

Israel—the Holy Land

Adventure Memo

Greetings from the WAI Travel Team,

After working for several months on a completely new walking program to an undeniably old part of the planet, we are excited to present our first Adventure to Israel! We are already smitten with Israel and suspect you will be too.

You will be challenged by the breadth of historical periods that overlap each other in a seemingly endless chain of tribes, conquerors, and kingdoms. You'll be surprised by flora and fauna and the verdant green spaces of Galilee and Golan in the north. You'll be impressed by the deserts of the south at Qumran, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered, Ein Gedi, where David hid from King Saul, and Masada, the Alamo of the Jewish world.

Before you sign up for this timeless trek through the pages of the Bible, there are a few important points that need clarification.

How do I lock in my place on the Adventure?

To save yourself a spot on this Adventure, contact us with a \$500 payment as soon as possible. Reservations will be accepted on a first-come-first-serve basis!

How do we arrange airfare for this Adventure?

The official start and finish point for this Adventure is the Tel Aviv airport in Israel. We recommend that you contact a travel agent to help book your flight arrangements. In this age of airfare complications and airport uncertainty, using a travel agent is a good investment! We have two different agents to recommend for this Adventure. More details about flight arrangements and travel agent contact information will be provided in the Adventure Advice flyer, which will be mailed to you when you register.

Please do not book your airfare prior to receiving the Adventure Advice flyer!

Optional Excursions

As much as any Adventure we've ever planned, this program is full of amazing encounters and experiences. Driving distances are nominal, at most. Yet everywhere you turn in Israel, you are confronted with a cultural conundrum, a scenic delight, but most often, a remnant of history and a piece of the puzzle of the Bible that calls out for us to stop and explore. Our goal is to provide enough time for you to process the historical, cultural, and spiritual stimuli you will encounter. Balancing this with the cornucopia of attractions is tricky. One way we can do this is to make some afternoon and evening activities optional. Therefore, we are offering optional activities as follows:

DAY 8: YAD VESHEM HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL: Those with reserves of physical and emotional energy are invited, after the *Jerusalem Footsteps of Jesus Walk*, to join us for an optional excursion to Yad Veshem, a stunning holocaust museum and memorial in West Jerusalem. Estimated price: \$20

DAY 9: TOWER OF DAVID SOUND & LIGHT SHOW: A unique story of Israel played upon the crumbling walls of the Tower of David in the Old City. Estimated price: \$15

DAY 10: CITY OF DAVID NAT'L PARK & HEZEKIAH'S TUNNEL: At the City of David National Park, where David first took Jerusalem from the Jebusites, we will descend below ground. Our route is wet as we splash our way through the dark, water-filled (up to your calves) 2700-year-old tunnel built by Hezekiah as a secret water channel prior to the Assyrian siege. Estimated price: \$25

If you would like to be included in these optional activities, please let us know when you register, or as soon as possible thereafter.

Travel insurance

Walking Adventures has negotiated with an insurance carrier to provide travel insurance in the form of a Preferred Benefits™ policy. We are pleased to make this package available and believe that it will provide travelers with an important element of security at a reasonable price. (See the back of the General Tour Conditions sheet for more detailed information.)

IMPORTANT: The insurance policy includes time-sensitive coverage provisions for a couple of extra benefits, including pre-existing conditions and trip cancellation coverage for any reason (with additional fee), **provided you purchase the insurance within 14 days of your registration.** Should you choose to add the cost of your airline tickets to your insurance policy, contact our office after you purchase your airfare.

Insurance – What if I need to place a claim?

Jumping through hoops to get results from large, bureaucratic organizations can be enough to try the patience of Job! Travel insurance companies, unfortunately, are not immune to bureaucracy. Ambiguity and forms-overload sometimes seem to outweigh reason and logic. Ultimately, however, travelers are paid and the *Preferred Benefits* policy we recommend works! Though it is easy to view insurance as a necessary evil, we have seen the benefits of travel insurance time and again. We believe it is worth the cost...and hoop-jumping required!

A word about risk

The WAI philosophy of travel takes a dim view, in general, of certain aspects of modern journalism. The unfortunate union between reporting and marketing has produced a “tabloid” mentality where “news” that appeals to the emotions is often most catered to.

Israel is admittedly the epicenter of the conflict between the Arabs and the Jews. Hard things have happened in this part of the world. Violence does occur. The violence that occurs in Israel, however, usually receives a disproportionate level of media attention relative to the impact of that violence on the region as a

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whole, or levels of violence that occur here in the USA, or in other supposedly peaceful cultures.

Many times during the 20+ years of planning and leading Adventures, we have been in parts of the world that had less than hospitable reputations. Almost without fail, we found that though life does not come with a money-back guarantee, and bad experiences do come our way from time to time, the feeling of fear generated by media reports was vastly exaggerated!

In regards to Israel, the odds of travelers being impacted by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict pales alongside everyday risks such as driving your car or falling in your home that we all factor into daily life choices about how we live without a second thought.

Our point? Though safety is always top of mind as we plan our Adventures, life is inherently uncertain, and we will not likely cancel our plans to visit Israel unless significant, widespread violence makes it clear that we would be in danger.

If you have concerns about this position, or about your safety and visiting Israel, but you would still like to experience this amazing corner of our planet, you may wish to consider upgrading your travel insurance. For a higher premium, you can purchase insurance that allows you to cancel "for any reason". To purchase this policy, ask for the "Cancel for Any Reason" benefit, which pays up to 75% of the non-refundable trip cost in cash if you change your mind about the trip. The surcharge is an additional 2.75% of the normal base premium you would otherwise pay, and must be purchased within 15 days of registering for the Adventure. Travelers must cancel at least 2 days before departure to claim this benefit.

Group travel credit

If you are part of a Group, remember that your full deposit of \$500 is still required to hold your spot on this Adventure. Your group leader is responsible to submit your name to us before you register, qualifying you for the Group Travel Credit, but a full deposit is needed to officially reserve your place.

What happens next?

Upon registering for this Adventure, you will receive a welcome letter, initial invoice, and Adventure Advice flyer with important information about steps to take in the months before your trip.

Please do not buy your airline tickets until you receive the Adventure Advice flyer. The final payment for the program is due 90 days before departure, and you will receive a final billing about 2 weeks prior to that point, along with a Tips & Tidbits factsheet with additional information about the Adventure to help you prepare! Then, about 3 weeks before departure, you will receive a final packet with all the details of the program, including hotel names and contact information, a list of fellow travelers, and a more detailed daily schedule.

Now it's time to grab a cup of coffee and curl up in your favorite chair with the *Israel—the Holy Land* brochure. The Holy Land of Israel has always been an integral part of our culture, an ancient land that is now very close to becoming an unforgettable part of your current reality!

We look forward to exploring Israel with you in 2011!!

*More than a vacation...
it's an Adventure!*

