

## Best of Israel & Jordan

**Country(ies):** Israel , Jordan

**Tour type:** Shoestring

**Transport:** A/C minibus/coach

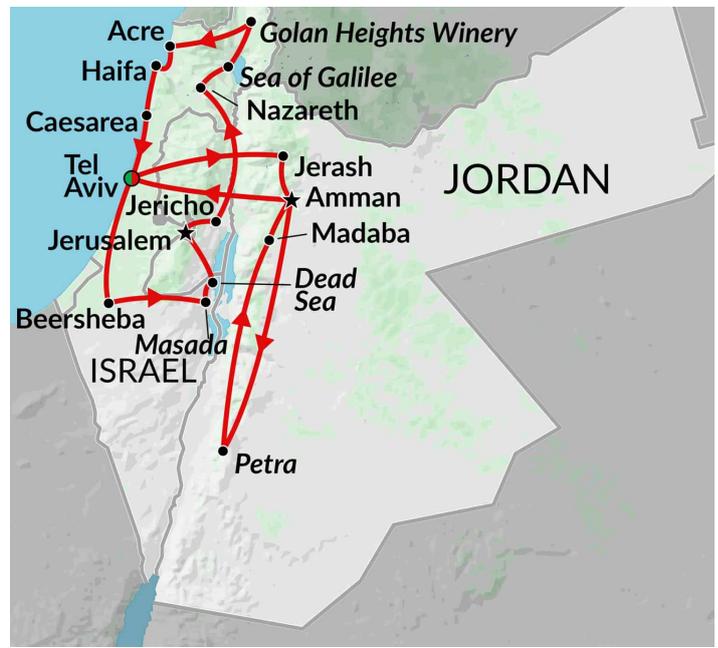
**Group size:** Min: 2 | Max: 45

**Days:** 11 days

**Start Location:** Tel Aviv, Israel

**End Location:** Tel Aviv, Israel

**Meals:** Breakfasts - 10, Lunches - 0, Dinners - 0



### Highlights:

Tel Aviv, Masada fortress, Dead Sea, old & new Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Jericho, Sea of Galilee, Tiberias, Golan Heights, Nazareth, Acre, Caesarea, Haifa, Jerash Roman ruins, Petra tour, Madaba mosaics, Mount Nebo views

# Itinerary

## Day 1: Arrive into Tel Aviv. Transfer to hotel

Upon arrival in Ben Gurion Airport, in Tel Aviv, after passing through immigration and customs you will be met by our representative and transferred to your hotel in Tel Aviv for the night. The rest of the day is free for you to settle in and look around Tel Aviv independently.

**OVERNIGHT:** Tel Aviv Hotel

**MEALS:** None

**EXTRAS:** Extra night in Tel Aviv - pre-tour Extra night in Jerusalem - pre-tour Single room supplement (ISSHIE)

## Day 2: Masada & Dead Sea

You'll meet your tour guide and fellow travellers this morning and set off south from Tel Aviv, passing the cities of Ashkelon, Ashdod and Beersheba, the capital of the Negev Desert region. You'll then continue to Masada, the foremost archaeological park in Israel. Here we'll ascend to the top of the fortress by cable-car and have a comprehensive visit of the site, learn about the rituals, culture and politics of the people who lived in this desert fortress. This was the final stronghold of the Jewish Zealots during their war against the Romans, and we will visit the excavations, the synagogue, bathhouse and cisterns, Herod's palaces and enjoy fantastic views of the Roman camps and the Dead Sea, far below us.

Leaving Masada, we head down to the lowest place on earth - the Dead Sea - at 430 metres below sea level! Here we'll enjoy a swim, or float, in the salty waters and those inclined can also enjoy the benefits of the mineral rich black mud. We'll then head north up the Dead Sea road, with the hills of Jordan clearly visible to the East, passing by the Oasis of Ein Gedi and through the Judean Desert to Jerusalem.

**OVERNIGHT:** Jerusalem hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:**

## Day 3: Israel Museum - Yad Vashem - Ein Karem - Bethlehem

We start our tours today in Jerusalem at the Israel Museum's Shrine of the Book, home to the famous Dead Sea scrolls. Next we'll visit the beautifully renovated model of the Herodian city of Jerusalem, which dates back to the time of the Second Temple.

We then visit Yad Vashem which is the official memorial to the Jewish victims of the Holocaust. Established in 1953, the memorial is located at the foot of Mt. Herzl.

On our way out of Jerusalem, we'll visit the picturesque village of Ein Karem in the southwestern outskirts of the city. According to tradition, this is where John the Baptist was born. We continue out of Jerusalem to visit Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus, and we will visit the Church of the Nativity and Manger Square before returning to Jerusalem.

We'll also have the opportunity to enjoy Ein Karem; a picturesque village in the southwestern outskirts of Jerusalem. This small village has great significance in Christian traditions, since this is where according to

tradition John the Baptist was born.

**OVERNIGHT:** Jerusalem Hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:**

## Day 4: Old City of Jerusalem

We'll enter the Old City of Jerusalem today for a day packed with visits to some of the most important religious sites in the world. We'll see the Western Wall, and the actual site of the Second Temple at Temple Mount. We'll also walk the Way of the Cross, the Via Dolorosa, to Calvary and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which houses both the traditional site of Crucifixion and the Tom of the Resurrection.

Leaving the Old City we'll see Mt. Zion, with the traditional tomb of King David, and the Room of the Last Supper. The next stop will be at the Mount of Olives, the site where Jesus first gave the Lord's Prayer. Here we can enjoy a spectacular panoramic view of Jerusalem, the holy city for three of the World's great religions - Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. Continuing the day we'll visit the Garden of Gethsemane where Judas betrayed Jesus, and in the heart of downtown Jerusalem we'll visit the largest open market in Israel, Mahane Yehuda and experience the smells, flavours and colours of this bustling area.

**OVERNIGHT:** Jerusalem Hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:**

## Day 5: Beit Shean - Golan Heights - Tiberias

We leave Jerusalem this morning and head north past Jericho, considered by many as the oldest city in the world. As we travel through the Jordan Valley we'll pass new settlements to Beit Shean and visit the excavations of this well preserved Roman city.

Travel through the Jordan Valley and the new settlements to Beit Shean, to visit the excavations of this beautifully preserved Roman city.

Drive up to the Golan Heights to enjoy an Israeli wine country experience, enjoying a tour, wine tasting and understanding of the wine production process. Travel through the Golan, with its Druze villages, former Syrian fortifications and panoramic views of Mount Hermon and into Syria.

Later, we descend to the Hula Valley and drive to Tiberias on the shores of the Sea of Galilee - regarded as one of the four Holy cities in Judaism, where the Jewish Talmud - the primary source of Jewish religious law - was compiled, with tombs of Rabbis scattered across the city.

**OVERNIGHT:** Tiberias Hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:**

## Day 6: Capernaum - Mount of Beatitudes - Nazareth

This morning we'll descend back down to the shores of the Sea of Galilee, the stage for many of the events in Jesus' life. We'll visit Capernaum, known as 'His Town', the centre of Jesus ministry, where he spent much time healing the sick and performing miracles. We'll visit the ruins of the ancient synagogue, the Mount of Beatitudes

where Jesus preached the 'Sermon on the Mount' and it is believed that he picked his 12 apostles, and Tabgha, the site of Christ's miracle of feeding the 5,000.

We will continue on to Tiberias, which was an ancient centre of Jewish learning, and there is the option of taking a boat trip across the Sea of Galilee here (subject to local conditions and an additional fee).

Later today, we head to Nazareth to visit the Church of the Annunciation and Christian holy sites. Finally we return to our hotel in Tiberias.

**OVERNIGHT:** Tiberias Hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:**

## **Day 7: Acre - Haifa - Caesarea - Jaffa**

After breakfast we will drive through the hills of the Galilee, heading westwards to the Mediterranean coast and Acre, where we visit the old, famous Crusader stronghold and medieval fortifications.

Next we continue to Haifa where we will ascend to the top of Mount Carmel to enjoy a panoramic view of the city including the Baha'i Shrine, Haifa Bay and the Persiam Garden.

Our next stop, as we proceed along the Mediterranean coastline is at Caesarea where we visit the Roman Theater and the Crusader fortress at the site known as the 'masterpiece of Herod the Great'.

Finally we will finish our trip with a short city tour of the ancient port of Jaffa and the city of Tel Aviv.

**OVERNIGHT:** Tel Aviv Hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:**

## **Day 8: Cross from Israel to Jordan, tour Jerash**

This morning we head east from Jerusalem to the Sheikh Hussein border crossing where we proceed through the immigration formalities and enter Jordan where we are met by our Jordanian guide and vehicle. We'll continue on to Jerash, a city of the Decapolis situated about 45km north of Amman in the fertile heights of the Gilad. Jerash is one of the best preserved ancient Greco-Roman sites in the whole of the Middle East and our tour will include the colonnaded streets, the 2nd century Hadrian's Arch, the baths, amphitheatre and the columns of the Temple of Artemis. Our day will finish with a panoramic tour of Jordan's capital, Amman.

**OVERNIGHT:** Amman Hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:**

## **Day 9: Petra**

After another early breakfast, we will drive south down Jordan's Desert Highway to Petra. Here you have the option to ride on horseback, take an electric buggy, or walk through the towering cliffs of the 'Siq' (canyon) into the incredible site of Petra. Known as the red rock city, Petra was the ancient trading capital of the Nabatean kingdom from the 3rd century BC to the 2nd century AD. During our guided tour we will visit the most interesting monuments including the Treasury, El Khazneh (a tomb of a Nabatean king), the field of tombs, obelisks and the theatre. After a little free time to explore independently, we will return to Wadi Musa village for the night.

**OVERNIGHT:** Petra Hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:**

## **Day 10: Madaba, Mt. Nebo, Tel Aviv**

After breakfast, we drive back up north to see the remains of a Byzantine church with a famous ancient mosaic floor map in Madaba. This is the oldest surviving original cartographic depiction in a mosaic of the whole of the Holy Land region and Jerusalem. We'll then continue to nearby Mt. Nebo from where Moses viewed the Promised Land. If the weather is clear, there are spectacular views from here, across the Dead Sea, Jordan Valley, to Jericho and beyond.

We will then head back down into the Jordan Valley, cross the border back into Israel and drive to Tel Aviv to finish the tour.

**OVERNIGHT:** Tel Aviv Hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:**

## **Day 11: Free time in Tel Aviv. Departure airport transfer**

After breakfast, your time is free until we transfer you to the airport for your departure flight. Extra nights are available in Jerusalem or Tel Aviv if you would like to extend the tour.

*\*The sequence of the tour, border crossing points used, hotels used and sites visited may be amended due to local circumstances at the time of travel or the guide's discretion.*

**OVERNIGHT:** N/A

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** Extra night in Tel Aviv - post-tour Extra night in Jerusalem - post-tour

### **Included:**

- All accommodation as stated in the itinerary
- All transport and transfers
- 24-hour airport arrival and departure transfer service
- English speaking guide during touring days
- All site entry fees
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary

### **Excluded:**

- International flights (available on request)
- Visa fees
- Border tax & crossing fees (payable locally at approx. \$107 per person)
- Travel insurance (compulsory)
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Drinks, snacks, tips and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Tips for tour leaders and drivers
- Any other items not mentioned above

# Options

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Our tours are designed to include all that you need to enjoy a really special time in the destination you're visiting. However, we do also offer some extra options to complement the tour and add some additional sightseeing or activities, or some extra time at either end of the tour.

All accommodation based options (e.g. Single supplements, extra nights, cruise upgrades) should be booked and paid for in advance so that we can make the appropriate arrangements. Other options may either be booked and paid for in advance or while you are on the tour, though we recommend booking in advance to ensure there are no issues with availability.

Many options are priced the same throughout the year, but some may incur single or high season supplements - full details are given on the tour reservation form or on request.

## Camel Ride in Wadi Rum

Min numbers: 1

This option adds on a fun sunset or sunrise camel ride through the Wadi Rum desert.

## Single room supplement (ISSHIE)

Min numbers: 1

The tour price is based on 2 people sharing twin/double rooms. This option books a single room in all the accommodation throughout the tour. If you are a single traveller and would be happy to share a room, let us know and we will see if we can pair you up with another single traveller of the same sex. If a room share is not available when you book then we will add the single room supplement to your booking and it will be payable with your balance payment unless we have arranged a room share for you by then. If a room share is arranged after you have paid the supplement then we will refund it to you. Room shares are arranged in order of booking.

**Note:** Single supplement prices may vary seasonally.

## Comfort hotel upgrade (ISSGBO)

Min numbers: 1

The standard tour price is based on comfortable mid-range hotels at the local 3 and 4 star level (they can be considered 3-star international standard). This option upgrades the accommodation to our most popular 'Comfort' level, featuring better 4-star hotels in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem and the same Kibbutz Hotel in the Galilee. In Jordan this upgrade includes 4-star hotels.

The normal hotels used are given below, though these may be exchanged for others on some dates subject to availability at the time of booking.

- Tel Aviv - Metropolitan or Grand Beach
- Jerusalem - Grand Court or Leonardo
- Galilee - same Kibbutz Hotel
- Amman - Grand Palace Hotel
- Petra - Nabatean Castle Hotel

If you are a solo traveller then you will need to add the single room supplement for the main tour. An additional supplement will also need to be added to cover the extra cost of a single room in the upgraded hotels. Please check the tour reservation form for prices or contact us for more details.

## **Superior hotel upgrade (ISSGBO)**

Min numbers: 1

The standard tour price is based on comfortable mid-range hotels at the local 3 and 4 star level (they can be considered 3-star international standard). This option upgrades the accommodation to a 'Superior' level, featuring 5-star hotels in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem Amman and Petra and a superior room in the Kibbutz Hotel in the Galilee.

The normal hotels used are given below, though these may be exchanged for others on some dates subject to availability at the time of booking.

- Tel Aviv - Crowne Plaza/Dan Panorama
- Jerusalem - Crowne Plaza Deluxe/Dan Panorama
- Galilee - Superior room in the Kibbutz Hotel
- Amman - Regency Palace Hotel
- Petra - Old Village Resort

If you are a solo traveller then you will need to add the single room supplement for the main tour. An additional supplement will also need to be added to cover the extra cost of a single room in the upgraded hotels. Please check the tour reservation form for prices or contact us for more details.

## **Deluxe hotel upgrade (ISSGBO)**

Min numbers: 1

The standard tour price is based on comfortable mid-range hotels at the local 3 and 4 star level (they can be considered 3-star international standard). This option upgrades the accommodation to a 'Deluxe' level, featuring some of the best 5-star hotels in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Amman, Petra and a superior room in the Kibbutz Hotel in the Galilee.

The normal hotels used are given below, though these may be exchanged for others on some dates subject to availability at the time of booking.

- Tel Aviv - Carlton or Sheraton
- Jerusalem - David Citadel or Mamilla
- Galilee - Superior room in the Kibbutz Hotel
- Amman - Kempinski Hotel
- Petra - Marriott Hotel

If you are a solo traveller then you will need to add the single room supplement for the main tour. An additional supplement will also need to be added to cover the extra cost of a single room in the upgraded hotels. Please check the tour reservation form for prices or contact us for more details.

Note: This hotel level is not available during peak season dates (Passover, after Yom Kippur and over Christmas)

## **Petra by night (local payment)**

Min numbers: 1

This magical experience takes you in through the narrow and winding Siq to the Treasury at the entrance to Petra. The whole route and the sand in front of the Treasury is lit up by numerous candles creating a beautiful and atmospheric sight. While at the Treasury you'll also enjoy some traditional Bedouin music and tea.

Pricing includes your entrance ticket and any transfers required to and from your hotel. Please bring a flashlight/torch with you for this trip as the path through the Siq is rough underfoot in places and while there are candles all the way, a torch provides extra assurance against mis-stepping.

**Please Note: This is a local payment option, payment will be collected by your tour guide whilst in Jordan.**

## **Wadi Rum Astronomy Experience**

Min numbers: 1

Venture into the heart of Wadi Rum's captivating desert landscape after nightfall and witness a celestial display like no other. Far from city lights, the vast, clear skies above this ancient valley reveal a breathtaking panorama of stars.

Join our optional astronomy tour and embark on a journey through the cosmos. Our expert guides will illuminate the constellations, planets, and deep-sky objects visible to the naked eye, sharing fascinating insights into their mythology and scientific significance.

Experience the profound silence and tranquility of the desert night as you gaze upon the Milky Way's shimmering expanse. With the aid of powerful telescopes, you'll delve deeper into the universe, observing distant galaxies and nebulae with remarkable clarity. This is an unforgettable opportunity to connect with the cosmos and appreciate the sheer scale and beauty of the night sky in one of the world's most spectacular natural settings.

## **Wadi Rum Hot Air Balloon Flight**

Min numbers: 1

Enhance your Wadi Rum visit with an optional hot air balloon flight. Experience a sunrise view of the 'Valley of the Moon' from above. Observe the desert landscape as the sun rises, providing unique photographic opportunities. Flights are early morning, conducted by professional pilots, and subject to weather conditions. Bookings are confirmed the evening before. A full refund is provided if the flight is cancelled due to adverse weather conditions.

## **Wadi Rum Quad Bikes**

Min numbers: 1

Unleash your adventurous spirit and explore the magnificent desert landscapes of Wadi Rum on an exhilarating quad biking excursion. This optional activity puts you in control of your own All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV), allowing you to navigate the sandy plains and weave between the iconic towering rock formations under the guidance of local experts. 1 Feel the thrill as you power through the stunning scenery of the 'Valley of the Moon', accessing unique viewpoints and experiencing the vastness of the desert in a truly dynamic way. It's a perfect add-on for those seeking an adrenaline rush and a different perspective on Wadi Rum's breathtaking beauty.

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## 1. Accommodation

We use good quality hotels rated at the Israel & Jordan 3-4-star level on this tour, Options are available to upgrade the accommodation if you would like a higher level of hotel. Please contact us for prices to match your dates. The normal hotels we use for these upgrades are shown below, though these may change to alternate hotels of a similar standard on some dates:

Comfort (4-star): Tel Aviv - Metropolitan / Grand Beach | Jerusalem - Grand Court / Ramada | Tiberias\* - Lake House / Royal Plaza | Amman - Grand Palace | Petra - Petra Moon / Petra Canyon  
Superior (4/5-star) : Tel Aviv - Dan Panorama / Crowne Plaza Beach | Jerusalem - Dan Panorama / King Solomon | Tiberias\* - Caesar / Gai Beach | Amman - Regency Palace | Petra - Old Village Resort  
Deluxe (5-star): Tel Aviv - Carlton | Jerusalem - David Citadel / Mamilla | Tiberias\* - U-Boutique / Magdala | Amman - Movenpick Amman | Petra - Movenpick Resort Petra (on request)

\* On some dates the tour may stay in Nazareth or Haifa instead of Tiberias

As different hotel levels are available, this does mean that if some people take up the upgrades there will be more than one hotel pick-up and drop-off each day, though we do aim to plan these to minimise any extra travelling time.

Accommodation is based on twin or double en-suite rooms with air conditioning. All couples will be given a private double room.

Please check the Single Room Supplement option for details on room sharing options and charges for solo travellers on this tour.

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## 2. Transfers

This tour includes an arrival airport transfer from Ben Gurion airport in Tel Aviv to your hotel at anytime on Day 1 of the tour, and a transfer back from your hotel to the airport on Day 11. If you would like to add extra time in Israel and arrive before Day 1 of the tour or leave after Day 11, we can provide you with a quotation for your extra nights and airport transfer.

For legal reasons when crossing from Israel into Jordan, it's not possible for us to use the same vehicle so you'll be escorted to the immigration point on the Israel side of the border before taking a shuttle bus to the Jordanian side where our Jordanian team will greet you. Once in Jordan you'll have a Jordanian guide and driver who will continue with you for this part of the tour. You should budget approximately \$107.00 for border fees which are not included in the tour price. These fees will be paid locally, in cash, when crossing the border. We have many passengers each year crossing this border and our local team are very experienced - full assistance will be given at each side.

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## 3. Border Crossings

This tour includes two crossings of the Israel/Jordan border. We ask for your patience when crossing borders, as this process can sometimes take more than an hour. Please be assured that our local team is working daily with the authorities and is doing whatever they can at all times to expedite this. We also suggest that you try to travel as light as possible, as the Israeli security is tight and it can take a while for them to search through and check large cases.

Crossing at Beit Shean (Sheikh Hussein) from Israel to Jordan.

Our border assistant will explain the procedure to you at the entrance to the terminal. First, you enter the terminal and visit the exit tax kiosk and pay your exit tax (100 ILS plus 5 ILS surcharge in USD, EUR or Israeli Shekels). Take your exit tax to the immigration counter and hand it over with your passport. After processing your passport you walk through the duty free and outside across the road there is a waiting area. Here you can wait till called to

board your shuttle bus to the Jordan Terminal. Note: Our staff cannot accompany you during this process, so you should follow the instructions of the assistant and border staff to ensure your crossing is smooth. You pay the shuttle bus fee of JOD 1.6 (approx. \$2.3 US or 10 NIS) on arrival at the Jordan terminal and then head to Jordanian immigration to arrange your Jordan visa and enter the country. Once on the Jordanian guide, your guide/assistant (sometimes the same person), will handle the taxes and if appropriate, visa payments.

**IMPORTANT:**

Jewish religious items/souvenirs are not allowed into Jordan through the border and are confiscated by Jordanian authorities.

This causes delays to the tour and may impact the amount of time spent at a site, or even cause the site to be missed from the program.

Please ensure that you do not take any of these items with you to Jordan, in order not to delay the tour.

Returning to Israel from Jordan.

Our assistant team on both sides can take you right up to the border fence and will explain to you the procedure throughout.

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#### **4. Group Size/Tour Leaders/Guides**

On average the group departures on this tour tend to have a minimum of around 10 passengers and an average of 14-18, though we only need 2 passengers to book for a departure to be guaranteed. The maximum capacity of this tour is 45 which is why we class it as a Shoestring level tour. To ensure affordability in what is a very expensive country to arrange tours like this, we share this tour with a small number of other operators so you may join with travellers booking with different companies.

At Encounters Travel we aim to only ever use local Israeli and Jordanian guides and reps. We feel this gives you the best experience of the country and the sites you are seeing. A different guide may be used for the Occupied Palestinian Territory sites to the rest of the tour in Israel.

When crossing to Jordan you will be dropped by your guide at the entry to the Israel/Jordan border crossing and met on the Jordanian side by a guide who will accompany you for the Jordanian section of the tour. On your return to Israel you will again pass through the border independently before being met on the Israeli side. Please check the Border Crossings note for information on border crossing fees.

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#### **5. What to take**

**Luggage:** Suitcases, rucksacks or fabric holdalls are all fine to bring with you to Israel and Jordan. You should also bring a small daypack/bag to take out during the day. Your main luggage will normally be left in the hotel during your sightseeing trips – you will not need to carry it far, and there are nearly always hotel porters to assist.

**Luggage limits:** There is no luggage limit for this tour. However, most airlines restrict you to between 20kg and 25kg for your hold luggage and between 5kg and 10kg for hand luggage. Please check with your airline before travelling to the airport.

**Clothing:** The climate in Israel and Jordan varies widely from hot days in the summer to cool and sometimes wet days in the winter months. At night, especially in the deserts, the temperatures can drop quite dramatically. So you must pack for cool conditions. Formal dress (eg. suits & ties) is not required. Modesty rates highly in Jordan (and parts of Israel), especially for women, so to respect the local culture & people, please ensure all clothes are loose fitting and not revealing. Shorts (not hot-pants) are OK in tourist sites, as are T-shirts, but these should not show too much bare flesh (we suggest that your shoulders should remain covered). When visiting any mosques, legs and arms should be covered.

**Other items:** At the Bedouin camp bedding is provided but we recommend bringing a light sleeping sheet or sleeping bag liner for comfort all year round (even with the best efforts, sand does find its way pretty much everywhere). In the winter months, or if you think you would like to sleep under the stars instead of in your tent, then we recommend you bring a sleeping bag with you as it can get very cold at night. We also recommend you bring a sun hat, sunscreen, sunglasses, a basic first aid kit, toiletries, money belt, small torch, camera & charger.

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## 6. Booking & Payment

If you would like to book a place on this tour, please complete the online reservation form on our website (via the Dates & Prices tab on the tour page). You may make a deposit or full payment online, or just hold a reservation if you prefer (full payments are due 8 weeks before departure). We will then contact you with more details about how to complete your booking. Payments may be made by debit or credit card (subject to a card processing fee), or by making a bank transfer, or posting us a cheque/bank draft. Full details will be provided in your booking confirmation email. Please [contact us](#) if you would like any more information or have any questions before making a booking.

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## 7. Financial Security

We are a UK registered company and are committed to providing our customers with financial protection to provide peace of mind and to allow you to book with confidence.

We have therefore partnered with Trust My Travel Ltd., which provides financial protection services to over 2000 partners around the world. Funds paid to us by our customers are protected via an Insurance policy held by Trust My Travel. Each traveller and the description of services sold is declared against Trust My Travel's insurance policy directly against our financial failure. In the event of our insolvency, you will be refunded for any unfulfilled products and/or repatriation to the UK (where applicable). Please see [our website](#) or [booking conditions](#) for more information.

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## 8. Responsible Tourism

It is impossible not to have an impact on the local environment, cultures and eco-systems when you travel. However, it is very possible to try and ensure that these impacts are as limited, or positive as possible. We are committed to ensuring that we try to leave our host countries in a better state than we found them and encourage and assist our travellers to help us with this.

The following are a few simple tips that require very little effort on your part but which will help ensure that any effect you have on the locations you visit is positive rather than negative.

- Don't prejudge: Things in different countries will almost certainly be different. That doesn't make them worse or inferior, just different.
- Communicate: Don't expect locals to speak your language. Take the trouble to learn a few words or phrases of the local language. Don't worry about sounding silly. Most locals are patient and accommodating and appreciate you making the effort to communicate in their language.
- Conserve energy: Be careful not to waste valuable resources. Use local resources sparingly. Switch off lights, air-conditioning and fans when you leave the hotel room and don't waste water. Remove superfluous packaging. Many countries have far less efficient waste disposal systems than ours. Remove packaging from newly acquired items before leaving home.
- Don't litter: No matter how untidy or dirty the country you're travelling in may look to you, avoid littering, as there is no need to add to the environment's stress. Many of the countries we visit have a tough challenge dealing with rubbish and waste. Please consider taking home as much plastic waste as you can (e.g. water bottles).
- Choose environmentally friendly products: By using environmentally friendly (bio degradable) sun creams, shampoos and detergents you can help reduce pollution.
- Respect local customs and traditions: As you are a guest in these countries, you should also comply with the local customs. If you are friendly and well mannered, the locals will reciprocate and it will only enhance your experience. It's important to follow dress and behaviour guidelines especially when visiting religious or sacred sites (your tour leader will advise you how best to do this).
- If a client commits an illegal act the client may be excluded from the tour and Encounters Travel shall cease to have responsibility to/for them. No refund will be given for any unused services.

All porters are employed and equipped following guidelines set by the International Porter Protection Group (IPPG).

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## 9. Follow Us Online

You can stay in touch with us online by following us on Facebook and Twitter. We post updates on relevant travel news in our destination countries, special offers and discounts and other interesting travel related news and information.

[www.facebook.com/encounterstravel](https://www.facebook.com/encounterstravel)

<https://x.com/encounterstravel> (yes, without the 'e')

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## 10. Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory on all of our tours and needs to cover personal accident & liability, medical expenses and repatriation, travel delay & abandonment. We also strongly recommend that you take out cover against cancellation and lost/stolen baggage. Personal medical insurance does not normally provide sufficient cover and is generally not suitable for travel on our tours. You will not be able to join your tour if you have not provided us with details of your insurance or if you arrive without cover in place (no refunds will be due in this event).

Considering travel insurance for your trip? [World Nomads Travel Insurance](#) offers coverage for more than 150 adventure activities as well as emergency medical, lost luggage, trip cancellation and more.

If your tour includes car hire, or if you plan to arrange a hot air balloon flight locally or do some scuba diving during your tour, you should check the small print in your policy to make sure these are covered (these are covered in our policy). Please also check the maximum altitude that you will be reaching and that full cover including emergency evacuation is provided up to this altitude.

If you are taking expensive camera gear or other electronic equipment with you then please check the coverage and the fine print of your policy to ensure that you have sufficient cover.

*IMPORTANT: We must have your travel insurance details (policy number and type of insurance) before you depart or you may not be allowed to join the tour. If you haven't told us already, please let us know the details when you can. You should take a paper copy of your insurance policy with you as you may be asked to show this at the start of the tour.*

### **Covid-19**

**Before purchasing any travel insurance, please check the coverage provided for situations related to Covid-19, and for the rules about government travel advice. Your normal policy may not be suitable.**

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## 11. Before you travel

It is important when considering and preparing to travel anywhere in the world that you have a good understanding of the country you are visiting, its laws and customs, and the possible risks and situations that may occur. This includes specific risks related to your itinerary (eg. does it involve water & can you swim, are you fit enough for the activities included), as well as more general risks such as terrorism and natural disasters.

General details and links to more information about health risks, visa requirements, money, and travel insurance are given in these tour notes. We recommend that you re-read all these before your departure as well as the small print of your travel insurance policy so you know exactly what is covered and what is not.

You should take copies of your important travel documents with you and ideally also store them online securely as a backup. Make sure that you have given us your emergency contact details and told that person where and when you are travelling. Ensure you take enough money with you and that you have access to emergency funds.

Finally, you should read through and stay updated with the current [official government travel advice](#) for your destination. We are registered partners with the UK Foreign Office's ['Travel Aware' campaign](#) which provides further useful and invaluable information.

## 12. Reduce Plastic Waste with Water-to-Go Filter bottles

Traveling responsibly means minimizing plastic waste, but staying hydrated on the go is essential. At Encounters Travel we are committed to reducing single-use plastics, which is why we've partnered with Water-to-Go. Their portable filtration system removes over 99.9% of contaminants from any non-saltwater source, turning even questionable water sources into safe drinking water.

Given that tap water is un-safe to drink in many of the countries in which we operate, we recommend purchasing a Water-to-Go bottle prior to departure. This will help you avoid the use of single use plastic bottles and keep you hydrated on the go.

Save big! Get a huge 25% off your Water-to-Go bottle and other Water-to-Go products (such as filters, lids, and carriers). Use code **ENCOUNTERS25** at checkout (valid in the UK, USA and Canada).

### How Water-to-Go Technology works:

- Their reusable, BPA free water bottles contain their own unique 3-in-1 filtration technology effectively providing clean safe drinking water from any non-salt water source around the world.
- Three different (1 traditional and 2 nano) technologies are combined in one filter cartridge to remove up to 99.9999% of microbiological contaminants in water.

### The three technologies used in a Water-to-Go filter are:

- Mechanical filtration – A tiny pore size, so small contaminants can't fit through.
- Electrical – A positive charge reduces the pore size even further and attracts contaminants like a magnet, trapping them inside the filter.
- Activated Carbon – Unlike most carbon based filters, instead of using adhesives to glue the carbon particles together, (which vastly reduces the carbon's efficiency) it is contained within the membrane, helping to reduce contaminants whilst eliminating bad tastes and odours. Try filtering water from your tap at home and taste the difference!

### Water-to-Go filter bottles deliver safe, healthy water worldwide

- Water-to-Go filters remove bacteria, viruses, waterborne disease, protozoa, heavy metals such as lead as well as harmful chemicals.
- Their filters remove Chlorine and Fluoride from tap water.
- The filter will eliminate harmful contaminants from the water but allow beneficial minerals such as sodium and magnesium to pass through leaving you with the healthiest water possible.
- Water-to-Go filters have been independently tested against internationally recognised standards by industry specialists including The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (UK), BCS Laboratories (USA), Bangalore Test House (India) and IMI (China).

### Use Water-to-Go products and you'll be healthier, wealthier and helping to make the world a better place!

- Depending on filter size, each Water-to-Go filter is able to replace 260 or 400 single-use plastic water bottles!
  - They ensure you have access to safe water anywhere in the world without ever having to buy environmentally damaging bottled water.
  - Their water bottles deliver safe, clean drinking water at just 5p per litre.
  - The filter membrane is biodegradable and the shrouds are recyclable.
  - The water bottles are used and approved by everyone from backpackers to commuters, gym users to expecting mums. Perfect for everyday, outdoor and travel.
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### 13. Private & Tailor-made Tours

While our group departures offer a fantastic way to explore with like-minded travellers, we understand that some guests prefer a more exclusive experience. Most of our group tours can be booked on a private basis, allowing you to enjoy the same expert-led routes with your own dedicated party. The primary advantage of choosing a private arrangement is the flexibility it provides; we can easily customise the itinerary to include your preferred style of accommodation or adjust the pace to suit your needs. Private tours can be run on the same start days as our group tours, or on other dates. However, some activities within our trips are restricted to particular days of the week - we will advise you on anything like this that we need to work around. Pricing will be based on the number of travellers in your party, and any customisations you may like to make.

For those seeking something truly unique, our specialist sales team is available to collaborate with you on a completely tailor-made tour, designed from the ground up to match your specific interests, accommodation level and requirements.

To request a quotation for a private or tailor-made tour, please [contact us](#).

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### 14. Passports and Visas - Jordan

Passports should be valid for at least six months after your departure from the country. Please do not bring an almost full or almost expired passport. Visa arrangements are the responsibility of the traveller, and requirements are subject to change by the local authorities.

To promote tourism to the country, the Jordanian government has designed the **Jordan Pass**. This provides adults of most nationalities with a free single entry Jordan visa (for stays of 3 nights or more), a discounted package of entrance fees, and free digital brochures for the various sites in Jordan. Please check the Jordan Pass tour note for more information.

**Please note that whilst the Jordan Pass is recommended for the vast majority of our Jordan Tours where entrance fees are not included, this is not recommended for our Petra & the Bedouin Trail tour as entrance fees to Petra and Wadi Rum are already included in the cost of this tour.**

Double or multi entry visas for Jordan are no longer available and you will need to arrange two visas if you are doing a combination tour (eg. with Egypt and/or Israel) that visits Jordan more than once. Exceptions may occur if you are crossing to and from Israel via the King Hussein Bridge - please contact us for details.

If you wish to arrange your visa separately in advance, or if your stay will be shorter than four days/3 nights, then a visa fee of 40JD (approx. USD 57) will be due.

Families with children under 12 are recommended not to purchase the Jordan Pass for the children as entrance fees are not charged in Jordan for children under 12. Instead, the adults should purchase a Jordan Pass and we will arrange a free visa for the children which you will receive when we meet you on arrival into Amman airport.

Other nationalities may require a visa prior to arrival and to obtain this in advance, please contact your local Jordanian embassy or consulate or a visa agency for details. In addition, if you plan to enter Jordan via the southern Wadi Araba crossing (Eilat-Aqaba) or the Allenby Bridge/King Hussein border with Israel in the north, you will need to obtain your Jordan visa in advance as these are not available on arrival at the border.

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### 15. Money - Jordan

The local currency in Jordan is the Jordanian Dinar (JD). You do not need to arrange to bring any Jordanian Dinar with you to Jordan as exchange facilities are available in the international airports and in most hotels, banks and bureau de changes in major towns. You should try to obtain and keep hold of small denomination notes or coins on you during the tour as these are useful for toilets, tips and small purchases. ATMs are readily available in major towns and many local shops will accept VISA/Mastercard or Amex, but may charge fees of up to 10% -

check before you pay. Travellers cheques are not recommended as they can not be changed in many places now, and can incur high fees.

While in Jordan you will need sufficient funds to cover meals not included in the itinerary, drinks, snacks, souvenirs and personal expenses such as laundry. These should generally all be paid for in Jordanian Dinar, though tips for guides and drivers may be paid in hard currency (GBP, USD, EUR).

It is difficult to recommend a level of personal spending money which will suit everyone as this can differ greatly, but as a guideline, we would suggest allowing USD 15-25 per person per day as a minimum. Allow more if you plan on doing lots of shopping, or buying many alcoholic drinks.

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## 16. Voltage

Sockets are two round pronged and 220 volts (Type C). Universal adaptors are available in most airport shops if you don't have one already. Standard European adapters will work fine, though sometimes they may feel a little loose in the sockets. All hotel rooms have electrical sockets where you can re-charge cameras, phones etc. Hair dryers are normally available on request from the hotel reception if not in your room already.

If you have US appliances (110 volts) you will need a voltage converter as well as a plug adapter.

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## 17. Time

The time in Egypt, Jordan, Israel and Lebanon is GMT plus 2 hours and in UAE GMT plus 3 hours. Daylight saving adjustments have historically been applied in some years but not others. At present it appears that there will be no daylight saving changes in Egypt 2016 and beyond, though this may change at short notice (with a resulting impact on flight times and schedules). In Jordan and Israel, daylight saving of one hour is generally applied between the end of March and the end of October, making it GMT plus 3 hours. Exact dates vary from year to year and sometimes the changes may be scrapped altogether.

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## 18. Health and Vaccinations

You should ensure you are fully insured for medical emergencies including emergency evacuation and repatriation.

Recommended vaccinations and other health protection measures vary according to the country you are visiting and where you are travelling from. We recommend you contact your GP/medical practitioner or a travel clinic for current information on vaccinations needed for your destination. You should ensure that you are up to date with vaccines and boosters recommended for your normal life at home, including for example, vaccines required for occupational risk of exposure, lifestyle risks and underlying medical conditions.

In addition, additional courses or boosters normally recommended for the countries in this region are:

Egypt: Tetanus, Typhoid, Hepatitis A

Jordan: Tetanus, Hepatitis A

Israel: Hepatitis A, Poliomyelitis

Lebanon: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A

Malaria is not generally present unless it has been contracted abroad; you do not need to take malaria prophylactics.

More information is available here: [Egypt](#), [Jordan](#), [Israel](#), [Lebanon](#)

Note: We are aware of some places in Egypt using 'black henna' instead of pure brown henna. Black henna contains a chemical dye PPD (paraphenylenediamine) which can result in severe allergic reactions and resultant scarring. To be safe we recommend avoiding any henna tattoos while in Egypt unless you are certain they are using pure brown henna.

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## 19. International Flights

We want to give you as much flexibility as possible when it comes to booking your holiday with us. So, to take account of people with varying travel plans, we don't include your international flights in the main tour price. We are however very happy to suggest flights to go with the tour. Please contact us with your preferred dates and departure airport and we'll give you a selection of airlines, times and fares to choose from.

Your airport arrival & departure transfers are included on the first and last days of the tour. All our group tours in Israel start and finish at Ben Gurion airport in Tel Aviv (TLV). Private and tailor-made tours may arrive into Tel Aviv or Eilat.

We do also sometimes advertise flight inclusive packages from selected airports. Where these are shown on our website, prices are correct at the time of quoting, but are subject to continued availability of the fare used. Prices will be reconfirmed at the time of booking, and we will also provide the flight times and airline details before tickets are issued.

Flight inclusive prices are based on the cheapest Economy ticket class available which is generally non-refundable and non-changeable unless the flight is cancelled for reasons such as Covid-19, in which case the airlines are more flexible. More flexible ticket options, as well as Premium Economy and Business Class tickets are available on request for an additional supplement. Any changes made to flight inclusive bookings will be subject to the airline rules on your ticket.

### **Flight CO2 Emissions:**

Traveling by air is an amazing way to explore the world, but flights also contribute to carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions that impact the environment. By considering the airline's CO2 emissions when you choose your flight, you can help minimize your travel footprint.

When selecting your international flights and airline, we do therefore recommend that you try and also take into account the flight CO2 emissions. Some airlines and flight search websites (eg. Google Flights, Skyscanner) do publish this information, so you can compare between your flight options and make an informed decision. Thankfully, many airlines are working towards sustainability efforts, and choosing a greener option allows you to contribute to positive change while still enjoying your incredible adventure.

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## **20. Tipping**

Tipping is common practice in Israel, as a sign of appreciation for services provided. You may therefore wish to tip your guide and driver at the end of the tour. You should not feel obliged to tip any particular amount, and should consider your personal budget. We are often asked to provide a guide however, and can suggest that approx. GBP 5 / USD 8 per person per day would be appropriate.

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## **21. Passports & Visas - Israel & OPT**

Passports should be valid for at least six months after your departure from the country. Please do not bring an almost full or almost expired passport. Visa arrangements are the responsibility of the traveller, and requirements are subject to change by the local authorities.

From 1st January 2025, all passengers travelling to Israel must arrive with a pre-arranged visa or ETA-IL approval. Many nationalities (including UK, European, USA, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand, South African) do not need to obtain a visa to enter Israel as a period as long as your stay is for less than 3 months, though an ETA-IL approval is required, even for passengers who are visa exempt. Other nationalities should check with their local consulate.

All passengers entering Israel from 1st January 2025 onwards should apply for an ETA-IL approval online at - [Israel Population & Immigration Authority](#) a fee of 25 shekels (around GBP 5, USD 7) will be required during the application process. If you are travelling to Israel prior to January 2025, the ETA-IL is not required.

Most of our tours visiting Israel also enter the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT). No special visas are required but check points and border posts are operated by the Israeli authorities and access is sometimes

limited or restricted.

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## **22. Money - Israel**

The local currency in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories is the Israeli Shekel (ILS). You do not need to arrange to bring any Shekels with you as exchange facilities are available in the international airports and in most hotels, banks and bureau de changes in major towns. You should try to obtain and keep hold of small denomination notes or coins on you during the tour as these are useful for toilets, tips and small purchases. ATMs are readily available in major towns and many local shops will accept VISA/Mastercard or Amex, but may charge fees of up to 10% - check before you pay. Travellers cheques are not recommended as they can not be changed in many places now, and can incur high fees.

While in Israel and the OPT you will need sufficient funds to cover meals not included in the itinerary, drinks, snacks, souvenirs and personal expenses such as laundry. These should generally all be paid for in local currency, though tips for guides and drivers may be paid in hard currency (GBP, USD, EUR).

It is difficult to recommend a level of personal spending money which will suit everyone as this can differ greatly, but as a guideline, we would suggest allowing USD 25-35 per person per day as a minimum. Allow more if you plan on doing lots of shopping, or buying many alcoholic drinks.

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**Note:** Please [download an up-to-date copy](#) of these tour notes shortly before you travel as itineraries and information does change from time to time.

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