

**The Village Temple's
In-Depth Tour to
ISRAEL
Led by Rabbi Deborah Hirsch
March 1 - 13, 2018
With optional Eilat/Petra Extension
March 13-16, 2018**

(As of 6/15/17)



Traveling together in Israel is an opportunity to connect – with our brothers and sisters in Israel, with the land itself, and with each other. As a traveling community, we will bond through our shared experiences, from the fun and adventurous to the historical and spiritual.

Day 1: Thursday, March 1, 2018: DEPARTURE

- We depart New York on our overnight flight to Israel.

Day 2: Friday, March 2, 2018: WELCOME TO ISRAEL!

- We arrive in Israel in the afternoon and are met by an Ayelet Tours representative.
- We transfer from Ben Gurion Airport to **Tel Aviv** to check in to our hotel, with time to relax and refresh.
- As the sun begins to set, we participate in **Shabbat services** lead by Rabbi Hirsch along the Tel Aviv beachfront.
- We enjoy a **welcome Shabbat dinner** together this evening at London, a beachside restaurant.

Overnight in Tel Aviv



Day 3: Saturday, March 3, 2018: SHABBAT SHALOM!

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- We begin exploring this Start-Up Nation by meeting with **Rony Rozen**, who is currently a Program Manager at **Google**. Prior to joining Google, Rony was the founder and CEO of **poccaDot**, a mobile software development company, with a portfolio of over 150 apps. Prior to that, Rony was a developer and team leader in the Israeli Air Force development unit, dealing with the force's operational embedded systems.
- Later this morning, we visit the **Diaspora Museum**, recently updated and featuring excellent rotating exhibitions as well as scale models of synagogues from around the world.
- Free afternoon to discover Tel Aviv on our own.
- We step out this evening for “**Dinner in the Dark**”, an experience that will trigger your senses, followed by a moving performance of “Not by Bread Alone” at the **Nalagaat Center** for the deaf and blind.

Overnight in Tel Aviv

Day 4: Sunday, March 4, 2018: TEL AVIV AND OLD JAFFA

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- This morning, we begin our day at **Independence Hall**, the site of the signing of Israel’s Declaration of Independence in 1948.
- We continue with a **co-existence walking tour** with a Jewish and Arab guide leading us side by side through **Old Jaffa**. This tour is coordinated through Beit Daniel, Tel Aviv’s original Progressive/Reform congregation.
- Our next stop is at the **Ilana Goor Museum**, where we view the artwork and learn about the life of this famous Israeli artist, and enjoy a light and refreshing reception.

Overnight in Tel Aviv



Day 5: Monday, March 5, 2018: THE MEDITERRANEAN COAST

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- This morning, we depart Tel Aviv and travel north along the Mediterranean coast to **Haifa**, stopping atop **Mt. Carmel** to take in the panoramic views of the port city and admire the beautiful **Bahai Gardens**.
- Our next stop is at the Progressive/Reform **Leo Baeck School** to meet teachers and students, and learn about how this campus continues to impact countless young Israelis OR we visit **Ohel Avraham**, one of Haifa's Progressive congregations, and meet Rabbi Gabby Dagan.
- We continue to **Akko** to explore the Crusader-era fortifications as well as visit **Or Torah**, the amazing Tunisian synagogue completely covered by mosaics.
- Return to Tel Aviv.
- Optional dinner at Manta Ray restaurant (reservation only - pay on own).

Overnight in Tel Aviv

Day 6: Tuesday, March 6, 2018: DESERT BEAUTY

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- We travel south into the **Eshkol region**. Here, we meet **Yaron Bob** at his workshop. Struck by the terror of shell attacks, Yaron decided to transform something horrible into something beautiful – and so began his artwork, known as “**Rockets to Roses**”.
- Continue to **Beresheet Resort** on the edge of the **Ramon Crater**, where we enjoy a lovely **lunch** with a breathtaking view.
- Our next stop is at the **Mitzpe Ramon Visitor's Center**, which tells the geological story behind this unique and amazing work of nature, and also tells the story of Israeli pilot, astronaut and hero Ilan Ramon.
- We take an exciting **jeep ride** into the crater to enjoy its amazing beauty.
- Enjoy free time at our breathtaking crater-side resort. (Spa appointments should be made in advance).
- **Dinner** together this evening at the resort.



Overnight in Mitzpe Ramon



Day 7: Wednesday, March 7, 2018: PROGRESSIVE IN THE NEGEV

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- This morning, we travel to **Kibbutz Lotan**, where we enjoy an excellent **program on ecology** as we learn about the development of environmental protection in Israel. We visit the ecological neighborhood, the recycled playground, organic perma-culture design garden, and natural building houses built using alternative green methods, renewable energy, water saving techniques, and constructed wetlands. Participate in a hands-on experience, in the organic garden.
- Return to our beautiful resort for a free afternoon.
- This evening, we meet for **dinner** together at our resort.

Overnight in Mitzpe Ramon

Day 8: Thursday, March 8, 2016: MASADA & THE DEAD SEA



- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- We depart early and travel to the **Dead Sea basin**.
- Upon arrival, we ascend **Masada** by cable car or snake path, to view the remains of King Herod's fortress. We learn about the Jewish Zealots' last stand against the approaching Roman armies. (Those choosing not to ascend Masada will be dropped at a nearby Dead Sea resort – spa appointments may be made in advance).
- After descending Masada, we head to the beach for **lunch** and an “unsinkable” swim in the healing, salty waters of the **Dead Sea**.
- Later this afternoon, we travel to Jerusalem, stopping atop the **Haas promenade** to say “Shehecheyanu”, as we look out over the **City of Gold** for the first time.
- We check in to our hotel and enjoy an evening at leisure to discover Jerusalem and enjoy dinner on our own.

Overnight in Jerusalem



Day 9: Friday, March 9, 2018: DISCOVERING JERUSALEM

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- This morning, we visit the **LGBT Jerusalem Open House**, a grassroots activist organization of LGBT people and their allies that started in 1997. The JOH aims to provide service to the LGBT community in Jerusalem and secure rights for all of Israeli society.
- We continue with an **Old City tour**, walking through the **Jewish quarter** and the **Arab market (shuk)**. We also stroll along the **Via Dolorosa** and end at the **Church of the Holy Sepulchre** in the **Christian quarter**.
- Continue with a tour of the **Western Wall Tunnels**, where we see the archaeological wonder that once remained untouched for centuries.
- This afternoon, we stroll through **Machane Yehuda**, where we take in the sights and sounds of the marketplace as the locals busily prepare for Shabbat. We will be sure to make a stop at **Marzipan Bakery** to taste the delicious rugalach.
- As the sun begins to set over Jerusalem, we attend **Shabbat services**, followed by a **home hospitality dinner** coordinated with a local progressive congregation.

Overnight in Jerusalem

Day 10: Saturday, March 10, 2018: SHABBAT IN JERUSALEM

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- We enjoy a free day to discover Jerusalem at leisure during the calmness of Shabbat, or spend the day resting at the hotel.
- Rabbi Hirsch will walk those interested into the Old City today. Other on-own options include the recently renovated Israel Museum or the Museum of Islamic Art.
- Later this afternoon, we enjoy a lecture with Holocaust scholar, **Dr. Rachel Korazim**.
- From here, we walk together to the nearby **Yemin Moshe windmill** for **Havdallah**.
- Free evening for dinner and to discover Jerusalem's night life on own. (Optional pay-on-own reservation at Chakra).

Overnight in Jerusalem

Day 11: Sunday, March 11, 2018: REMEMBRANCE

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- We visit **Yad Vashem**, Israel's memorial to the Holocaust, where we view the many moving exhibitions including the Hall of Names and the Avenue of the Righteous Among the Nations.
- Lunch on own nearby.
- We continue to the **Flam Winery** for a tour and tasting.
- We return to Jerusalem for an evening at leisure and dinner on our own.

Overnight in Jerusalem



Day 12: Monday, March 12, 2018: DIALOGUE IN JERUSALEM

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- Our day begins with a briefing by **Noa Sattath**, one of the young leaders at the **Israel Religious Action Center (IRAC)**. We learn about the struggles for equality, pluralism and social justice in this new yet old country.
- Next, we travel to the **Gush Etzion region**, where we meet with **Ali Abu Awaad** and **Shaul Yudelman**, founders of the **Roots/Shorashim Project**, a grassroots dialogue and reconciliation of Palestinians and settlers.
- Free time for last minute shopping or exploration.
- We join together for a **farewell dinner** as we recount all that we have experienced together.

Overnight in Jerusalem

Day 13: Tuesday, March 13, 2018: DEPARTURE OR EILAT/PETRA EXTENSION

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- Transfer to Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv for our flight back to New York, landing later today;

OR

JOIN US ON OUR EILAT/PETRA EXTENSION

- Transfer to Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv for our flight to **Eilat**.
- Upon arrival in Eilat, we check in to our hotel and enjoy a free afternoon at the beach, by the pool or at the aquarium.
- Leisure evening to discover Eilat and have dinner on our own.



Overnight in Eilat



Day 14: Wednesday, March 14, 2018: PETRA DAY TOUR

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- This morning, we cross the Israeli border into Jordan.
- Upon crossing the border, we travel to **Petra**, the Red Rose City and Eighth Wonder of the World, where we explore the **Nabatean City** (as seen in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*). We walk through the **Ciq** and ancient temples, and discover the amazing **Treasury** and **Roman theater**. On our way back to the border, we view **Wadi Rum**, a protected desert wilderness with sandstone mountains and natural arches.
- We return to our hotel in Eilat for a leisure evening and dinner on our own.



Overnight in Eilat

Day 15: Thursday, March 15, 2018: L'HITRAOT, L'YISRAEL

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- We spend the day at leisure, relaxing at the beach or pool, or visiting the aquarium.
- This evening, we enjoy a **farewell dinner**, recalling all that we have experienced together.
- We check out of our hotel after dinner and return to the Eilat airport for our flight back to Tel Aviv.
- Transfer to the international terminal at Ben Gurion Airport for our overnight flight to New York.

Day 16: Friday, March 16, 2018: WELCOME HOME!

- We land in New York this morning. Welcome home!

THE MEMORIES LAST FOREVER!

**itinerary subject to change*

