



ANCIENT ISRAEL

Classic Tour | 10 Days | Physical Level 1
Tel Aviv – Nazareth – Dead Sea - Bethlehem – Jerusalem

Our extensive tour of the Holy Land takes you through some of the most famous cities and sites in Israel and the Palestinian Territories. Begin in cosmopolitan Tel Aviv, home to the bustling Mediterranean port district of Jaffa. Visit Roman ruins and mountain villages en route to Nazareth and Acre. Learn of the mystery surrounding the Dead Sea Scrolls before a cable car journey to Masada Fortress for panoramic views across the land. Explore the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem before a triumphant end to your tour in illustrious Jerusalem.

- Tour the Roman ruins of Caesarea
- Discover Nazareth and the Sea of Galilee
- Visit the Crusader fortress at Acre
- Take a cable car to Masada Fortress
- Explore New & Old Jerusalem

TOUR MAP



ANCIENT ISRAEL TOUR INCLUSIONS:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- All meals
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escorts (if your group is 10 or more passengers) or Local Guides
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides
- Safe and secure with IATA

The only thing you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, customary tipping, early check in or late check out and other items not specified on the itinerary.

CLASSIC TOURS:

These tours are designed for those who wish to see the iconic sites and magnificent treasures of Israel on an excellent value group tour whilst travelling with like-minded people. The tours are on a fully inclusive basis, so you'll travel with the assurance that all your arrangements are taken care of.

You will be accompanied by our dedicated and professional National Escorts and local guides, whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

PHYSICAL LEVEL 1:

All our tours feature a physical rating to help you select the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights. Ancient Israel is rated as a physical level 1 tour. A reasonable level of fitness is required but it's more about spending time on your feet rather than covering large distances. You'll be getting on and off coaches and boats, walking around the sights and climbing some steps.

- There will be sightseeing on foot for both short and extended periods of time

Of course, our National Escort and local guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

JOINING YOUR TOUR:

The tour is 10 days in duration including international flights. Please note, due to flight schedules passengers may depart/arrive on Day 2.

Travellers booked on 'Land Only', the price includes your arrival/departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour. Please advise your international flight times to Reservations so we can arrange your transfers accordingly.

Join the tour on Day 2 in Tel Aviv and end the tour on Day 9 in Tel Aviv. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure. An informal Welcome Dinner will be held on Day 2 of the itinerary. If you miss this due to your arrival time, all information will be provided to you at breakfast the following morning.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1-2: Arrive Tel Aviv

Meals: D

Upon arrival in to Ben Gurion Airport, you will be met by your guide at the airport and transfer approximately 30 minutes to your hotel in Tel Aviv. Meet your fellow travellers at dinner this evening.

Day 3: Jaffa, Caesarea and Mt Carmel

Meals: B, L, D

Begin your explorations with a walk through the beautiful and historic district of Jaffa, on the edge of Tel Aviv. This historic and charming old town is famed for its various legendary associations and biblical stories.

Drive to Caesarea Maritima to view the fascinating ancient and medieval ruins of this coastal city. Visit the double aqueduct and the restored Roman theatre with its stunning Mediterranean views before continuing to the Crusader fortifications to admire the imposing thirteenth-century defenses.



Drive 40 minutes to the slopes of Mount Carmel to meet the Druze ethnoreligious community. The unique Druze faith incorporates aspects of many different religions, including but not limited to Christian, Islamic and Buddhist traditions. Explore a local bazaar and enjoy a local lunch before a short drive to the viewpoint at Mukraqa, a viewpoint atop Mt. Carmel, to see the Carmelite Monastery of St. Elijah.

Finish the day with dinner in Nazareth, the childhood town of Jesus and our base for the next two nights.

Destination Information

Tel Aviv - This trendy Mediterranean port city is both ancient and cosmopolitan, boasting famous architecture, endless beaches, world-class cuisine and a collection of UNESCO-recognised buildings. There are many districts that make up Tel Aviv, including historic Jaffa.

Jaffa - Reputedly founded by Japheth, son of Noah, Jaffa is also recorded as the site where Jonah attempted to escape God's mission and where the apostle Peter raised the widow Dorcas from the dead. Some Greek traditions have it as the site where Perseus rescued the chained Andromeda from the sea monster.

Caesarea – Originally a Phoenician colony, this area was rebuilt under the patronage of the Roman Empire and renamed Caesarea, after the Emperor Augustus Caesar. This city later became the capital of the Roman province of Judaea and was also an important centre of Christianity. Caesarea is best known however for its harbour, after excavations in the 1970s and 1980s helped it claim international attention as a marvel of the ancient world.

Day 4: Nazareth – Sea of Galilee - Acre

Meals: B, L, D

Head to Kibbutz Degania Bet, an expansion of Israel's very first Kibbutz (Degania Alef). Tour the community and learn about the polarising Kibbutz movement, originally conceptualised as a utopian agrarian community in the early 20th century.

Continue to Tabgha on the northern shores of the Sea of Galilee, held to be the site of the miracle of the Feeding of the Five Thousand. Visit the Church of the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes, home to some of the finest 5th century mosaics in Israel.



Drive 10 minutes east along the shore to Capernaum to visit the archaeological remains of the 3rd-4th century synagogue, built on the site where Jesus is believed to have performed many miracles, including the raising of Jairus' daughter from the dead. Explore the ruins of its white limestone halls and look out for impressive architectural reliefs and decorative Corinthian capitals. Walk 30 metres to the south to visit the excavations of the House of St Peter, visible through the glass floor of the modern church which has been built over them.

From here, a short drive brings you to the Mount of Beatitudes, the site of the Sermon on the Mount, as told in the Gospel according to Matthew. Admire the view over the Galilee region before lunch. Head west to Acre (Hebrew name Akko) to visit the Crusader Fortress here before dinner. Return to Nazareth.

Destination Information

Tabgha – Considered to be the site of the Bible miracle of the 'multiplication of loaves and fishes', now home to a church boasting beautiful 5th-century mosaics of peacocks, flamingos, doves, swans, flowers - and of course the famous loaves and fish.

Acre (Akko) – The Knights Hospitaller held Acre from 1104 until 1187, briefly lost it to Saladin, and reclaimed it in 1191 with the help of Richard the Lionheart. During the First Kingdom, it was a major source of wealth, and after the Knights Templar lost Jerusalem, Acre became the capital of the Second Crusader Kingdom.

Day 5: Christ's Baptism Site – Jericho – Floating in the Dead Sea

Meals: B, L, D

Explore Nazareth's famous Church of the Annunciation, believed to be where Gabriel first appeared to Mary.

Afterwards, enjoy a scenic two-hour drive through the Jordan River Valley to Qasr El Yahud. Believed to be the original site of Christ's baptism by John, this is one of the three most significant Christian pilgrimage sites in the world. The site is located in the West Bank and administered by the Israeli Ministry of Tourism.



Continue to the city of Jericho, administered by the Palestinian Authority, for a cable car journey to the Quarantal Monastery. The monastery clings to the cliff face of the Mount of Temptation, considered to be the site of the Devil's third and final attempt to tempt Jesus during his forty-day fast.

The cable car journey across the valley takes seven minutes, pausing halfway for you to enjoy the panoramic view over the region.

Later, continue to the Dead Sea for an unforgettable experience – floating at leisure in its super-buoyant, salt-rich waters.

Day 6: Masada

Meals: B, L, D

Drive one hour to the impregnable mountain of Masada, ascending to the summit by cable car. Visit the archaeological remains of the fortress built by King Herod the Great c. 37 BC. Hear the story of the Siege of Masada in 73-74 AD – the fateful and controversial last stand of the Jews against Rome in the First Jewish-Roman War, as recorded by Josephus.



Continue to Qumran, the site where the ancient religious texts known as the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered by shepherds in the 1940s. From here, drive on to Bethlehem, re-entering Palestinian-administered territory. Enjoy a Palestinian dancing show during dinner this evening (group size permitting) and stay in Bethlehem overnight.

Day 7: Bethlehem & Jerusalem

Meals: B, L, D

This morning visit the UNESCO-listed Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, birthplace of Jesus and one of the most holy and significant Christian sites in the world. Enter via the tiny Door of Humility (made smaller by Crusaders to prevent their enemies riding in on horseback) and descend the stairs to the Grotto of the Nativity – atmospherically lit by lanterns and marked by a 14-pointed silver star.



Continue to Jerusalem to visit the famous Western Wall, an iconic site in the Holy Land. The wall is the last remnant of the original Temple Mount retaining wall, which supported the First and Second Temples of Jerusalem. Head underground to visit Jerusalem's Western Wall Tunnels (also known as the Wailing Wall) to view the original stonework from the period of King Herod the Great. Then, walk along the points of the Stations of the Cross to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where Jesus is said to have been crucified and resurrected.

Continue to Temple Mount itself, sacred to Jews, Christians and Muslims, where you will find the Dome of the Rock and Al Aksa Mosque.

Please note that there is a lot of walking today, though the walking will be at a leisurely pace. Be aware that wearing religious symbols on Temple Mount is forbidden.

Day 8: Jerusalem

Meals: B, L, D

Head outside the Old City to Mount Zion to visit the Cenacle (the room of the Last Supper), King David's Tomb and the Abbey of the Dormition. After lunch, drive to the Mount of Olives, a site of much significance in both the Old and New Testaments – not least as the site of Christ's Ascension. Visit the Pater Noster Church and the Church of the Ascension and admire the view over Jerusalem before walking down into Josaphat Valley to the Garden of Gethsemane, site of Christ's arrest, to admire its ancient olive trees.



End your tour with an authentic Shabbat dinner experience, hosted and prepared by a local rabbi. This fascinating experience will help you to gain an understanding of Jerusalem's Orthodox Jewish community and gain an insight into their lives.

Please note that there is a lot of walking today, though this will be at a leisurely pace. Please watch your footing whilst walking down the Mount of Olives, and ensure you are wearing sensible footwear.

Destination Information

Mount of Olives – An impressive viewpoint over Jerusalem's Old City, the Mount of Olives rises more than 800 metres above Jerusalem and takes its name from the endless olive groves that once covered the land.

Garden of Gethsemane - At the foothills of the Mount of Olives, the Garden of Gethsemane (translates to 'olive oil press') has centuries-old olive trees spread throughout the garden.

Day 9-10: Depart Israel

Meals: B

Transfer approximately 50 minutes from Jerusalem to Ben Gurion airport for your onward flight.

Please note:

Late check-out is not included in our Ancient Israel tour. If you wish to book a late check-out for your final day in Jerusalem, please contact our reservations department who can confirm the additional price and make this arrangement for you, subject to availability at the hotel.

Transfers - In the event that your flight departs outside of the majority group departure time, you will be transferred to the airport by a shared coach.

ISRAEL TRAVEL INFORMATION 2023

VISAS:

Visas are not required for New Zealand passport holders for entry into Israel. Your passport needs to be valid for at least six months beyond your intended return date to New Zealand.

Please note the visa procedures and requirements may change at any time. These changes are often made by the relevant embassy or consulate; Wendy Wu Tours acts as a third party and has no influence on the process of a visa. Your travel consultant will inform you if any changes are applicable prior to your departure.

INSURANCE:

We strongly recommend that you take out a policy as soon as you pay your deposit. Wendy Wu Tours cannot in any way be made liable for any additional cost incurred by the customer on any tour due to the customer not having adequate travel insurance.

We also encourage all customers to take a copy of their travel insurance documents (especially relevant international contact numbers) with them while on tour. We advise that you check the inclusions and procedures for lodging claims prior to your departure. These documents should be stored separately from the original

EATING IN ISRAEL:

Israeli food offers you a wonderful culinary delight. With various food choices like Pita bread, Hummus, Kebabs and Shwarmas, it makes for a difficult choice but guaranteed to leave long lasting taste. Israel has many delicacies, and a traditional meal consists of hummus, small plates of a variety of salads and warm pita bread. Mujaddara is a dish of cooked lentils with rice and sautéed onions.

Whilst we always encourage our guests to try the local cuisine, you will have opportunities during your tour to eat Western food. Those with dietary requirements will be very well catered to in Israel - just make sure to inform your booking agent of any specific requirements well in advance of your trip.

Your itinerary has been carefully crafted to introduce you to a range of local dishes and we hope that you enjoy the culinary adventure ahead. All meals (excluding drinks) are included in our fully inclusive group tours from dinner on the day of your groups' arrival until breakfast on your day of departure.

**PLEASE INFORM US OF ANY ALLERGIES AND/OR SPECIAL DIETARY REQUIREMENTS
AT TIME OF BOOKING**

TRANSPORT:

Coaches: Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers between destinations. Roads in Israel have generally been improved over recent years, but please be aware traffic and/or weather conditions may extend driving times. There may be sections of road where the surface may be comparatively bumpy, but our drivers will do their utmost to lessen the impact.

TIPPING POLICY:

Tipping while on holiday is common in most parts of the world and the Middle East is no exception. However, it is not always clear who it is appropriate to tip and how much. Furthermore, travellers may not have the right amounts of cash available at the right time. In order to avoid any inconvenience Wendy Wu Tours operates a tipping policy where a stated amount is given to your national escort at the beginning of your tour and tips are disbursed amongst your main service providers (for example local guides and drivers) throughout your tour.

The amount is designed to be at a reasonable level for travellers while being fair to the local people and includes a gratuity for the national escort. Any other tipping, such as tips for bathroom attendants or hotel porters that are taking luggage to your room, is at your discretion based on satisfaction of services received, as are gratuities for additional requested special services.

We generally find that most customers appreciate the convenience of our tipping policy, but we do recognize that it may not suit everyone. However, as this is a group tour, we ask that everyone follows the same protocol to be fair to other group members.

PORTERAGE:

Please be aware that porterage is not included on our tours in Israel. You will therefore need to be able to handle your own luggage within the hotel and when using transportation like trains and coaches.

ACCOMMODATION:

Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family run guesthouse in a smaller town. Hotels used in Israel are generally rated as local four-star standard. All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, TV and telephone.

Plumbing and electricity supplies can be erratic and occasionally the power in hotel rooms is turned off while guests are out of the room. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your National Escort/Local Guide. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards meet your needs. Please note that double bed requests can be made at time of booking but can't be guaranteed.

DEVELOPMENT IN ISRAEL:

Concepts of personal responsibility are different to those in New Zealand. Consequently, tourist and public facilities may not uphold the same safety standards as in New Zealand; for example, you may see a hole in the road without a warning sign or safety barricade. All our suppliers meet local safety standards as a minimum. We want you to have an enjoyable holiday, so we ask that you take extra care, use your common sense, refer to notices and follow advice from your National Escort or Local Guides.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCE:

Israel society and culture are built on intricate social etiquette and customs. As foreigners, we are not expected to be knowledgeable about all etiquette, but it will make your time in Israel more enjoyable if you are respectful of local customs.

CLIMBING STEPS:

Sightseeing at a lot of sites of interest involves climbing quite a number of steps. The steps tend to be quite large, not level and sometimes without handrails.

You sometimes need to walk from the bus park to the entrance, and/or need to climb some steps inside. People with knee or hip injuries, who have poor balance or are otherwise unable to complete these activities independently should consider the suitability of this itinerary carefully.

LUGGAGE:

All travellers are limited to two items of luggage each: a suitcase with a maximum weight of 20kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of five kilograms. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. Please note that authorities will only allow bottles onto the aircraft if they have been checked in as main baggage. Bottles in hand luggage may be confiscated.

EXCHANGING CASH:

The unit of currency in Israel is the New Israeli Shekel. We suggest exchanging your money before travelling to remote areas and smaller towns, as exchange facilities can be limited. Try and keep some small notes and coins on you, as on street stalls and in small shops they may not have the change to break up a high denomination note. ATMs are common across Israel, and we recommend using an ATM inside a bank where possible. Most major credit cards are widely accepted across the continent, though please bear in mind the charges of your provider. Debit cards are also widely accepted but may have a limit to the amount of cash you can withdraw – consult your bank about this before travelling.

PERSONAL EXPENSES AND OPTIONAL TOURINGS:

Personal Expense - You will need to take some extra money to cover drinks, laundry and souvenirs, plus any additional sightseeing that may be offered to you.

Optional Tours - May be offered in each city you visit during your tour. These are not included in the standard itinerary and will only be available if time permits and if seats are available.

Please ensure you have additional funds available if you feel you may wish to participate in any extra activities. Each option will be arranged locally by your National Escort/Local Guide, participation and tipping for optional excursions is completely at your discretion.

VACCINATIONS AND YOUR HEALTH:

We recommend that you contact either your Doctor or Health centre for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Safetravel has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful www.safetravel.govt.nz

BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with www.safetravel.govt.nz as in the event of an emergency, New Zealand Consular assistance will be more readily available.

Up until the day you travel, it is vital you keep up to date and familiarised with the entry requirements as these can change at short notice. You are personally responsible for completing any entry forms, conducting any covid tests (if necessary), etc and adhering to countries' specific entry requirements.

You can also access the New Zealand Government's travel advisory service for up-to-date information about your destination on the same website.

AFTER YOUR BOOKING:

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation along with a link to our website where you can find your visa information (if applicable) and other important information. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure.

ITINERARY CHANGES:

It is our intention to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate; in these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.

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