

# Galilee to The Dead Sea

8 days | Starts/Ends: Tel Aviv



*Starting in Tel Aviv, spend 8 days taking in the highlights of Israel, from the famously buoyant Dead Sea and the holy cities of Jerusalem and Nazareth, to the Sea of Galilee and Mount Carmel in Haifa and Caesarea on the Mediterranean coast*

## HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

### Trip Highlights

- Tel Aviv - explore this cosmopolitan city and the ancient port of Jaffa
- Masada – take a cable car up to the ancient fortification of Masada and enjoy unrivalled views over the Dead Sea
- The Dead Sea – float in the famously buoyant, mineral-rich waters
- Jerusalem New City (West Bank) - admire incredible views of the Old City from Mount Scopus, see the Dead Sea Scrolls in the Israel Museum and visit the world Holocaust remembrance center
- Jerusalem Old City (West Bank) - explore the sacred sites of the Old City including the Wailing Wall, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and Via Dolorosa
- Bethlehem (West Bank) - visit the Shepherd's Field, Church of the Nativity and Manger Square

- Beit Shean - take in the excavations of this beautifully preserved Roman city
- Nazareth - see the Church of the Annunciation and other holy sites
- Safed - visit a synagogue and the beautiful streets of the artists' colony in the city of the Kabbalah
- The Wine Region - learn about wine production on a tour of a vineyard and sample fine wine
- Sea of Galilee - visit the site of the 'Sermon on the Mount' and the 'Miracle of the loaves & fish' in Capernaum and Tabgha
- Acre - roam around the old Crusader stronghold and medieval fortifications
- Haifa - walk through the beautiful terraces of the Bahai Gardens, set on the slopes of Mount Carmel, and see the UNESCO listed Bahai Shrine
- Caesarea - discover Roman and Crusader-era ruins in one of the great cities of antiquity

### What's Included

- Vineyard tour and wine tasting in Israel's wine region
- 7 breakfasts and 6 dinners
- 7 nights 4 star hotel accommodation
- Airport arrival and departure transfer on day 1 and day 8
- Private touring of Masada, Dead Sea, Jerusalem, Ein Karem, Beit Shean,

- Bethlehem, Nazareth, Sea of Galilee, Acre, Haifa, Caesarea, Jaffa, Tel Aviv
- Escorted by an English speaking driver guide
- Transportation in an air conditioned vehicle
- Entrance fees to all included sightseeing

### What's Not Included

- International flights and visa
- Tipping/gratuities for your guide and driver. We recommend you allow USD\$5 - 7 per day, per traveller. for your guide and USD\$2 per day for your driver. Tipping your guide and driver is an entirely personal gesture.
- Laundry, drinks and items of a personal nature

## DETAILED ITINERARY

### Day 1 : Tel Aviv

Sunday. Upon arrival at the airport you will be met and transferred to your hotel in Tel Aviv. Rest of the evening is free. **Overnight - Tel Aviv**

### Day 2 : Masada Fortress & The Dead Sea

Tel Aviv - Beer Sheba - Masada - Dead Sea - Jerusalem (West Bank). Set off from Tel Aviv, and drive south past the cities of Ashdod and Ashkelon to the Negev capital of Beer

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Sheba. After a short visit, continue via Arad to the Masada Fortress which sits atop an isolated rock cliff and was the last stronghold of the Jewish Zealots in their war against the Romans. Ascending by cable car to the fortress offers incredible views of the Dead Sea and at the top explore the excavations of Herod's Palaces, the synagogue and the bathhouse. Later descend to the lowest place on Earth to float in the famously buoyant, salt-laden water of the Dead Sea. From the Dead Sea journey to Jerusalem, passing by the oasis of Ein Gedi and the Judean Desert en route. Spend the evening at leisure.

**Overnight - Jerusalem (B, D)**

## Day 3 : Jerusalem New City



Today's sightseeing tour of Jerusalem New City starts with a drive to Mt Scopus for a wonderful panoramic view of Old City, before continuing on to the Garden of Gethsemane and the Church of All Nations at the foot of the Mount of Olives. Next stop is the Israel Museum which houses The Dead Sea Scrolls in the Shrine of the Book. Then visit the beautifully renovated Model of the Herodian city of Jerusalem, which dates back to the time of the Second Temple. The final stop on our tour of the New City is Yad Vashem, the world Holocaust remembrance centre.

This afternoon visit the the picturesque village of Ein Karem, which is the birth place of John the Baptist. Then travel to Downtown Jerusalem to explore bustling Mahane Yehuda, which is Israel's largest open market.

**Overnight - Jerusalem (B, D)**

## Day 4 : Jerusalem Old City & Bethlehem

Step back in time on a tour of Jerusalem's revered Old City today. Enter through one of

the Gates to the walled Old City, to visit the renewed Jewish Quarter, the Western Wall (aka the Wailing Wall), the Temple Mount and the colourful souk. Then walk along the Via Dolorosa, stopping at the Stations of the Cross en route to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. The Church of the Holy Sepulcher is one of the world's holiest Christian shrines and the site of Jesus' crucifixion and burial. Continuing your tour, visit Mt Zion and the tomb of King David, the Room of the Last Supper and Dormition Abbey.

This afternoon drive to Bethlehem to visit the birthplace of Jesus at the Church of the Nativity before returning to Jerusalem for the night. **Overnight - Jerusalem (B, D)**

## Day 5 : Beit Shean, Nazareth & Safed

Beit Shean - Nazareth - Safed - Galilee. Bid farewell to Jerusalem and drive north past Jericho, which is considered to be the world's oldest city. Travelling through the Jordan Valley and the new settlements to Beit Shean, see the excavations of this beautiful preserved Roman city before continuing on to Nazareth to visit the Church of Annunciation and other Christian holy sites. Final stop of the day is Safed, city of the Kabbalah and centre of Jewish mysticism, where you'll visit a synagogue and explore the beautiful streets of the artists' colony. Your home for the next two nights is a kibbutz hotel in Galilee.

**Overnight - Galilee (B, D)**

## Day 6 : Golan Heights & the Sea of Galilee



Driving to the Golan Heights, visit the former Syrian fortifications and the Druze villages, passing Banias, the source of the Jordan River. Then enjoy a tour of the Israeli wine

country, visiting picturesque vineyards where you can take in the wonderful views, learn about wine production and sample fine wines.

Descending to the shore of the Sea of Galilee take a tour of the Miracle Sites. In Capernaum visit the ruins of the ancient synagogue, the Mount of Beatitudes - site of the 'Sermon on the Mount' and Tabgha - site of the miracle of the loaves and the fish. Then travel on to Tiberias, the old centre of Jewish learning. This afternoon there is also an optional sailing trip across the Sea of Galilee to experience the tranquillity and beautiful scenery which has hardly changed in the past 2000 years (book and pay locally). Then return to your kibbutz hotel for the night. **Overnight - Galilee (B, D)**

## Day 7 : Acre, Haifa, Caesarea & Tel Aviv



Galilee - Acre - Haifa - Caesarea - Tel Aviv. After breakfast drive through the hills of the Galilee, westwards to Acre, where you'll explore this old, Crusader stronghold and its medieval fortifications. Continue to Haifa, the largest city in northern Israel which dates back over 3000 years. Sightseeing here includes the UNESCO world heritage listed Bahai Shrine and the magnificent gardens on the slopes of Mount Carmel which are spread over 19 terraces, the highest of which is the Persian Gardens where you can enjoy the wonderful panoramic view of the city and Haifa Bay.

Travelling down the coast to reach Caesarea, visit the Roman Theater and Crusader fortress at what is known as the "masterpiece of Herod the Great". Then continue your journey to Tel Aviv and end the day with a short city

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tour of Tel Aviv and the ancient port of Jaffa.

**Overnight - Tel Aviv** (B, D)

## Day 8 : Tel Aviv

Sunday. Arrangements come to an end after breakfast and onward transfer to airport. Alternatively extend your stay to enjoy more time in cosmopolitan Tel Aviv. (B)

### HOTELS

The hotels listed below are ones which we frequently use on this tour. We reserve the right to substitute these hotels to ones of a similar standard when necessary.

### Hotel Metropolitan

Within easy walking distance from major city attractions, Hotel Metropolitan is a modern hotel with excellent amenities. Guest rooms are designed in a contemporary style with soft furnishings and stylish en suite bathrooms. The hotel also has an onsite bar and cafe serving food throughout the day. In the summer head to the outdoor pool with sundecks - the perfect way to start the day! Perfectly located in the centre and very heart of Tel Aviv.



### Hotel Grand Court

Centrally located, the Hotel Grand Court is a very modern hotel and an excellent base for exploring the holy city. Guest rooms are bright and well furnished with free Wi-Fi throughout. The Garden Court is the perfect spot to enjoy breakfast al-fresco. There is also a refreshing outdoor pool to relax in or by (open April - September). Perfectly located just a short walk from the Old City.



### Kibbutz Kfar Giladi

Founded in 1916, the Kibbutz Kfar Giladi is a recently renovated hotel in a former Kibbutz. All of the guest rooms are well furnished and include breathtaking views across the dramatic Golan Heights. Internet access is available and the hotel also offers a sauna and massage service for guests who fancy a bit of pampering. Delicious kosher food is served for breakfast; and lunch and dinner can be ordered upon request. The accommodation is located in Upper Galilee offering stunning views of the Hula Valley and Mount Hermon.



### KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

#### Welcome to Israel

Israel and the Palestinian Territories are both fascinating and beautiful, rich in culture, steeped in history and home to some of the world's most holy sights, at the cornerstone of the Christian, Jewish and Islamic faiths. The revered Holy Lands, once walked upon by Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, Jesus, the apostles, Baha'i saints, and the Prophet Muhammad (in a miraculous Night Journey), have been a sought-after destination for pilgrims across the world, from ancient times until today. Whilst cosmopolitan Tel Aviv, offers all things modern, the ancient port city of Jaffa which is medieval in appearance, has a laid back Mediterranean seaside resort appeal and the Dead Sea provides the unique opportunity to float in its famously buoyant waters.

#### Tipping

Tipping is customary within the tourism and service industry in Israel. We would recommend for a job well done you budget USD\$5 - 7 per person, per day for your tour guide and USD\$2-3 if you have a separate

driver, however the decision to tip or how much is entirely up to you.

#### Time & Voltage

Israel is 2 hours ahead of Greenwich Meantime (GMT). Daylight Saving time starts on the Friday before the 02 April. The move back to standard time occurs late September/early October according to the Jewish calendar falling on a Saturday night between Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year) and Yom Kippur. During this period, Israel is 3 hours ahead of GMT. Standard voltage is 220 volts, 50Hz AC. Primary sockets require the Continental or European, 2 small round pin variety. We recommend that you pack a universal travel adaptor. You will need a voltage converter, and plug adaptor in order to use U.S. appliances.

#### Visas

Please be advised that visa requirements are subject to change and that visa procurement is the responsibility of the traveller and not On The Go Tours. Please also ensure that your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your planned date of departure from Israel, with two blank pages. British, South African, Australian, New Zealand, USA and Canadian passport holders do not require a visa to enter Israel. For all other nationalities please visit the Israeli embassy website: <http://israel.embassyhomepage.com>

**ISRAELI LAND BORDER TAXES:** On both arrival into Israel from Jordan, you must take the official border shuttle bus or chartered coach at a cost of JD 6 (about \$8), payable in USD or JD.

#### Essential Packing

- Bring your own beach towel to make the most of the perfect Tel Aviv Mediterranean beaches
- If visiting in winter, pack warm clothes and an umbrella
- If visiting in summer bring lightweight clothing, sunscreen and a hat
- 3 pin 'type H' Israel electrical adaptor
- Tour voucher and a copy of your travel insurance
- Two spare passport photos and a photocopy of your passport

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- Proper walking shoes (joggers/trainers) for sightseeing in the old city of Jerusalem

## Climate

Temperatures vary widely, especially from December – early March. The more mountainous regions can be windy, cold and sometimes snowy; Mount Hermon's peak is covered with snow most of the year and Jerusalem usually receives at least one snowfall each year. Temperatures at this time of year average 10-15°C in most places, but approx 5°C in Jerusalem and the Galilee hills - where it can be very cold at night. In January and February there is often heavy rain.

Meanwhile, coastal cities, such as Tel Aviv and Haifa have a typical Mediterranean climate with cool, rainy winters and long, hot summers (May to early September) when temperatures range from 27°C – 32°C and rainfall is minimal.

## Arrival Transfer

Upon arrival to Ben Gurion Airport, our representative, carrying an On The Go Tours signboard, will be waiting to meet you just after passport control before you collect your luggage. Please hand this tour voucher to him/her. If for any reason you are unable to commence your tour as scheduled, or on arrival are unable to make contact with our rep (within 20 minutes) please do not exit the airport, call our emergency contact number as detailed above.

## Health Requirements

You should seek medical advice before travelling to Israel from your local health practitioner and ensure that you receive all of the appropriate vaccinations. As a guide Tetanus and Hepatitis A are strongly recommended. The tap water in Israel is generally considered safe to drink, but as a precaution against stomach upsets you may want to drink bottled water, which is readily available from shops, hotels and restaurants.

## Food, Wine & Kosher meals

Food in Israel is extremely diverse and generally very good. A well known favourite is falafel – small fried balls of mashed chickpeas, usually served inside unleavened pita bread with houmous (a cream of chickpeas, tehina, onion, lemon and olive oil). Another popular

dish is Shawarma, sliced turkey meat which is also served in pita bread. Also try Me'orav Yerushalmi (Jerusalemite mix) which contain several types of meat, or Schnitzel. Fresh fruit and salads are very popular in Israeli cuisine. Israeli sweets are delightful, try Teiglach - tiny marble sized dough balls drenched in a honey syrup or Ingberlach - ginger candies shaped into small sticks. The Mohn Kihel is a circular or rectangular wafer sprinkled with poppy seed. Pirushkes, or turnovers are little cakes fried in honey or dipped in molasses after they are baked. Strudel is served for dessert.

Alcohol is available at many hotels and restaurant (excluding the Palestinian territories) Maccabee and Gold star, both palatable pale lagers and certified kosher. Israeli wine is produced by hundreds of wineries. The nation's modern Israeli wine industry was founded by Baron Edmond James de Rothschild, owner of the Bordeaux estate Château Laffite-Rothschild. Much of the country is suited for viticulture, prices are fair and top drop can be enjoyed with every meal. If your tour includes dinner in Jerusalem, you are best to re-confirm this information with the hotel reception upon check in. Meals (breakfast and dinners) in the hotel are Kosher. Meaning that you will never find dairy products served served with beef. Pork will not be served nor will various types of shellfish. The combinations may seem a little unusual though there is always plenty of choice to provide a satisfying meal.

Lunches: Where lunch is not included within your itinerary (most days or all days) we suggest you budget \$25 - \$30 per day for an average meal

## Currency

The currency of Israel is Israeli New Shekel. Pound Sterling, US Dollars, Euro and other major currencies can be exchanged in Israel. ATMs and exchange facilities are available everywhere. It's advisable to request bank notes in smaller denominations, as it can sometimes be hard to get change from large notes and smaller notes are handy for smaller purchases and gratuities. Traveller's Cheques are not recommended as they're often difficult to exchange and incur high fees.

## Culture & Dress

Despite the inevitable ups and downs of travelling abroad, you will generally be shown great hospitality in Israel. Israel is generally a very relaxed country with a western-oriented outlook. Respect for religion is important to most Israeli's and there are a few situations when this should be kept in mind.

Visitors to some synagogues, most churches and all mosques should be aware that entry will normally not be permitted to those with exposed legs or women with exposed upper arms. Women may be asked to cover bare arms and legs in both mosques and synagogues. Carry a wrap or bring along long sleeve shirts for these occasions. Further, men should cover their heads when entering a synagogue with a hemispherical shaped skullcap called a kippah or yarmulke (often provided by the synagogue) though a normal sunhat is also acceptable and in mosques both men and women will be required to take off their shoes before entry.

Israeli people are generally quite direct in what they have to say. Openness and honesty are often valued over politeness and projection of niceness. Direct personal questions are common and should not be taken as offensive. Israelis are also very kind and hospitable. When you make a friend here, they will do their best to take care of you while you're in their country. Foreign visitors are deeply appreciated and are generally shown the utmost respect by locals.

## Optional Activities

### The Night Spectacular

If you have a free evening in Jerusalem you may wish to consider attending the city's famed 'Night Spectacular'. Each evening the walls of the Old Jerusalem Citadel serve as the stage for a sound and light show. Amidst the archeological remains in the Citadel's courtyard, and to the sound of original music, the story of Jerusalem is told through stunning visual and lighting displays. An adult ticket costs approximately \$16. Tickets can be purchased online in advance or at the gate (subject to availability). Show times vary, but normally from 8pm in the summer and 7pm in the winter. Check the show website for exact timings.

### Sea of Galilee Boat trip

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On some of our trips we offer a 2 hour Boat Trip on the Sea of Galilee. Often boarding a wooden boat, resembling those from ancient times you'll see gulls overhead and have time to take in the tranquil surrounds. It is here upon the lake that Jesus walked on the water (John 6:19-21), calmed a storm (Matt. 8:23-26), and showed the disciples miraculous catches of fish (Luke 5:1-8; John 21:1-6). The boat trip is offered, dependent on time and number of persons. Should you be interested, please speak with your tours guide.

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