

Israel the Holy Land Interfaith Tour (102A) 10 Days / 8 Nights

Description:

This tour is the same as the "Israel 101A" tour, plus a full day of touring in Tel Aviv to learn about Israel's largest city and experience it for all the wonderful sites it has to offer. The tour travels around the central and northern regions of Israel, visiting mostly sites related to the life and teachings of Jesus, along with sites related to the history of the country and the Jewish religion.

Please keep in mind this itinerary is only a suggestion and can be modified according to the group's interests, preferences, budget and other requirements.

Basic Tour Highlights:

- Round trip flights from the USA to Israel
- 7 Days of Touring with a professional guide and private bus for the group
- Entrance fees to all sites visited
- 2 Nights in Tel Aviv
- 3 Nights in the Galilee
- 3 Nights in Jerusalem
- Full Israeli buffet breakfast and dinner daily in the hotels
- Boat ride on the Sea of Galilee and St. Peter's fish lunch

Suggested Tour Itinerary:

DAY 1: Departure from the U.S

Today your group departs the USA for Israel. This is an overnight flight.

DAY 2: Welcome to the Holy Land



Today your group arrives in Israel, the Holy Land. You'll be welcomed at the airport by a local representative who will assist with luggage collection. Your guide will meet you in the arrivals hall and the group will be transferred to the hotel in Tel Aviv, where the rest of the day or evening is at leisure to relax from the flight. Dinner will be served at the hotel. **OVERNIGHT – TEL AVIV (D)**

DAY 3: Tel Aviv and Jaffa



Enjoy full Israeli buffet breakfast at your hotel. Tel Aviv is Israel's largest city and business center. As with many Israeli cities, Tel Aviv offers an interesting mixture of new and old. Your tour will start with the ancient city of Jaffa (Joppa), once a major port mentioned several times in the Bible (*Jonah, 2 Chronicles*). Phoenician merchant ships stopped here to unload cedar trees used in building the Temple in Jerusalem. Today, Jaffa is home to St. Peter's Church, a small fishing harbor and lots of small shops and restaurants. It's a great place to walk around a bit. Then, a short walk takes you to the Bauhaus neighborhoods of Neve Tzedek and Nachlat Binyamin, which were built more than 100 years ago and completely renovated in recent years. The tour continues to Independence Hall, where Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben Gurion, proclaimed the state's independence in 1948. Nearby is the Carmel Market, always a very colorful and interesting place to visit with vendors loudly promoting their produce laid out in beautiful displays. The bus will take the group for a driving tour nearby the HaBimah national theater and to Rabin Square, where Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated in 1995. We arrive at the Diaspora Museum, a world-famous center for the study of Jewish heritage and lineage around the world. The rest of the day is yours to enjoy the beautiful beach or the promenade. **OVERNIGHT – TEL AVIV (B, D)**

DAY 4: Caesarea, Mukhraka, Tziporri and Nazareth



Enjoy full Israeli buffet breakfast at your hotel. We drive this morning north along the Mediterranean coast to the ancient Roman city of Caesarea, built by King Herod about 2100 years ago to serve as the main port and administrative center for the Judea Province of the Roman Empire (*Acts*). The group will tour the Hippodrome and Roman baths and experience the amazing acoustics of the amphitheater which is used for concerts until today. From here, drive to Mount Carmel for a visit to the Mukhraka, traditional site of the contest held between the Prophet Elijah and the false prophets of the Ba'al (*1 Kings*). The location offers a magnificent view of the Jezre'el Valley to the north and the Mediterranean coastal plains to the south. Continue to Tzipporri, an archeological site of a once-significant town in Jewish history, including the remains of a Synagogue with beautiful mosaic floors. We continue to the city of Nazareth, where Jesus spent his childhood years. You'll visit the Church of Annunciation, Mary's Well and other sites of significance. End the day with a short drive to your hotel in the Galilee. **OVERNIGHT – GALILEE (B, D)**

Day 5: Mount of Beatitudes, Tabgha, Capernaum and the Golan Heights



Enjoy full Israeli buffet breakfast at your hotel. The day will begin with a visit to the Mount of Beatitudes where Jesus performed the Sermon on the Mount (*Gospel of Matthew*). Then, continue to Capernaum, where much of Jesus' Galilean ministry took place, as it was a central town in those days, including a major Synagogue where Jesus taught and a Church considered to be the home of Saint Peter (*Matthew*). Afterwards, it's time for a fun and inspirational boat ride across the Sea of Galilee, followed by a tasty "Saint Peter's" fish lunch at a local restaurant. From here, ascend the Golan Heights to learn about this area so vital to Israel's security. It was the site of many fierce battles during the wars of 1967 and 1973 and today acts as an important security buffer. We'll tour the area, learn about its history and enjoy the beautiful views of the Galilee below us. From Mount Ben-Tal, you will have an excellent view into Syria. After descending back to the Sea of Galilee, our last event for the day will be a visit to the Yardenit Baptismal site for an optional baptismal service. We return to our hotel at the end of the day for dinner. **OVERNIGHT – GALILEE (B, L, D)**

Day 6: Upper Galilee, Caesarea Philippi, Tel Dan, Tsfat



Enjoy full Israeli buffet breakfast at your hotel. Today the tour begins with a drive to Caesarea Philippi, an ancient Roman city located at the base of Mount Hermon, Israel's highest mountain and on the banks of one of the tributaries to the Jordan River. It was here that Jesus revealed himself to his disciples as the Son of God (*Matthew*). We continue to Tel Dan, a nature preserve around the ruins of Dan, once the northernmost city in the Kingdom of Israel. From here, we ascend the mountains of the Upper Galilee for a magnificent view of the entire area below and a drive to the city of Tsfat (Safed), which has been a center of Jewish studies for many centuries. The tour includes a visit to one of the beautiful Synagogues located here as well as time to stroll through the city's artists' colony. We'll now return to our hotel in the Galilee for a relaxing evening and dinner. **OVERNIGHT – GALILEE (B, D)**

Day 7: Masada, Dead Sea, Ein Gedi and to Jerusalem



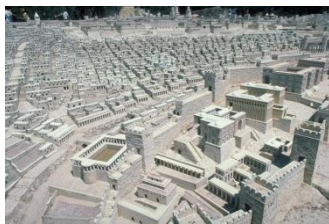
Enjoy full Israeli buffet breakfast at your hotel. Today we leave the green pastures of the Galilee and begin our drive in the Jordan Valley toward the Dead Sea. We'll begin with a visit to Masada, an iconic site where 960 Jewish zealots held their resistance against the Roman siege below. After descending by cable car, we'll drive to one of the public beaches on the Dead Sea to enjoy a "float" in the lowest spot on Earth. We'll continue to Ein Gedi Nature Preserve where we walk along the river to reach the waterfall where, in Biblical times, young David hid from the wrath of King Saul. We'll now begin our ascent through the Judean Desert to Israel's eternal capital city – Jerusalem, where we check into our hotel and enjoy dinner. **OVERNIGHT – JERUSALEM (B, D)**

Day 8: Old City of Jerusalem



Enjoy full Israeli buffet breakfast at your hotel. The Babylonian Talmud says: *“Ten measures of beauty came down to the world. Jerusalem took nine and the rest of the world took one.”* Indeed, Jerusalem is the world’s most beautiful, inspirational city. The tour of the old city begins with an overview from the Mount of Olives. We’ll then visit the Garden of Gethsemane, a place frequented by Jesus and his disciples and also the place where they prayed before His crucifixion. We continue to the Cenacle, also known as “The Upper Room”, where Jesus and the Apostles held the Last Supper. From here, we’ll enter the walled city through one of the gates and visit the Kotel (Western Wall), the holiest of holy sites in the Jewish faith. Nearby, we’ll take a tour of the archaeological tunnels dug below the Kotel, revealing thousands of years of Jewish life in the area. We continue to walk through the Jewish Quarter for a view of the rooftops of the old city and follow some of the Via Dolorosa to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher where it is believed Jesus was crucified and some believe buried as well. During the day, time will be allotted for a visit to the colorful Arab market to shop for souvenirs. **OVERNIGHT – JERUSALEM (B, D)**

Day 9: New City of Jerusalem and Bethlehem



Enjoy full Israeli buffet breakfast at your hotel. Today we’ll visit sites in the new (western) part of Jerusalem. We’ll begin with a stop at the Knesset (parliament) for an overview of the Israeli political system and see the famous Menorah statue located outside the building. We’ll then continue to see the miniature model of Jerusalem during the Second Temple period (about 2100-2600 years ago) and the Shrine of the Book at the Israel Museum to view the Dead Sea Scrolls. Our next visit will be to Yad Vashem, memorial to the six million Jews who perished in the Holocaust and the righteous few who endangered themselves to help the Jews. In the afternoon, we’ll drive to Bethlehem, for a visit to the Church of Nativity, built on the location where Jesus was born and the Shepherd’s Field, where an angel announced the birth of Jesus. We return to our hotel. In the evening, we’ll head out to one of the wonderful restaurants in Jerusalem for a farewell dinner to say “Shalom” to our guide and driver. **OVERNIGHT – JERUSALEM (B, D)**

Day 10: Departure for the USA

According to your scheduled departure, the group will be transferred by bus to Ben Gurion Airport for the flight home.

Note: An optional free day in Jerusalem can be added at the end of the tour to allow for some last-minute shopping and independent visits to sites which were not included in the touring itinerary.