

A scenic view of Jerusalem, Israel, with a group of tourists in the foreground. The tourists are gathered on a hillside, looking out over the city. In the background, the city of Jerusalem is visible, including the Dome of the Rock. The sky is clear and blue. The overall atmosphere is bright and sunny.

# Travel Tips

*Making the most of your trip to Israel!*

***Ayelet*** Tours, Ltd.

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[www.ayelet.com](http://www.ayelet.com) • 800-237-1517

# Travel Tips

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# BEFORE YOU LEAVE...



## PASSPORT/VISA

Every visitor must have a valid passport to travel to Israel.

Please be aware that it usually takes several weeks to obtain a passport, so apply well ahead of time if you don't have one yet. It should be noted that current US government regulations stipulate that passports must be valid for at least six (6) months after your return travel date or you may not be permitted to depart the United States. Prior to departure, fill in the emergency information page of your passport! In certain circumstances a passport may be renewed on an expedited basis, but it is an expensive process. It is recommended to make two copies of the first two pages of your passport. Keep one copy at home and put the other with your

travel materials separate from your passport. This will help speed the process of replacing your passport if it's lost or stolen. A visa is not required for US citizens traveling to Israel. Citizens from many countries, including the US, are issued free visitors' visas when they enter the country. When entering Israel, you will receive a small blue slip called the B2 Entry Visa. This **MUST** be retained, as hotels may charge you VAT tax unless you present this slip when requested. It may also be requested at the time you exit the country.



## MONEY

Most businesses accept credit cards. The credit card companies usually give you good exchange rates. ATM machines are located throughout

the country. It is recommended you alert your credit card company that you will be traveling out of the country. In order to avoid possible difficulties with transactions, be sure to include the dates and destinations you will be visiting. We recommend traveling with two different credit cards. Visa and MasterCard are preferred by most Israeli merchants. American Express is accepted in hotels, but many other places do not take it. Discover is less widely accepted. It is a good idea to carry some cash with you for emergencies, transportation and small purchases. It is also a good idea to have a supply of small American bills on hand to leave as tips for hotel housekeeping, etc. While hotels and banks offer convenience for changing money, their rates tend to be less favorable than the Change kiosks found plentifully in the city centers.

## **PACKING**

How much to pack depends on the length and purpose of your trip. Clothing requirements vary depending on weather, and if your trip is designed for business or solely as a vacation. On your tour to Israel, you will probably be moving around a lot and you won't want to pack and unpack a lot of "stuff." It's a good idea to travel light and expect to need more room in your bags when returning to accommodate gifts, etc.

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR SIMPLIFYING:**

- Build your travel wardrobe around no more than two colors, one of which is black, navy, gray, or brown. Plan to wear every item more than once.
- Bring more tops, fewer bottoms. A combination of T-shirts, shirts and sweaters will work in most climates and let you change your look from

day to day. Fleece works well in cooler weather.

■ Place used plastic dry cleaning bags between suits and dresses to eliminate wrinkles.

■ If you're bringing more than one coat or pair of shoes, wear the heaviest ones on the plane.

■ Make a list of everything in your suitcase. You'll have something to refer to in the event your luggage is lost and you have to describe the contents. Refer to it to make sure you haven't forgotten anything. Don't bring more than you can manage yourself. Most able-bodied travelers should be able to hoist their own bags. The more experienced traveler will bring the least luggage!

## LUGGAGE ALLOWANCE

Luggage allowance varies depending upon the airline. Since luggage restrictions change often, please check directly with your airline to be certain of specific regulations. Links to various airline websites and a baggage allowance website can be found on [www.ayelet.com](http://www.ayelet.com).



## TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel insurance is available and highly recommended. In order to be fully covered for pre-existing conditions, insurance must be purchased within 15 days of receipt of your initial deposit by Ayelet Tours. Acting immediately will avoid problems with refunds or medical coverage in the future.

Please go to:

[www.ayelet.com](http://www.ayelet.com)

and click on the [Travel Insurance](#) link within the [Travel Information](#) tab for complete, detailed information.



## WEATHER

Israel enjoys long, warm, dry summers (April – October) and generally mild winters (November – March), with somewhat drier, cooler weather in the hilly regions, such as Jerusalem and Safed. Rainfall is relatively heavy in the north and center of the country with much less in the Negev and almost negligible amounts in the southern areas. Regional conditions vary considerably, with humid summers and mild winters on the coast; dry summers and moderately cool winters in the hill regions; hot dry summers and pleasant winters in the Jordan Valley and year-round semi-desert conditions in the Negev.

A note about summer in Israel - it is hot! Please take measures to stay cool - a fan, a hat with a back flap or a cooling towel can all make your trip more comfortable.

# THE WEATHER IN ISRAEL

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	
<b>Jerusalem</b>	C	6-11	7-14	8-16	12-21	15-25	17-27	19-29	18-28	16-26	12-19	8-14	
	F	43-53	44-57	47-61	53-69	60-77	63-81	66-84	66-86	65-82	60-78	54-67	47-56
<b>Tel Aviv</b>	C	9-18	9-19	10-20	12-22	17-25	19-28	21-30	22-30	20-31	15-28	9-19	
	F	49-65	48-66	51-69	54-72	63-77	67-83	70-86	72-86	69-89	59-83	54-76	47-66
<b>Haifa</b>	C	8-17	9-18	8-21	13-26	15-25	18-28	20-30	21-30	16-27	13-23	9-18	
	F	49-63	47-64	47-70	55-78	58-76	64-82	68-86	70-86	68-85	60-81	56-74	48-65
<b>Tiberias</b>	C	9-18	9-20	11-22	13-27	17-32	20-35	23-37	24-37	22-35	19-32	11-20	
	F	48-65	49-67	51-72	56-80	62-89	68-95	73-98	75-99	71-95	65-89	59-78	53-68
<b>Eilat</b>	C	10-21	11-23	13-26	17-31	21-35	24-37	25-40	26-40	20-33	16-28	11-23	
	F	49-70	51-73	56-79	63-87	69-95	75-99	77-103	79-104	75-98	69-92	61-83	51-74
<b>Dead Sea</b>	C	11-20	13-22	16-25	20-29	24-34	27-37	28-39	29-38	27-36	24-32	18-27	13-22
	F	53-68	56-72	61-78	68-85	75-93	80-99	83-102	83-101	81-96	75-90	65-80	56-71

# WHILE IN ISRAEL

## SAFETY

In spite of what you might read in the newspapers or see on television, remember that Israel is a very safe place to visit. Take the same precautions you would normally use in any city or country. Be careful going out at night and travel in groups when possible. In most places in Israel, it is safe to walk alone. However, it is advisable to only go into the West Bank territories with a group and a licensed guide. One of the first things you'll notice when you arrive in Israel is the number of people carrying guns. It can be disconcerting. Soldiers carry them on the streets, in cars and on buses. Soldiers are required to keep their weapons with them, and since so many Israelis are on duty, it is common to stand next to someone with an Uzi. You will quickly get used

to this and realize, for Israelis, it's a fact of life in Israel and nothing to fear. In an emergency, dial 101 for Ambulance (Magen David Adom) or 100 for police. Do not wear conspicuous clothing or expensive jewelry, nor carry excessive amounts of money or unnecessary credit cards. Travelers have different opinions regarding carrying wallets and purses. Some people believe it is safer to put valuables in a pouch or to conceal them. Pouches and backpacks worn outside clothing make you stand out as a tourist and do not necessarily protect you from thieves. Valuable items are best left in a safe deposit box in a hotel. Important phone numbers should be kept on your person at all times for emergencies and to contact friends and family in Israel.



it is safer to put valuables in a pouch or to conceal them. Pouches and backpacks worn outside clothing make you stand out as a tourist and do not necessarily protect you from thieves. Valuable items are best left in a safe deposit box in a hotel. Important phone numbers should be kept on your person at all times for emergencies and to contact friends and family in Israel.

## GETTING AROUND

Since most Israeli cities are small, it is possible to walk to most places. Excellent walking shoes are strongly recommended. You will see a lot more and have more opportunities to interact with the people while walking. Getting a map from a hotel or tourist



office is a good idea. It is possible to rent a car, but driving in Israel is not for the faint of heart. The roads are considered the most dangerous places in Israel and the traffic, especially in and around Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, is extremely heavy.

Taxis are a common mode of transportation. Always ask how much the fare will be or insist a meter is used before getting into a cab. The one exception is for long trips, such as between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem (and from the airport) where the fares are usually set before leaving. For those longer

trips, it is usually less expensive, though also less comfortable and convenient, to take a group taxi or sherut. You can also learn a lot

to cab drivers; they are usually not shy about offering their opinions.

#### **BY BUS:**

The most popular mode of travel is the bus. There are many private tour bus lines. One of the most recognized public bus lines is Egged. Bus rides are inexpensive and the newer ones are very comfortable. If you will be in Israel on your own for an extended period of time, you may wish to find out about the different fares and plans at

<http://www.egged.co.il/Eng/>

Traveling by public bus may seem overwhelming because of the language differences. Many Israelis, however, do speak English. Don't be afraid to ask the driver or other passengers for help in identifying your stop. Buses afford people a leisurely way to see the country and a casual way to meet the people. Some people even choose to travel

long distances, such as to Eilat, by bus. Students and youth group tourists often use this method of transportation.

#### **BY RAIL: Israrail**

Israel has been working to develop a modern, convenient passenger rail system and is proud of its progress. Now it is possible to travel to many parts of Israel using this affordable mode of transportation. You may travel from Ben Gurion airport to Tel Aviv and Haifa. Much of the transportation along the coast, and even down to Beer Sheba can now be accomplished by train. The new train from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv takes just over an hour. Information about schedules and fares may be found at

<http://www.rail.co.il>

#### **PRIVATE TRANSFERS:**

The most convenient way to get from one point to the next, such as

## TABLE OF LOCAL DISTANCES

*in Kilometers*

*(1 mile = 1.6 kilometers)*

	Tel Aviv	Jerusalem	Eilat	Haifa
Akko	118	181	474	23
Beer Sheva	113	83	243	208
Eilat	356	326	——	451
Haifa	95	158	45	——
Jerusalem	63	——	326	158
Ben Gurion Airport	18	51	341	112
Netanya	32	95	388	63
Tel Aviv	——	63	356	95
Tiberias	135	198	491	70
Caesarea	60	110	416	40

from the airport to your hotel, and vice versa, is the private car transfer. Ayelet Tours can make these arrangements for you.



## **ELECTRICITY**

The power supply is 220 volt AC-50 cycles. Most high standard hotels have US 110 electrical ports in the bathroom, for use with electric razors. Make sure your electrical items can operate on those specifications and that the appliances you are operating have the appropriate two prong plug head adapter. If you are not sure an electrical appliance is able to operate on the referenced voltage/cycle level, it is better to secure a universal converter kit. These are readily available at luggage stores, specialty electronics chain shops at your local mall, larger office

supply chain shops, etc. Sometimes hotels can spare adapters, but these should not be confused with converters. Adapters can be used with electrical appliances that already have the capability to work at the outlined voltage/cycle levels, but for which you do not have an appropriate electrical plug head. However, take caution when using any adapter. There is risk of short-circuiting your appliance or causing injury by using an electrical appliance that is not properly converted and adapted for use as required.

## **STAYING IN TOUCH**

CNN or other news service cable channels are available on television in most hotels. Programs in English may be found on a number of other channels. Virtually all hotels offer Wi-Fi and in recent years more and more hotels are offering this complimentary, either in room

or in the lobby. An International Herald Tribune can be picked up at most newsstands. The Jerusalem Post is a daily Israeli paper available in English. **Cell phones and travel Wi-Fi (Mi-Fi)** are now readily available to tourists through a variety of services.



Many rental services will deliver the equipment to your home via express delivery service in advance of your departure. To find more information on recommended options, please visit [www.ayelet.com](http://www.ayelet.com). You may consider using Skype or FaceTime via Wi-Fi networks for inexpensive or even free calls worldwide. Your smart phone may also be eligible for a global calling plan – contact your wireless provider for options. Long-distance phone calls can be

very costly, especially if made from a hotel room, where substantial service charges are added. Most major long-distance companies have numbers in Israel that allow you use of their rates. Some phones may also benefit from the use of a SIM card. A prepaid phone card can also be purchased from any Post Office in Israel.

## **LAUNDRY/ DRY CLEANING**

**Superclean Laundry** is a family laundry and dry-cleaning business located in Jerusalem. They offer a complete range of dry-cleaning, washing and pressing of all types of garments, including water-proofing of coats. Superclean picks up clothing from customer hotels and homes and offers friendly and quick service.

### **Superclean Laundry**

16 HaPalmach St., Jerusalem.

Phone: **02-566.0367**

## TIME

Israel is usually seven hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time, eight hours ahead of Central Time, nine hours ahead of Mountain Time and ten hours ahead of Pacific Time. It is two hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT).

## STAYING HEALTHY

Getting sick while you are away from home can be depressing. Several items on the checklist are meant to keep you healthy and insure you have the basic remedies for common maladies, such as headaches or upset stomach. Health care in Israel is excellent, but it is better to be safe rather than sorry. Food and water in Israel should not be a problem, but just in case, bring medication to relieve the symptoms of stomach ailments. Allergy sufferers may wish to have their preferred medication on hand. Bring only medications that you have previously taken.

Do not try new medications, even over the counter ones that have never been taken before, or with which you are not familiar. If prescription medications are taken, you might find it valuable to have your physician make duplicate copies of your prescriptions for you to take with you in case you need an emergency refill or for reference purposes in the event of emergency. The same holds true if you are allergic to specific medications. Always carry a list of these specific medications that should not be administered due to an allergy. Prescription drugs should be taken in your carry-on bag in case of baggage loss or delay. Although not required, it is a good idea to have a copy of the prescription information with you. Declare at the security checkpoint any medications that come in a gel or liquid form in a container larger than the allowed



100 ml/3 ounces.

Also, be aware that many tourists unknowingly put themselves at risk by not drinking enough water. Regardless of the season, Israel's climate is most likely much dryer than that to which most people are accustomed. Bottled water is readily available in most hotels and restaurants. When traveling on a tour bus, the driver may have bottled water and other soft drinks available for sale as a convenient way for passengers to stay hydrated. The cost is about \$1.00 – \$2.00 per bottle. If traveling on your own, be sure to stop often for bottled water throughout your day.

While in the past no vaccinations were necessary to visit Israel, there has recently been some concern regarding Polio in the middle east. Please check with a local travel doctor/clinic for the latest

recommendations. It may also be helpful to have a copy of your immunizations record in case of illness, or travel to another nearby country.

### **REMEMBER...**

Even if you do not normally keep a journal, bring a note pad or diary to record feelings and experiences.

When you return, and for years later, you'll be glad you did.

Bring a camera and/or video recorder and try to take pictures of people rather than just buildings. The photos will be more memorable when attached to faces.

### **CULTURE, DRESS & MANNERS**

As a visitor, you should always be courteous. If you do go to Arab towns in Israel or the territories, you will find the people are typically very hospitable and likely to invite you into their homes for tea and a bite to eat. Some may be



comfortable talking about politics, others may not.

The [checklist \(page 19\)](#) has a variety of apparel. Warm clothes and rain gear will be needed during winter months. Regardless of the season, dress in Israel is casual. If you plan to go to religious shrines or services, it is best to observe respective traditions and bring appropriate, modest clothing. Men should carry a yarmulke or kippah (head covering). Tradition extends to religious Jewish neighborhoods where it should be observed that women are expected to wear sleeves below the elbow and skirts below the knees. One alternative is to carry a lightweight, large shawl that can be wrapped around your shoulders or bare legs, or you may prefer to bring a wrap skirt to cover up your shorts. Regardless of your personal views, kindly respect those of the people who live there.

## SHOPPING

Israel is a good place to buy souvenirs. As in other Middle Eastern countries, haggling in Israel is a tradition. Keep the following points in mind when shopping: It is rare to ever have to pay the full price listed on an item (***NOTE: This applies mostly to souvenirs, not everything in the markets, and is not true of ordinary retail shops like department stores.***)

- Always be ready to walk out of a shop and don't be surprised if the sales person follows you out.
- The merchants in the market in the Old City, in particular, can be very aggressive. Don't be intimidated. Remember, you are the customer and it is their job to satisfy you.
- Keep in mind your budget and don't let yourself be talked into paying more. You will probably



see the same items in more than one store, so shop around before deciding.

■ Be clear on the exchange rate before hand.

By paying with a credit card, there is usually a better exchange rate. Sometimes you can get a better price if you pay with US dollars. Israel assesses a Value Added Tax (VAT) of 18% on goods and services. Prices should include this tax. In some cases, you can get a refund of this tax. Qualified purchases are over \$100 including tax. The buyer may not be an Israeli citizen nor hold an Israeli passport. The goods must be for personal use and not commercial use. Food, drink or tobacco products are not eligible for refund. VAT refunds may be transacted at the airport before departing. 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. To do so plan on arriving to the airport very early (four hours) to permit time to visit the VAT customs office. Merchants should put your purchases in a clear plastic bag with a copy of the receipt inside. Keep the original receipt with you. The bag must be sealed and remain unopened to get the refund. Refunds may not be processed once you have departed Israel.

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### **USEFUL HEBREW WORDS:**

Hello, Goodbye, Peace = SHALOM

Please, You're Welcome = B'VA-KA-SHA

Thank you = TODAH

Okay = B'SEDER

Where? = AY-FOH?

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## TOP TIPS for an enjoyable journey:

■ **Clocks.** Many hotel rooms in Israel do not have clocks. While wake up calls are available by calling the front desk, bringing a travel alarm clock (or ipod, smartphone, etc. that can be set as an alarm) is suggested.

■ **Water.** During the summer in Israel, dehydration is a concern. The dryness of the heat can be misleading about how much hydration is lost. Bring electrolyte powder packs or pills to add to bottled water to restore electrolytes and remember to always drink before feeling thirsty!

■ **Taxis.** Taxis in Israel all have meters, but some drivers will attempt not to use them, creating the possibility of over charging. Always insist on the meter, or set the price in advance when entering the taxi.

■ **Get in Shape!** While most of the walking involved on a tour is moderate, many people are not used to walking this much on a regular basis. Jerusalem is hilly, and places like Masada or Petra require a good deal of walking. Try walking 20 – 30 minutes a day, 3 times per week for a few weeks before departure; this will ensure a more pleasant trip. To prevent blisters,

walk in the shoes you plan to bring — never start breaking in a new pair during the tour.

■ **Sanitizer.** The Purell craze hasn't really hit in Israel. You may want to bring hand sanitizer as well as moist wipes (travel packs).

■ **Ask.** If there is something that could be done to make your experience more pleasant, let your guide know. While it helps to get feedback afterwards, we would rather make it right for you during your tour.

■ **Get to the airport early.** If there are any issues (such as flight cancellation or delay, issues with your ticket or seating), an early arrival means more time to address any possible problems.

■ **Bring USD singles** - they come in handy!

# PACKING CHECKLIST

## DOCUMENTS

- Tickets
- Copy of travel insurance
- Itinerary
- Passport and photocopy
- Cash (not too much)
- Credit cards/ATM
- Phone numbers
- Reservations

## SUPPLIES

- Wallet/handbag
- (Sun)glasses
- Hat
- Umbrella (in winter)
- Backpack/day pack
- First Aid supplies
- Sewing kit
- Jewelry (not expensive)
- Safety pins
- Flashlight
- Paper/journal
- Travel alarm clock
- Camera/video & film
- Plastic bags
- Canteen
- Addresses/stamps
- Pen/pencil

## CLOTHING

- Bathing suit/towel
- Flip flops
- Kipah/yarmulke
- Shirts (casual/dress)
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Sandals
- Socks/hose
- Dresses/skirts
- Belts/shawls/scarves
- Underwear
- Pajamas/sleepwear
- Sweater/sweatshirt
- Raincoat with zip-out lining (in winter)
- Gloves/scarf/hat (in winter)

## TOILETRIES

- Toothbrush/paste
- Mouthwash
- Deodorant
- Prescriptions
- Hand sanitizer
- Razor & shaving cream
- Comb/brush
- Shampoo & soap
- Wash cloth
- Sunscreen
- Moisturizer
- Medication
- Cosmetics

# The memories last forever!



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