

Classic Israel

Country(ies): Israel

Tour type: Shoestring

Transport: A/C car/minibus/coach

Group size: Min: 2 | Max: 45

Days: 8 days

Start Location: Tel Aviv, Israel

End Location: Jerusalem, Israel

Meals: Breakfasts - 7, Lunches - 0, Dinners - 2

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

Once you've arrived at the airport, one of our representatives will welcome you and transport you to your hotel. The day is yours free to either relax or explore the city on your own.

OVERNIGHT: Tel Aviv hotel

MEALS: None

EXTRAS: Extra night in Tel Aviv - pre-tour Single room supplement (ISSGCI)

Day 2: Masada – Herod's Palaces - Dead Sea

We officially start the Israel tour today and set off from Tel Aviv, driving south, passing by the cities of Ashdod, Ashkelon and Beersheba, the capital of the Negev Desert.

We continue via Arad to Masada, Israel's foremost archaeological park and ascend via cable-car for a thorough visit that gives insight to the rituals, politics and culture of the people who inhabited this desert fortress.

We visit the excavations, Herod's palaces, the synagogue, bathhouse and cisterns, and enjoy the incredible views of the Roman camps and the Dead Sea.

We later descend to the lowest place on earth and the Dead Sea, to experience the mineral-rich black mud and to float in its salty waters.

We end the day by passing by the oasis of Ein Gedi and proceeding through the Judean Desert to Jerusalem.

OVERNIGHT: Jerusalem hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 3: Israel Museum - Yad Vashem - Bethlehem

Today, we drive to Mount Scopus, passing the WWI British cemetery, Hadassah Hospital, and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem for a panoramic view of the Old City.

We continue the tour to the Israel Museum, which houses the Dead Sea Scrolls in the Shrine of the Book after which we'll visit the large scale renovated model of the Herodian city of Jerusalem.

We also visit Yad Vashem and the world Holocaust remembrance centre and followed by an afternoon drive to the picturesque village of Ein Karem.

Later, we'll visit Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus, at the Church of the Nativity and Manger Square.

OVERNIGHT: Jerusalem hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 4: Old City of Jerusalem - Mahane Yehuda

We go back into time and visit the Old City of Jerusalem and we start the tour by entering through one of the gates to the walled Old City to visit the renewed Jewish Quarter and the colourful Souk.

We also walk along the Via Dolorosa, stopping at the Stations of the Cross, ending at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. We also make a visit to Mt. Zion and the tomb of King David, the Room of the Last Supper and Dormition Abbey

In the afternoon we visit Mahane Yehuda to experience the flavors, aromas, colors and the traders' interaction with the crowds, at the largest open market in Israel.

OVERNIGHT: Jerusalem hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 5: Beit Shean - Golan Heights - Tiberias

We leave Jerusalem today and drive north passing by Jericho and the oldest city in the world. We'll travel through the Jordan Valley and the new settlements to Beit Shean and visit the excavations of well-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. Later, we travel through the Golan, with its Druze villages, former Syrian fortifications and panoramic views of Mount Hermon and into Syria.

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, Dinner

EXTRAS:

Day 6: Capernaum - Mount of Beatitudes - Sea of Galilee - Nazareth

Along the shoreline of the Sea of Galilee, proceed to Capernaum, to visit the ruins of the ancient synagogue, the Mount of Beatitudes, traditional site of the 'Sermon on the Mount' and Tabgha, the traditional site of the 'miracle of the loaves and the fish'.

Whilst here we offer an optional sailing on a boat across the Sea of Galilee to experience the tranquility and scenery little changed during the past 2000 years (subject to conditions and extra fee if available).

Later in the day, we continue on to Nazareth to visit the Church of the Annunciation and Christian holy sites. Our day ends with a journey back to Tiberias where we spend the night.

OVERNIGHT: Tiberias hotel

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

EXTRAS:

Day 7: Acre, Haifa & Tel Aviv

After breakfast, we start the last day of our tour with a drive through the hills of the Galilee, westwards to Acre (Akko) for a visit of the old, famous Crusader stronghold and medieval fortifications.

We then continue to Haifa, for a panoramic sightseeing tour of the city, including the Baha'i Shrine, Persian Garden, Mount Carmel and Haifa bay. We then head along the Mediterranean coast to Caesarea to visit the Roman Theater and the Crusader fortress at what is known as the 'masterpiece of Herod the Great'

We end the day with a short city tour of Tel Aviv and the ancient port of Jaffa.

OVERNIGHT: Tel Aviv hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 8: Your Classic Israel tour ends

Today, the tour officially comes to an end and you'll be transferred to the airport for your departure back home. Don't hesitate to contact us if you'd like to extend your tour.

OVERNIGHT: N/A

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: Extra night in Tel Aviv - post-tour

Included:

- Accommodation 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, available on request)
- 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

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.

Extra night in Tel Aviv - pre-tour

Min numbers: 1

This option adds an extra night to the start of your tour in Israel, staying in the same hotel in Tel Aviv as the main tour itself (subject to availability at the time of booking). Your airport arrival transfer is still included. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing a twin/double room on a bed and breakfast basis.

Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

Single room supplement (ISSGCI)

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 (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
- Galilee - 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
- Galilee - 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
- Galilee - 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)

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 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

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.

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

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.

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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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.
