

# Chicago Loop Synagogue Tour to Israel

**Feb. 26 – March 9, 2023 (including Purim!)**

(As of 9/22/22)

*Israel is a land of connections and reconnections. It is a place that both holds nostalgia and awaits rediscovery. Over the decades, so much in Israel has changed dramatically, yet the essence that draws us remains the same. Join us on a fun, interactive and hands-on journey of discovery, experiencing time-honored sites in a new light and sharing new experiences that will form the base of cherished memories for years to come.*



### Day 1: Sunday, February 26, 2023: BEGIN OUR JOURNEY

- We depart Chicago on our overnight flight to Israel.
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### Day 2: Monday, February 27, 2023: WELCOME TO ISRAEL!

- Shalom and Bruchim Habaim—welcome to Israel! We arrive at Ben Gurion Airport and transfer on our own to our hotel in Tel Aviv.
- We check into our hotel and have a chance to freshen up, followed by our **welcome dinner** at a local restaurant, a short walk away.

### Overnight in Tel Aviv

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### Day 3: Tuesday, February 28, 2023: THE ORIGINS OF A MODERN NATION

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- We begin our day at **Rabin Square** where we discuss one of the most formative events in modern Israeli history, the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.
- Next, we follow the **Independence Trail** through the **Rothschild District**, discovering the architectural, cultural and intellectual foundations of this great city along the way, including a stop at the famed site of Israel's **Independence Hall**, where Israel was declared a state in 1948.
- This afternoon, we stroll down the **Nachalat Binyamin pedestrian mall**, with its bi-weekly craft fair and eateries. Alongside is the bustling **Carmel Market** filled with colorful produce and goodies from halva and baklava to gifts and mementos. Time for lunch on our own.
- We participate in a guided **graffiti tour** through **Neve Tzedek**, one of Tel Aviv's oldest neighborhoods, where the colorful and edgy street art brings the fringe into the forefront.
- We return for time to refresh before a free evening.



### Overnight in Tel Aviv



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#### Day 4: Wednesday, March 1, 2023: TRAVELING NORTH

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- We begin our day with a tour of **ANU: Museum of the Jewish People** (formerly the Diaspora Museum), showcasing 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 drive north to **Caesarea National Park**, the Roman regional capital. Here, we view the ancient theater, stroll through the hippodrome and Roman theater and stand in awe at Herod's palace and harbor.
- We stop for a delicious falafel lunch on our own.
- Our drive takes us to the top of **Mount Carmel** in **Haifa**, where the panoramic overlook of the **Bahai Gardens**, a UNESCO World Heritage site, slopes beautifully downward toward the bay.
- We continue to **Akko**, touring the massive **Hospitaller Fortress** and **Knights' Hall** that stood here. We will walk through the secret **tunnel to the sea** and wander through the market. Those skipping the tunnel will be able to meet up with the group at the market.
- We travel to the **Galilee** to check into our kibbutz and enjoy **dinner** together this evening.

#### Overnight in the Galilee

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#### Day 5: Thursday, March 2, 2023: MYSTICISM AND THE GOLAN

- Breakfast at our kibbutz.
- This morning, we visit **Tel Hai** to learn about a decisive battle fought in the Galilee in the pre-state period.
- We climb up to explore **Nimrod's Fortress**, a medieval castle at the foot of Mount Hermon.
- Next, we ascend to the top of **Mount Bental**, a former Israeli bunker overlooking the Syrian border. As the full vista comes into view, we reach a deeper understanding of both the past and present complexities facing Israel in a hostile Middle East.
- Lunch on our own nearby.
- We travel to the mystical city of **Safed**, one of the four holy cities in Israel and the center of Kabbalah. We wander through the cobblestone streets to view the ancient synagogues and admire the art galleries.
- We return to our kibbutz for a relaxing evening and **dinner** together.



#### Overnight in the Galilee

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## Day 6: Friday, March 3, 2023: THE ROAD TO JERUSALEM

- Breakfast and check out of our kibbutz.
- This morning, we drive south, hugging the western shore of **Lake Kinneret (Sea of Galilee)** and stopping at the **Rambam's Grave in Tiberius**.
- We continue to **Beit Shean** to view the ruins of the ancient Roman City.
- We make a brief stop at the beautiful mosaic floor of the **Beit Alpha Synagogue**.
- We ascend to **Jerusalem** and stop atop **Mount Scopus** for a special Shehecheyanu blessing with challah and wine as we look out over the City of Gold.
- We check into our hotel and have time to refresh.
- As the sun sets, we have many options to welcome Shabbat. Those interested can join us at Shira Hadasha or choose to instead attend the **Egalitarian Kabbalat Shabbat service** offered at **Ezrat Israel** (adjacent to the Western Wall plaza) on own, or one of the other amazing services available in the area.
- We then gather together for **Shabbat dinner** at our hotel.

### Overnight in Jerusalem

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## Day 7: Saturday, March 4, 2023: SHABBAT SHALOM!

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- This morning, we enjoy **Shabbat services** at a local congregation (options provided), followed by **Shabbat lunch** together at our hotel.
- The afternoon is at leisure. Those interested may visit (on own) the famed **Israel Museum**, the country's premiere cultural institution, featuring ancient archaeology, modern Israeli art and everything in between. This is also the site of the **Shrine of the Book**, housing the famous Dead Sea Scrolls, as well as a large-scale **replica of King Herod's Jerusalem**.
- We gather together to enjoy a special **Havdalah** at our hotel, followed by an evening at leisure to explore and have dinner on own. We suggest visiting Ben Yehuda Street, the Mamilla Mall, the renovated Train Station area, or nearby Emek Refaim.

### Overnight in Jerusalem

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### Day 8: Sunday, March 5, 2023: THE OLD CITY

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- Today, we visit **Old City of Jerusalem** for a walking tour. We stop at the traditional **Tomb of King David** on **Mount Zion** and then enter the Ottoman walls via the **Zion Gate**. We continue into the **Jewish quarter**, filled with synagogues, shops and history, where we wander through the **Cardo** and visit the four **Sephardic synagogues**.
- We make our way down the giant staircase to the **Kotel (Western Wall)** built 2,000 years ago by King Herod to dignify and support the Second Temple. At this silent monument, a witness to triumph and tragedy, to hope and despair throughout the generations, we take time to reflect and pray, perhaps wedging a sacred note into a stone crevice and enveloping ourselves in the sense of holiness pervading the plaza.
- We continue to explore the ruins of Herod's Temple Mount building project at the **Davidson Center**.
- Lunch on our own in the Old City.
- We visit **Ir David, the City of David**, where the stories of the Biblical King David come to life through the palace excavations, underground passageways and monumental fortifications.
- Free evening to enjoy dinner on own.

### Overnight in Jerusalem

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### Day 9: Monday, March 6, 2023: FUN IN THE DEAD SEA BASIN

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- We depart early this morning and travel south to the **Dead Sea basin**, passing by **Qumran**, the home of the **Dead Sea Scrolls**. Upon arrival, we ascend the imposing mountain of **Masada** by cable car to view the remains of King Herod's fortress, including the synagogue, walls and bathhouse, as we learn about the Jewish Zealots' fateful last stand against the Roman forces.
- We descend the mountain and head to the beach for **lunch** and an unsinkable swim in the luxuriating, salty and mineral-rich waters of the **Dead Sea**, where we can cover ourselves in silky, healing mud and float at the lowest place on Earth.
- After our refreshing afternoon dip, we enjoy a short hike to the hidden waterfalls in the desert oasis of **Ein Gedi**.
- As we return north, we visit **Genesis Land** to experience authentic Biblical hospitality in the hills overlooking the Judean Desert, including **dinner** and a **camel ride**.



### Overnight in Jerusalem



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### Day 10: Tuesday, March 7, 2023: WE REMEMBER

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- Today, we visit **Yad Vashem**, Israel's memorial to the Holocaust, viewing the many moving exhibitions, including the **Hall of Names**, the **Children's Memorial** and the **Avenue of the Righteous Among the Nations**. (An option to visit **Jerusalem's Biblical Zoo** will be provided).
- Next, we visit **Mount Herzl**, Israel's national cemetery, and pay our respects by the gravesites of some of Israel's most prominent leaders, including **Theodore Herzl**, **Golda Meir**, **Yitzhak Rabin** and **Shimon Peres**, in addition to hearing about the many lesser-known heroes of Israel's wars buried here.
- We drive by Israel's parliament the **Knesset**, stopping briefly to explore the symbolism built into the giant and iconic Menorah statue nearby.
- We visit the famed **Machane Yehuda**, where we take in the sights, smells and sounds of the bustling marketplace and learn about some of Israel's delicacies during our **tasting tour**.
- Tonight begins **Shushan Purim in Jerusalem** – we have the option to celebrate with a local congregation, then with the people of Israel in the streets of Jerusalem!



### Overnight in Jerusalem

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### Day 11: Wednesday, March 8, 2023: DEPARTURE

- Breakfast, then check out and store luggage for the day.
- We drive out to **Latrun** to visit the museum and memorial for Israel's **Tank Corps**.
- We continue to **Rehovot** to tour the house of **Chaim Weitzman**, Israel's first president.
- We return to Jerusalem for lunch and time on our own for last-minute shopping or exploration before gathering for our **farewell dinner** at a local restaurant.
- We transfer to the airport for our overnight flight back to the United States.

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### Day 12: Thursday, March 9, 2023: WELCOME HOME!

- We arrive back in the United States this morning.

## THE MEMORIES LAST FOREVER!

*\*Itinerary subject to change*

