

Rabbi Matt Cutler
Congregation Gates of Heaven
Amazing Adventure in
ISRAEL

February 14 - 25, 2024

(As of 10/10/22)

Traveling in Israel is an opportunity to encounter the wonders of this ancient land. We'll grow through our shared experiences, from the fun and adventurous, to the historical and spiritual, as we explore Israel together!



Day 1: Wednesday, February 14, 2024: DEPARTURE

- We depart Congregation Gates of Heaven on our bus, driving to the airport where we board our overnight flight to Israel.

Day 2: Thursday, February 15, 2024: WELCOME TO ISRAEL!

- We arrive at Ben Gurion Airport in Israel and are met by an Ayelet Tours representative.
- We transfer to our hotel in **Tel Aviv** for check in and have time to freshen up.
- This evening, we enjoy a **welcome dinner** together at **The Old Man and The Sea** at 7:00PM.

Overnight in Tel Aviv

Day 3: Friday, February 16, 2024: CONNECTING WITH THE LAND

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- This morning, we visit the **Palmach Museum**, where we “join up” with the paramilitary forces from Israel’s pre-statehood days.
- Next, we enjoy traditional **Ethiopian hospitality at Battae**, an interactive first-of-its-kind **Ethiopian Israeli Heritage Center**, telling the compelling story of Ethiopian Jews’ journey home to the promised land.
- Lunch on own.
- We continue to the popular **Levinsky Market**, where we take in the sights, smells and sounds of the bustling marketplace and watch as the local busily prepare for Shabbat.
- We stroll along **Nachalat Binyamin**, where the artists and entertainers bring the streets of Tel Aviv to life (*time-permitting*).
- As the sun sets, we join together for **Shabbat dinner** at our hotel.



Overnight in Tel Aviv



Day 4: Saturday, February 17, 2024: SHABBAT SHALOM!

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- Today, we experience a docent-led tour at the amazing **ANU: Museum of the Jewish People** (formerly the Diaspora Museum), featuring interactive audio-visual exhibits that bring life and color to the vibrant history of the Jewish people. Following the tour, we return to the exhibits that most intrigued us. We break for lunch (on own) – available on the patio of the Aroma Coffee Shop located on the first floor and then continue to explore the museum.
- This afternoon, we visit the **Ayalon Institute**, where we discover the underground ammunition factory that played a pivotal role in Israel's fight for independence.
- We return to our hotel in Tel Aviv to prepare for the evening.
- Enjoy a night out at **Dinner in the Dark**, an experience that will tantalize all your senses, followed by a performance of *Not by Bread Alone*, at the **Nalagaat Center**, whose actors are both visually and hearing impaired.

Overnight in Tel Aviv

Day 5: Sunday, February 18, 2024: THE BEAUTIFUL NORTH

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- We depart from Tel Aviv and travel north along the Mediterranean coast to **Caesarea**, the former Roman capital of the area, where we see the ancient theater and the aqueduct.
- Next, we travel to **Haifa** for a **graffiti tour** that combines creativity and coexistence. We will walk from **Wadi Nisnas** to the **port**, gaining insight into the international and multicultural lively atmosphere of this city by viewing artwork that represents and promotes tolerance and freedom of expression.
- Lunch on own, en-route.
- We continue north to **Akko**, where we tour the Crusader-era fortress and learn about this historically important port.
- Our final stop today is at **Rosh Hanikra**, where we discover the chalk cliff grottoes carved out by the Mediterranean waters over time (*time permitting*).
- We transfer to the **Galilee** to check in to our kibbutz and enjoy a relaxing evening and **dinner** together.



Overnight in the Galilee



Day 6: Monday, February 19, 2024: EXPERIENCING THE GOLAN

- Breakfast at our kibbutz.
- This morning, we set out on a **jeep ride** to the top of **Har Bental**, where we see the remains of the old army outpost, take in the views of Syria and learn about the current geopolitical situation.
- Be warmly welcomed as **guests of a local Druze woman** for a grass roots cross-cultural experience of the Middle Eastern custom of *hachnasat orchim*; **home hospitality**. We will learn about cooperation and coexistence as we prepare and enjoy a **traditional luncheon feast** in their Galilean home.
- This afternoon, we visit the mystical city of **Safed**, where we stroll through the cobblestone streets to view the ancient synagogues and shop in the artist's quarter.
- We return to our kibbutz for **dinner** together this evening.



Overnight in the Galilee

Day 7: Tuesday, February 20, 2024: THE ROAD TO JERUSALEM

- Breakfast and check out of our kibbutz.
- Our first stop of the day is in **Tiberias** to see the **Hamat Synagogue**.
- Then, we depart the Galilee and travel to **Beit Shean** to see the ancient Roman ruins.
- From there, we begin our ascent to **Jerusalem**, discussing the current situation in the West Bank along the way.
- Lunch on own, en-route.
- Upon our arrival, we stop at the **Haas Promenade** overlooking the city for a special Shehecheyanu ceremony to mark our arrival in Jerusalem of Gold!
- We check into our hotel before setting out for an evening at leisure to discover the city and enjoy dinner on own.

Overnight in Jerusalem



Day 8: Wednesday, February 21, 2024: EXPLORING JERUSALEM

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- This morning, we enter the **Old City** for a tour of the **Western Wall tunnels**, where we discover the archaeological wonders that once remained untouched for centuries.
- We continue to the **Davidson Center**, where we learn about the construction and history of the Temple Mount area through multi-media exhibitions and stop at the **Hurva Synagogue**.
- We stop for lunch on our own in the **Jewish quarter**.
- Next, we explore **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. For the fearless, descend with a flashlight into **Hezekiah's Tunnel**, a 2,700-year-old pitch-black water-filled tunnel, a marvel of engineering, that brought water into the ancient city.
- This afternoon, we become immersed at the famed **Machane Yehuda**, where a chef leads us through the bustling marketplace, introducing us to Israel's most popular foods, culminating in a **cooking class** to prepare **dinner** with our purchases. Afterwards, you may choose to stay to view the artistic **graffiti** painted on the closed shutter doors.
- We return to our hotel for the evening.



Overnight in Jerusalem

Day 9: Thursday, February 22, 2024: B'NAI MITZVAH IN THE DEAD SEA BASIN

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- We depart early this morning and travel south to the **Dead Sea Basin**. Upon arrival, we ascend **Masada** by cable car to celebrate our **B'nai Mitzvah**. After the ceremony, we view the remains of King Herod's fortress, including the synagogue, walls and bathhouses while learning about the Jewish Zealot's last stand against the Roman forces.
- We descend the mountain and head to the beach for **lunch** and an unsinkable swim in the healing, salty waters of the **Dead Sea**.
- Later this afternoon, we return to Jerusalem for a relaxing evening and dinner on our own.

Overnight in Jerusalem



Day 10: Friday, February 23, 2024: WE REMEMBER

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- This morning we visit **Yad Vashem**, Israel's memorial to the Holocaust, where we view the many moving exhibitions, including the **Hall of Names** and the **Avenue of the Righteous Among the Nations**.
- Atop **Mount Herzl**, we visit the new **Remembrance Hall** built to honor those who gave their lives fighting for Israel. We'll take a walk through the military cemetery, where we pay our respects and hear important stories about the life and work of Israel's past leaders, such as Theodore Herzl, Golda Meir, Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres, as well as stories of lesser-known heroes.
- This afternoon, enjoy lunch on own before spending free time on **Ben Yehuda Street** OR returning to **Machane Yehuda** to explore at leisure.
- As the sun sets, we join members of **Kol HaNeshama** for **Kabbalat Shabbat services** in Jerusalem, followed by **Shabbat dinner** together at our hotel.



Overnight in Jerusalem

Day 11: Saturday, February 24, 2024: A JERUSALEM SHABBAT

- Breakfast at our hotel.
 - Today, we return to the **Old City** for a tour of the different quarters. We begin in the **Jewish quarter** with time for reflection at the **Western Wall**, then continue to the **Arab market (shuk)**, followed by a stroll along the **Via Dolorosa** to the **Church of the Holy Sepulchre** in the **Christian quarter**.
 - We return to our hotel to relax and finish packing.
 - This evening, we check out of our hotel and enjoy a **farewell dinner**, recalling all that we have experienced on this journey together.
 - We transfer to Ben Gurion Airport for our overnight flight back to the United States.
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Day 12: Sunday, February 25, 2024: WELCOME HOME!

- We arrive back in the United States this morning, where our bus is waiting for us to return to Schenectady, New York, and Congregation Gates of Heaven.

THE MEMORIES LAST FOREVER!!

**Itinerary subject to change*

