

Larchmont Temple

הר חיים

Family Friendly

Return to Israel

Led by
Rabbi Jeffrey Sirkman
& Rabbi Eve Rudin
February 16-26, 2023

(As of 5/27/22)

Traveling together in Israel is an opportunity to connect – with the people of Israel, with the land itself, and with each other. As a community, we will bond through our shared experiences and stimulate our minds through fascinating encounters with locals. Our days are fun-filled, interactive and exciting, and we finish each evening feeling both satisfied and eager for the next day's experiences!



Day 1: Thursday, February 16, 2023: DEPARTURE

- Depart the United States on your overnight flight to Israel.

Day 2: Friday, February 17, 2023: WELCOME TO ISRAEL!

- **Shalom and Bruchim Habaim**—Welcome to Israel! Our time in this incredible land has officially started and our excitement mounts as we set off on the adventure ahead. Just beyond passport control, an Ayelet representative will meet us in the baggage claim area and assist us through customs.
- We ascend to **Jerusalem**, stopping at the **Haas Promenade** to say *Shehecheyanu* as we together enjoy our first glimpse of the **City of Gold**.
- We check in to our hotel and have a chance to freshen up before departing for **Kabbalat Shabbat** at the **Kotel (Western Wall)** to experience the electric atmosphere as Jews from around Jerusalem and the entire world gather to welcome the Sabbath Bride.
- We enjoy a **Shabbat welcome dinner** together with students from the Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem.



Overnight in Jerusalem

Day 3: Saturday, February 18, 2023: SHABBAT SHALOM!

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- We join for **Shabbat morning worship** at the Hebrew Union College.
- We visit the **Old City of Jerusalem** for a walking tour of the different quarters. We enter the Ottoman walls via the **Jaffa Gate** and stroll past colorful and exotic vendors in the **Arab shuk**. Continuing into the **Jewish Quarter**, filled with synagogues and history, we pass by the ancient **Broad Wall**. Our path continues to the **Church of the Holy Sepulchre**, where Jesus was crucified, and through the **Christian and Muslim Quarters**, including the bustling alleys of **Via Dolorosa**.
- We have time for **lunch** together at an Old City restaurant, and time for shopping in the busy markets.
- This evening, we enjoy dinner on our own, following Rabbi Sirkman to the Ben Yehuda pedestrian mall or checking out the Jerusalem Train Station.
- **Optional:** Take in 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



Day 4: Sunday, February 19, 2023: DISCOVERING JERUSALEM

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- We stop by the **Knesset**, Israel's parliament and seat of power, for an opportunity to take photos by the bronze **Knesset Menorah**. *(Possible meeting with Gilad Kariv – pending confirmation).*
- We tour **Yad Vashem**, Israel's memorial to the Holocaust, to view the many moving exhibitions, including the **Hall of Names**, the **Children's Memorial** and the **Avenue of the Righteous Among the Nations**.
- We take part in a **tzedakah project**, building wheelchairs at **Yad Sarah**. Working together to help those in need, we elevate ourselves spiritually through the process.
- At **Ir David, the City of David**, we hear stories of King David come to life through the palace excavations, underground passageways and monumental fortifications.
- We enjoy an evening at leisure with dinner on own, perhaps in the lovely German Colony (Emek Refaim).

Overnight in Jerusalem

Day 5: Monday, February 20, 2023: MASADA AND B'NAI MITZVAH! MAZEL TOV!

- Early breakfast at our hotel.
- We depart early this morning and travel south to the **Dead Sea basin**. 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.
- Atop Masada, we celebrate our **B'nai Mitzvah**, joining our modern celebration with the rituals of the past, standing in the literal footsteps of our ancestors.
- Option to walk down the Roman Ramp, and at the bottom enjoy a fun **camel ride** through the Judean desert. Others will take the cable car down for additional time in the Dead Sea area.
- We enjoy an unsinkable swim in the luxuriating, salty and mineral-rich waters of the **Dead Sea**. Here, we can cover ourselves in silky, healing mud and float effortlessly at the lowest place on Earth. We have time for lunch on own.
- A short hike to the hidden **David Waterfall at Ein Gedi** makes for a fantastic day exploring the desert beauty.
- Later this evening, join an optional walk to **Machane Yehuda**. There are lots of options for dinner in the area, and after the market closes, it comes to life in a different way, with beautiful murals painted on the stall shutter doors, and small pubs opening in the alleyways, including **BeerBazaar**, featuring over 100 beers...all made in Israel!



Overnight in Jerusalem



Day 6: Tuesday, February 21, 2023: DIGGING OUR WAY NORTH

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- We **plant trees** nearby, tying us physically and spiritually to the land of Israel.
- We visit **Beit Guvrin** and **Dig for a Day** at a real, live **archaeological expedition!** Through our digging and sifting, we will uncover the ancient past, hidden for over 2,200 years, and turn their trash into our treasure.
- We continue north to the **Galilee** and check in to our kibbutz hotel.
- This evening, we take part in a fun hands-on **pottery making workshop** and enjoy **dinner together** at our kibbutz.

Overnight in the Galilee

Day 7: Wednesday, February 22, 2023: EXCITEMENT AND CHALLENGES IN THE NORTH

- Breakfast at our kibbutz.
- We begin our day with an exciting **jeep tour of the Golan Heights**, passing by old Syrian bunkers along the way to the top of **Mount Bental** to take in the panoramic views of Syria and discuss the geo-political situation in the region.
- Next:
 - Try your hand at **chocolate making** and learn from the experts in a delicious and fun experience at the **DeKarina Chocolate Factory** at Ein Zivan
 - OR**
 - Choose to join a **wine tasting** at the adjacent **Pelter Winery**.
- We continue to a **Druze village**, where community representatives will offer us insight on their unique culture and how they fit into the Israeli mosaic. We enjoy **lunch** together here.
- Weather and time permitting...In the Upper Galilee, we hike through the **Hermon Stream (Banias) Nature Preserve**. Here, enjoy the confluence of nature and Roman ruins, a trail suspended just meters over the rushing water and cap off our experience by visiting the splendid waterfall.
- Returning to our kibbutz, we enjoy **dinner** together and keep the fun going with a **karaoke night!**



Overnight in the Galilee



Day 8: Thursday, February 23, 2023: MYSTICISM IN THE GALILEE

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- Stop at **Kibbutz Malkia**, located on Israel's **northern border with Lebanon**. Learn about the kibbutz's history and present challenges as a front-line village opposite the forces of Hezbollah. **ENGAGING ENCOUNTER: Meet with soldiers from an IDF unit** based in the area to hear first-hand how they work to defend Israel from the numerous threats facing the country.
- We visit the mystical city of **Safed**, birthplace of *Kabbalah* and home to legends, myths and miracles. We will wander the cobblestone alleys, visit the ancient **Caro** or **Ha'ari synagogues**, hear stories of the great mystics and stroll through the enchanting artists' quarter. **Optional:** No visit to Safed is complete without a hands-on experience, **crafting candles for Kabbalat Shabbat** in the city where the tradition was created.
- We drive to Tel Aviv and check in to our hotel before enjoying dinner on own and an evening at leisure.

Overnight in Tel Aviv

Day 9: Friday, February 24, 2023: TIKKUN OLAM

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- This morning, we follow the **Independence Trail** through the Rothschild District, discovering the architectural, cultural and intellectual foundations of this great city along the way.
- **TIKKUN OLAM:** Volunteer through the **Jaffa Institute's Chesed projects** (packing food supplies), serving the needy. We will learn about the huge difference the Jaffa Institute makes in the lives of children & adults, both Arab & Jewish, living in poverty in Israel.
- We have time for lunch on own in **Jaffa**.
- **ENGAGING ENCOUNTER:** We meet with peace activists and educators **Ilhab and Ora Balha** of **The Orchard of Abraham's Children**, a foundation working toward coexistence and bridging the gap between different cultures in Israel.
- Take a break for free time in the **Carmel Market**, enjoying our immersion into the vibrant colors, smells and flavors that make up this bustling marketplace. Stroll through the charming **Nachalat Binyamin Craft Fair**, a twice-weekly street market with an avant-garde attitude, featuring Israeli artisans, entertainers, crafts and souvenirs.
- Tonight, we join **Kehilat Ra'anana** for **Shabbat t'fillah** followed by **home hospitality dinner**. We will enjoy familiar traditions in a new setting and have the opportunity to get to know actual Israelis over a shared meal.



Overnight in Tel Aviv



Day 10: Saturday, February 25, 2023: SHABBAT SHALOM AND FAREWELL!

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- We join for **t'fillah on the beach** this morning.
- In nearby Rehovot, we visit the **Ayalon Institute** and discover the underground ammunition factory that played a pivotal role in Israel's fight for independence.
- Tour **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 have the remainder of the afternoon at leisure for shopping, packing or relaxing.
- After **late check out** from our hotel, we visit the **Tel Aviv Namal (port area)** and join together for **Havdalah** overlooking the Mediterranean Sea.
- We enjoy a **farewell dinner** before transferring to the Ben Gurion Airport for our overnight flight back to the United States.

Day 11: Sunday, February 26, 2023: ARRIVE HOME

- We arrive home early this morning.

THE MEMORIES LAST FOREVER!

**itinerary subject to change*

