

**Congregation Beth Emeth's  
Journey to Connect:**

# **ISRAEL**

***Celebrating 75 Years***

**June 15-25, 2023**

**Led by Rabbi Yair Robinson**

(As of 8/15/22)

*Traveling together in Israel is an opportunity to connect – with the people of Israel, with the land itself, and with each other. We'll grow through our shared experiences, from the fun and adventurous, to the historical and spiritual, as we explore our homeland together and mark modern Israel's 75<sup>th</sup> year!*



### Day 1: Thursday, June 15, 2023: DEPARTURE

- We depart on our overnight flight to Israel.
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### Day 2: Friday, June 16, 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 transfer to **Tel Aviv** for a special Shehecheyanu **welcome ceremony** on the beach, accompanied by a sweet taste of challah and wine (or grape juice) to celebrate our arrival in Israel.
- Time permitting (based on our flight arrival), we enjoy a stroll through the charming **Nachalat Binyamin Craft Fair**, a biweekly market featuring Israeli artisans and entertainers who bring the streets of Tel Aviv to life.
- We check into our hotel with time to relax and refresh.
- This evening, we gather together for **Shabbat services**, either at our hotel or on the beach, possibly joining the incredible Kabbalat Shabbat service with **Beit Tefila Yisraeli** at the Port of Tel Aviv.
- Our evening continues as we enjoy a **Shabbat welcome dinner** together at our hotel.

### Overnight in Tel Aviv

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### Day 3: Saturday, June 17, 2023: A TASTE OF TEL AVIV

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- We begin our day with a stroll along **Independence Trail** through the **Rothschild District** and discover the architectural, cultural and intellectual foundations of this great city, and pass by **Independence Hall**, where the state was officially founded 75 years ago.
- 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.
- The remainder of the day is at leisure to enjoy the beach, relax or take in one of Tel Aviv's other outstanding attractions, such as the Tel Aviv Museum of Art.
- Tonight, see and taste for yourself the incredible culinary scene of Tel Aviv with dinner on own at one of the area's trendy restaurants (*recommendations can be provided*).

### Overnight in Tel Aviv

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#### Day 4: Sunday, June 18, 2023: MODERN CHALLENGES, ANCIENT CONNECTIONS

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- This morning, we meet with **Rabbi Meir Azari** at **Mishkenot Ruth Daniel** in Jaffa to hear the story of this Progressive community and the challenges faced by Reform Jews in Israel today.
- We continue our visit to **Old Jaffa**, an ancient port city filled with a storied past, to wander through the cobblestone alleyways and admire the artist galleries, all framed by views of the sea.
- Next, we take part in a Jaffa **co-existence tour**, featuring both a Jewish and an Arab guide. We are led on an exploration of the mixed city of Jaffa, tracing the different historical narratives where Arabs and Jews live side by side.
- We stop for a snack at **Abulafia Bakery**, an old-style Arab Israeli bakery dating from 1879.
- Later this afternoon, we visit the **Ayalon Institute** in Rehovot and discover the secret underground ammunition factory ran by the Hagenah (predecessor to IDF) that played a pivotal role in Israel's fight for independence.
- We return to our hotel to relax and refresh before dinner on our own this evening.
- **Optional:** This evening, we set out for **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 (*separate cost, transfers by taxi*).

#### Overnight in Tel Aviv

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#### Day 5: Monday, June 19, 2023: THE MEDITERRANEAN COAST

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- We depart Tel Aviv and travel north along the Mediterranean coast 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 continue to mark Israel at 75 with a visit to the **Atlit Detention Camp**, where we hear the stories of brave refugees who were caught attempting clandestine immigration during the British Mandate.
- Next, we travel to **Haifa** to visit the **Leo Baeck Institute** to learn from their leadership about the innovative programming taking place here, as well as meet faculty and students throughout the afternoon.
- Later this afternoon, we travel to the **Galilee** to check into our kibbutz and have time to relax and explore before **dinner** together tonight.



#### Overnight in the Galilee



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## Day 6: Tuesday, June 20, 2023: THE MYSTICAL AND BEAUTIFUL NORTH

- Breakfast at our kibbutz.
- Today, we visit the mystical city of **Safed**, where we wander through the cobblestone alleyways to view the ancient synagogues and shop in the artist's quarter. Beyond the mystical heritage of the city, a key 1948 battle took place here and our guide will share the history.
- Time for lunch on own in Safed.
- Next, we set out on an exciting **jeep tour** through the **Golan Heights**, passing former Syrian bunkers on the way to the top of **Har Bental**, where we take in the panoramic views leading into Syria.
- Our next stop is in **Tzomet HaGoma** to enjoy **Buza Ice Cream**. The Jewish and Arab co-owners have not only found meaningful friendship through their business, they have created "a corner of delicious sanity."
- We complete our day taking in the beautiful scenery and sunset at the **Golan Heights Winery** and enjoy a **tour and wine tasting**, sipping on some of the best the varieties the area has to offer.
- We return to our kibbutz for a relaxing evening and **dinner** together.



### Overnight in the Galilee

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## Day 7: Wednesday, June 21, 2023: THE ROAD TO (THE CITY OF) PEACE

- Breakfast and check out of our kibbutz.
- We depart the Galilee this morning and begin traveling south. Our first stop is at **Beit Alpha**, where the tale of the synagogue's ancient mosaics comes to life in an audio-visual production.
- We continue south to **Gush Etzion** for a dialogue with **Ali Abu Awwad** and **Rabbi Shaul Yudelman**, the founders of the **Shorashim/Roots** program. Shorashim fosters a grassroots movement of understanding, non-violence and partnership between Israelis and Palestinians. Gush Etzion's story from 1948 to 1967 is a key part of the narrative of modern Israel.
- We ascend to **Jerusalem** and stop atop the **Haas Promenade** to say the "Shehecheyanu" as we look out over the **City of Gold** for the first time. Our guide points to key locations in the fights for Jerusalem in 1948 and 1967, from Ammunition Hill to Mt. Scopus.
- We check into our hotel and freshen up for the evening.
- After dinner on own, we meet for the **Tower of David Night Spectacular**, a sound and light show that transforms the walls of David's Citadel into the living story of Jerusalem.

### Overnight in Jerusalem



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## Day 8: Thursday, June 22, 2023: MODERN JERUSALEM

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- This morning, we participate in **tikkun olam** and engage in an unforgettable hands-on experience packing food staples included in monthly food baskets delivered to Israel's neediest families at **Pantry Packers**.
- We continue to **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. Return visitors will instead visit the new and moving **Memorial to the Fallen Soldiers at Mt. Herzl**, Israel's military cemetery.
- This afternoon, after time for lunch on own, we tour the **Israel Museum**, the country's premiere cultural institution, featuring ancient archaeology, modern Israeli art and everything in between. We will walk through the **Shrine of the Book**, housing the famous Dead Sea Scrolls, pass through the replica of **King Herod's Jerusalem** and enjoy a taste of this amazing museum. Those wishing to extend their time at the museum are welcome to stay later (the museum is open until 9pm tonight!)
- This evening, a chef accompanies us to **Machane Yehuda** for a sensual immersion into the vibrant colors, smells and flavors that make up this bustling marketplace. We wander through the pyramids of spices, brightly colored exotic vegetables, platters of nuts and olives and delicious halva creations. After our introduction to the fundamentals of Israeli cuisine, we **prepare dinner** together with our purchases.

## Overnight in Jerusalem

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## Day 9: Friday, June 23, 2023: JERUSALEM THEN AND NOW

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- We begin our day at **Ir David, the City of David**, where we wander through the carefully preserved archaeological excavations dating back to the time of King David, including the new excavations leading us to **Robinson's Arch**.
- This afternoon, we enter the **Old City** for a walking tour through the different neighborhoods. We begin in the **Jewish quarter** with a chance for personal reflection at the **Western Wall**, continue through the **Arab market (shuk)**, then stroll along the **Via Dolorosa** to the **Church of the Holy Sepulchre** in the **Christian quarter**.



- Next, we head underground to the **Western Wall tunnels** for an opportunity to discover the many layers of Jerusalem's history, passing through grand building projects from ancient Rome through the modern day.
- As the sun sets over Jerusalem, we join together for **Kabbalat Shabbat services** with **Cantor Evan Cohen** at **Kehilat Har-El**, followed by **Shabbat dinner** with members of the community.

### Overnight in Jerusalem

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#### Day 10: Saturday, June 24, 2023: SHABBAT IN THE DESERT

- 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 or snake path to view the remains of King Herod's fortress, including the synagogue, walls and bathhouses, as we learn about the Jewish Zealots' last stand against the Roman forces.
- We descend the mountain and head to beach to enjoy **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.
- We continue on a short hike to the hidden waterfalls in the desert oasis of **Ein Gedi**.
- We return to Jerusalem, passing the **Qumran caves**, the site where the Dead Sea scrolls were discovered by a local shepherd.
- After time to refresh and finish packing, we check out of our hotel and gather for our festive **farewell dinner**, as we recall all that we have experienced together on this journey.
- After dinner, we transfer to Ben Gurion Airport for our overnight flight back to the United States.




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#### Day 11: Sunday, June 25, 2023: WELCOME HOME!

- We arrive back in the United States this morning.

**The Memories Last Forever!!**

*\*itinerary subject to change*

