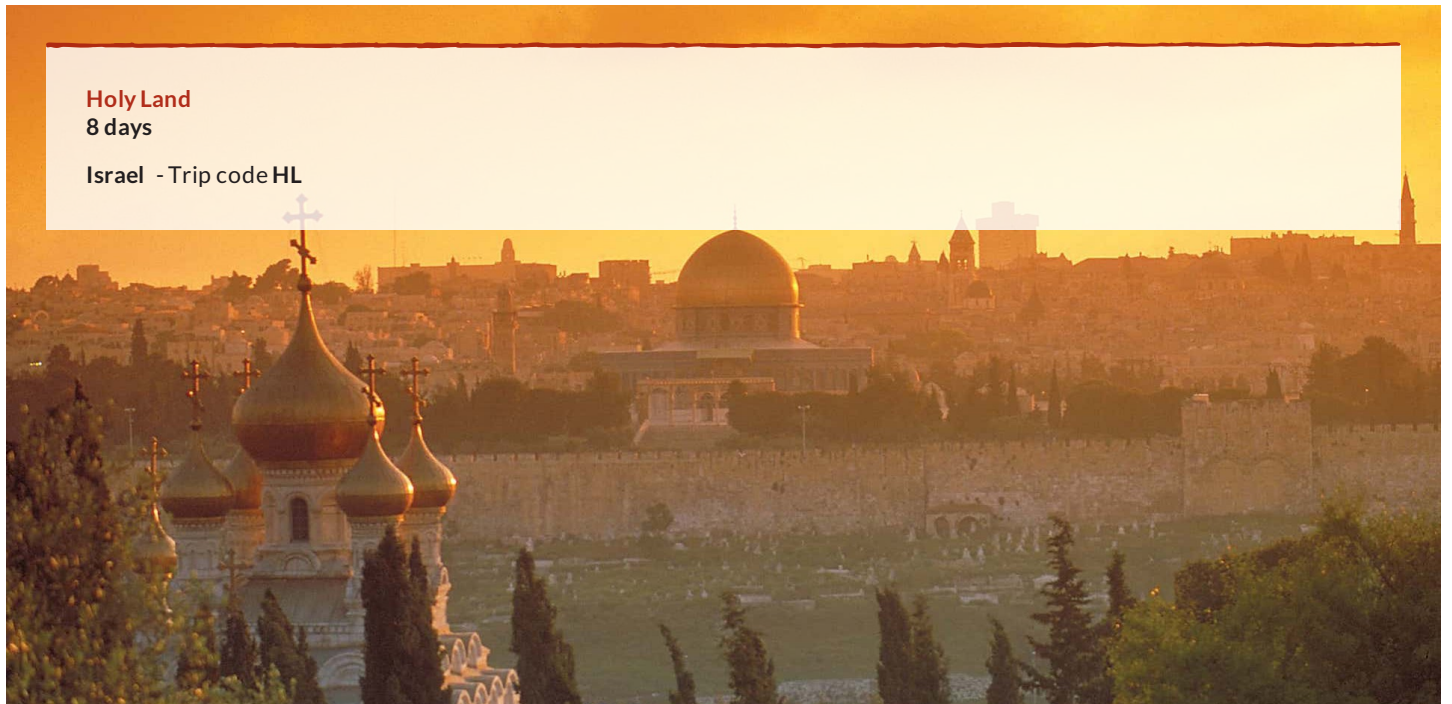


EXPLORE!

Holy Land
8 days

Israel - Trip code HL



Holy Land

On this journey we explore some of the Holy Land's greatest cultural and religious sites. We roam through the narrow streets of the Old City of Jerusalem and visit the Church of the Nativity and the Wailing Wall. We also take a dip in the Dead Sea, enjoy local Bedouin hospitality and take a cable car to the impressive sky fortress of Masada.

Trip highlights

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

TRIP PACE:

Full on

Full on paced trips are for travellers who like their holidays packed with activities and experiences, moving on quickly from place to place with lots of early starts and long, busy days. Some may find them tiring, but others get a buzz from packing their precious holiday-time as chock-a-block full of new experiences as possible!

GROUP SIZE:

12 - 18

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join tour Tel Aviv

Join your tour in Tel Aviv and check into hotel. Tel Aviv, often called 'the city that never stops' was the first modern Jewish city built in Israel, and is the country's economic and cultural centre. It is a lively, active city with entertainment, culture and art, festivals, and a rich night life. Situated on a 14km long strip of the Mediterranean coast, Tel Aviv extends beyond the Yarkon River to the north and the Ayalon River to the east. Hundreds of thousands of workers, visitors, tourists, and partygoers move about the city each day.



Accommodation: Hotel Rothschild 22 (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Tel Aviv city tour, then explore Old Jaffa, Caesarea, Haifa and Akko

Israel's second largest city, Tel Aviv was founded at the beginning of the 20th century on the outskirts of the old port city of Jaffa. We'll get a chance to take a tour of this impressive 1930s architecture this morning, as we walk through the historic centre to the trendy neighbourhood of Neve Tzedek. From here we will board our bus to ancient port area of Jaffa and continue to the ruins of Caesarea. We travel along Israel's northern coast and journey to the historic city of Haifa, where we take in the panoramic views from the slopes of Mount Carmel and see the Bahá'í Gardens. We visit the crusader-era Knights Halls in Akko, a large stone fortification built to protect the town from marine attacks before making our way to our Kibbutz at Degania Bet, at the Sea of Galilee. A kibbutz is a collective community of people in Israel based mainly on agriculture and shared living. They began in the 1920's and currently there are approximately 270 kibbutzim in Israel.



Accommodation: Kibbutz Degania Bet (or similar)



Standard Kibbutz



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Visit Sea of Galilee and holy places of Capernaum; afternoon tour of Nazareth

Today we visit the important Christian sites of Tabgha and Capernaum. It was at Tabgha, where one of the most significant events of the New Testament saw the feeding of the 5,000. We will have an opportunity to visit the Church of the Multiplication of the Loaves, the Church of the Primacy of St Peter and the Mount itself, before continuing on to Capernaum, the birthplace of St. Peter and the site where it is believed Jesus first started his ministry. Taking an afternoon boat trip out onto the waters of the Sea of Galilee, we then head for our kibbutz, close to the historic city of Tiberias. This afternoon we will make a tour of Nazareth to visit the Basilica of the Annunciation and St. Joseph's Church. We will then have free time to explore the town and local market before returning to our kibbutz for the night.



Accommodation: Kibbutz Degania Bet (or similar)



Standard Kibbutz



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast and Dinner

DAY 4 - Visit Jericho, the scrolls of Qumran and float in the Dead Sea

This morning we take a tour of our kibbutz, to meet some of the residents and to understand their way of life. Heading off towards the Jordan Valley we travel to the ancient city of Jericho. Lying amidst the hotly contested settlements of the West Bank, Jericho was the first city to fly the flag of the newly formed Palestinian state and its history stretches back some ten millennia. We drive to Qumran, home of the Essenes, a strict and devout Jewish sect who lived in the area until early in the 1st century AD. They are believed to have been the authors of the 2,000 year old manuscripts found amongst the hillside caves in 1947. Following our visit to Qumran, we will drive to the Dead Sea. At 418m below sea level, this salty expanse of mineral rich water is the lowest point on earth and has been revered for centuries for its beneficial properties. After a float in the Dead Sea the afternoon is free to relax back at our Kibbutz.



Accommodation: Kibbutz Kalia (or similar)



Standard Kibbutz



Swimming pool available



Single room available




Meals Provided: Breakfast and Dinner


DAY 5 - Explore Ein Gedi, visit sky fortress of Masada and drive to Jerusalem

We start the day with a trip to Ein Gedi, a natural oasis in the desert, protected as a nature reserve where we will take a short walk to a natural spring. Back on the bus, we will continue along the western shores of the Dead Sea to the isolated hilltop fortress city of Masada, the last stronghold of the Zealots against the Romans during the First Revolt in AD 70. From the top of the citadel there are some stunning views of the surrounding desert, including the mountains of Moab and the Dead Sea. We then move on to Jerusalem, our base for the next few nights; this evening there is the option of a light and sound show at the Tower of David.



Accommodation: The Post Hostel (or similar)

 Standard Hotel

 Single room available

 Meals Provided: Breakfast


DAY 6 - Exploring Jerusalem

This morning we drive through the new part of Jerusalem, taking in the Hebrew University, the Parliament building and the Supreme Court, before continuing to the Israel Museum and the Shrine of the Book, home of the Dead Sea Scrolls parchments and the largest museum to all things Israeli anywhere on the planet. Passing by Ein Karem we then visit the Church of St John the Baptist, before making our final visit of the day to Bethlehem and the Church of the Nativity. The original building was believed to have been built by the Empress Helena, the mother of Constantine, the emperor who legalised Christianity in 313AD. From here we return to Jerusalem and drive to the Western Wall to witness the Shabbat prayers, where thousands of people gather to welcome the Sabbath. This evening there is the option to experience Shaabat of a life time, spending the evening with an Israeli family as they say friday night prayers to celebrate the Sabbath.



Accommodation: The Post Hostel (or similar)

 Standard Hotel

 Single room available

 Meals Provided: Breakfast


DAY 7 - Walking the biblical trail in Jerusalem

Certainly one of the world's most intriguing cities, Jerusalem can boast a history stretching back some three millennia, and during its long history it has been destroyed twice, besieged 23 times, attacked 52 times and recaptured 44 times. This morning we drive by bus up to the Mount of Olives for a superb view over the Old City, before descending into the Josaphat Valley to visit the Pater Noster Church, Dominus Fleuit, the Garden of Gethsemane and the Church of All Nations. Entering the Old City we then visit the Pool of Bethesda, before taking a walking tour of this most hallowed of settings. Passing through narrow winding streets overflowing with street vendors and shops, we head to the Via Dolorosa, traditionally believed to be the route taken by Christ on the day of his execution. We will follow the Stations of the Cross to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the holiest site in Christendom and the reputed place of the crucifixion, burial and eventual resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jerusalem is unique in that it is held sacred by the three great monotheistic religions of the world, Christianity, Islam and Judaism. Finally we head up onto the slopes of Mount Zion, where we visit the tomb of King David, the beautiful Benedictine Abbey of the Dormition and the Cenacle, which since the 4th century has been identified as the site of the Last Supper. After our visit here we return to our hotel. The majority of today will be on foot, however there is the option of using transport for those that are struggling.



Accommodation: The Post Hostel (or similar)

 Standard Hotel

 Single room available

 Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Tour ends Jerusalem

Trip ends after breakfast in Jerusalem.



What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 7
Dinner: 2



Transport

Bus
Boat



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader
Driver(s)



Accommodation

4 nights standard hotel
3 nights standard kibbutz

Trip information

Country information

Israel Holidays & Tours

Climate

Israel has a Mediterranean climate. Summer is hot with fairly high humidity in coastal regions. Rainfall is mostly from November to March; during this period temperatures can drop quite sharply, particularly in December, so pack accordingly.

Time difference to GMT

+2

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Jewish, Islam, Christian.

Language

Hebrew, Arabic, English.

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

Ein Bokek - Kibbutz Tour \$9-20 pp (depending on numbers), Genesis Land Tour \$. Jerusalem - Sound & Light Show - from \$15.00 pp (subject to weather conditions); City Tour at Night by Bike - \$26.00 pp (minimum 4 people) ; Shabbat of a Lifetime - Friday night - \$60.00 pp (depending on numbers). If you would like to book the Shabbat of a Lifetime experience please use this website: <http://habbatofalifetime.com/>. Please note this is a very popular excursion so we do advise to prebook early.

Clothing

Clothes should be casual and practical: convention demands that long trousers are worn in some Jewish and Christian holy places, and women must cover their arms, legs and head. During winter medium weight clothing and rainwear is advisable. A fleece will be useful during this time for early mornings (Masada visit) when it can be chilly.

Footwear

Comfortable walking shoes or boots, trainers and sandals.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One suitcase, and a daypack is useful.

Equipment

No special equipment required.

Tipping

Explore leader

Tour Leader: At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Local crew

You should allow approx £25 for gratuities for local staff. It is customary to tip the tour leader in Israel, however this is at your discretion. We would recommend allowing approximately \$3-\$4 a day should you feel you wish to do this.

Country Information

Israel Holidays & Tours

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Dinner price

£10.00 - 14.00

Beer price

£2.00 - 4.00

Water price

£1.00 - 2.00

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Shekel (NIS).

Recommended Currency For Exchange

It is easy to exchange major currencies - euros, pounds sterling and US dollars

Where To Exchange

Your tour leader will advise you on arrival.

ATM Availability

ATM's are widely available.

Credit Card Acceptance

Credit cards are also generally accepted.

Travellers Cheques

Travellers Cheques are not easily exchanged and should be avoided.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, Boat

Accommodation notes

Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

Throughout this trip the accommodation varies in style, standard and size. In Jerusalem, we stay in a centrally located hostel in what was once the post office building. However, to clarify we have graded the accommodation as 'standard hotel' because although the property features dormitory rooms, all Explore customers stay in private twin-share accommodation with en-suite. Whilst the rooms are small and simply furnished, they are clean and all feature private bathroom facilities, making it a great base from which to explore this historic capital city. The main highlight of this accommodation is its central location, with many of Jerusalem's highlights just a walk away and access to the city's modern tram just 100m away.

Essential information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check

requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa Information

Israel & Palestinian Territories: Visas are not required by UK, New Zealand, Australian, US & Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office. Note: You will now be given a visa card at immigration with your details on it. This replaces a stamp in your passport and must be kept safe as it will be required when exiting the country.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

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Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, we recommend protection against, typhoid, tetanus, diphtheria, polio, rabies, hepatitis A and B. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.
