

## 12 Night Highlight Tour of ISRAEL

**12 Nights \* 14 Days \* 8 Touring Days**

**Thursday Departure/Friday Arrival**

**2 nights Tel Aviv \* 2 nights Galilee**

**5 nights Jerusalem**

**2 nights Eilat \* 1 night Tel Aviv**

**With Optional Day Tour to**

**PETRA, JORDAN**



### DAY 1, THURSDAY – DEPARTURE

- Depart the United States on our overnight flight to Israel. (Contact Ayelet Tours for assistance booking flights)

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### DAY 2, FRIDAY - WELCOME TO ISRAEL!

- Shalom and welcome to Israel.
- Greeting and assistance at Ben Gurion airport by an Ayelet representative.
- Transfer to our hotel; remainder of the day is on own at leisure.

Overnight Tel Aviv

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### DAY 3, SATURDAY - SHABBAT SHALOM!

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- Enjoy a day at leisure to explore Tel Aviv on own.

Overnight Tel Aviv

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### DAY 4, SUNDAY - THE MEDITERRANEAN COAST

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- This morning we check out of our hotel and drive north along Israel's scenic coastal plain.
- Drive along the Mediterranean Coast to **Caesarea**, the ancient Roman capital of the area.



Here we view the Roman Theater, the aqueduct, and ancient port as well as the impressive excavations of the Crusaders' city.

- We continue to **Megiddo**, site of biblical Armageddon, whose 20 layers of civilization were featured in James Michener's *The Source*.
- Our next stop is **Daliat El Carmel**, a Druze village, where we have the opportunity to learn about their unique culture.
- Enjoy a **late lunch at a local restaurant**.
- We stop atop **Mt. Carmel** in Haifa, where we take in the view of the sea, and the amazing terraced Bahai Gardens.
- Continue into the Galilee.
- Dinner at our kibbutz hotel.

Overnight at our Kibbutz in the Galilee

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### Day 5, Monday: SAFED AND THE GOLAN

- Breakfast at our kibbutz.
- We tour the mystical city of **Safed**, center of Kabbalistic practice. Explore the narrow alleyways lined with ancient synagogues and artists' galleries.
- Enjoy a jeep ride up to the **Golan Heights**, where we pass former Syrian bunkers and stop atop **Har Bental** for panoramic views stretching far into neighboring Syria. Our guide updates us on the geopolitical situation in the area.
- We continue to **Kuneitra**, former Syrian administrative capital of the region and **Katzrin**, the Israeli administrative capital of the region.
- We stop at the award winning **Golan winery** for a tour and tasting.
- We then visit **Kesem Hagolan** to watch a spectacular multimedia presentation of the area and its history in the 180 degree IMAX movie theater.
- Dinner at our kibbutz hotel.

Overnight at our Kibbutz in the Galilee

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### Day 6, Tuesday: THE SEA OF GALILEE AND NAZARETH

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- We begin our day with a visit to the **Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth**, \*\* which some believe marks the site of Mary's childhood home and the Annunciation by the angel Gabriel.
- We continue to **Tiberias**, one of four holy cities in Judaism, where we visit the grave of the medieval sage **Maimonides**.
- We continue to **Capernaum** where Jesus began his ministry, and site of numerous miracles. We see the ruins of several synagogues and the octagonal **Church of St. Peter**.



- Our next stop is the **Mount of Beatitudes**, where Jesus delivered the Sermon on the Mount.
- Visit the extensive Roman ruins of **Beit Shean**, destroyed over 1,300 years ago by earthquake, and recently excavated and reconstructed on a massive and impressive scale.
- Visit the intricate mosaics in the synagogue at nearby **Beit Alpha**.

Overnight Jerusalem

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### Day 7, Wednesday: JERUSALEM'S OLD CITY

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- We begin our day with an ascent up the **Mount of Olives** for a magnificent panoramic view of the City of Gold.
- We continue **Mt. Zion**, where we visit the **tomb of King David** and then proceed to the **Upper Room**, believed to be the site of the **Last Supper**.
- We enter the walled **Old City** and walk through the newly restored Jewish quarter, including the **Roman Cardo** marketplace and the **Herodian** quarter excavations.
- We walk the **Stations of the Cross** along the **Via Dolorosa**, ending at the **Church of the Holy Sepulcher**.
- We continue to **Bethlehem\*\*** (security permitting) to view the **tomb of Rachel**, wife of biblical patriarch Jacob.
- We visit the **Church of the Nativity** and Manger Square.

Overnight in Jerusalem.

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### Day 8, Thursday: NEW JERUSALEM

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- We begin our day at the extensive galleries of the **Israel Museum**, which recently completed a \$100 million renovation and is world class in every way. The galleries range from pop and modern art, through renaissance and classical, with a strong emphasis on Jewish and Israeli archeological history and evidence going back thousands of years. Walk through the iconic **Shrine of the Book** which houses the **Dead Sea Scrolls**, and see the impressive scale replica, in miniature, of Jerusalem as it was during the Second Temple period.
- We continue to the **Knesset**, Israel's parliament where we take a tour and have time for a unique photo opportunity by the amazing outdoor bronze menorah sculpture. The Menorah was a gift given from England's parliament; the world's oldest, to Israel's parliament, the world's youngest.
- Visit **Mt. Herzl**, Jerusalem's military cemetery, where we visit the gravesites of



Theodore Herzl, Golda Meir and Yitzhak Rabin, and learn from our guide some of the heroic stories of those buried here.

- We continue to **Yad Vashem**, Israel's memorial to the 6 Million Jews murdered in the Holocaust – here we view the many moving exhibitions including the Hall of Names and the Avenue of the Righteous Among the Nations.
- We continue to **Mea Shearim**, an Ultra-Orthodox neighborhood in Jerusalem to learn about the unique lifestyle of the residents.
- Tonight we enjoy a **Middle Eastern dinner** together.
- Afterward, we enjoy a spectacular **Sound and Light Show at the Tower of David** (weather permitting).

Overnight Jerusalem.

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### **Day 9, Friday: MASADA AND THE DEAD SEA**

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- Early this morning, we depart Jerusalem and drive south through the Judean desert for the Dead Sea Basin.
- Stop at **Qumran**, site where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found.
- We drive along the shores of the Dead Sea and ascend to King Herod's fortresses and castle atop **Masada**, ascending the desert plateau by cable car. Visit the remains of the walls, palaces, synagogue, and the bathhouses, learning about the Jewish Zealots last stand against Roman forces.
- Enjoy lunch and an unsinkable swim in the healing salty waters of the **Dead Sea**.
- Return to Jerusalem.

Overnight Jerusalem.

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### **Day 10, Saturday: SHABBAT SHALOM**

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- Enjoy a day at leisure to explore Jerusalem on your own.

Overnight Jerusalem.

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### **Day 11, Sunday: THE SOUTH**

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- This morning, we check out of our hotel and travel south through the **Negev desert**.
- Visit **Timna** with its impressive and beautiful desert stone landscapes, once home to



King Solomon's Copper Mines. Marvel at the huge multi-colored rock formations. Then, on to Eilat.

- In **Eilat**, we visit the fascinating **Underwater Observatory**, one of the largest seaquariums in the world, built into a Red Sea coral reef.

Overnight Eilat.

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### Day 12, Monday: EILAT/PETRA

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- Enjoy a day of leisure relaxing or enjoying some of the many water sports on the shores of the Red Sea **OR** opt for an exciting day tour to **Petra in Jordan\***.

#### **\*OPTIONAL DAY TOUR TO PETRA (Additional cost applies)**

- A mini-bus will provide early morning pick-up at hotels and transfer to the Jordanian border for crossing formalities.
- After assistance with visa processing, we continue across the border into **Jordan**, and board our bus to begin our touring experience.
- Drive through desert highways to our ultimate destination, the astonishing rose-red city of **Petra**. Petra is famous for its massive architecture, pools, dams and water channels. Petra is the legacy of the Nabateans (an early Arab tribe) who settled in the South of Jordan more than two thousand years ago.
- The visit begins with the possibility of a short horseback-ride for about 700 meters (a little less than ½ mile) to the entrance of the **Siq** which is about 1.2 km (¾ mile) long (walking distance).
- There is a possibility to rent a cart (extra cost) to get inside **Petra** and back to the gate outside.
- Petra is famous for its huge monuments such as The Treasury, Royal Tombs, The Court, Roman Theatre, Roman Street, Qassier El- Bint (Palace of Pharaoh's daughter) and many other smaller monuments which fascinate visitors. The city itself is almost 45 square km and is considered to be the eighth wonder of the world.
- Late **lunch** is included.
- Arrive at **Jordan/Israel border** around 6:00 PM to conclude crossing formalities.
- Cross the border back into Israel & return to Eilat for a free evening.

Overnight Eilat.

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### Day 13, Tuesday: THE MAGNIFICANT RAMON CRATER

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- This morning, we check out of our hotel and travel north to the edge of the breathtaking crater at **Mitzpe Ramon**.



- Afterwards, we enjoy a **camel riding** experience with a visit to an authentic **Bedouin tent** to experience their **desert hospitality** and enjoy a light lunch.
- Continue to **Sde Boker** to Ben Gurion's Hut and Gravesite, where we will recall his dream of turning the desert green, and see the ways it is becoming a reality.
- Head north to the Israeli Air Force Museum at **Hatzerim**, to see aircraft from throughout Israel's history.
- Continue north to Tel Aviv for a free evening.

Overnight Tel Aviv.

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### **Day 14, Wednesday: DEPARTURE**

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- Depart for Ben Gurion Airport for our flight back to the United States. L'hitraot!

### **THE MEMORIES LAST FOREVER!**

*\*Itinerary subject to change*

**\*\*Visit subject to availability**

The above program can be extended and customized for groups and private families.

**\*Day Tour to Petra--**If booking this optional day tour, additional charges will apply. **ALSO** plan to bring \$60.00 per person in U.S. currency (and valid passport) when you travel to Jordan to cover visa fees and border taxes (for both entry to Jordan and return into Israel). Credit cards or travelers checks are **not** accepted.

**Please note:** If you depart from Israel during your visit (for example to go to Jordan or Egypt even for one day) VAT refund must be requested from customs at your departure land border at the time you depart. VAT at Ben Gurion airport will only process the refund for any goods purchased since last date of entry into Israel.

