



## ISRAEL TOUR QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

*Everything you need to know for your*

# UP TO JERUSALEM

JOURNEY TO THE LAND OF THE BIBLE

### BEFORE YOUR TOUR BEGINS!

- » **Currency/credit cards:** U.S. dollars are accepted at many (but not all) places in Israel. Bring some smaller denominations (\$1s, \$5s, \$10s US) since change will usually be given in shekels (Israeli currency). Credit cards are also accepted in many places. However it is recommended to call the credit card company and bank and let them know you will be overseas in Israel. Traveler's checks are not recommended as they are not widely accepted.
- » **Documentation/ Passport/Visa:** You must have a passport that will not expire within six (6) months of the tour dates. **Passports should be kept on your person at all times (so keep it in your personal item or carry on).** We recommend you photocopy your passport signature page, which contains your passport number and photo and keep it in your luggage. The copy can be kept in a side pocket of your suitcase and will come in handy if you lose your passport. Never leave your passport in your checked luggage or hotel room. **Keep your passport with you at all times in Israel.**
  - » **Visa:** You do not need to obtain a visitor's visa prior to leaving for the tour. A visitor's visa will be issued to you upon arrival in the passport control hall at the airport.
- » **Health requirements/vaccinations:** You should have a copy of your health insurance card. Immunization shots are NOT required for this tour.
- » **Medication:** If you are taking medication that is necessary for your health, be sure to get separate, written prescriptions from your doctor and take them along in addition to the medication you are carrying. The scripts can be used in Israel if your medication becomes lost or you run out of your supply. **It is very important that you keep all medication in your carry-on bag** in the unlikely event that your luggage is delayed.
- » **Physical requirements:** While you are in Israel you will be in a comfortable, climate-controlled, modern bus. However, you need to be in good health and be able to climb at least three flights of stairs and walk three to four miles a day. Mobility is a must as tour sites are different than in the U.S. Some include uneven, unpaved and/or rocky surfaces; places without railings; and lack handicap-accessible accommodations.
- » **Pre-Tour Package:** A couple of weeks before the tour begins, you will receive a package from GTI that contains your e-ticket receipt, itinerary, *Up to Jerusalem* Guidebook, journal, nametag, luggage tags, pen, and an electric plug adapter. **Please be sure to bring these items along on the tour.**
- » **TIP:** *Before you leave home, send your family a copy of your itinerary and the link to the FOI website, [www.foi.org/blog](http://www.foi.org/blog), where they can follow your experience touring Israel through daily pictures and journal on the tour blog.*

### PACKING FOR THE TOUR!

- » **Dress:** Tour dress is casual. Jeans or comfortable slacks/trousers are appropriate for both men and women. Modest shorts can be worn on most days but will not be suitable on certain days due to site restrictions. Sneakers, tennis shoes, or good walking shoes with a grip on the bottom are the best for walking during the full days of touring. We highly recommended that the shoes be broken in prior to the tour. Layers are best, you may need a light jacket/sweater in the morning that can be left on the bus while touring in the afternoon. Additionally, you may want water shoes or flip flops for the Dead Sea swim. Leave your expensive jewelry at home. Bring along one "dressier" outfit for our farewell dinner; slacks/trousers are fine for both men and women; coat and tie are not recommended.
- » **Eye Protection:** If you wear **eyeglasses**, take an extra pair. **Sunglasses** are also highly recommended.

- » **Electronics:** Israel uses 230 volts electrical service and a different plug style (compared to US 110 volts). Today, many electronics are made with dual voltage and will automatically switch between the 110v and 230v (50 Hz and 60 Hz). However, your electronic devices may need a voltage converter if they don't switch automatically. You also need an adapter for your electric cords because the plugs in Israel are a different shape than in U.S. Israel uses the European standard for outlets. Typical electronics people pack battery chargers, electric shavers, travel irons, hair dryers, curling irons, etc. GTI will send you a universal adapter in your pre-tour package but it is not a converter. Hotels do not provide converters or adapters. You can purchase electronic converters and plug adapters before you leave in most electronic or luggage stores.
- » **Items to Pack:** Travel alarm clock, kleenex, hand sanitizer, raincoat or poncho, swimsuit, sunscreen, hat, sun visor; along with all items sent in pre-tour package.
- » **Luggage:** Make sure all luggage is in good working order and ready for travel. Also, keep it light (under 50 pounds). The airlines impose heavy surcharges on checked bags weighing in excess of 50 pounds.
- » **Luggage Allowances** (per person):
  - » **One checked bag** (under 50 pounds)
  - » **One carry on:** the maximum dimensions are 9 inches x 14 inches x 22 inches including handles and wheels cannot exceed 17 pounds.
  - » **One personal item** (handbag/small backpack/laptop bag) 17 inches x 10 inches x 9 inches.
  - » For more information/up to date luggage guidelines: [www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov)
- » **Luggage Tags:** Enclosed in your pre-tour package from GTI, please fill them out with your complete name and address. Affix one to your checked bag and one to your carry-on bag. **All pieces of luggage must be tagged.** Using the GTI Tours tags enables porters in Israel to quickly identify your bags for transport to and from the tour bus when moving from one hotel to another.
- » **TIP:** Make your luggage uniquely identifiable (straps, travel stickers, and bandanas or ribbons work but be careful not to put too much on because it could get stuck in conveyor belts.
- » **Toiletries:** Pack a two-week supply but keep in mind that all carry-on liquids must be under three ounces. It is also recommended you put your liquids in a ziplock bag to prevent possible leakage. All carry-on liquids must be in a one quart clear bag for airport security screening.

## TRAVEL TO ISRAEL!

- » **Airlines:** Ticketing is electronic (e-tickets) and an e-ticket receipt will be included in the pre-tour package. You will use the e-ticket receipt to check in, either online or at the airport. If you have any problems with your flights, call Monica at 616-396-1234 and she will work to resolve them.
- » **Air travel:** A good rule of thumb is to arrive three hours early for international flights.
- » **Departure From Newark:** When you arrive at the departure gate in Newark, you may want to put your nametag on to identify yourself to other tour participants. The gate area may be closed but will open approximately 1.5 hours before departure. You will pass through another security screening at the gate entrance. Once inside the gate, you will board when your zone is called. There are a lot of people at the gate and you may not meet The Friends of Israel staff on the tour until you arrive in Israel.
- » **TIP:** You may want to bring in your carry-on bag some items to make your flight more comfortable. This would include compression socks, neck pillows or rests, earphones, and snacks. Dress comfortably because it is an 11-hour flight. It's also best to pack a complete change of clothes in your carry-on bag just in case your luggage is delayed. Water is available on the flight and two meals will be served.
- » **Arrival in Israel:** Upon arrival, follow the signs for passport control. It is a long walk and there are restrooms along the way. As you enter the passport control hall, get into one of the queuing lanes for foreign passports.
- » **Customs Entrance:** Israel does not use a visa stamp on your passport, rather they print a visitor's visa. **The visitor's visa must be kept with your passport at all times!** We recommend bringing a paper clip along to clip your visitor's visa to the inside of your passport. Some hotels require us to show them our passport and visitor's visa.
- » **Baggage Claim/Tour Assembly:** After you leave the Passport Control hall you will enter the baggage claim area where you will collect your checked bags. Once you have your bags, **look for The Friends of Israel Up to Jerusalem group in the baggage claim area.** Please make sure you are wearing your nametag. We usually assemble the group at the far end of the baggage claim near the exit. There will be an opportunity to use a restroom before we exit. Please wait for the group to assemble and **DO NOT exit the baggage claim on your own.**

## WHILE YOU ARE IN ISRAEL!

- » **Daily Itinerary/Punctuality:** We make every effort to follow the itinerary as listed in the brochure. This outlines the major places you will be visiting. Your actual tour may vary somewhat as determined by local conditions and/or your tour leader.
  - » We want every hour spent touring to be a valuable experience. The Israeli guides we use are professionals who demonstrate great expertise in biblical content, history, geography, and Jewish traditions. They are also very personable, and will answer your questions from an “insider’s point of view.” Some leisure time is built into the schedule and there will be ample opportunities for shopping.
  - » Punctuality: Each day’s schedule will be communicated to you the evening prior by the guide. It is your responsibility to be on the tour bus on time each morning and stay with the group when they are touring. Don’t be a “straggler” who falls behind or wanders off. The bus will leave punctually each day!
- » **TIP:** If, in the highly unlikely event, you do get separated from the group; find a cab, pull out your hotel room key card, and ask the driver to take you to your hotel.
- » **Cell Phone:** If you are planning to use your cell phone in Israel, we recommend switching to an international calling/date plan with your carrier for the time you are in Israel. If interested, we can send your rental information through TalknSave Israeli phone company.
- » **Entrance Fees:** All entrance fees are covered in the price of the tour.
- » **Guidebook:** An *Up to Jerusalem* Guidebook will be sent to you in a pre-tour package, along with a journal and your name tag. The Guidebook provides helpful information on the sites we visit and can be used to make notes along the journey.
- » **Meals:** Breakfast and dinner are included each day at the hotel. You are responsible for lunches. We will stop each day for lunch and most restaurants will take American dollars for lunch (estimated cost \$10-\$14). Fruit drinks and carbonated beverages which are similar to those in the U.S. (although diet drinks may be called “light”) are available.
- » **Service Tips:** Tips for your guide, bus driver, hotel porters, waiters, chambermaids, and reception staff are included in the tour price. However, a love gift collection for the tour guide and the bus driver will be taken by The Friends of Israel staff toward the end of the tour. The typical amount given by each tour participant is \$50.
- » **Taking Pictures:** Most places can be photographed but a few stops are restricted for photos. You will be told if there any restrictions by our guide.
- » **Time Difference:** Israel is seven hours ahead of Eastern Time (USA). That means 8:00 am in New York is 3:00 pm in Israel and 9:00 am in Israel is 2:00 am in New York.
- » **Value Added Tax (VAT):** Israel has a 17% VAT on purchases. Some merchants participate in a VAT refund for foreigners on purchases over \$100. If you qualify for a VAT refund program, the merchant will give you a form to keep. You will use this form at Ben Gurion Airport to obtain a VAT refund before leaving Israel. Instructions for obtaining the refund will be given prior to entering the airport.
- » **Water:** Bottled water is provided on the bus throughout the tour and is included in the price of the tour. The water in Israel is safe to drink and we highly recommend you drink a couple of bottles a day to avoid dehydration.

## TRAVEL BACK HOME!

- » **Preparations for Departure:** Instructions for packing, check out, and departure to the airport will be given at the farewell dinner on the last evening of the tour.
- » **Arrival in Newark:** When you arrive in the U.S., follow the signs to passport control to the U.S. Customs hall. You will be given a customs form on the flight to declare articles purchased in Israel and in your possession. Be sure to keep a record of your purchases. By law you may be required to open all baggage for inspection if requested. So pack in such a way that will make it easy. Try to pack articles which were acquired abroad on top inside your luggage, and keep sales receipts handy. Each person may bring home \$800 worth of duty-free items. Canadians may bring home \$750 CAD worth of duty-free items per person.
- » **Tour Pictures:** A few weeks after the tour ends, you will receive a DVD containing the pictures and journal from our tour blog. We also will share a list of the tour participants that you can use to stay in contact with others from the tour. We will send you the link to a private Friends of Israel *Up to Jerusalem* Tour Facebook page where you can upload pictures to share with others from the tour.