

## Israel the Holy Land Interfaith Tour (103A) 13 Days / 11 Nights (with Jordan)

### **Description:**

This tour is the same as the "Israel 102A" tour, plus 3 days and two nights in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, where much of the famous Biblical stories took place, as well as a tour of magnificent Petra and other historic sites. The tour travels around the central and northern regions of Israel and Jordan, visiting mostly sites related to the life and teachings of Jesus, along with sites related to the Jewish faith and the history of Israel and Jordan.

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 in Israel with a professional guide and private bus for the group
- 3 Days of touring in Jordan 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
- 1 Night in Amman
- 1 Night in Petra
- 1 Night by the Dead Sea
- 3 Nights in Jerusalem
- Full 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, Tsiporri 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 Tsippori, 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: Cross into Jordan, Ajloun, Jarash and Amman



Early this morning, we'll leave our hotel in the Galilee and head to the Jordan River border crossing into Jordan just south of the Sea of Galilee. We'll meet our local guide and bus driver to begin our drive to the 12<sup>th</sup> century Islamic Castle at Ajloun, built to protect the area against Crusader incursions from the west. We continue to the ancient city of Jarash, considered one of the best-preserved Roman cities anywhere. Afterwards, the bus drives south to the capital of Amman (known in Roman times as Philadelphia). In the center of town you'll find the Citadel, a hill with the ruins of the Temple of Hercules and a museum depicting archeological artifacts from the area. End the day at your hotel. **OVERNIGHT – AMMAN (B, D)**

### Day 8: Bethany Beyond the Jordan, Madaba and Mount Nebo



Today you leave Amman for a visit to Bethany, where Jesus was baptized by John. Nearby is Elijah's Hill, where the Prophet Elijah is said to have ascended to heaven. From here, we continue along the 5000-year-old Kings' Highway to the city of Madaba, also known as "The City of Mosaics" because of the mosaic floors scattered throughout local churches and homes. One of the highlights of the visit is a sixth-century Byzantine mosaic depicting the Holy Land and Jerusalem. Our last stop of the day will be Mount Nebo, where Moses overlooked the Land of Israel which he would never enter. It is believed to be his place of burial. The day ends with a drive to Petra where we check in to our hotel. **OVERNIGHT – PETRA (B, D)**

### Day 9: Petra and Cross into Israel



Full buffet breakfast at our hotel. We begin our day with a visit to the amazing Nabatean city of Petra, one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Nothing really prepares the visitor for the beauty of this rose-red city, much of which is carved right into the sides of the red and black desert mountains. After touring Petra for several hours, we head back north to the King Hussein (Allenby) border crossing and make our way into Israel. Here, we'll meet our Israeli guide again and head to our hotel on the shores of the Dead Sea. We'll have some time for a "float" in the healing waters and use of the hotel spa before dinner. **OVERNIGHT – DEAD SEA (B, D)**

### Day 10: Masada, Dead Sea, Ein Gedi and to Jerusalem



Enjoy full Israeli buffet breakfast at your hotel. 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 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. Next, we visit the site of Qumeran, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in 1947. 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 11: 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 12: 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 13: 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.