

# **TRAVEL TIPS & INFORMATION FOR YOUR ISRAEL TOUR**

## **BEFORE YOU TRAVEL**

### **PASSPORT**

- A valid passport is required to leave the USA. It should be valid for a minimum of 6 months after your departure date. If you do not have a passport, apply for one immediately; it normally takes four to six weeks to be issued.
- A copy of the photo page of your passport should be sent to our office 60 days prior to departure. Also retain a copy of this passport page to keep with you while traveling.
- Application can be obtained online or at your nearest passport office, courthouse, or post office. You will need a certified birth certificate (with raised seal and file number), proof of present ID such as a driver's license, and 2 duplicate non-glossy photographs measuring 2" x 2" taken within six months of application. For forms, information, or if you have already applied for a U.S. passport, check the status of your application online at <http://travel.state.gov>
- National Passport Information Center: 1-877-487-2778. Customer Service Representatives are available Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Eastern Time, excluding federal holidays. These hours may be expanded to accommodate increased calls during periods of heavy travel. Automated Information available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you have a travel emergency, please call the Center to speak with a customer service representative. Do not e-mail.
- Urgent and Rush Passport Services. [www.visaexpress.net](http://www.visaexpress.net) This agency makes it possible for you to obtain a passport in days. About \$200. Also see [www.passportexpress.com](http://www.passportexpress.com)

### **NON-U.S.A. CITIZENS AND VISAS**

- U.S. and Canadian citizens DO NOT need a visa for Israel. Non-US citizens must contact the Israel Consulate or call us to find out other nation's status.

### **VACCINATIONS**

- None are required for Israel.

### **ROOMMATES**

- We will try to match you with a roommate; we cannot guarantee one will be available. Therefore, you should try to find a roommate and notify us of your selection no later than 60 days prior to departure.

### **FINAL PAYMENT**

- Final payment for the trip is due 60 days prior to departure. The balance is payable by cash, check or money order. Credit Card payments will be subject to an additional 3% charge.

### **CANCELLATIONS**

- Call our office immediately, and then submit your cancellation in writing. Refer to our office for terms and conditions regarding cancellation fees.

### **TRAVEL INSURANCE**

- Travel Insurance is highly recommended. See attached information. See Travel Insurance Certificate for complete details. Travel Insurance benefits are administered by: Trip Mate, Inc.(in CA, dba Trip Mate Insurance Agency), 9225 Ward Parkway, Suite 200, Kansas City, MO, 64111, 1-800-888-7292, To review full plan details online, go to: [www.tripmate.com/wpF418C](http://www.tripmate.com/wpF418C).

## GETTING THERE

### PURCHASING YOUR OWN DOMESTIC TICKETS

- We recommend that passengers who purchase domestic airline tickets **arrange for arrival at least four hours before the scheduled departure time of the international flight**. All flight times can be subject to change without advance notice. Airlines have been known to change flight times, or cancel flights completely. Israel Travel Advisory Service is not responsible for changes and/or delays in airline schedules, nor the expenses associated with such changes for tickets not purchased through this office.

### PURCHASING YOUR OWN INTERNATIONAL TICKETS

- Remember, airport / hotel / airport transportation transfers may not be provided to passengers who have purchased their own international flights. If you are a "land only" passenger, you will meet the group at the first hotel and leave the group at the last hotel. You may be responsible for making your own travel arrangements to/from the international airports. Israel Travel Advisory Service is not responsible for changes and/or delays in airline schedules, nor the expenses associated with such changes for tickets not purchased through this office.

### MISSING OR CANCELLED FLIGHTS

- Contact our office immediately so we can inform our other offices. The airline's responsibility is to get you to your destination as quickly as possible. Be sure to call our agency with your new arrival information so we can meet you at the arrival airport or assist you with the changes if possible.

## DEPARTURE CHECKLIST

### PASSPORT

- keep your passport in your purse or a secure pocket where it cannot be seen; never pack your passport in your suitcase;
- be sure it is signed **valid for six months after your return**.
- Leave a **copy** of the inside information page at home, one in your suitcase and your **original passport with you** or in a secure place.

### AIRLINE TICKETS

- You will be issued an E-Ticket or an electronic ticket approximately two weeks before departure (paperless); Please keep a copy of the Record Locator Number Code with you in order to make the check in process easier. This Number Code enables family at home to also keep track of you through the airlines. Bring all the documents we send you with you on the tour.
- We regret that we are unable to guarantee specific airline seat assignments. Security and other reasons often dictate when seats are assigned and which people are assigned to which seats. We will try to ensure that couples and families are seated together, and as many others as possible. However, we are not able to request window or aisle seats for a specific passenger.

## **MONEY and CREDIT CARDS**

- Bring U.S. currency in smaller denominations. Do not bring \$50 bills or larger.
- The average person spends about \$400 on a 12 Day tour in Israel.
- Major credit cards, such as Visa or Master Card are excellent to have in case of an emergency and for buying more expensive items. They provide a good exchange rate and receipt. Always ask for the carbon if used, along with your customer copy. Please notify your bank or Credit Card agency before you depart overseas of your schedule and that you will be making purchases out of the country.

## **NAME BADGE**

- Wear your name badge every day, beginning with the day you depart; your name badge helps identify you as a part of the group at airports, hotels, sites, etc.

## **COMMON SENSE PRECAUTIONS ON FLIGHTS**

- Wear comfortable clothing on the flight. Dress casually; wear comfortable, loose fitting clothes. Bring a jacket & inflatable neck pillow. Drink plenty of fluids while traveling. Avoid coffee and alcohol. Stand up and stretch several times during long flights. Stretch and contract calf muscles by frequent foot exercises.

## **TYPE OF CLOTHING TO PACK**

- Layer clothing as the mornings and evenings may be cool.
- Bring a coat, raincoat, a small umbrella, gloves and a hat to protect you from both the rain and sun.
- For touring, wear loose, comfortable cottons or other lightweight clothing that can be layered. It is appropriate to have at least the upper arms covered (T-Shirt length), and pants and skirts to at least the knee. Bare midriffs are not appropriate for this tour. Please, no tank-tops. At some sites entrance is denied to persons wearing shorts or sleeveless tops.
- Comfortable shoes are a must! Include a more formal pair of shoes for dinners at the hotel. High heels not recommended for women. Bring sandals and water shoes for the pool, beach, and Jordan River baptism.
- Bring a swimsuit, cover-up and water shoes for the Jordan River, Dead Sea, beach and pools.

## **PRESCRIPTION MEDICINES**

- Pack your medicine in the original bottle and bring some in your carry-on bag. Be sure to pack enough of your prescription medications to last through the tour.
- Bring an extra week's supply, your doctor's phone number, and a copy of the generic names for each.
- Have your doctor write an Israel-equivalent prescription for life-dependent medications. Not all prescriptions are interchangeable. Your doctor will be able to advise you.
- If you are allergic to any medicines, please keep a list of these with your passport.
- In Israel you may need a prescription for medicine that is sold over the counter in the U.S.
- You should pack some aspirin, antacids, and similar items you use at home and feel you might need on the tour.
- If you suffer from motion sickness, bring along any medication you use to prevent this on the bus and plane.
- If you have medications which need to be refrigerated, you must inform our office prior to departure so we can make the appropriate arrangements with the airlines and hotels.

### **TIPS FOR JET LAG**

- Get ample rest before departure, and drink plenty of water and fluids.
- Go to bed and get up on the new schedule. Your body will adjust quicker if you do not stay up all night or sleep during the day.

### **CAMERA and FILM**

- Bring a digital camera and bring extra lithium batteries, film or memory cards.
- Include a couple of disposable flash cameras along with your regular one.
- Be sure you know how to load and unload the film and operate the camera.
- Pack extra film, batteries, video batteries, and your flash. Film sold by street vendors may be beyond its expiration date and can be hard to get developed at home.
- Film shields to protect film from security x-rays are available in camera shops
- Video cameras may be brought into Israel without any problems.
- In order to achieve the most successful photographs of your journey we suggest that you take a picture of every site entrance sign before entering the site so that you will be assured to recognize each site when your pictures are viewed.

### **ELECTRIC CONVERTER and ADAPTER PLUGS**

- Israel's voltage is 220. Converters and outlet adapters can be purchased from Radio Shack, AAA Travel, luggage stores and department stores. Look at your items which will use electricity. Some shavers, camera battery chargers, etc., already have converters. They may use either 110 or 220 volts. One adapter is all that you may need. It will have 2 round prongs that the hotel will have outlets to accommodate. Note: bathroom outlets are of lower power and meant for shavers, not curling irons, (buy cordless curling irons). Adapter plugs are usually all that is needed for computer cords and battery chargers.

### **LUGGAGE**

- You are allowed to check in ONE suitcase for free. There is a charge for additional checked-in luggage. Your suitcase must not exceed 62 in. (height + width + length) and 50 lbs. in weight. The airline will charge extra or may refuse to accept luggage larger or heavier than this.
- Your ONE carry on must not exceed 39 in (height + width + length) and must fit under the seat in front of you. Additional carry-ons may need to be checked in.
- Attach the ITAS Colored Luggage Tags to all bags. Your bus is determined by the color on your luggage tag and name tag which you should have with you at all times.
- Women are allowed a normal size purse.
- Keep in mind that the flight is long and the more leg room you have the more comfortable you will be.
- On the tour bus in Israel, luggage storage space is limited. Only one suitcase per person will be stored in the bus luggage compartment. Bus storage space is limited to the under seat space in front of you and the shallow space above your head.
- Porters are tipped based on one suitcase per person. You are responsible for additional pieces at all times.
- ALWAYS pack fewer clothes and bring more money and more film than you think you'll need.
- Include a closable canvas bag inside your suitcase in case you need extra luggage for items you have purchased.

### **NON-U.S. CITIZENS**

- Please remember to bring any necessary documentation (i.e., green card, immigration papers, a visa, etc.) for your departure from the U.S. and return. These must be requested months prior to departure. Call our office for assistance.

### **HOW MUCH MONEY TO BRING**

- We suggest you take enough money to pay for items that are not included such as: tips, lunches, snacks, beverages, postcards, stamps, room service, laundry, taxi, souvenirs, and other items.
- Lunches are purchased en route on your own; you may wish to plan \$8 - \$10 per day.
- The US dollar is accepted almost everywhere in Israel. Bring smaller bills including about \$50.00 in one dollar bills. Change is almost always given in Shekels.

### **TYPE OF CURRENCY USED AND EXCHANGING MONEY**

- Shekels in Israel, but US currency is widely accepted everywhere. The exchange rate is approximately \$1.00 equaling about 4 shekels.
- It is not necessary to exchange money. You can use U.S. currency for small purchases and credit cards for larger ones. Bring mostly \$1.00, \$5.00, \$10.00, and \$20.00 bills. Bring a lot of smaller bills, not coins. (Some hosts have found that by packing money in bundles of 15 \$1.00's with 2 \$5.00, each bundle being \$25.00, they could easily keep a needed amount on their person each day and never have to exchange money!). All money exchanges should take place in the airport or at a local bank. Hotels may exchange money, but will charge a fee or give you change in shekels.
- Generally US currency is accepted for small purchases. A Visa/Master Card charge card is recommended for more expensive items and better currency exchange rate. Keep carbons.
- ATMs are available at local banks. The money you receive will be in the local currency. We will stop occasionally at an ATM, please ask your guide.
- We do not recommend the use of traveler's checks as you may experience difficulty using and/or cashing them. In addition, banks usually charge a handling fee when cashing travelers' checks. Major credit cards are recommended for purchases.

### **SECURITY AT THE AIRPORT**

- Have all travel documents readily available at check in, placed in carry on or purse, NOT in your luggage.
- Be prepared to submit yourself to a body check by metal detector or by physical means if necessary.
- Be prepared to open all luggage for inspection at check in. All packages, including gifts, may be opened at this time.
- Do not accept anything presented to you unless you have inspected the contents.
- Please do not say or do anything during security checks that may cause delay in departure.
- NEVER JOKE about hijacks or bombs, etc. Airline and security personnel take these matters very seriously.

## **UPON ARRIVAL**

### **UPON ARRIVAL AT THE AIRPORT**

- You will have filled out an immigration card on the plane for passport control. Have this card and your passport ready to be stamped.

- You will be met by our representative just inside the baggage claim area, after passport control.
- Take a cart and collect your luggage from the conveyer. Luggage carts may be free or available for an extra charge.
- Stay with the group and follow instructions from our representative.

### **LOST OR DAMAGED LUGGAGE**

- File a claim at the airport before you leave the baggage claim area. It will be the airline's responsibility to get lost luggage to you or compensate you for damaged luggage. We will do our best to follow-up with the airline, but the responsibility ultimately rests with the airline. We strongly suggest you pack at least one change of clothes and have essentials in your carry-on bag.

### **DIFFERENT TIME ZONES**

- Israel is 7 hours ahead of US Eastern Standard time, 10 hours from the West Coast, 12 hours from Hawaii.

### **CHANGES IN SIGHTSEEING ITINERARY**

- We reserve the right to alter the sightseeing itinerary to accommodate changes in local conditions and/or circumstances. You will be notified of any changes that are made to this itinerary prior to departing the U.S. if possible.

### **AIRPORT AND HOTEL TRANSFER TIME**

- The transfer time can vary. Hotel rooms will be available by mid afternoon.
- From Ben Gurion Airport: Tel Aviv – 30 min., Jerusalem-1 hour, Galilee-2 hours.

### **HOTELS**

- Hotel rooms are First Class or better. Each room will have a private bath, TV, and phone.
- Some, but not all hotels have hair dryers. You can use a cordless curling iron or bring a converter and/or an adapter.
- Dry cleaning is available at the hotels, but there are no Laundromats.
- Make use of the safe deposit boxes available at all hotels. Keep extra travelers checks, jewelry, tickets, etc. in the box and remember to empty it at checkout.
- If possible, please check out of the hotel the night before departure, after you know that there will not be any more charges to your room(s). This will avoid long lines in the morning and you will not hold up the group. You must check out even if you did not make any charges to your room.
- Most hotels have internet and wireless spots either in their lobby, business center or rooms. There is usually a fee to register for internet use. Most battery chargers and computer cords need only a plug adapter. (Two round prongs – Middle East).

### **COMPUTERS AND LAPTOPS**

- You can bring your own laptop or use the public computer in the lobbies of most hotels in Israel.
- There is usually a fee of about \$10 per day for access, and some areas are wireless – either complimentary or for a small fee.
- The new Ben Gurion Airport is free wireless.
- It is best to buy a small adapter plug (for the Middle East) to put on the end of your electrical cord, so it will fit into the sockets in Israel. This will save your battery life, either in the hotel or elsewhere and keep you online. Purchase one at a travel store, such as AAA. They cost only about \$5. It's easier to pick them up beforehand. Some hotels have individual room access and others allow you to have your laptop in their

lobby or designated areas for wireless connection. The wiring is 220, and for some appliances, you may need a converter with an adapter attached for your items to work. Find at travel stores, Target or Wal-Mart.

### **MEALS**

- The famous all you can eat, Israeli buffet breakfast and dinners are included daily.
- Lunches can be purchased where we stop during our itinerary.
- Coffee or teas are served at breakfast and most dinners.

### **SIGHTSEEING DAY**

- Usually, you will depart the hotel between 8:00-9:00AM and return in the afternoon around 5:00-6:00 PM. Your guide will announce the sightseeing schedule and a wake-up call for each day's itinerary.

### **BUSES**

- The deluxe touring motor coaches are air conditioned, and will accommodate approximately 50 passengers.
- Transportation will be provided to comfortably seat each group size.
- Be on time and be prepared to rotate seats on bus.
- Bottled water is available on the bus at a cost of \$1.00 per bottle.

### **RESTROOMS**

- In Israel the buses do not have restrooms, but sufficient stops will be made for the comfort of our passengers.

### **SHOPPING ON TOUR**

- Time will be allotted for shopping. We will visit a variety of stores and souvenir shops; however most are not on a shopping tour.
- We are not responsible for your dissatisfaction with any items purchased, but some stores offer guarantees. We will let you know the best locations to purchase distinctive items from Israel.

### **U.S. CUSTOMS REGULATIONS**

- A returning US resident is allowed \$800 in purchases duty free.
- Gifts may be mailed to the US duty free, but are limited to \$100 per person/per day.

### **TAX-FREE SHOPPING OR VALUE ADDED TAX = V.A.T.**

- V.A.T. (Value Added Tax) is a sales tax that is charged for most goods in Israel. This amount is part of the price - not added on at the cash register.
- VAT in Israel is at least 18%. It is possible for you to claim back most of this tax at the airport just before leaving the country. The best way to do this is to see if the retailer you are buying from is affiliated with "Tax Free" shopping: VAT. If so, they will give you the instructions for your refund. Generally, all you have to do is collect a completed form from the store which lists your purchases of \$110 or more. You MUST have the form stamped by customs just prior to check in at the airport VAT Desk when you leave the country. You will then receive your cash refund inside the Tel Aviv airport terminal after your return flight check in. Look for the TAX FREE SHOPPING symbol at stores and the V.A.T. (Value Added Tax) Refund Counter inside the airport. To download V.A.T. refund information [click here](#).

### **CLIMATE**

- Israel is best known for two seasons. **Summer** extends from April to October and is virtually rain free; winter lasts from November to March and is generally mild.



Israel's summer is similar to Southern California's, with cool evenings in high elevations, like Jerusalem and the city of Safed in the Galilee. **Winter** brings ideal high 70s to Eilat and the Dead Sea coast during their peak tourist seasons, while coastal cities are in the 40s and 50s, with rain interspersed with sunshine. Snow is possible in Jerusalem and more so in the Galilee. Ski season runs from December to early March on Mount Hermon. Spring and autumn are neither too hot nor too chilly, with plenty of sunshine.

### **LIMITED MOBILITY**

- Due to the lack of handicapped accessible facilities, persons needing wheelchairs or ambulatory assistance will find travel on this program difficult. Many sites will be inaccessible. Yet, it is still possible to participate.

### **LOST ITEMS**

- Leave valuables, including items of sentimental value, at home.
- Double check your belongings before leaving the plane, hotels and buses. We cannot assume responsibility for lost items.
- Put your name and a contact number on your items. You can include our agency information too.

### **PREPAID PHONE-CARDS**

- Prepaid phone cards can be purchased at most hotel gift shops.
- If you have a cell phone, check with your local provider for International Service.
- A few weeks before departure you can order a cell phone to rent for use in Israel. For Israel Cell Phones & Walkie-talkie: AMIGO at 888-264-4687 or 718-258-5200

### **FREE TIME**

- Each day is quite full with sightseeing, but you can notify your guide and hosts if you wish to miss a day of touring (itinerary permitting).

### **SUGGESTIONS**

Sometimes tourists, in the excitement of being in a foreign country, temporarily fail to exercise the same caution they use at home. Here are a few things to remember:

- Stay with the group and avoid straying off on your own.
- Don't follow friendly little boys down an alley because his uncle has a shop where you can find a great deal. It may be hard to get out of the store without buying.
- In any crowded place, keep your backpacks and hip packs in front of you with your arms folded across them.
- Keep your wallets in your front pants pockets.
- Since Moslem women are covered from head to foot, Moslem men think that Western women's clothes are "loose and immoral". For this reason we ask that you dress modestly at all times.
- Again, due to the difference in cultures, we ask that there be no dating of anyone not a member of our tour.
- Be sure you drink plenty of water on the plane and on the buses during the touring to avoid dehydration
- Do not leave your passport, jewelry, money, checks, cameras, or purses in your room or on the bus unattended.
- For security reasons, do not leave your luggage unattended in any public place.
- Settle personal charges the night before checking out of hotel.
- Remember, you are a guest in another country. Customs and food will be different than at home.
- No drinking of alcohol.



- No smoking on the bus or in the hotel.
- Do not bring anything with you that you cannot afford to lose.
- Avoid the temptation to feed the local children. One darling child with a hand out can quickly become a group too large for your supply.
- Avoid friendly embraces from strangers. Pick-pockets aren't limited to the USA.
- Avoid criticizing the country, the people, and the food. If you have a problem, please see your bus leader or guide.

## THINGS TO TAKE

1. Passport
2. Notebook, pen, highlighter
3. Money (more than you think you will need in small bills)
4. Sunglasses, sunscreen, lip balm, shade hat, moistened towelettes
5. Substantial amount of pocket size Kleenex (for restrooms)
6. Wrapped candy, and snacks for bus rides
7. Extra film and batteries for camera w/protective case for x-ray machines
8. Compact folding umbrella
9. Prescription medicines in original container
10. Hand & body lotion (dry climate)
11. Small Ziploc baggies for rocks, shells, and other souvenirs, plus a felt tip marker
12. Shampoo, conditioner, soap w/container
13. Swimsuit, cover-up, small towel, river shoes
14. Small detergent (for hand washables)
15. Comfortable clothing that you can layer
16. Comfortable walking shoes
17. Inflatable head rest and eye shades for long overseas flight
18. Adaptor (220 volts) and converter for electrical appliances
19. Calling cards

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### USEFUL PHRASES

Though many Israelis speak English quite fluently, knowing just a few words and phrases of Hebrew can help you enjoy your Israel experience even more.

**Shalom**..... Hello, goodbye, peace  
**Toda**..... Thank you  
**Toda Raba**..... Thank you very much  
**Bevakasha**..... Please, you're welcome  
**Kama?**..... How much?  
**Boker tov**..... Good morning  
**Erev tov**..... Good evening  
**TsoHoRaYiM ToVeeM**..... Good Afternoon