

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

Departs On: Saturday

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

Places Visited: Tel Aviv, Caesarea, Megiddo, Haifa, Safed, Golan Heights, Tiberias, Nazareth & Jerusalem



Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive Tel Aviv, transfer to hotel

Upon arrival you'll be met in the airport by one of our representatives who will then transfer you to your hotel. The rest of the day is then free for you to settle in and have a look around independently before meeting the group and starting the first sightseeing tours tomorrow morning.

OVERNIGHT: Tel Aviv hotel

MEALS: None

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

Day 2: Caesarea to Megiddo to Druze village to Haifa

Drive along the coastal plain to Caesarea, capital of Judea under the Romans. See the excavations of the Crusader city and the Roman port, aqueduct and the amphitheater that has been restored to its former glory as a concert venue. Proceed to Megiddo, identified as the site of Armageddon; visit the archaeological excavations including the well preserved water supply system. Continue to Daliat El Carmel, a Druze village and enjoy a late lunch at a local restaurant. Proceed via Mount Carmel to Haifa for a panoramic view of the Haifa bay and the Golden domed Bahai Shrine and gardens.

OVERNIGHT: Galilee Kibbutz

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

EXTRAS: None

Day 3: Safed to Golan Heights winery

Drive to Safed, the center of Jewish mysticism, where you will visit the ancient synagogues and the artists' colony. Continue to the Golan Heights to see the former Syrian bunkers, Kuneitra and the new Israeli town of Katzrin. Stop at the Golan winery for a tour and wine tasting. Proceed to "Kessem Hagolan", a multimedia presentation of the area and its history.

OVERNIGHT: Galilee Kibbutz

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

EXTRAS: None

Day 4: Sea of Galilee to Nazareth

Start the day with a visit to Nazareth and visit the church of Annunciation; Continue to Tiberias; Visit Capernaum to see the ruins of the synagogue and octagonal church of St. Peter; Visit Mount of Beatitudes where Jesus delivered the Sermon on the Mount. Drive via Beit Shean to Beit Alpha to see the remains of the mosaic floor of an ancient synagogue depicting the zodiac.

OVERNIGHT: Jerusalem hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: None

Day 5: Jerusalem, the old city

Start the day with a magnificent panoramic view from Mount of Olives. Drive to the Old City. Visit the Tomb of King David and the room of The Last Supper on Mount Zion. Enter the walled city and walk through the newly restored Jewish quarter. Visit the Roman Cardo, the Herodian quarter and continue to the Western Wall. Walk along the Via Dolorosa to the church of the Holy Sepulchre. If time and border restrictions permit, we will also enter the Occupied Palestinian Territories to visit Bethlehem to view Rachel's tomb and proceed to visit the Church of Nativity and Manger's Square.

OVERNIGHT: Jerusalem hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: None

Day 6: Jerusalem, the new city

Drive to the Israel museum. Visit the Shrine of the book where the Dead Sea Scrolls are housed and the miniature model of Jerusalem as it was during the second temple period. Proceed for a tour at the Knesset, Israel's parliament. Continue to visit Mount Herzl cemetery and Yad Vashem, the memorial to the Holocaust. Visit Mea Shearim, the ultra-orthodox neighborhood in Jerusalem and learn about their unique lifestyle. In the evening enjoy a Middle Eastern dinner followed by the spectacular "sound& light" show at the Tower of David museum, weather conditions permitting.

OVERNIGHT: Jerusalem hotel

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

EXTRAS: None

Day 7: Qumran to Masada to Dead Sea

Drive through the Judean Desert to the Dead Sea, the lowest point on earth, almost 1300 feet (400 meters) below sea level. Stop at Qumran to visit the site where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. Drive along the shores of the Dead Sea to Masada. Ascend by cable car and tour the ancient fortress where the Zealots made their last stand against the Romans before committing mass suicide in 73 AD. Descend by cable car. Continue to the Dead Sea. Cover yourself with the mineral rich mud and experience a swim in the Dead Sea, subject to the weather, that many believe has its therapeutic effects.

OVERNIGHT: Jerusalem hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: None

Day 8: Jerusalem, free time, transfer to airport

Today is free for you to do some last minute shopping or sightseeing before we transfer you back to the airport for your flight home.

OVERNIGHT: N/A

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: A Taste of Israel day tour || Extra day in Jerusalem - post-tour

Included

- All accommodation in 4-star hotels and a Kibbutz Hotel as stated in the itinerary
- 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 breakfast, 1 lunch, 3 dinners)

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

Options

Our tours are designed to include all that you need to enjoy a really special time in the destination you're visiting.

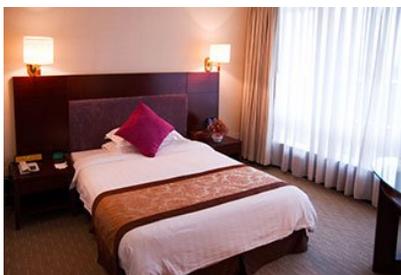
However, we do also offer some extra options to complement the tour and add some additional sightseeing or activities, or some extra time at either end of the tour.

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.

Single room supplement (ISSGCI)



Min numbers: 1 person

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: The price shown is a low season price. Slightly higher prices may apply during high and peak seasons - the exact price for your dates will be shown on the online booking form and is always available on request.

Extra day in Tel Aviv - pre-tour



Min numbers: 1 person

This option adds an extra day to the start of your tour in Israel, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (subject to availability at the time of booking). Your airport arrival transfer is NOT included. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing.

Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

Extra day in Jerusalem - post-tour



Min numbers: 1 person

This option adds a day to the end of your tour in Israel, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (subject to availability at the time of booking). Your airport departure transfer is NOT included. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing.

Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

Hotel upgrades



Min numbers: 1 person

If you would like a higher level of comfort on the tour, then an upgrade is available to better 4-star or 5-star level

hotels. Please contact us for prices as these do vary depending on your departure date. Additional single room supplements will also apply. Further details are given in the Accommodation section of the Tour Notes.

Tour Notes

1. Accommodation

We use good quality hotels rated at the Israeli 4-star level on this tour, together with a night in a Kibbutz hotel. Options are available to upgrade the accommodation to a better 4-star, standard 5-star, or 5-star deluxe level. 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:

Superior (4/5-star) : Tel Aviv - Dan Panorama | Jerusalem - Dan Panorama | Kibbutz Lavi - Superior room

Deluxe (5-star): Tel Aviv - Carlton | Jerusalem - Inbal | Kibbutz Lavi - Premium room

Luxury (superior 5-star): Tel Aviv - Dan Hotel | Jerusalem - King David | Kibbutz Lavi - Premium room

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. Single travellers will need to pay a single room supplement to guarantee themselves a single room throughout the tour. We aim to keep this cost as low as possible. As we may share this tour with other operators, we do not offer a room-share option.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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).

5. 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 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

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. 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.

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. Other nationalities should check with their local consulate.

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.

10. 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.

11. 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.

12. 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.

13. 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.

14. Dates & Prices

We run regular small-group departures on this tour starting on Saturdays throughout the year. All departures are guaranteed to run with a minimum of 2 people. Departure dates and prices are listed on our website and on a separate dates & prices sheet available on request.

15. 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.

16. 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). [More information...](#)

You may arrange your own insurance, or you can take advantage of a comprehensive policy that we can arrange for you through Endsleigh Insurance which has been designed to be suitable for our tours. The policy is available to travellers of all nationalities and you do not need to live in the UK to take out the policy. For full details of cover provided, prices and to apply for one of our policies, please complete [travel insurance application form](#).

Note: Any country that borders the Mediterranean is considered as 'Europe' for the purposes of travel insurance (including Turkey, Israel, Egypt and Morocco). If you are doing a tour that visits one country in 'Europe' and one that is 'Worldwide' (for example, an Egypt and Jordan tour), then you need a 'Worldwide' policy. When completing the form you should enter your travel dates including any extra days involved in overnight flights or connecting travel between your home and the tour. Our policies are not able to cover any extra time or activities other than your tour and options booked with us and your travel to & from home.

Note - to comply with insurance sales regulations, our travel insurance policies are only available to customers booking directly with us. If you have booked through a travel agent you will need to arrange your own insurance.

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.

17. Financial Security

We are a UK registered company and an ABTA Member (Y4447) and you can be confident when booking with us that your money is safe and protected.

Financial failure insurance is also provided through Affirma to protect all customers for the land portion of your tour. Please see [our website](#) or [booking conditions](#) for more information.

18. 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).

19. 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

www.twitter.com/encounterstravl (yes, without the 'e')

20. 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.



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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.
