general rule most hotels will allow guests to check-in from 2pm. Please note that the price of your tour does not include guaranteed early check-in. Therefore please advise us if you would like to ensure that your room is available for an earlier arrival. This is particularly relevant on the first day of the tour and for early morning arrivals. One option is to pre-book and pay for an extra night at the beginning of your tour which will guarantee your accommodation is available irrespective of what time you arrive. Please contact us for information and costs.

It should also be noted that on many of our tours we have set-aside Day 1 of the itinerary as an 'arrival day'. For this reason and because tour participants are likely to be arriving at different times, and often from different countries, guided sightseeing or other activities are not included. If you are arriving early or before the start date of the tour and would like to organise some extra arrangements on a private basis please contact us.

Food & Drink

The daily meal basis is shown in the tour itinerary; breakfast (B), lunch (L) and dinner (D). Please note that lunch may be a picnic. Drinks are not included and will be payable locally in cash.

Dietary Requirements

If you have any special dietary requirements you must notify us at the time of booking. While we will make every effort to cater for you, we cannot guarantee that this will be possible.

Budgeting for your Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch or Dinner £10- £15

Drinks

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide for those purchased in a restaurant.

Water £1 - £2 / Beer £2- £4
Tea/Coffee £2 / Soft drink £1

Tipping – Guide and Drivers

Although not compulsory, tipping is common practice in the Middle East. If you have been happy with the services of your guide and driver, then a reasonable amount to tip would be \$5-10 per day for the guide and \$3-5 for the driver, if you are travelling on our small group tour. If you are travelling privately then around double this amount would be reasonable.



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Foreign Exchange

ATM Availability: ATMs found in the main cities only

Credit and Debit Card Acceptance: Cards are widely accepted throughout Israel

Local Currency: Shekel

Recommended Currency for Exchange: Most major currencies can easily be exchanged

Where to Exchange: Your guide will advise you

Joining your Tour

Flight Information

Our advertised prices do not include the cost of international flights. Please contact us if you would like a quotation to book a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Undiscovered Destinations that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country and be valid for the entire duration of your holiday.

Visa Information

Many nationalities including British, US, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand and EU passport holders do not require a visa for a touristic visit to Israel.

Regulations do frequently change though, so we advise that you check the current requirements with your nearest embassy.

Passports

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, valid for at least six months after the date of return to your country.

We strongly advise that your passport contains a minimum of two blank pages, as this may be a requirement of the local immigration authorities. In addition, certain countries will stipulate that the two blank pages are opposite each other. If you are unable to meet these requirements you may be refused boarding by your airline or denied entry by the immigration authorities.

Evidence of a previous visit to Israel like an Israeli entry/exit stamp in your passport does not normally cause any difficulties when entering Jordan. It is, however, for the Jordanian authorities to determine the right of entry into the country.

For specific information about the requirements for your destination please check with the country's embassy or consulate. Alternatively, UK citizens can visit www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

Vaccinations & Protection

For tourists, there are no compulsory vaccinations. However, we strongly recommend that you contact your Doctor's surgery or a specialist travel clinic for up-to-date information, advice and the recommended vaccinations.



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The legal status and regulation of some medicines prescribed or purchased in your home country can be different in other countries. If you're travelling with prescription or over-the-counter medicine, read this guidance from NaTHNaC on [best practice when travelling with medicines](#). For further information on the legal status of a specific medicine, you'll need to contact the embassy, high commission or consulate of the country or territory you're travelling to.

Preparing for your tour

Climate

Israel can be visited year-round although the hottest months are June to August especially on the coast and travelling at this time can be uncomfortable. Away from the coast temperatures are more pleasant in the more mountainous areas. During the winter months temperatures are usually mild on towards the coast but can be cold at higher elevations. Spring and autumn are usually particularly pleasant times to travel. From May – October, the region experiences very little rain although it is not unheard of. Rain is more common in the winter months and early spring.

Clothing

When it comes to clothing it is usually recommended that lighter clothes are worn through the day, and warmer ones at night. A hat is also advised to be worn through the day to protect from the sun, along with at least one piece of waterproof clothing for any days that the weather may be wet although this will be rare in summer. For the inland and more mountainous areas particularly from November – March, it is advisable to bring warmer clothes especially for night time and early mornings. We advise to dress respectfully for this tour and avoid any revealing attire. Shorts can be worn but should be at the knee or below.

Equipment

The first thing on your list should be a first aid kit. Whilst there is no undue cause for alarm, travellers are best advised to travel well-prepared and to be adequately immunized. A good insect repellent and bite cream is advisable. Suncream/sunblock is a must – please ensure you bring enough as it may not be available locally. Insect repellent, including a bite spray will also be useful to have. It is recommended to also bring a torch (flashlight) or head torch for any dimly lit areas. Please take a travel towel and swimming costume if you wish to bathe at the Dead Sea.

Driving times

The driving times stated in the itinerary are given in the best of faith and are the overall amount of time spent in the vehicle not including stops. Driving times may on occasion be longer due to unforeseen circumstances such as poor weather, road construction activity, mechanical problems etc.

Footwear

Comfortable walking shoes are recommended when visiting the various historical sites during the tour. Sandals are fine when travelling.

Luggage on tour

Your luggage should not exceed 20kgs (44lbs). One large rucksack or suitcase, and one small hand luggage rucksack is acceptable.

Plug type

A 2-pin round plug type is commonly used but we recommend taking an international adaptor.



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Itinerary Versions

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes. These tour notes were updated 12th June 2020.

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**ABTA**
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