



Israel

Trip 2020

June 2-14, 2020

Shalom (Peace)!

Below is some general information to help answer some of your questions as well as help get you excited for our up coming trip to the Promised Land.

First, let me say that this trip is not a bus tour, the land of Israel is our classroom and the Bible will be our instructor. This will certainly be a once-in-a-lifetime experience you will never forget!

Going to the beach, seeing the mountains, spending time with family, enjoying a beautiful sunset, all of those are very special moments indeed, but the opportunity to stand in the footprints of our Lord, to hear His words from the very places they were spoken, to see with your own eyes the places he saw is something that will stick with you forever.

When you encounter the shore of the Sea of Galilee for the first time and look out across the waters at the very place Jesus called His first disciples, when you visit the very synagogues Jesus stood and preached, when you look out across the field where David and Goliath battled, when you stand at the place where Jesus was judged by Pilot, the place He was likely crucified and buried... your world will change and the words of Scripture will come to life in a way you have never experienced.

I truly hope you are as excited as I am to be a part of this wonderful opportunity to hear, see, touch and experience the land of Israel, its people, its culture, and our Lord's precious gift of life and forgiveness that began within its borders. As you we look forward to our departure. Here are some logistical details to pass along:

I also want to provide you with the hotels (subject to change) we will be staying at for those who would like to pass along the information to employers, family or friends. We will be using Jerusalem as a central location for the majority of our trip, this way you won't have to carry your bags to multiple locations. Here is the list of properties and a link to their website:

- **Grand Court Hotel, Jerusalem**
15 St. George Street | P.O. Box 280, Jerusalem 91002, Israel
Ph. 02-591-7777
<http://www.inisrael.com/grandcourt/index.html>
- **Kibbutz Ein Gev**
Jordan Valley 1494000
Phone: +972 4-665-9800
<http://www.eingev.com>

Flight Details:

Our departure date has changed from June 1st to June 2nd because the flights available on June 1st were all night time flights. Our arrival in Tel Aviv would have been late night on June 2nd and we would have gone directly to our hotel in Jerusalem to sleep for the night. Changing our date to June 2nd allows us to begin our Israel adventure as soon as we land on June 3rd.....

To Israel

6/02 Tues Travel to Tel Aviv

(Day 1)

- Flight #AC7384 from STL-YYZ departs at 9:25 am and arrives at 12:27 pm.
- Flight #AC080 from YYZ-TLV departs at 4:30 pm and arrives at 10:00 am on June 3rd

From Israel

6/14 Sun Travel to Ben Gurion airport for Departure

(Day 13)

- Flight #AC081 from TLV-YYZ departs at 11:45 am and arrives at 4:30 pm.
- Flight #AC7389 from YYZ-STL departs at 8:35 pm and arrives at 9:45 pm.

Flight #	Date	Airports	Departs	Arrives	Time Zone	Time in Flight
AC7384	June 2, 2020	STL – YYZ	9:25 am	12:27 pm	-1 hour	2 hours
AC080	June 2, 2020	YYZ – TLV	4:30 pm (16.30)	10:00 am on 6/3	- 7 hours	10½ hours
AC081	June 14, 2020	TLV – YYZ	11:45 am	4:30 pm (16.30)	+ 7 hours	11:45 hours*
AC7389	June 14, 2020	YYZ – STL	8:35 pm (20.35)	9:45 pm (21.45)	+ 1 hour	2:10 hours

Toronto is 1 hour ahead of St. Louis

Tel Aviv is 7 hours ahead of Toronto

Tel Aviv is 8 hours ahead of St. Louis

*Flying home will take longer because we will be flying into the wind.....

AC = Air Canada

STL = St. Louis Lambert International Airport

YYZ = Toronto Pearson International Airport

TLV = Tel Aviv Ben Gurion Airport

Passports: All participants must have passports valid for at least 6 months from date of departure or they may be refused flight boarding and the new Missouri Real ID driver's license.

GETTING READY TO GO!

Here are lots of answers to questions you may (or may not), be asking!

Weather in Israel during our dates of travel looks like this: No rain. Jerusalem averages 70-90°, Galilee is 72-92°, and Masada averages 88-95°. Once when there this time of year I wished I had a light jacket in Jerusalem (that's rare). On another occasion, it was over 100°.

Clothing . . . Israel is informal. Common dress for Israelis is pants and a short-sleeved shirt. They rarely wear shorts (except in Tel Aviv), but tourists do all the time. I'll be in either shorts or Khaki pants and a light shirt most days. Sleeveless is acceptable everywhere but the places you'll need the modesty kit. Be sure to include:

- Swimsuit (for the Dead Sea, the Mediterranean, the Sea of Galilee, and Gan Hashaloshah)
- Water shoes, river shoes or Velcro type sandals you can get wet (while you can swim in everywhere without shoes, you will want something on your feet in Hezekiah's tunnel)
- Plastic bag for your wet swimsuit
- A wash cloth (some hotels do not provide this)
- Towel for swimming spots
- Shorts (if you don't bring a swimsuit) for walking through Hezekiah's Tunnel – the water is thigh deep at the highest.
- Good and broken-in walking shoes – tennis shoes work well for where we go. DO NOT plan on wearing sandals for the hiking days.
- Clothing for 12 days of traveling around the country. (See below regarding laundry)
- Modesty Kit (**See below*)
- Flashlight (small, preferably water tight) or headlamp
- Daypack or similar for hauling the each day's needs including Israel Study Guide and Bible

***A Modesty Kit** covers up your knees and your shoulders. It can be a wrap around skirt, sweats pants, cargo or khaki pants, or the hiking shorts that have legs that zip in and out. For the ladies, you will need a pull over scarf or shawl to be sure that your shoulders are covered. Take the modesty kit with you **every day**, because although we plan to need it on only 6 days, you never want to be left out of an impromptu stop!

Other things to pack . . . A basic supply of first aid and sickness type stuff: Imodium, sun screen, maybe cold medicine (not sold over the counter in Israel), antibiotic cream, mole skin for blisters, a laxative, Benadryl, Tylenol . . . you get the idea.

Internet: is available for free at all of our hotels and most likely on the bus.

Laundry: There should be a Laundromat at most all of the hotels at which we will be staying, but that is not a guarantee they will be in operation. For that reason, either pack accordingly or plan to do laundry in the sink if necessary. A clothes line is in most showers.

Water & Food: We will be eating breakfast and dinner at the hotels. For lunch we will be stopping at a variety of places (Jewish, Arab, Druze, and American lunches). We will have water bottles on the bus for purchase for \$1.00 each or you can bring a water bottle to fill. I would suggest a Hydro flask or similar bottle which is Vacuum insulated, here is an example on Amazon:

https://www.amazon.com/dp/B07MZ9ZP9P/ref=cm_sw_em_r_mt_dp_U_dLGzCb3P9P56W

We will be on a couple of longer walks, so you will be reminded to take extra water on those days.

Drinking water is run through an identical purifying system as here in the States, so it usually is not a problem. Lunch will vary in cost from \$8.00 to \$14.00. We will work to keep it on the low side . . .

Cell phones . . . depending on your carrier or make of phone, your cell phone might work in Israel.

Be sure to have your carrier look it up because their automatic response is that it won't work. However, Israel's cell system uses similar SIM cards to us, so many of them will, in fact, work. Be very aware that data service is *very* expensive, so be sure to turn your data service off on your phone when you get there. If you need, you can ask your carrier about getting a temporary international phone as well. There is Wi-Fi in all of our hotels to make Wi-Fi calling as well.

Converters: Israel has 220 volt electricity, meaning unless your computer or appliance is dual voltage or designed for 220 volts, you will need a converter or transformer. The cycles (Hz) are 50 per second. In older buildings, Israel uses the standard European non-grounded plug. In more modern, it uses the Israeli grounded. Most devices these days run off of both 110 or 220, but be sure to check the device before assuming that it you will fry something. For all of our hotels you will want the grounded plugs as seen below.

Here is a grounded adapter example from Amazon.com (**you need the one on the right**):


https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01N7VKQ7Z/ref=cm_sw_em_r_mt_dp_U_1NGzCb9VKA7N2

Non grounded



Grounded

Bible and Israel Study Book (ISB): Plan to bring your Bible and study book with you each day as we travel. Bibles small enough and light enough to fit in your backpack or day pack is recommended.

Money, you will receive conflicting views on what type of money to take. Their currency is called the New Israeli Shekel (NIS). The symbol is:  a shekel is worth around .29 of a \$1.00, a little less than 4 (shekels) to 1 (dollar). They also use the agurot, with 100 agurot to a dollar. We will change money the first day in country, so there is no need to do it in advance. Smaller denominations of US dollars (nothing larger than a twenty) can often be used throughout the country and you will receive shekels in change. It is preferable to not take travelers checks. Major credit cards can also be used in many places, but be sure that you have enough cash for the trip.

Purse & wallet protection -- I'll remind you later, but wallets should go into front pockets and fanny packs should be worn in front. Inside the old city of Jerusalem it gets crowded; this will help prevent pick pocketing.

Passports should never be packed in your luggage, but carried on your person. You will need to show it every time you board a plane. I will want to see your passport, take a copy, and verify the number from you at some point as well before departure. Usually we will travel with our passport in Israel because you never know when you will be asked to see it.

Length of days . . . Days in Israel like here are 24 hours. Just kidding. Our time in Israel will be full. Most days we will be leaving the hotel at 7:30 or at 8:00 a.m. and returning around 5:00 p.m. depending on the day. On a few of the evenings we will meet after dinner for bible study and to prep for the next day.

Shopping -- You will find opportunity for shopping. We start and end the trip in Jerusalem, so we will make some time to be free in the Old City bazaar area where everything can and should be bartered if you are willing. Favorite shopping items: Olive wood figures, gold and silver jewelry, copper and brassware, unique glassware, stone jewelry boxes, and cut diamonds (for which Israel has quite a reputation).

U.S. Custom's general regulations for all you heavy shoppers . . . On returning from an international trip, you must pass through "Customs" and may be required to provide the U.S. Customs Service with a list of the items you purchased or were gifted outside of the U.S., including the costs of the items.

In the language of the Customs Service, you must "declare" these items, meaning that when you are re-entering the US, you must report all goods you are bringing back that you did not have when you left the United States. "Duty" is the amount of money you must pay the government for items you are bringing home which were purchased in another country. You will be asked to fill out a Customs Declaration Form before getting out of the plane.

You will find it easier and faster to fill out the Declaration Form if you keep your sales slips from purchases made abroad in case you are asked to verify the cost of any of the items that you listed on your customs declaration. When packing, try to group the items you will need to declare in the same luggage, in case you need to remove them for inspection.

The "duty-free exemption", also called the "personal exemption", is the total value of merchandise you may bring back to the United States without having to pay duty. You may bring back more goods than your personal exemption allows, but you will have to pay duty on the excess. In most cases, the personal exemption is \$800, but there are some exceptions to this rule based on your recent travel and having used this exemption within 30 days. After that, the exemption varies depending on items purchased, but it is usually a flat 10% on the next \$1,000 of purchase.

Gratuities: Though service charges are included at hotels, it is customary to show your appreciation to hotel personnel. **\$3 for hotel staff per person per overnight;** a **10-12% tip in a restaurant** is considered appropriate. As for tipping your **guide** and **driver**, of course it is at your discretion, however; we recommend the following:

- \$6-8 for the guide per person per day of touring
- \$5-7 for the driver per person per day of touring
- Tips should be given to the tour leader at the end of the tour.

Trip Insurance: Again, many companies sell trip insurance. It is usually based on the cost of the trip, your age, the places you are travelling to, and the extent of the coverage you desire. With some companies, it needs to be purchased within two weeks of your paying for the trip, so if you want it, don't delay. You can go to www.insuremytrip.com for a decent comparison of rates and what is covered. We will not be obtaining group insurance as a group, so you are on your own to obtain it.

One option is through Travelguard, if you are interested in purchasing **travel insurance through them**, you may **copy and paste** this link in your web browser, which will give you access to all the information online: http://www.travelguard.com/agentlink.asp?ta_arc=155092&pcode.

It might seem like you have a lot of time but I would suggest a few things...

- Start getting in shape now. Plan now to get in the best possible shape you can be in to see as much as possible. Eat better and Exercise (especially in the heat).
- Begin reading as much about the region as much as you can. Advanced knowledge is always beneficial.
- Buy a language book and familiarize yourself with at least a few basic words.
- Start thinking about your packing list and appropriate clothing.

Get ready; June 2nd will be here before you know it!