

International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism



TOUR TO SECULAR ISRAEL



**Led by Rabbi Adam Chalom
& Rabbi Jeffrey Falick**

December 10-21, 2023

(As of 9/20/22)

A unique tour - experience Israel from a secular perspective. Together we will explore the issues facing Israel as a Jewish and democratic state. Conflicts between Palestinians and settlers, tensions between ultra-religious and secular Israelis, and social and economic justice are all on this itinerary. Most significantly, we will also find hope among those working for pluralism and human rights.



Day 1: Sunday, December 10, 2023: DEPARTURE

- We depart the United States on our overnight flight to Israel.

Day 2: Monday, December 11, 2023: WELCOME TO ISRAEL!

- Shalom and Bruchim Habaim - welcome to Israel! Upon arrival, we are met by an Ayelet Tours representative who will assist us through customs and baggage claim. Our time in this incredible land has officially started and our excitement mounts as we set off on the adventure ahead.
- We ascend to **Jerusalem** and check into our hotel with time to refresh before our **welcome dinner** this evening.
- We light **Hannukah candles** together in Jerusalem for the first time!

Overnight in Jerusalem

Day 3: Tuesday, December 12, 2023: THE OLD CITY

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- We begin with a walking tour of the **Old City**, focusing on social justice issues between the Jewish and Islamic community. We are led by both a Jewish and Muslim guide who offer their different viewpoints on the debated areas of the Old City. Along the way, we visit the **Jewish quarter**, and walk along the **Via Dolorosa** to the **Church of the Holy Sepulchre** in the **Christian quarter**.
- We travel through Israeli and Palestinian **neighborhoods beyond the '67 borders** with **Ir Amim**. We discuss the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the city, including the relationship between Israeli authorities and the Palestinian population, Israeli policy in Jerusalem and its social and political implications, as well as the separation barrier and its effects on the city.
- Lunch on own.
- We head to the **Israel Museum**, where we are led by **Rabbi Sivan Maas** of **Tmura-IISHJ**. We tour the **Shrine of the Book**, home to the Dead Sea Scrolls and see a miniature replica of Jerusalem from the Second Temple days.
- Dinner on own at the famed **Machane Yehuda** market.
- Later this evening, we meet with **Ittay Flescher** from **Kids4Peace**, an interfaith movement for youth, to learn about their unique program and the challenges and triumphs of creating a community of communication and understanding in Jerusalem.
- We share what we've learned from the day and light **Hanukkah candles** together to conclude the evening.

Overnight in Jerusalem



Day 4: Wednesday, December 13, 2023: MASADA AND THE DEAD SEA

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- Early this morning, we depart Jerusalem and travel south to the **Dead Sea basin**.
- We pass the **Qumran Caves**, site where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered by a local shepherd.
- We ascend **Masada** by cable car to view the remains of King Herod's palace and fortifications and hear the story of the Jewish Zealots' last stand against the approaching Roman armies.
- We descend the mountain and head to the **beach** for lunch on own and a chance to experience the mud baths, followed by an unsinkable swim in the healing, salty waters of the **Dead Sea**.
- We enjoy a short **hike** to the hidden waterfalls in the desert oasis of **Ein Gedi** and tour the **ancient synagogue** and **kibbutz** with **Rabbi Mani Gal**.
- Tonight, we join together for **dinner and lighting Hanukkah candles** at Kibbutz Ein Gedi before returning to Jerusalem and enjoying the rest of the evening at leisure.



Overnight in Jerusalem

Day 5: Thursday, December 14, 2023: FOUNDATIONS OF A NATION

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- This morning, we meet with scholar **Shlomo Balsam** at our hotel for a lecture and discussion before we head to **Yad Vashem**, Israel's memorial to the Holocaust, for a special guided visit.
- We continue to **Mount Herzl**, Jerusalem's military cemetery, to visit the gravesites of Theodore Herzl, Golda Meir, Yitzhak Rabin, and Shimon Peres and hear stories of Israel's path to foundation. We conclude the visit at the new **Remembrance Hall** along with **Yiftach Maas**, whose firm designed the memorial.
- Lunch on own.
- This afternoon, we may choose to attend the **20th Anniversary Tmura-IISHJ Conference and Rabbinic Ordination** or use the free time to explore and go shopping.
- Dinner on own this evening.
- Later tonight, we gather together to **light the candles** to celebrate the last night of **Hanukkah**.

Overnight in Jerusalem



Day 6: Friday, December 15, 2023: TMURA - IISHJ CONFERENCE (No bus/guide/no services)

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- Today, we attend the **20th Anniversary Tmura-IISHJ Conference and Rabbinic Ordination**.
- As the sun sets, we join the people of Jerusalem at the **Western Wall** to welcome **Shabbat**, followed by **Shabbat dinner** in private room at our hotel.

Overnight in Jerusalem

Day 7: Saturday, December 16, 2023: CELEBRATING DIVERSITY IN ISRAEL

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- This morning, we travel north along the Mediterranean coast to **Caesarea**, the former Roman capital of the area, to see the ancient theater and the aqueduct. Centuries ago, people of multiple faiths co-existed here.
- Next, we visit **Beit HaGefen**, where we tour the **Arab-Jewish Cultural Center** and get an insider's look into the diverse community of Haifa, as well as the various projects that are in place to bring Arabs, Jews and Christians together.
- We complete our day with a visit to **Wadi Nisnas Market**, a symbol of co-existence between Arab and Jewish residents, this small yet colorful market is brimming with baked goods, fresh seafood and the most succulent fruits and vegetables.
- We transfer to **Haifa** and check into our hotel before setting out for dinner on own.



Overnight in Haifa

Day 8: Sunday, December 17, 2023: THE NEW SETTLEMENT

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- This morning, we tour the ruins of the once-thriving city of **Tzippori**, where Jews and Gentiles lived side by side for centuries and where the Mishnah was codified almost 2,000 years ago.
- Next, we get a glimpse into the early days of the Zionist movement at **Kibbutz Degania**, the first kibbutz established and former home of leaders such as David Ben Gurion, Moshe Dayan and Joseph Trumpeldor.
- This afternoon, we visit **Kibbutz Beit Ha-Shita** with a Tmura-IISHJ rabbi and meet the locals as we explore the **Chagim Center**, which archives a century of secular Jewish holiday creativity.
- Dinner on own this evening.

Overnight in Haifa



Day 9: Monday, December 18, 2023: THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN DIVIDE

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- This morning, we visit **Rawabi**, the new Palestinian city. Get a glimpse at this unique project; a synthesis between private enterprise and public resources to create a new urban reality in Palestinian society as we meet with developer **Bashar el Masri** (*pending security clearance*).
- Next, we visit the settlement of **Psagot** for **lunch** together, and meet with a local resident to discuss the centrality of the settlement enterprise to his or her being an Israeli.
- We continue to the current capital of the **Palestinian Authority, Ramallah**, to discuss the current status of the area with local representatives and meet with young start-up entrepreneurs (*pending security clearance*).
- We arrive in **Tel Aviv** and check into our hotel with time to relax before enjoying dinner on our own this evening.

Overnight in Tel Aviv

Day 10: Tuesday, December 19, 2023: TEL AVIV

- Breakfast at our hotel
- Today, we explore the relationship between Israeli culture and Jewish tradition through dialogue and study with scholars at the **ALMA Home for Hebrew Culture** in Tel Aviv, including **Rani Jaeger**, founder of a local secular synagogue.
- Next, we embark on a walking tour through Tel Aviv's **White City**, a collection of over 4,000 buildings built in a unique form of the **Bauhaus** (International Style) developed in the 1920s-30s by German-Jewish architects who immigrated to the British Mandate of Palestine after the rise of the Nazis. A UNESCO World Heritage site, Tel Aviv has one of the largest concentrations of Bauhaus-style architecture in the world. Here, we will:
 - Walk along **Bialik Street** and peek into the lives of some of Tel Aviv's most significant residents of years past, including a stop in the **Reuven Ruben House**, filled with his artwork, as well as the **Old City Hall and Square**
 - Walk the **Independence Trail** through the **Rothschild District**, discovering the architectural, cultural, and intellectual foundations of this great city along the way, including a stop outside the famed site of Israel's **Independence Hall**
 - Stroll down **Dizengoff Street**, the beating heart of Tel Aviv, filled with galleries, coffee shops and places for people-watching to take in the Tel Aviv vibe



- Free afternoon to explore and have lunch on own.
- Enjoy an evening **Old Jaffa co-existence tour**. This experience brings together a Jewish and Arab tour guide to explore the mixed city of Jaffa, where Arabs and Jews live side by side, tracing the different historical narratives. We explore the possibility of creating a common future and shared society and end with **dinner and home hospitality** with local Christian families.

Overnight in Tel Aviv

Day 11: Wednesday, December 20, 2023: FAREWELL

- Breakfast at our hotel.
 - This morning, we meet with LGBTQ representatives along with **Amutat Keshet**.
 - Next, we experience **ANU: Museum of the Jewish People** (formerly the Diaspora Museum), recently renovated and featuring interactive audio-visual exhibits that bring life and color to the vibrant history of the Jewish people outside the land of Israel following the destruction of the Second Temple.
 - We check out of our hotel this evening and enjoy a festive **farewell dinner**, recalling all that we have experienced together on this journey.
 - We transfer to Ben Gurion Airport for our overnight flight back to the United States.
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Day 12: Wednesday, December 21, 2023: WELCOME HOME!

- We arrive back in the United States this morning.

THE MEMORIES LAST FOREVER!!!

**itinerary subject to change*

