ENCOUNTERS TRAVEL

Your passport to adventure

Classic Israel

COUNTRY(IES)	Israel
TOUR TYPE	Shoestring
TRANSPORT	A/C car/minibus/coach
GROUP SIZE	Min: 2 | Max: 45
DURATION	8 days
STARTS	Tel Aviv, Israel
ENDS	Jerusalem, Israel
MEALS	Breakfasts - 7, Lunches - 0, Dinners - 2

TOUR ROUTE MAP **8 Days**



ROUTE: **Tel Aviv Yafo** (Start) → **Mount Scopus** → **Tiberias** → **Ben Gurion Airport** (End)

HIGHLIGHTS

Tel Aviv, Roman ruins at Caesarea, Druze villages, Golan Heights wine tasting, Haifa, Sea of Galilee, Tiberias, Nazareth, Masada fortress by cable car, Bethlehem, Dead Sea swim, old & new Jerusalem

Itinerary

DAY 1 Arrive Tel Aviv, transfer to hotel

Begin your journey in Israel with a smooth and comfortable arrival at Ben Gurion Airport. After clearing passport control, you'll be greeted by your representative and escorted to your hotel in Tel Aviv. This transfer is designed to provide a stress-free start to your Biblical Israel Tour, giving you the rest of the day to settle in, refresh, or explore the vibrant coastal city at your own pace.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Tel Aviv Airport to Tel Aviv City Hotel**
  Transfer from Ben Gurion Airport to your Tel Aviv hotel. A representative meets you after passport control. The rest of the day is free for rest or exploration.
- **Free Time in Tel Aviv**
  Enjoy free time in Tel Aviv to relax, explore beaches, or try local cafés. The city offers a lively yet laid-back atmosphere. Perfect for settling in after your flight.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS	EXTRAS
Tel Aviv hotel	None	Extra night in Tel Aviv - pre-tour, Single room supplement (ISSGCI)

DAY 2 Masada – Herod's Palaces - Dead Sea

Travel from Tel Aviv into the heart of the Judean Desert to explore Masada, King Herod’s iconic cliff-top fortress and a symbol of ancient resilience. After visiting the archaeological highlights, continue to the Dead Sea for a relaxing float in its mineral-rich waters, the lowest point on earth. Passing the oasis of Ein Gedi, the day concludes with a scenic ascent through desert landscapes back toward Jerusalem, where your arrival marks the end of a remarkable desert adventure.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Tel Aviv to Masada**
  Depart Tel Aviv and drive south through the coastal plain and Beersheba into the Judean Desert. Watch the scenery shift dramatically as you approach Masada.
- **Explore Masada National Park**
  Explore the ancient fortress built by King Herod atop an isolated desert plateau. The site tells the dramatic story of the Jewish Zealots and offers sweeping desert views.
- **Drive from Masada to Dead Sea**
  Drive down the desert road from Masada to the shores of the Dead Sea. Enjoy stark desert landscapes on the descent.
- **Dead Sea swim and float**
  Experience the unique buoyancy of the Dead Sea's salty waters. Floating effortlessly is a highlight for many visitors.
- **Drive from Dead Sea to Jerusalem**
  Ascend from the lowest point on earth back into the Judean Mountains toward Jerusalem. The route showcases dramatic elevation changes and desert landscapes.
- **Arrive in Jerusalem**
  Arrive in the historic and spiritual heart of Israel. Jerusalem offers deep cultural, historical, and religious significance for millions around the world.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Jerusalem hotel	Breakfast

DAY 3 Israel Museum - Yad Vashem - Bethlehem

Drive to Mount Scopus, passing the WWI British cemetrey, Hadassah Hospital and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, for a panoramic view of the Old City. Continue the tour to the Israel Museum, which houses the Dead

Sea Scrolls in the Shrine of the Book, after which you'll see the large scale renovated model of the Herodian city of Jerusalem. Visit Yad Vashem, the world Holocaust remembrance centre, before an afternoon drive to the picturesque village of Ein Karem. Later, travel to nearby Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus, to explore the Church of the Nativity and Manger Square before returning to Jerusalem. This holdings combines the cultural, historical and spiritual highlights of Jerusalem with panoramic views and local character.

ACTIVITIES

- **Explore Mount Scopus Viewpoint**
  Enjoy a panoramic view of Jerusalem from Mount Scopus. This high vantage point offers sweeping views of the Old City and surrounding landscapes.
- **Explore Israel Museum**
  Explore the large-scale model of Jerusalem during the Second Temple period. The display offers a detailed look at the ancient city's layout and landmarks.
- **Explore Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial**
  Visit Israel's official memorial to the victims of the Holocaust. The museum and memorial grounds offer a powerful and emotional historical experience.
- **Explore Ein Karem Village**
  Walk through the picturesque village believed to be the birthplace of John the Baptist. The area features charming stone alleys and historic churches.
- **Drive from Jerusalem to Bethlehem**
  Travel south from Jerusalem toward Bethlehem. The route passes through historic landscapes important to biblical tradition.
- **Explore Church of the Nativity (Bethlehem)**
  Visit the traditional birthplace of Jesus inside one of the oldest churches in continuous use. The site includes the Grotto of the Nativity and Manger Square.
- **Drive from Bethlehem to Jerusalem**
  Return to Jerusalem after the Bethlehem visits. The drive takes you back through the surrounding Judean hills.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Jerusalem hotel	Breakfast

DAY 4 Old City of Jerusalem - Mahane Yehuda

Step back in time in the Old City of Jerusalem, beginning with a transfer to the Old City and entering through one of the gates of the walled city to explore the renewed Jewish Quarter and its colourful souk. Visit the Western Wall, Judaism's most significant active prayer site, and view the Temple Mount from the exterior, then walk along the Via Dolorosa, stopping at the Stations of the Cross and following the traditional path of Jesus' final steps to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, revered as the site of both Golgotha and the Tomb of the Resurrection. Continue to Mount Zion for the tomb of King David, the Room of the Last Supper and Dormition Abbey. In the afternoon, leave the Old City for Mahane Yehuda Market, the largest open market in Israel, and experience the flavours, aromas and colours

of its stalls of fresh produce, spices and cafés along with the traders' interaction with the crowds. This holdings pairs the layered religious landmarks of the Old City with the lively local culture of Jerusalem's most famous marketplace.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Jerusalem City Hotel to Old City Gate**
  Transfer from your Jerusalem hotel to one of the Old City gates. This short drive brings you to the historic heart of Jerusalem. Begin your walking exploration from here.
- **Explore Western Wall**
  Visit Judaism's holiest active prayer site. The wall is a remnant of the ancient Temple complex and holds deep religious meaning.
- **Explore Temple Mount (Exterior)**
  See the location of the ancient Jewish Temples and one of Islam's most sacred sites. The area is rich in spiritual and historical importance.
- **Walk Along the Via Dolorosa**
  Walk along the traditional route of Jesus' path to crucifixion. The journey passes through stations marking key events of the Passion.
- **Explore Church of the Holy Sepulchre**
  Visit the site believed to contain both Golgotha (Calvary) and the Tomb of the Resurrection. It is one of Christianity's most sacred locations.
- **Explore Mount Zion**
  See the room where Jesus shared the Last Supper with his disciples. The site is revered by Christians worldwide.
- **Drive from Old City to Mahane Yehuda Market**
  Travel from the Old City area to Mahane Yehuda Market. The drive takes you through central Jerusalem's lively districts. Arrive at the city's largest outdoor market.
- **Explore Mahane Yehuda Market**
  Discover Mahane Yehuda Market, Jerusalem's bustling hub of spices, produce and street food. Enjoy the colourful, energetic atmosphere.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Jerusalem hotel	Breakfast

DAY 5 Beit Shean - Golan Heights - Tiberias

Travel from Jerusalem to Beit Shean for the archaeological visit before continuing north into the Golan Heights. Panoramic viewpoints provide the main natural focus, with views towards surrounding valleys and Mount Hermon when conditions allow. Afterwards, drive down towards the Sea of Galilee and finish in Tiberias. No additional sightseeing in Tiberias is specified after arrival.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Jerusalem to Beit Shean**
  Travel down the Jordan Valley past Jericho and farmland en route to Beit Shean. Watch the desert landscape give way to fertile plains.
- **Explore Beit Shean**
  Explore Beit Shean's vast Roman ruins including theatres, bathhouses and colonnaded streets. Learn how this city thrived in the Decapolis.
- **Drive from Beit Shean to Golan Heights**
  Ascend through the hills from the Jordan Valley to the Golan Heights. Enjoy striking vistas over the countryside below.
- **Explore Golan Heights Viewpoints**
  Visit panoramic lookouts over Mt. Hermon and the rugged Golan plateau. The region is known for dramatic landscapes and strategic historical importance.
- **Drive from Golan Heights to Tiberias**
  Drive from the Golan Heights down into the Hula Valley and on to Tiberias. Arrive beside the Sea of Galilee for your overnight stay.
- **Arrive in Tiberias**
  Arrive in Tiberias, one of Judaism's holy cities. A scenic lakeside destination and perfect base for exploring northern Israel.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Tiberias hotel	Breakfast,Dinner

DAY 6 Capernaum - Mount of Beatitudes - Sea of Galilee - Nazareth

Explore the sacred sites surrounding the Sea of Galilee, including Capernaum, the Mount of Beatitudes, and Tabgha, the traditional site of the miracle of the loaves and fishes. Enjoy a peaceful boat ride on the Sea of Galilee before continuing to Nazareth to visit the Church of the Annunciation, then return to Tiberias after a full day of biblical history and scenic landscapes.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Tiberias to Capernaum**
  Depart Tiberias and travel along the Sea of Galilee shoreline toward Capernaum. The route passes rural landscapes and lakeside villages. Arrive at one of the key sites of Jesus' ministry.
- **Explore Capernaum**
  Explore the ancient fishing village known as “His Town,” where Jesus taught and performed miracles. The site includes a synagogue and remains of historic dwellings.
- **Explore Mount of Beatitudes**
  A hillside overlooking the Sea of Galilee where Jesus delivered the Sermon on the Mount. The area offers beautiful gardens and panoramic views.

- **Explore Tabgha (Church of the Multiplication)**
  Visit the traditional site of the miracle of the loaves and fishes. The church features beautiful mosaics and serene lakeside views.
- **Explore Sea of Galilee Boat Sailing**
  Enjoy a peaceful boat experience on the Sea of Galilee. The scenery here has remained largely unchanged for thousands of years, offering a memorable moment on the water.
- **Drive from Sea of Galilee to Nazareth**
  Travel from the Sea of Galilee region to the city of Nazareth. The drive crosses rolling hills and rural communities. Arrive in one of the most important Christian pilgrimage cities.
- **Explore Church of the Annunciation**
  Visit the Church of the Annunciation, one of Christianity's most important sites. Tradition holds it as the place where the Archangel Gabriel appeared to Mary.
- **Drive from Nazareth to Tiberias**
  Return to Tiberias after visiting Nazareth. Enjoy a relaxed evening by the Sea of Galilee.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Tiberias hotel	Breakfast,Dinner

DAY 7 Acre, Haifa & Tel Aviv

Acre provides the first heritage stop with time in the Old City and Crusader Fortress before the journey continues along the coast to Haifa. Caesarea follows with its Roman archaeological remains, while Old Jaffa provides the final stop of the day. The route brings together medieval fortifications, Roman history and ancient Mediterranean port settings.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Tiberias to Acre**
  Drive west from Tiberias through the hills of the Galilee toward the Mediterranean coast. Arrive at the historic port city of Acre.
- **Visit Acre Old City and Crusader Fortress**
  Explore the Crusader halls, tunnels and fortifications of Acre's Old City. Learn how this port played a key role in Crusader and Ottoman history.
- **Drive from Acre to Haifa**
  Drive south along the Mediterranean coastline to Haifa. Ascend Mount Carmel overlooking the Bay of Haifa.
- **Explore Haifa**
  Stop at a viewpoint atop Mount Carmel to view Haifa Bay and the Baha'i Gardens below. Learn about Haifa's modern mixed-city character.
- **Drive from Haifa to Caesarea**
  Continue driving south along the Mediterranean coast to Caesarea. Pass beaches, kibbutzim and seaside towns along the way.

- **Explore Caesarea National Park**
  Explore Herod the Great's grand port city featuring the Roman Theatre, palace ruins, and ancient harbor remains.
- **Drive from Caesarea to Tel Aviv**
  Drive from Caesarea back to Tel Aviv via the coastal highway. Arrive for your final night in Israel before crossing into Jordan.
- **Explore Old Jaffa**
  Explore the ancient port city of Jaffa with its narrow alleyways and hilltop views. The area blends archaeology, culture, and seaside scenery.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Tel Aviv hotel	Breakfast

DAY 8 Your Classic Israel tour ends

Transfer from the Tel Aviv city hotel to Ben Gurion International Airport and complete the final organised journey of the trip. The route takes you directly from the city to the departure terminal, keeping the last day straightforward. Arrival at the airport brings the arranged services in Israel to a close.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Tel Aviv City Hotel to Tel Aviv Airport**
  Drive from your hotel in central Tel Aviv to Ben Gurion Airport. Your transfer brings you directly to the departures hall.
- **Depart from Tel Aviv International Airport**
  Your tour concludes at Ben Gurion Airport as you check in for your flight home. The airport's efficient facilities make the departure process comfortable and straightforward. This marks the end of your Biblical Israel journey.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS	EXTRAS
N/A	Breakfast	Extra night in Tel Aviv - post-tour

INCLUDED

- Acommodation in 3 to 4-star hotels
- All transport and transfers in AC vehicles
- 24-hour airport arrival & departure transfer service
- English speaking guide during touring days.
- All site entry fees.
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary (7 breakfasts)

EXCLUDED

- International flights (available on request)
- Visa fees (if applied)
- Travel insurance (compulsory, get a quote here)
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Drinks, snacks, tips and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Tips for driver & tour leader
- Any other items not mentioned above

Notes

Note: From March 2024 onwards please note that the itinerary will include the following changes:

- Thursday - After visiting Beit Shean, the tour will go to the Golan Heights for wine tasting and tour of Golan Heights (for tours departing before March 2024 this will be on Friday)
- Nazareth visit is moved to Friday (for tours departing before March 2024 this will be on Thursday)
- Safed will no longer be included on this tour, instead of Safed we will include a tour of Tiberias

Tour Options

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.

Comfort hotel upgrade (ISSGCI)

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.

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
- Galiliee - same Kibbutz 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 (ISSGCI)

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 and Jerusalem 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
- Galiliee - Superior room in the Kibbutz 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.

Deluxe hotel upgrade (ISSGCI)

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 and Jerusalem 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
- Galiliee - Superior room in the Kibbutz 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)

Important Notes

1 Accommodation

We use good quality hotels rated at the Israeli 3-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 changes 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

Superior (4/5-star) : Tel Aviv - Dan Panorama / Crowne Plaza Beach | Jerusalem - Dan Panorama / King Solomon | Tiberias* - Caesar / Gai Beach

Deluxe (5-star): Tel Aviv - Carlton | Jerusalem - David Citadel / Mamilla | Tiberias* - U-Boutique / Magdala

* 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 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, despite the 3 to 4-star level of the hotels. 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 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

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3 Entrance Fees

The tour price includes entrance fees to all the tourist sites mentioned in the itinerary. You will need to cover the cost of entrance to any other extra sites that you may wish to visit.

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4 Dates & Prices

We run regular departures on this tour starting on Sundays throughout the year. All departures are guaranteed to run with a minimum of 2 people. We can also run this tour privately starting on any other dates. Please contact us for details and prices based on the number of people in your party and your preferred dates.

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5 Transport

Our trips feature a mix of different transport options. We want you to feel like you’re really experiencing the country you’re travelling through, but at the same time we want you to finish journeys refreshed enough to enjoy the next stage of the tour. Our routes in Israel and the small distances involved mean that we use private vehicles

throughout this tour.

6 Transfers

Your airport transfers are only included on the first and last day of the set tour itinerary, plus on any additional days if you book your hotel room with us. If you make your own arrangements for additional accommodation at either the beginning or the end of the tour then you will need to arrange your own airport transfers on these days.

7 What to take

Luggage: Suitcases, rucksacks or fabric holdalls are all fine to bring with you to Israel. 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 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. When visiting any mosques, legs and arms should be covered.

Other items: We also recommend you bring a sun hat, sunscreen, sunglasses, a basic first aid kit, toiletries, money belt, small torch, camera & charger.

8 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.

9 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.

10 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).

11 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://x.com/encounterstravl (yes, without the 'e')

12 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.

13 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.

14 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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15 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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16 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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17 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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18 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 passenges 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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19 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.

20 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.

21 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.

22 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: Dipheria, 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.
