



Although a tiny strip of land at the centre of Middle East, Israel offers a great variety of experiences. Witness the holy Jerusalem as you roam its ancient walls and streets while listening to the prayers of Muslims, Christians and Jews. The Old City of Jerusalem carries monumental religious importance with countless battles won and lost over it. The city remains a spiritual capital of the world, attracting pilgrims globally for centuries.

On the other hand, Tel-Aviv is the hub of progress as the technological and economic heart of Israel. Enjoy the golden beaches, taste delicious local cuisine and pastries. Go on to sip your cocktail before hopping aboard the vibrant nightclubs. On the way, get to discover Nazareth, a huge open-air museum on its own and visit the childhood village of Jesus Christ.

ESSENTIALS

Before you leave your country, we recommend you make sure you have the following:

- ➔ Passport
- ➔ Airline or transportation ticket
- ➔ Tour voucher
- ➔ Insurance policy
- ➔ Visas (if necessary)
- ➔ Label on your travel bag
- ➔ Pre-departure information
- ➔ Money / Credit card

VISAS

Citizens of Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States, Canada and South Africa do not require a visa for a touristic stay of up to 3 months. Your passport must be valid for at least 6 months from the end date of your travel, and have an empty page. Official passport holders (government officials) from USA or South Africa are not exempt of a visa and may require to apply in advance.

Although Israel no longer stamps passports at airports and entry via land borders, it is recommended people travelling to Arab countries, following an entry to Israel, officially request that their passports are not stamped. Please notify the clerk accordingly as you hand your documents.

HEALTH & SAFETY

It is mandatory for all passengers travelling on Travel Talk tours to have a personal travel insurance to cover medical and repatriation costs. A suitable insurance policy should provide adequate cover for medical expenses arising through illness or accident prior to or during the holiday and loss of holiday monies through cancellation and curtailment of the

holiday for insurable reasons, as well as any additional coverage per your personal needs and preferences. Please do not forget to take a copy of your insurance policy with you, which you'll be requested to provide when joining the tour. While there are no mandatory vaccinations for Israel, it is advisable to ensure Dengue, DTP, Hepatitis A inoculations are up to date.

Most people find that Israel is a friendly and hospitable country and feel quite comfortable wandering around alone during the day. However, as with any country and touristic site, show great care for your belongings at crowded tourist areas.

WHAT TO WEAR

As a general guideline, clothing should be lightweight, loose fitting, hard-wearing and easily washed. In summer, cotton clothing is much more comfortable than synthetic materials like nylon or polyester. Clothing that will protect you from sunburn is an absolute necessity. Especially in summer months white or light coloured, long sleeve cotton shirts are preferable.

In winter (December-March) you will need some warm, woollen clothing but in general, the weather is still quite warm. Please also keep in mind that when visiting religious sites, appropriate attire is required (scarf for females etc.).

MONEY

Israeli New Shekel (ILS or NIS) is the official currency in Israel. Bank notes are available in 20, 50, 100 and 200 Shekels. Coins are used for 10, 5, 2, 1, 0.50 and 0.10 Shekels.

Approximately GBP 1 = 4.44 ILS, however please check the latest conversion rates. There is no restriction on the amount of foreign currency that a visitor may bring into Israel, but large amounts above 80,000 ILS should be declared on arrival. Banks and ATMs can be found almost everywhere in Israel. We recommend you take USD, EUR or GBP as these are the easiest to exchange.

Credit cards are accepted in most shops, restaurants and hotels (with the exception of American Express).

WEATHER

The weather in Israel is pleasurable for travel throughout the year. The most comfortable times to visit are Spring when temperatures are on average in the low 20's and Autumn with temperatures around the high 20's. During the summer months, the average temperatures are over 30C and closer to 40C in the Southern parts, while the coastal areas are less affected. The Winter months are still mild in Israel, although there are occasional storms in the coastal areas in December and January, and it sometimes even snows in Jerusalem. May and October are generally considered as good times to visit, due to less tourists at the sites and great weather! It isn't too hot as some find it in the summer, but less unpredictable than the winter. September is also a great time, but is often affected by the Jewish Holidays of Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashana which almost shut down the country for a couple of days.

EATING & DRINKING

Food in Israel is a mixture of Jewish, Middle Eastern and Mediterranean cuisine. Some of the popular meals in the region include falafel, hummus, delicious aubergine dishes as Baba Ghanouj shakshouka, couscous and za'atar. A standard meal will consist of a main dish, supplemented by a number of appetisers (mezzes) such as tahini (sesame seed puree), Baba Ghanouj (tahini, garlic and charred aubergines) dips and salads. The cuisine incorporates olives, chickpea, wheat, dairy, tomatoes, aubergine, zucchini, fish and delicious bakery. Special dishes are also prepared during Shabbat and different Jewish holidays with the tradition of keeping kosher however some shops may be closed during the holidays. Tea and coffee are widely popular in Israel. Mint, thyme, or saga are often used to flavour the tea.



EATING & DRINKING

Coffee is served Turkish style; very strong and sweet. Freshly squeezed fruit juice is readily available from street stalls and kiosks and makes a refreshing change from the carbonated drinks. Limonana is a popular type of lemonade with mint. You might also want to try Araç – a strong aniseed-flavoured liqueur. There is a wide variety of national and international cuisine, bars and clubs in Tel-Aviv. Some fine restaurants require booking in advance.

OPENING HOURS

Most stores are open between Sunday to Thursday between 9:00am and 7:00pm as Sunday is the first day of the work week. However, these hours may get extended during peak holiday times, especially in the main shopping streets and malls. Shops usually close at noon on Friday and open again on Sunday morning. Popular shopping malls and shops on main shopping streets may remain open on Saturdays or holiday nights. Coffee shops and restaurants that do not serve kosher food often remain open on Saturdays.

ELECTRICITY

In Israel the standard voltage is 220-240V with a frequency of 50Hz. You can use your electric appliances in Israel, if the standard voltage in your country is in this range (as is in the UK, Europe, Australia and most of Asia and Africa). European type plugs with two rounded pins are used.

TIPPING

Tips are a common reward for the service staff in the Middle East. Most restaurants include service charge but if not stated, waiters expect to be tipped around 10-15% of the bill. Your bus driver and guide will also be especially honoured with such a traditional appreciation at the end of your tour.

TRANSPORTATION

You can expect comfort and reliability on our modern coaches and mini buses. Most vehicles feature air-conditioning, safe and secure luggage storage, comfortable seats, and a sound system.

DISTANCES

Below information will give you a better idea of the times travelled to help you plan your day. Please bear in mind that the travel time will depend on traffic congestion and may differ.

- ➔ Amman / Tel-Aviv 215 km 3 h. 45 min.
- ➔ Tel-Aviv / Jerusalem 75 Km 2 h. 15 min.
- ➔ Jerusalem / Nazareth 165 km 2h. 30 min.
- ➔ Nazareth / Tel-Aviv 105 km 1h. 45 min.

AIRPORT TRANSFER

Your arrival airport transfer is included if:

- You fly into the city in which your tour starts
- You arrive on the first day of your tour
- You forward your flight details to us, at least 10 days in advance, including:
 - Date of flight
 - Flight number
 - Arrival time
 - Name of traveller/s to be picked up

If you do not want an airport transfer to the hotel, please let us know by either phoning the office (0208 099 95 96) or sending us an email (info@traveltalktours.com).

ACCOMMODATION

The hotels used on Travel Talk Israel tours are rated 3-star. The main criteria in the hotel selection process are cleanliness, private bathroom facilities and location (generally central). If you are travelling on your own, you'll be allocated a twin or triple room with other group members of the same gender. Travellers who have paid single supplement will stay in single rooms. Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee the availability of double beds, but will try our best. Your tour leader will organise the rooming arrangements when checking into the hotels according to the rooming lists. Therefore, we cannot guarantee any last-minute changes.

TOUR LEADER

Your tour leader's role is to ensure that all aspects of the trip run smoothly. They will share their local knowledge, advise you on ways to spend your free time and coordinate the day to-day running of the tour.

From time to time, unpredictable situations can occur and things may not go according to plan. Your leader may require your cooperation and understanding in that case. If you have any problems on tour, please let your leader know so that the correct steps can be taken. Please bear in mind that when you travel on a combined tour, you will have different groups and a different leader for each country.

MISSED WELCOME MEETING

Being avid travellers ourselves, we know that the unforeseen circumstances can arise. If you miss your welcome meeting (at the lobby around 6pm) or arrive on the second day of the tour, don't stress. If you arrive late at night on the first day, please check the info board at the lobby for the next day's programme. If you arrive on the second day of the tour, please contact your tour leader to join the group. However, if you miss out on the departure from the starting city of the tour, it's your responsibility to meet with the group.

TOUR PRICE

Bear in mind that the tour price does not include any extra meals, entrance fees, optional activities, drinks, tips, personal expenses, visas or flights or other travel costs, unless stated in the itinerary and inclusions section of your tour online.

JEWISH HOLIDAYS

As Jewish holidays are set according to the Jewish Calendar, so the exact dates shift earlier each year. During these special times, many Israelis abide by tradition and the day-to-day life is altered and some shops and offices may be closed. All Jewish Holidays begin with the sundown on the holiday eve, and the work week is from Sunday to Thursday.

Pesach is an important religious holiday in April, during which many stores and offices may be closed for a week. The first and last days of the week are official holidays and many people go on holidays in-between. Rosh Hashana is the Jewish New Year which is celebrated at the end of September. Yom Kippur is a unique holiday as almost all the country shuts down as the country goes quiet for a day, all private motorized vehicles stop running. Sukkot is an important holiday between 2-3 weeks following the Jewish New Year. Hanukkah is a popular Jewish Holiday at the end of December.