

## ISRAEL: OFF THE BEATEN PATH

**Led by Rabbi Stacy Offner & Nancy Abramson**

**February 14 – 25, 2018**

(As of Sep 6, 2016)

### Wednesday, February 14, 2018

#### *Departure*

- Departure from the United States.

### Overnight: Flight

### Thursday, February 15, 2018

#### *Arrival Welcome to Israel*

- Arrive at Ben Gurion International Airport with assistance by our Ayelet Tours representative and light refreshments upon arrival.
- We ascend to Jerusalem.
- Time permitting, we stop at Mivaseret to visit Progressive congregation Kehillat Mivaseret Tzion – we'll share a welcome drink with leadership from the congregation and enjoy a beautiful view of the hills of Jerusalem in the distance.
- Welcome Ceremony at the Haas Promenade—with a view of the Dome of the Rock, the Walls of the Old City, the City of David, the Peace Forest, Arab villages, and the mountains of Jordan, participate in a Shehekianu ceremony celebrating this moment of arriving in Jerusalem.
- Check into the hotel.
- Optional Walk with Rabbi Offner to the Kotel.
- Festive welcome dinner at one of Jerusalem's restaurants, followed by an introduction and orientation to our time together.

### Overnight: Jerusalem



**Friday, February 16, 2018**



***Rarely Visited Jerusalem Neighborhoods***

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- **Jeep tour** of the **Burma Road** with the guides narrating the struggle for Jerusalem in 1948 and the Biblical stories brought to mind by the views of famous Biblical sites along the Burma Road.
- Walking Tour of **Nachlaot**, considered by many to be Jerusalem's most pluralistic neighborhood, followed by lunch on your own at **Machane Yehudah**, one of the most famous outdoor markets in the Middle East.
- In one of Jerusalem's **Haredi/Ultra-Orthodox neighborhoods** visit a family and hear about their life, observances, and about their preparations for Shabbat.
- Return to the hotel with time for rest and to prepare for Shabbat.
- Freshen up at our hotel before **Shabbat services at Shir Hadash**, a warm and welcoming Modern Orthodox community catering to the English speaking population of Jerusalem. The community is led by Rabbi Ian Pear & Rabbi Sam Shor, both of whom made aliyah from North America. This evening we enjoy dinner hosted by a Modern Orthodox family (or two).

**Overnight: Jerusalem**



## **Shabbat (Saturday), February 17, 2018**

### **A Jerusalem Shabbat**



- Breakfast at the hotel.
- We attend services at the Hebrew Union College campus, the center of Progressive Judaism in Jerusalem.
- Afternoon Jerusalem Old City walk and political discussion with **Prof. Paul Liptz** (Hebrew Union College) entitled: "The Interaction of War and Politics: 1948 to the Present," beginning at Beit Sh'mu'el. We'll stop along the way for an included lunch at a restaurant in the Christian Quarter.
- Free time to enjoy the hotel, spa, and a chance to recharge batteries for the week ahead, followed by **Havdalah** led by Rabbi Offner overlooking the walls of the Old City. Optional pre-Havdalah study at the hotel with **Dr. Melila Helner**—“*My Jerusalem*”.
- Dinner on your own – *Ben Yehuda Street, Emek Rephaim, or the Tachanah (Old Train Station)*

### **Overnight: Jerusalem**

## **Sunday, February 18, 2018**

### ***Yearning for Peace***

- Breakfast at the hotel with **Alec Isaacs** who shares his story and his project Siach Shalom, a possible game-changer in the endless struggle for peace.
- Visit **Yad B'Yad**, a cutting edge, unique Jewish-Arab School—meet faculty and students.
- Drive to **Gush Etzion** and meet with the founders of **Roots/Shorashim Project, Ali Abu Awaad and Shaul Yudelman**, a grass roots dialogue and doing project of Palestinians and settlers.
- Lunch at the **Harutzim Café in Talpiot** run by **Shekel**, providing Community Services for 8,000 people with special needs from every sector of Israeli society: Jews, Arabs, Christians, religious and secular.
- Return to the Old City for *The Three Faiths Tour of Jerusalem* with **Hanna Bendkowsky**—spend the afternoon seeing the incredible patchwork of religious life in one of the most interesting and complex cities in the world. Along the way visit the **Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Stations of the Cross, the Dome of the Rock, and the Kotel (Western Wall)**.
- Return to the hotel for rest and relaxation.
- Dinner on your own in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City.
- **Evening Cultural Performance** (TBD based on schedule as we get closer to departure – additional cost/optional)

### **Overnight: Jerusalem**



**Monday, February 19, 2018**

*Heading South*

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- Head south to **Sderot**.
- Guided drive through Sderot with security personnel, with a briefing and, security conditions permitting, a view into the **Gaza Strip**.
- Brunch in Sderot with **Mevashlot Sderot**—a group of women who prepare traditional ethnic Jewish culinary treats.
- Visit **Saroka Medical Center** with a chance to perform the mitzvah of bikur cholim and learn about how this hospital handles war related trauma issues.
- Visit the tiny hut in Sde Boker where **Prime Minister David Ben Gurion and his wife Paula** spent their last years and experience for yourself the compelling leadership and powerful draw of Ben Gurion's ideas and his claim that the future is in the south. Conclude the visit with an opportunity to pay respects at the graves of Israel's founding parents.
- Continue south to **Mitzpe Ramon**.
- Check in to hotel.
- Dinner at the hotel followed by an evening desert hike and star gazing.



**Overnight: Mitzpe Ramon**

**Tuesday, February 20, 2018**

*Flavors of the Desert*

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- **Sunrise Jeep Tour of the Machtesh Crater.**
- Hike through the **Ein Avdat Canyon** to the **Ein Avdat Spring**.
- Free time to rest or visit the world class spa at the Beresheet Hotel.
- Continue to the **Shirat Midbar Spice Farm** A farming experience in the midst of herbs, A unique organic farm in with medicinal herbs and spices, Moroccan Argan trees, edible grapes and a colorful orchard. Here we enjoy a great family program, inclusive of lunch.
- Late afternoon visit to a **Bedouin Encampment** for an opportunity to engage with Israeli Bedouins and ride camels.

**Overnight: Mitzpe Ramon**



## Wednesday, February 21, 2018

### *Eco-Exploration*

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- Drive to **Kibbutz Keturah**.
- Special program with the **Arava Institute** on *Facing the Global Environmental Challenge the Jewish Way*, including a visit to the **Ketura Solar Fields** and a meeting with **Jordanian and Palestinian students at the Institute**,

followed by a guided drive around the hills of Eilat exploring the realities on the borders of Egypt and Jordan, which have been at peace with Israel for the past 37 and 22 years respectively.

- Continue to Eilat – free time for lunch on own.

This afternoon, we enjoy Snorkeling at the Coral Reef and fun in the sun on the Red Sea.

- Check in to our Eilat hotel.
- Dinner on own and free time in Eilat.



### **Overnight: Eilat**

## Thursday, February 22, 2018

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- Today we enjoy an exciting day trip to Petra, Jordan - departing at 7:00 am, and returning at 6:00 pm.
- Walk through the **Siq** and view the ancient temples.
- Discover the famous **Treasury**, the **Roman Theater**, and more at this, the Eighth Wonder of the World. (*Note border taxes are due in USD at the border crossing – currently \$65 per person*).
- Return to Eilat for a free evening.



### **Overnight: Eilat**



## **Friday, February 23, 2018**

### ***Exploring the Desert***

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- Depart for Central Israel.



- Stop at Kibbutz Neot Smadar, one of the most creative and organic kibbutzim in Israel to visit their organic farm and winery.
- Drive to the Bedouin city of **Rahat** for a meeting at the Municipal Communal Center (Matnas) of Rahat:
  - Meet **Dr. Amer al-Huzayl, Deputy Mayor of Rahat**, “Challenges Facing the Development of Rahat and Bedouin Townships in the Negev”.
  - Meet **Dr. Sarab Abu Rabia-Quieder of Ben Gurion University**, “Bedouin Women in the Negev: Transition and Empowerment”.
- Drive to Tel Aviv.
- Kabbalat Shabbat on the Beach, followed by Shabbat Dinner at the hotel.

### **Overnight: Tel Aviv**

## **Shabbat (Saturday) February 24, 2018**

### **A Tel Aviv Shabbat**

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- Walking tour of **Jaffa**, one of the most ancient cities in the world, including Biblical vignettes, the role of Jaffa as gateway to the Middle East, the great return of Jews to these shores beginning in 1881, and the struggle of two peoples to live together.
- Visit the **Tel Aviv Museum of Art**, for a glimpse into some of the newest and trend-setting art in the world today.
- Walking Tour to **Bialik Street**, for a guided visit through part of the White City – UNESCO Heritage Bauhaus collection and a glimpse into the lives of some of Tel Aviv's most significant residents of years gone by: Author **Chaim Nachman Bialik** and artist **Reuven Rubin**.
- Time to prepare for return to the United States or to enjoy the beach and boardwalk.
- Concluding Discussion - What are we taking home with us? What does it all mean?
- Festive Farewell Dinner
- Return to Ben Gurion International Airport for the 1am return flight. (1am Feb. 25)

## **Sunday, February 25, 2018 – Arrival in the US**

### **The Memories Last Forever!**

*\*Itinerary subject to change*

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