

Israel Trip – February 6-16, 2023

DAY 1: MONDAY, FEBRUARY 6TH 2023 | THE JOURNEY BEGINS

Depart from USA for your overnight flight to Israel. Meals served on board.

DAY 2: TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7TH 2023 | ARRIVE TO ISRAEL

Bruchim Habaim! Welcome to Israel! Upon landing, you will be met by a representative who will assist you through and expedite the passport control, customs and luggage process. Once you have finished at the airport, you will meet your driver and be transferred to your hotel to check in, freshen up and relax. Spend the first day in leisure as you catch up on some rest after the long flights. **Overnight at Leonardo Plaza Hotel in Jerusalem.**

DAY 3: WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8TH 2023 | BIBLICAL JERUSALEM

We'll open our day with a spectacular panoramic view over Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives. We'll use this view to locate and understand the key sites in the story of Jesus in Jerusalem, before descending the mountain, just as he would have done, to the Garden of Gethsemane, where we'll reflect on Jesus' final moments before being arrested.

Explore the impressive excavations in the Davidson Center where we'll be able to transport ourselves 2000 years back in time and walk on the very stones that visitors would have walked on in the time of the Second Temple.

We'll pause at the Western Wall (also known as the Wailing Wall) to soak up the atmosphere, and continue underground as we come as close as humanly possible to the Holy of Holies while exploring the Rabbinical Tunnels.

Head up to the Jewish Quarter and after a great local lunch visit the Burnt house and the Herodian Quarter in order to get the full picture of Jewish lives here during the time of the 2nd Temple.

Overnight at Leonardo Plaza Hotel in Jerusalem

DAY 4: THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9TH 2023 | REVOLUTION IN THE WILDERNESS

Our day will begin at the Ein Gedi desert oasis. We'll take a short walk in this marvel of nature and will pause by one of the waterfalls to discuss Saul and David's meeting here.

Our next stop will be the UNESCO World Heritage Site Masada. After a quick lunch we'll ascend by cable car and will explore the ruins of this remarkable desert fortress built by King Herod 2000 years ago, and discover the tragic end of its final defense. After all that walking, we'll relax at a private Dead Sea beach for some well-earned down time. Float on these saline waters and you'll come out rejuvenated – guaranteed!

As we head back to Jerusalem, our final stop will be at Genesis Land to transport ourselves back into the Biblical wilderness for a meeting with Abraham. We'll learn about life in the desert in ancient times and have the opportunity to ride a camel into the sunset.

Stop at the Mt. Scopus observation and take in the beautiful scenery of Jerusalem, get some beautiful pictures and say a prayer together.

Overnight at Leonardo Plaza Hotel in Jerusalem

DAY 5: FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10TH 2023 | MODERN JERUSALEM

Our day will begin in a reflective mood during a visit to Yad Vashem, Israel's national Holocaust Memorial. After exploring the museum we'll ascend to Mount Herzl – Israel's national memorial cemetery. We'll visit some of the nation's most important figures and discuss their legacies, including Theodor Herzl, Yitzhak Rabin, Golda Meir, Shimon Peres and many more.

Lunch will be spent at the market as we witness the eclectic nature of Israel's population today despite what we learned this morning. After enjoying the sights, sounds, smells and most importantly, tastes, at the Machane Yehuda open-air market, we'll end our day with a visit to the world-class Israel Museum, home of the Dead Sea Scrolls. We'll use the museum's models and displays to trace our footsteps around Israel as our trip sadly comes to a close.

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Following a break at the hotel to shower and change, in the evening return to the Western Wall plaza to experience the joyous 'Receiving the Shabbat' Jewish prayer service. Continue for a traditional Shabbat dinner at the hotel led by Rabbi Mark Blazer. **Overnight at the Leonardo Plaza in Jerusalem.**

DAY 6: SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11TH 2023 | SHABBAT IN JERUSALEM

Shabbat in Jerusalem is special. Start the morning later by attending prayers at the close by Hebrew Union College, followed by lunch.

Enjoy the rest of day at leisure

or optional tour:

We'll open our day in Bethlehem, the birthplace of King David and Jesus. We'll begin with a visit to the famed Basilica of the Nativity, marking where Jesus was born and will also visit the traditional site of the Shepherds' Fields, where it's believed that the announcement of Jesus' birth was made to the local shepherds.

We'll then ascend from the Kidron Valley to the Old City where we'll visit the Pools of Bethesda, where Jesus healed a paralytic man.

After seeing the most holy site for Muslims in Jerusalem, The Dome of the Rock, from a very unique angle, we will walk the ancient pilgrim route known as the Via Dolorosa, or the Stations of the Cross, marking Jesus' path with the cross from his trial until his crucifixion. The route culminates at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, believed to be the location of Jesus' crucifixion and burial and venerated by many as one of the most important holy sites in the world.

As Evening approaches, gather as a group and enjoy a joyous Havdalah ceremony followed by an evening out to the Ben Yehuda street or the Machane Yehuda Market. **Overnight at the Leonardo Plaza in Jerusalem.**

DAY 7: SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12TH 2023 | HEADING NORTH

Following check out, drive north through the Jordan valley, part of which is in the West bank. We'll use the driving time to get a better understanding of the political situation in the West Bank and Israel's relationship with Jordan.

We'll then journey into the desert, stopping at Qasr el-Yahud on the Jordan River, marking the traditional site of the Israelites crossing into the Promised Land and also the baptism of Jesus.

Visit the ancient Greco-Roman city of Beit-She'an and witness the amazing theatre, markets and bathhouses available here. This used to be one of the largest cities in this area and played a major role during the Jewish Great Revolt.

Continue to Tiberias and visit the Tomb of Rabbi Maimonides as we learn more about one of the most famous Rabbis in history. End the day with a visit to the famed Hamat Tiberias and the ancient synagogue discovered on site. Witness how Judaism adjusts to the foreign rule of the time. **Overnight at the Leonardo Plaza in Tiberias.**

DAY 8: MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13TH 2023 | SPIRITUALITY IN NORTHERN ISRAEL

We'll begin our day at Tzippori, the former Roman capital of the Galilee. We'll walk its ancient stones, as it is likely Jesus would have done also, and marvel at its stunning mosaics. Tzippori plays an important role in Judaism as the home of the codification of the Mishnah (the Jewish oral law).

Continue our day with a visit to Safed (Tzfat), one of Judaism's four holy cities. We'll wander its ancient alleyways and discover the secrets of the Kabbalah (Jewish Mysticism) which developed here 500 years ago. Expect beautiful synagogues, stunning vistas, and remarkable tales.

End the day with a relaxed boat cruise on the Sea of Galilee, enjoy an opportunity to simply be on the world lowest fresh water lake. **Overnight at the Leonardo Plaza in Tiberias.**

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DAY 9: TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14TH 2023 | NORTHERN BORDERS NOW & THEN

We'll begin with a visit to Capernaum, where a young Rabbi named Jesus made his home following his expulsion from Nazareth. We'll see the house it is believed he lived in, and the ruins of a remarkable synagogue.

Continue to Tel Dan, where we'll be able to discover remarkable Biblical ruins as well as look out over the Lebanese border. Continuing on the Biblical theme, we'll go further into the Golan Heights, and stop at the ancient pagan worship site of Caesarea Philippi, where Jesus gave Peter his name. This evocative location, surrounded by a free-flowing spring and lush greenery, is a great place to reflect and is commonly referred to as the Niagara Falls of Israel.

After lunch in the renowned Ha'Bokrim steakhouse, we'll ascend to an observation deck near the Syrian border. Our view will look out towards where Saul of Tarsus saw Jesus on the road to Damascus, and give us an opportunity to get an understanding of the complex relationship between contemporary Israel and Syria.

We'll end our day by raising a glass to our trip during a visit to one of the best boutique wineries in Israel for a short tour and tasting. **Overnight at the Leonardo Plaza in Tiberias.**

DAY 10: WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15TH 2023 | ISRAEL'S COASTLINE

Following check out, we'll start our day in the beautiful city of Nazareth, the home of Jesus. We'll begin with a visit to Nazareth Village, which recreates life here at the time of Jesus – we can even have an authentic Biblical lunch! Next, we'll explore the remains of the ancient city in the bottom of the grand Basilica of the Annunciation, where it's believed that Mary was visited by the angel Gabriel. We'll conclude our day on the edge of the city with a stunning view from Mt Precipice, where we will get a great insight into the geography of the Biblical Galilee. Our next stop will be in Akko (Acre), the former Crusader capital and home to the remarkable ruins and tunnels from the time of the Crusaders, which earned Akko UNESCO world heritage site status.

We'll continue south to Haifa, Israel's third biggest city, and home to the world center of the Baha'i faith. From a vantage point on Mount Carmel, we'll look down over their stunning gardens and enjoy the view over the Mediterranean.

Next stop is Caesarea, the regional capital that was built by King Herod the Great two thousand years ago. We'll explore the spectacular ruins, and understand the contribution of Caesarea to the Great Jewish Revolt. We will also discuss Peter's conversion of Cornelius before visiting the port area from which the first Christian missionaries would have spread their message to the rest of the world.

Overnight at Tal on the Beach Hotel in Tel Aviv.

DAY 11: THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16TH 2023 | TEL AVIV, FAREWELLS AND FLIGHTS

Our last day focuses on Tel Aviv. Visiting the Palmach Museum really sheds light on the aches and troubles that establishing the modern state of Israel came with. Head into modern Tel Aviv, exploring the early neighborhoods such as Rothschild Boulevard, and discover the story of the pioneers who helped build this city, and country, from sand dunes into skyscrapers.

Enjoy some time to wander in the Carmel Market and find your own lunches as well as some last-minute shopping before we head to Jaffa.

Jaffa is one of the most ancient port cities in the world. After wandering the quaint alleyways of this timeless gateway to the Holy Land, we'll visit St Peter's Church and discuss the vision he had at Simon the Tanner's House, before descending to the port where Jonah was swallowed by the whale.

Here we will summarize our visit before heading to the Maganda restaurant located nearby for our last meal together.

Lehitra'ot! See you later! Following dinner, you will be transferred to Ben-Gurion airport where a representative will assist you through the check-in process to ensure you are on time for your flight. While your journey home will begin, remember that you always have another home here.