

Walking Israel—The Holy Land

Adventure

Walking Adventures International plans and guides walking adventures that combine international travel with walking. Our itineraries blend historic, cultural, and scenic highlights of the regions we're traveling through with walks in the area. Our trips are fast-paced; they are designed as overview tours to expose travelers to as much of the region's significant highlights as we can manage, and still maintain a reasonable daily schedule. Even though most walkers find it easy and natural to enjoy our style of travel, we want to ensure that we've afforded every opportunity for travelers to know what to expect, in advance! Listed below are a series of questions and answers to help you develop accurate expectations of this Adventure and make plans to maximize your enjoyment. Please feel free to call us with any additional questions you have.

Questions & Answers

Q: Do you have more detailed information than is available in the Adventure brochure?

- A: About four weeks before departure, a final packet will be mailed to each participant. This packet will include:
- * Hotel listing (including address and phone information of all hotels)
 - * Traveler List
 - * Daily schedule
 - * Adventure t-shirt & nametag
 - * Adventure map
 - * Luggage tags

Q: Do I need a passport or visa?

- A: **Israel requires that passports do not expire for at least 6 months from the date you depart the country. There are no visa requirements for American or Canadian citizens.** A passport can usually be obtained by applying at your town's main post office. It generally takes at least six weeks to process, however, so don't delay!

IMPORTANT: Please make a copy of your passport and birth certificate and keep them in your luggage separate from where you keep your passport. In case your passport gets lost, having these copies really speeds up the replacement process.

Q: Do you have any suggestions to help with flights to Israel?

- A: **By now your flights to Israel should be booked. If you have not yet booked your flights, we strongly suggest that you do so as soon as possible.** For information on how and when to book your flights, please see the Adventure Advice flyer mailed to you after you registered for this tour. WAI is not a travel agent, and we don't have the authority to make individual bookings or print airline tickets.

Travel agents are still the simplest way to plan your flight and provide you with a lifeline should you encounter problems on the day of travel. **There are two travel agents we recommend to book flights for this Adventure:**

ELITE TOURS & TRAVEL

Grace Emerson
Phone: 1 (800) 354-8320 EXT 158
Email: grace@elite-tours.com

Debbie Erwin
Phone 1 (800) 354-8320 EXT 108
email: info@elite-tours.com

WORLD TRAVEL

Debby Custer
Phone: 888.276.0925 or 503.231.9507
Email debby@wtpdx.com

Please see the Adventure Advice flyer mailed to you after registration for more information.

Israeli security procedures: As one of the most embattled nations in the world, Israeli airline security is more restrictive than most of us are accustomed to, even in the post 9-11 world. Expect additional security checks at the gate as you depart North America (or European gateways you may be flying through). Expect toilets on board to be closed to use about 45 minutes before arrival into Tel Aviv. Consider taking care of your physical needs well before arrival in Tel Aviv.

A word (or two) on jet lag: Much has been theorized about the best way to fight jet lag. One small booklet we've added to our library is *Jet Smart* by Diana Fairechild. An oversimplified summary of her book would suggest that you:

- 1) eat as little as possible while in transit, avoid alcoholic beverages, and eat high carbohydrate foods if you must eat,
- 2) get up and walk around the plane when you can,
- 3) do isometric exercises (flex and relax your muscles) occasionally during the flight,
- 4) adjust your sleep schedule to the local time as soon as possible.

IMPORTANT: We particularly recommend no's. 2 and 3. Over the years, we've had several travelers who have experienced circulation problems during the Adventure due to the long flight.

NOTE: Some information is generally true for most of our Adventures. Text in bold represents information that is specific to this Adventure only.

Q: What are the rendezvous plans in Tel Aviv?

A: As listed in the Adventure Advice memo, a member of the WAI team, or our local representative, will be on hand at the airport to greet you as you come through customs. Standard arrival procedures at airports around the world generally involve 3 steps after disembarking the plane: 1 – Go through immigration (passport control) to show your passport and any entry forms you filled out on the plane, 2 – claim your luggage at the luggage carousels, and 3 – walk through customs into the arrivals hall.

Generally, “customs” involves merely walking to the exit past customs officers (Make sure you follow the “green” signs—meaning you do not have anything to claim, not the “red” signs— meaning you do have something to claim.). When you exit customs into the arrivals hall, look for someone holding a WAI “Walkin’ Willie” sign.

Upon leaving the airport, you will be transferred to our hotel in Tel Aviv where our first group activity is an Orientation meeting followed by dinner together. Please plan to arrive at the hotel by 6 pm in order to participate in these important first day activities! In order to arrive at the hotel by 6 pm, you should arrive in Tel Aviv by at least 4 pm, preferably earlier to provide a cushion to rest before our first meeting.

Travelers arriving one day early for the optional walk in Tel Aviv will be met at the airport in the same manner when they arrive on February 24. Travelers arriving earlier than February 24 are on their own to transfer from the airport to our hotel in Tel Aviv.

Q: What type of hotels will we be in?

A: We use good quality, tourist class accommodations. In Israel, double rooms sometimes have two twin beds placed side by side; double or queen-sized beds are not as common as in the USA and Canada. In addition, single rooms may be smaller than double rooms. The single supplement entitles single travelers to their own room but not to a double-sized room.

Though we attempt to work with hotels in good locations, it's not always possible to predict how quiet a given hotel will be. Light sleepers should always be prepared with a supply of earplugs to help get a full night's sleep.

Non-smoking rooms cannot be guaranteed, though we do request them and generally do not have trouble obtaining them. In some cases, however, we will encounter cigarette smoke. Most of the world is not yet as health conscious as North America when it comes to smoking.

We have a fascinating and eclectic collection of lodgings to offer you in Israel, from a modern high-rise hotel in Tel Aviv, to a humble traditional Arabian inn in Nazareth, to a Kibbutz on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. The kibbutz hotel and the Arabian inn are traditional structures—not modern hotels. The Arabian inn, in particular, has a middle eastern feel and would be considered a 2-star hotel by most international standards. However, we selected this hotel to give travelers the ambience of old Nazareth both in the charm of the traditional architecture and the setting within the historic district of the old city.

Q: What will our walks be like?

A: Walk routes were planned during an on-site exploration trip by two members of our team, Dan Friesen and Russ Isom, who will also be your guides for this Adventure. Though we support the sport and concept of volkssport, (see paragraph below), WAI is placing a growing emphasis upon walk quality over distance.

As listed in the Adventure brochure, walks on this Holy Land journey are therefore a collection of trails shorter than the standard volkssport length of 10 kilometers (6.2 miles), often 2 trails in different locations in a day. Walks are more intentionally designed to highlight the history, culture, and scenery of Israel, with a special emphasis on Biblical history.

We are excited about the results of our planning and believe this medley of walking trails will provide travelers with a broad array of exposure to the land of Israel and timeless, thought-provoking connections to the Holy Land that will stay with you forever.

All walks will be conducted as guided walks with the assistance of local guides.

Using the American Volkssport Association's (AVA) difficulty rating system of 1 to 5, with 1 representing flat, smooth walk routes and 5 representing very difficult hikes, **these walks are rated between 1 and 3+**, as listed in the Adventure brochure. Here is the description of ratings used by the AVA:

1. *An easy walk on pavement or well-maintained trail with no significant hills.*
2. *A moderately easy walk, may be on pavement or on trails. No significant difficulty with hills.*
3. *A moderate walk in any setting with some difficult terrain, one or two substantial hills and/or steps.*
4. *A more difficult walk. Most likely in a natural setting with poorly maintained paths and steeper or hilly inclines. Participants with certain health problems should take caution.*
5. *A very difficult walk. All in rough fields or woods. Many steep hills or high altitude trails, or very rough uneven terrain, steep or unstable inclines. Not suitable for any person who is not in good health.*

If you are walking for IVV credit, you may use the same event and distance books for this Adventure that you use here in the States. We will have a supply of extra event and distance books along if your books get filled up en route.

Carrying a water bottle on the walks is mandatory. Israel is a dry climate where dehydration can occur quickly. In addition, we are spending 4 days in Jerusalem at an altitude of just under 3000 feet, which adds to the need for hydration.

Walking boots with good ankle support are strongly advised. Though most of our walks are not in difficult terrain, a few are challenging, and we advise a walking stick for segments of the walks that have challenging footing. Finally, hats for shade from sun should be standard walking apparel for an international trip such as this.

Q: Will the walks be sanctioned volkswalks?

A: We will apply for sanctioning to the American Volkssport Association for these walks, but cannot guarantee that volkssport stamps will be available.

Q: What is a volkswalk?

A: Volkssport is a club activity that began in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland in 1968. There are four primary activities: walking, biking, swimming, and cross country skiing. Walking is, by far, the most popular and well developed. A volkswalk is walked at a steady pace through a scenic and/or historic area over a pre-marked route (usually 10 km, which is 6.2 miles). Normally, it is hosted by a local group of volunteer club members. It is noncompetitive, and aims to involve people of all ages. Everyone who participates is declared a WINNER! Presently, there are walks in all 50 states and more than 30 countries worldwide.

Q: What type of footwear should I bring?

A: Two pairs of walking shoes or boots are recommended. The increase in the number of light-weight hiking boots is making them a more attractive and practical option. We believe a quality pair of lightweight hiking boots or shoes with ankle support is a good investment for a traveling walker and a necessary part of this Adventure.

Q: Is the water drinkable in Israel? Are there any health precautions I should take?

A: Water in most of our hotels in Israel is considered drinkable. This is less likely to be true at the Dead Sea. However, you can eliminate one of the many adjustments your body has to make during international travel by drinking bottled water. Please remember that Israel, and the region, faces a serious water shortage! Conserving on water (e.g. short showers, don't leave tap running while brushing teeth, etc) is a mark of a considerate traveler.

One of the realities of foreign travel is that we encounter different bugs and bacteria than we do here at home. Another reality is that group travel involves sharing a lot of things — including germs. As a result, cold nasties can quickly travel through the bus looking for weak immune systems to attack. There are several supplements and behaviors that can make a significant difference in your ability to resist these bugs and preserve a healthy Adventure, including the following:

- * Use Vitamin C, Echinacea, or grapefruit seed extract beginning a week before the trip and during the trip to boost your immune system (Check with your doctor for possible allergies to Echinacea.).
- * Maintain the use of a good multi-vitamin both before and during the trip.
- * Wash your hands thoroughly and frequently (carrying a waterless hand cleaner is highly recommended).
- * If/when you cough, cover your mouth as completely as possible to avoid the spread of germs in consideration of fellow travelers.
- * Avoid touching your face and rubbing your eyes.
- * Be sensitive to your health and particularly your need for rest. Guard against fatigue by monitoring your participation in trip activities and allowing yourself necessary "down time."

Q: What shots are recommended?

A: No special immunizations are generally recommended for travel in Israel. Routine immunizations considered standard for adults traveling internationally include tetanus-diphtheria (every 10 years), measles/mumps/rubella (if not previously given), and chickenpox (only if blood tests show no immunity). For more information, please consult your physician or a travel immunization clinic.

Q: How many people do you accept on an Adventure?

A: We generally welcome between 25 and 30 travelers per Adventure—but no more than 30.

Q: What is the average age of your groups?

A: Most of our travelers fall between 50 and 70 years of age. This seems to be the age bracket that has the time and means to travel. However, we always have travelers that fall outside that range, from the 20's up into the 80's. Walkers are characteristically great traveling companions — positive, cheerful, and appreciative of the opportunity to see the world.

Q: What is the split between men and women?

A: One of the realities of life is that there are more women on the planet than men. Another is that they tend to outlive their spouses. As a result, we do have more women on the trips than men. The percentage of women on the trip can run anywhere from 60 to 80%. We have quite a few couples, a lot of women traveling together or singly, and more and more single male travelers.

Q: What if I don't have a roommate?

A: It's always best to register for the trip with your own roommate. Though we cannot guarantee a roommate, we do offer to help match travelers up with others needing roommates. We provide contact information for potential roommates and allow travelers to contact each other and make their own decisions.

Q: What will the motorcoaches be like?

A: We are committed to finding quality coaches and drivers. The bus will be air conditioned, but toilets are NOT available on buses in Israel. We employ a seat rotation system to assure everyone equal time in the best seats and a chance to get acquainted with all their fellow travelers. It is not possible to reserve seats on the coach. Rest stops are spaced every 1½ to 2 hours.

Q: How much money should I take along?

A: GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS: Israel has a modern banking system and a network of ATM's (automatic teller machines). Debit cards at ATM's have become the most practical way to manage cash needs when traveling in most parts of the world. This applies in Israel as well. If your debit card is lost or stolen, most banks have protections that limit losses to a nominal amount. Ask your bank about their policy.

If hesitant to use an ATM card linked to your bank account, consider AAA's (Automobile Association of America) credit/debit card designed for travelers. You can load the card with a specific amount of cash in advance, further limiting your losses should the card get lost or stolen. Log on to www.aaa.com/prepaidcards or call

your local AAA branch for more information.

We are strongly in favor of using debit cards at ATM's. If you don't have one, consider getting one from your bank now. If you prefer not to use one, that's okay too; but you'll need to plan your cash needs more carefully and be willing to carry more cash on your person.

Purchasing Foreign Currency

If you are having trouble purchasing foreign currency from your local bank, try Thomas Cook, AAA, or some of the new internet outlets (www.travelex.com). A last resort would be to buy some in the airport on the day of departure, but airport rates are almost always less than favorable.

Bringing foreign currency home: The rate is generally 2-3% less favorable for selling the foreign currency back to the bank when you get home than for buying it. All things being equal, it's better to spend the money overseas than to bring it home and exchange it back into dollars.

Traveler's checks: We do not recommend traveler's checks for this type of travel.

Photocopies: Be sure to make photocopies of all the credit/debit cards you intend to take. These photocopies should, of course, be kept separate from the cards themselves.

Eggs in two baskets: As always, store money, and any debit or credit cards, in more than one place to minimize the risk of loss. When going out for a walk or an outing, take only the cash and credit cards you think you might need for the outing and leave the balance hidden in your luggage or in the hotel safe.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS: The Israeli currency is the New Shekel. The rate of exchange at the time of this printing is about \$1 = 3.65 Shekels. Here are a couple of ways to approach the issue of money in Israel:

Strategy #1—Recommended—the ATM approach: Purchase a nominal amount of foreign currency—\$30 to \$50 of Shekels here in North America before departure. Then use your debit card en route as your primary method of obtaining cash in each country. Take along about \$300 US in \$10's and \$20's as backup in case you can't find an ATM and need to exchange dollars for local currency. Expect to bring this money home with you—it is only intended for emergency purposes.

Make sure you contact your bank in advance to inform them that you will be in Israel and verify that your ATM card works there (most do).

Strategy #2—Alternative—the Cash approach: If you are not comfortable using an ATM, or simply prefer to have your foreign currency purchased in advance so you don't have to deal with it during the trip, your situation will be a little more complicated. We suggest you purchase as much of your foreign currency as possible in North America, as suggested below, before departure. In addition, we recommend that you bring an additional \$200-\$300 USD as backup emergency cash.

It is often difficult to purchase small amounts of foreign currencies at home, and some currencies are not available at all to some banks. If you are not able to purchase foreign currency, we recommend you take along \$300-\$400 US dollars to exchange upon arrival in Israel. Then you can exchange USD as needed.

Applicable to both Strategy #1 and #2:

We do NOT recommend that you arrive in Israel with no foreign currency—i.e. only with US dollars to exchange.

Two dinners and nine lunches are NOT included in your Adventure price. Therefore, the minimum recommended cash budget for the Adventure, NOT including amounts listed in the brochure for optional excursions, which should be prepaid before departure is:

*** 1100 to 1500 Israeli Shekels (equivalent of about \$300 to \$400)**

This recommended amount is the minimum, no-frills amount you would need if you intended to do no shopping. Many travelers spend double or triple this amount.

In all cases, we strongly recommend that you use a money belt, and carry your money and credit cards underneath your clothes.

Q: What type of clothing is appropriate?

A: Casual tourist attire will be the norm for the entire trip. Most of the time, we will be dressed in our walking clothes. Our own strategy is to take two or three pairs of quick-dry pants with zip-off legs along with several quick-dry t-shirts and nylon or tri-blend travel shirts. We supplement this with a quality set of breathable raingear (e.g. Goretex) which we also wear for warmth when the temperatures are a bit cool. Additionally, we also take along a light jacket and/or silk or high performance fabric undershirts to use as additional layers. In any case, we have found that packing lightweight layers of clothing is the most practical strategy. This can be especially important in the higher altitudes of Jerusalem (3000 feet above sea level) where it can be very cool at night.

We will encounter a few places where shorts are not allowed (e.g. Church of the Nativity) and women are not permitted entrance if they are wearing short sleeve shirts. Temperatures should be cool, so jackets would eliminate any conflict here, but women may wish to bring a light-weight scarf or jacket to wrap around your shoulders when we enter these restricted areas.

Men need to cover their heads to enter the Western Wall, the so-called "Wailing Wall". Jews wear a yarmulke (skullcap), and normally there is basket of free paper yarmulkes available for visitors. Even a baseball cap will suffice as a head covering.

You may wish to bring along a set of casual non-walking clothes (slacks or nice jeans for the men and a skirt or dress for the ladies) for the odd occasion when you feel like wearing something other than walking attire or the couple of evenings when we have special dinners.

Weather:

Weather can vary quite a bit during this time of year.

However, here are the average high and low temperatures in Fahrenheit over the past few years.

	<u>High</u>	<u>Low</u>
Tel Aviv	65	50
Galilee	61	44
Dead Sea	75	55
Jerusalem	65	50

Q: Do you have a suggested reading list for this Adventure?

A: We know that "life long learning" is a core value for many WAI travelers. Along with travel guidebooks such as Frommers, Rough Guide, DK Eyewitness, and others, here are some good media resources to prepare for the Adventure over the coming months.

***The Israel-Palestine Conflict*, by James L. Gelvin**

It seems best to read from a few different sources on the Middle East conflict, as authors tend to be biased one way or the other, and the books themselves become out of date so quickly. Gelvin's book on the Israel-Palestine Conflict presents a good, fairly neutral, introduction to this topic.

***Zealots for Zion*, by Robert I. Friedman**

Although dated, this book is still a relevant source of information on the West Bank settler movement.

***The Holy Land*, by Jerome Murphy-O'Connor**

Written for the layperson, this book covers all of Israel's main archeological sites, with details on their history as well.

The Bible

The definitive resource on the history of Israel.

***In the Land of Israel*, by Amoz Oz**

In this compelling volume first published in 1983, Israeli novelist Amoz Oz interviewed dozens of his fellow countrymen from all walks of life. A passionate, candid and diverse portrait of a people and their hopes, fears and prejudices.

***The Crusades through Arab Eyes*, by Amin Maalouf and Jon Rothschild**

A gripping account of the crusades told from an Arab perspective. Vivid characters and battles make this an excellent historical re-creation for anyone with an interest in the world at the time of the crusades.

***A History of Jerusalem: One City, Three Faiths*, by Karen Armstrong**

Focused more on ancient than modern happenings, this book explores the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim influences on the city of Jerusalem.

***Historical Atlas of Jerusalem*, by Meir Ben-Dov**

Photos, maps, and plans depict Jerusalem from the Jebusite times and detail the city's involvement in the trade and politics of the region throughout history.

***City of Stone: the Hidden History of Jerusalem*, by Meron Benvenisti**

A history of Jerusalem with a focus on modern times by Meron Benvenisti, an Israeli former deputy mayor of the city.

***Exodus*, by Leon Uris (fiction)**

A blockbuster novel, this book is mandatory reading for its sweeping overview of Israel and Palestine.

***Murder in Jerusalem*, by Batya Gur (fiction)**

Popular Israeli author Batya Gur spins the tale of her police inspector Michael Ohayon, solving a crime amidst the scholars of the Hebrew University.

Masada

Emmy Award-winning movie dramatizing the siege of Jewish-held Masada by the Romans in A.D. 72.

Also worth considering (in no particular order):

- ⇒ The Rough Guide History of Islam, by Justin Wintle
- ⇒ Hiking the Jesus Trail, by Anna Dintaman and David Landis
- ⇒ My Michael, by Amos Oz (fiction)
- ⇒ Birds of the Middle East, by R. F. Porter, P. Schiermacker-Hansen, and S. Christensen

Other Important Information

MEALS:

In addition to all breakfasts, most dinners and one lunch are included in the Adventure price. One of the delights of this experience is sampling various types of Jewish, Arab, and Druze cuisine.

CALLING/MAILING HOME:

Calling home from overseas can be complicated. Internet cafes and business centers in our hotels are usually a more practical way to stay in touch with loved ones back home. In case of emergency, advise your family to contact the emergency numbers listed on the Hotel List you will receive in the Final Mailing.

LAUNDRY:

It is highly unlikely that you will find self-service laundry facilities in any of the places we visit. Some of our hotels will have laundry service available for a fee, which can be quite substantial. We have two laundry strategies: 1) pack a few feet of clothes line and do your laundry in your room, or 2) pack tightly and bring enough essentials so that you don't need to do laundry until you return home. Because of the luggage restrictions mentioned below, we highly recommend option 1) — travel light and do your laundry in your room.

PHOTOGRAPHY:

Be discreet when taking photographs of people. If close up, it's best to ask their permission (sign language works). Do not take photographs of police, airports, or other military bases or installations. We suggest that you bring more film or memory cards than you expect to need! In the new age of digital photography, we often hear travelers lamenting the lack of space on their memory cards. If purchasing videos, remember that most of the world uses a different format (PAL/SECAM) than the USA (NTSC). The PAL format will not play in our video/DVD players in the USA.

ELECTRICITY:

Household current in Israel is 220 volts. Cell phones, cameras, and laptops often have chargers that can handle the full range of currents; check the fine print on

your charger to see what it is rated for. Wall outlets in Israel are what is called an "H" socket, which requires a 3-prong plug unique to Israel. They are designed, however, to also accept the standard European-style round 2-prong (non-grounded) plug-ins.

TIME ZONES:

We will be traveling in only one time zone in Israel—GMT (Greenwich Mean Time) + 2 hours. For example, when it is noon in Israel, it is 5 am on the USA east coast and 2 am on the USA Pacific coast. Israel does not switch to Israel Daylight Time (summer time change) until April 1. Most of the USA switches to daylight savings time the week after we return in March.

TRAVEL INSURANCE:

Walking Adventures International strongly recommends travel insurance. Many years of helping travelers deal with unexpected circumstances that require cancellation of their travel plans, or expensive special flight arrangements to return home have made us believers in the benefits of this form of insurance. WAI offers Preferred Benefits™ through USI Travel Insurance Services as part of the Adventure registration process.

There are two primary reasons we recommend travel insurance:

- 1) Trip cancellation coverage which reimburses travelers for the cost of the tour if they are unable to participate due to a "covered reason" (e.g. their illness or that of a close family member) before or during a tour, and
- 2) Medical expense and evacuation. Many medical insurance policies cover travelers overseas. Not many, however, will cover medical evacuation, which can be extremely expensive even for non life-threatening injuries which require first class or business class seats for a flight back to the USA.

Please call our office if you have questions on how to purchase travel insurance.

GRATUITIES:

Gratuities for group meals and lodging are included in the cost of the Adventure. In addition, the Adventure price also includes the tip for the driver and any local guides that serve us. Tips for services on any optional excursions are not included in the Adventure price. Generally we recommend the equivalent of about \$1 per person for the person who serves you on these excursions.

LUGGAGE:

As you will notice in the General Tour Conditions sheet originally inserted with your Adventure brochure, we request that you limit your luggage to one suitcase per person plus carry-on type luggage. Porterage will likely be provided at some hotels, but will be accompanied by the expectation of the usual tip from the bellman. Most airlines are now charging extra for luggage beyond 1 piece of checked luggage weighing 50 pounds. We recommend you review your airline policy for their specific guidelines.

CULTURAL ISSUES:

Since North American culture is linked closely with our common European heritage, Israel presents us with a fascinating opportunity to see into a very different cul-

ture, one that weaves together a fascinating blend of oriental and western; Islam, Christianity and Judaism; Arab and Jew; all immersed in a flow of both Christian and Jewish pilgrims from all over the planet. We recommend that you pick up a travel guide like *Lonely Planet* or *Fodor's* and become more aware of some of the differences you can expect to encounter. Here are a few we noticed during our planning experience:

Religious Epicenter: Israel occupies a unique place on the world stage. Seeking to understand how this came to be, and why things are as they are requires viewing the landscape through various "lenses" - historical, religious, cultural, and political, at a minimum. This is not a "pilgrimage" tour in the traditional sense. We are not all necessarily of one faith background and the scope of our interest is broader than the "religious lens".

Travelers should be aware, however, that much of our program revolves around the story of Israel as told through the Bible. When we do look through the religious lens, a traditional Christian worldview will be our reference point. Your WAI guides, in addition, are practicing Christians and will likely share personal insights on occasion during the trip, and may offer optional evening bonus sessions for those wishing to dig deeper into the intersection of the Holy Land's history and culture and personal faith.

However, this will not feel like a church group; we will not have public prayers or singing. Rather, we will apply the typical WAI history, culture, and scenery model of travel to this unique corner of our globe.

Information Overload: Though a tiny country (slightly smaller than New Jersey), Israel is full to the brim with sites of historic and cultural significance. As the origin of both Judaism and Christianity, twin ethical and cultural pillars of Western Civilization, hardly a square meter can be passed that does not contain some symbol or relic or connection with our shared background. As a result of the richness of heritage, travelers may feel overwhelmed sometimes and insatiable at other times. We believe this is somewhat unavoidable, a destination hazard if you will, but your guides will be sensitive to this unique reality, and our program attempts to provide an ebb and flow to give you time to reflect and digest. As always, we look forward to your feedback at the end of the Adventure!

Security issues: Throughout the trip, expect to see visual indicators that Israel is a nation that values the importance of a strong military posture. Encountering members of the military throughout the country is to be expected. Checkpoints will slow us down a few times as we drive, and changes in the fluid relationship between Israel and the Palestinian territories may require changes to our routing. During our planning trip in July 2010, we encountered few obstacles to conducting our itinerary and walks as we planned. However, due to the unique geographical and political situation, don't be surprised if we make a few changes en route, which happens quite frequently no matter where we are traveling. Upon departure at the airport, those lucky enough to be selected for the second level baggage review will have the privilege of watching the most sophisticated,

hi-tech, no-nonsense security procedures we've ever experienced!

TRAVELER'S PERSPECTIVE:

As with most things in life, the benefit you receive from this experience will depend to a large degree on the frame of mind you have at the outset. If you've not traveled outside the U.S. before, there are a few things you should be aware of:

- Though we attempt to eliminate it as much as possible, travel always contains an element of uncertainty. Being ready to adjust will enhance your experience.
- To varying degrees, hotels, food, and local customs are different in other countries. This can be uncomfortable...and exciting!
- Though we continue to look for ways to slow the pace of our "Adventures," we still believe in providing a full day's opportunities for our travelers. On some days, we spend a significant amount of time on the bus.
- Group travel, by its nature, involves giving up a certain degree of individual convenience. Though we strive for added flexibility for the individual, much of the time we all need to be "headed in the same direction."

We hope we've covered most of your questions. If not, feel free to contact us and we'll be glad to fill in the gaps. We look forward to Walking Israel with you!



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Adventure Checklist

Though by no means intended to be comprehensive, following is a list of things you should probably consider bringing with you on this walking adventure. We've left a few blank lines for you to add your own "necessities" as you think of them.

- two pairs of walking shoes (**or boots**)
- clothing that can be layered
- rain gear
- walking stick
- sun screen
- sense of adventure
- earplugs
- foreign currency
- passport
- airline tickets/receipt
- sunglasses
- sense of humor
- electrical transformers
- adapters for wall outlet
- camera (with extra batteries)
- extra film/disc's
- travel binoculars
- country or area maps
- handi-wipes or waterless hand cleaner (for quick cleanup on bus)
- hat or visor
- walking credit books
- photocopy of passport & birth certificate
- mini-flashlight
- insect repellent
- swimsuit
- cold and flu preventatives and remedies
- photocopy of credit/debit cards
- WAI Walking Journal from prior trips
- highlighter for marking road/walking maps and sheet protectors in case of rain
- NO knives, scissors, sharp objects in carry-ons at airports
- toilet paper (for your daypack)
- washcloths
- water bottle (**mandatory**)
- medical insurance card/identification