

Things to Know Before You Go to Israel...

Frequently Asked Questions & Answers



BEFORE YOU TRAVEL with Educational Travel Services

Do I need a passport?

YES. A valid passport is required for international travel. It must be valid for a minimum of 6 months after your return date. If you do not have a passport, apply for one immediately as it normally takes 4-6 weeks to process. Once you have your passport, you must submit the information to your agent, by sending a photocopy of the picture page of your passport.

How do I get a passport?

You can obtain an application at your nearest passport office, courthouse, post office, or online. You will need a certified birth certificate (with raised seal and file number) and 2 duplicate non-glossy photographs measuring 2x2 inches taken within 6 months of the application. For more information regarding passports you can go online to <http://travel.state.gov>

Will I need a visa?

US and Canadian citizens do not need a visa for Israel.

NOTE: If you are not an American or Canadian citizen, you will need to check with the nearest consulate to find out if visas are required and if so, how to get one.

Will I need vaccinations?

As of today, the COVID vaccine is required.

What if I can't find a roommate?

While we will try to match you with a roommate, we cannot guarantee one will be available. If no roommate can be found, you will be responsible for the single room supplement, as listed under the "Accommodations" section of The Fine Print in your brochure. This notification can come to you as late as 30 days prior to departure.

When is the final payment due?

Final payment for your trip is due 105 days prior to departure. Thereafter a late payment fee of \$100 will be assessed.

What if I need to cancel?

Call your agent immediately and then submit your cancellation in writing. Please refer to your tour brochure for information regarding cancellation fees. Beginning 105 days prior to the tour, you will be charged the single room supplement if your cancellation forces your roommate into a single room. If you have travel insurance

with cancellation coverage, contact the insurance company immediately to file your claim.



GETTING THERE

What airline will be used?

We have contracts with many IATA carriers. Your flight schedule will be available approximately 30 days prior to departure.

When may I receive my flight information?

Flight information is available approximately 30 days prior to departure. You will be mailed your flight schedule along with your other travel documents approx. 2-3 weeks before your tour begins.

Who is responsible for any airline schedule changes and/or expenses?

All flight times are subject to change by the airlines without advance notice. We are not responsible for changes and/or delays in airline schedules nor any expenses associated with such changes.

NOTE: Should you incur any expenses due to a scheduling change, make sure to keep your receipts as you may be able to be reimbursed through your travel insurance policy if you chose to purchase one.

How early should I arrive at the airport?

Due to the increased security at airports, we recommend arriving at least two hours prior to departure for domestic flights and at least three hours prior for international flights

What if I miss my flight or it is cancelled on the day of departure?

Contact us immediately. After that, go speak to a gate agent to see when the next available flight will be. It is the airline's responsibility to get you to your destination as soon as possible. Once you have your new schedule, be sure to call our office so we can let our overseas staff know when to expect you so we can arrange a new transfer time for your group if necessary.

NOTE: Our emergency line is answered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Refer to your travel folder and flight letter for phone number information. Please listen carefully to the instructions given in the recording.



May I request special seating and/or meals on my flights?

YES. Requests should be submitted to our office in writing at least 105 days prior to departure. However, we cannot guarantee that your requests will be honored, as it is ultimately the airline's decision.

What about frequent flier miles?

Unfortunately, we are not able to process miles towards your flights and/or upgrades. However, you may earn miles for your flights. To do so, please provide a gate agent with your frequent flier number at check in. Information about your airline's frequent flier program is available on the airline's website.

How much luggage am I allowed to bring?

Due to limited space available for luggage on the motor coach, only ONE suitcase (limited to approx. 50 lbs.), one carry-on and one personal item (purse, laptop case, etc.) are allowed.

Most airlines will accept a maximum of 62 linear inches (length + width + depth) for checked luggage. Please review your specific airline's current luggage requirements on their website. Carry-ons & personal items must fit under your seat or in the overhead compartment of the plane, and under your seat or in your lap while on the motor coach. We will provide you with a luggage tag for your checked item, however we strongly recommend that you attach your own tags on each item you carry as well.

UPON ARRIVAL

What if my luggage is lost or damaged?

File a claim at the airport before you leave the baggage claim area. It is the airline's responsibility to get lost luggage to you or compensate you for damages.

Will a company representative meet us at the airport?

YES. Our personnel will meet you upon arrival at your final destination, and will accompany you to the airport at the end of your tour. There will not be a representative at US airports.

What can I expect upon arrival?

After going through customs, you will be met by our representative just inside the baggage claim area who will give you instructions. Collect your luggage and pay attention to the directions. En route to the hotel, you will also be told the procedures for luggage & checking in. Porters will only handle your primary piece of luggage. You are responsible for your carry-ons and personal items.

What if I booked my own flights?

Please be advised that Educational Travel Services (ETS) has only scheduled transfers between the airport and the hotel for those who book their flights through ETS. If you elect to purchase your own flights as a "Ground Only" passenger, you are ultimately responsible for securing transportation between the airport and the hotel, both for your arrival and departure. Please be prepared to make your own transfer arrangements from the airport to the hotel on arrival and then back to the airport at the end of your trip as we cannot guarantee there will be space for you on any of our transfer buses.

What is the difference in our time zones?

Israel is 7 hours ahead of US Eastern Standard Time.

Will my tour schedule change?

We reserve the right to alter the sightseeing itinerary to accommodate changes in local conditions or extenuating circumstances.

What are the hotel rooms like, and what amenities do they offer? Are hair dryers and washcloths available in the rooms?

We use hotels that are 1st-class or better. Each room will have a private bath, TV, and phone. Most rooms will have a hair dryer. Typically, most hotels will not provide washcloths, while some may do so only upon request. Therefore, we recommend taking your own with a plastic "baggie" in which to pack it.

A Note on Electricity...

You will need an international adapter (2 round prongs, European style) & converter set to safely use your electronics. Israel uses 220 volts, vs 110 in the USA. Note: Some devices are “dual-voltage” and do not need the converter. Check your specific device to see if a converter will be necessary for you. Use caution with devices that heat up such as flat irons and hair-dryers as they can ruin your converter and appliance. It is best to purchase the kind that can run on 220 volts with the flip of a switch.

Will I have internet access?

Nearly all hotels will offer internet access (charges may apply). Please see the front desk for current rates. Also, many touring coaches have onboard Wi-Fi.

How can I call home?

Calls may be made from your hotel room phone for a fee. You may also either rent an international cell phone or bring your own cell phone with you.

NOTE: Contact your wireless carrier to find out if your phone will work overseas, and if so, what the rates will be. We do not recommend the use of calling cards, as hotels may still charge you.

What meals are included?

Unless otherwise stated on your brochure, buffet breakfast and dinner at the hotel are included daily. Lunch will be on your own. Coffee, tea and water will be available at breakfast. Water will be available during dinner. Other beverages may be available at a small charge.

Is the water safe to drink?

In Israel, the water is safe, & bottled water will be available on the bus for purchase daily.

Will I be able to hear my guide?

For your convenience, we are providing headsets to your group. These will allow you to stay connected to your guide, even in crowded or noisy areas. For your comfort you may use your own headphones if you do not find the provided set to be comfortable.

How long is the typical touring day?

On most days, you will depart the hotel between 7:30-8:30 am and will return late afternoon, around 5:00-6:00 pm. Your guide will announce the daily schedule.

What are the buses like?

The deluxe touring coaches are air conditioned & accommodate approximately 45 passengers.

Are there restrooms on the bus?

There are no restrooms on the bus, however sufficient stops will be made for your comfort.

GENERAL INFORMATION

How much money should I bring?

Not included on your tour are the following: lunches, spending money, optional tipping, Love Offering for the guide and driver. We suggest at least \$500 in cash, to cover these and any miscellaneous expenses, but it is a personal decision.

What about tipping?

Unless otherwise stated on your brochure, prepaid gratuities have been collected for the guide, driver, porters as well as the hotel dining, housekeeping and front desk staff. However, if you request any special services from the staff, an additional tip of \$1 or so would also be appropriate for your lunches and occasional other services (such as using the restroom at a church). Your guide will let you know when this is appropriate.

Love Offering

Unless specified otherwise on your brochure, there will be a voluntary love offering collected for your guide and driver. While in Israel, the suggested amount is \$6 per person, per day for your guide and \$3 per person, per day for your driver. Your group leader will pass around an envelope for this collection near the end of the tour.

What type of currency is used?

Shekels are used in Israel; however, US currency is widely accepted. We suggest you take a good supply of small bills: \$1s, \$5s, \$10s, etc.

Should I exchange money before I go?

This is not necessary, but if you prefer to have local currency, you can exchange it at your local bank or the airport. Currency exchange may not be available at the hotel, so if you plan to exchange, do so before you leave the airport.



Will ATM machines be available?

ATMs are available at local banks and at most hotels. You will receive funds in the local currency.

NOTE: You will likely be charged a fee and may be subject to daily withdrawal limits.

What about traveler's checks & credit cards?

We do not recommend the use of traveler's checks as you may experience difficulty using and/or cashing them. You may also be subject to significant handling fees. Credit cards can be used for most purchases.

IMPORTANT: Before you travel, contact your bank or credit card company to notify them about your travel to Israel to avoid difficulty using your card overseas.

Will I be able to shop while on the tour?

Yes; time will be allotted for shopping during the tour. Please be courteous of others while shopping, and be aware of when the group and bus are ready to leave.

NOTE: Any purchases made are at your own risk. We are not responsible for your dissatisfaction with any purchases. Guides are not authorized to recommend any stores or shops on our behalf.

What are the US customs regulations?

A returning US resident is allowed \$800 in duty-free purchases. Gifts may be mailed to the US duty free, but are limited to \$100 per person, per day.



GENERAL INFORMATION (cont.)

What is VAT?

VAT (Value Added Tax) is a sales tax of at least 17% that is charged for most goods in Israel. This amount is part of the price, not added at the register. It is possible to claim back most of this tax for Israel. The best way to do this is to see if the retailer you are buying from is affiliated with tax-free shopping. If so, they will give you instructions for your refund. Generally, all you have to do is collect a completed form from the store which lists your purchases. You **MUST** have this form stamped by customs when you leave the country.

What will the weather be like?

There is no way to predict the weather, therefore, we recommend checking www.weather.com before your departure to get an idea of current temperatures and conditions for the cities you will be visiting. Although the climates we visit are typically dry during the Spring, Summer, and Fall, we recommend packing a small umbrella.

What type of clothing should I bring?

Your best option is to bring clothing you can layer that is loose-fitting and casual. A hat, sunglasses and a poncho are also a good idea. Some days will involve long rides and/or a lot of walking, so comfortable shoes are a must!

NOTE: At many holy sites, both men and women are expected to have their shoulders and knees covered. Please check with your guide for any clothing restrictions for the following day.

What about my prescription medication?

Bring your medicines in their original containers along with a copy of your prescription as well as the generic name.

If you have medication which needs to be refrigerated, you must inform our office at least 105 days prior to the tour so that we can make appropriate arrangements with the airlines and hotels.

Am I fit enough to travel? What if I have mobility issues?

Passengers registered for the tour accept the responsibility for being in good health and able to walk and travel on the tour. Because many of the sites are not accessible to the physically challenged, those needing oxygen, wheelchairs or other ambulatory assistance will find the tour extremely limiting to their experience. Guides, drivers and other staff are not permitted to assist with wheelchairs and the like for liability reasons. Please call our office if you have further questions.

How much walking is there each day?

While this will vary, expect to walk 1-3 miles daily over varying terrain (stairs, cobblestone, etc.). This will be intermittent and often there will be somewhere to pause for rest. If you are concerned about the difficulty, you may either stay on the bus or sit nearby. Your guide will let you know your options at each site.

What about travel insurance?

If you purchased the Travel Protection Plan through our company, both cancellation & medical coverage is provided. It is important to note however, that services must be paid for at the time rendered. Upon your return to the US, a claim will need to be filed directly with the insurance provider. Please review the Travel Protection Plan information that has been included in your pre-tour literature for more details.

What if I lose something on the tour?

Leave valuables at home! Double-check your belongings when leaving the plane, hotel & bus. We cannot assume responsibility for your lost items.

Have any lectures or special services been planned?

Please refer to your brochure and/or detailed itinerary which will be enclosed with your final travel documents.

Any last minute items I shouldn't forget?

Passport, another form of photo ID, flight information, Bible, sunglasses, camera (with extra batteries & memory cards), electrical converter & adapter, prescriptions, money & sundry toilet items.

Any other tips?

YES, here's a few...

- Pack light. (Save room for souvenirs!)
- Bring copies of important documents like your passport & prescriptions.
- Be on time for the bus and prepared to rotate seats each day.
- Keep all your receipts.
- Settle personal charges at the hotel the night before you check out.
- Remember: You are a guest in a foreign country. Customs and food will be different than at home. Be respectful of the culture and embrace the new **EXPERIENCES!**

12/10/18

