



Bar / Bat Mitzvah Tours Summer 2007 Itinerary

Wednesday: Flight to Israel. Bon Voyage—Nesia Tova! Overnight on board the flight.

Thursday: After arriving at Israel's new Ben Gurion Airport, we alight our bus, and head for Jerusalem. First stop will be at Mt. Scopus, the traditional "overview" of Jewish pilgrims who arrived in Jerusalem over the centuries. Here we will break bread together, and toast our arrival. We then check in at our Jerusalem Hotel, and take a brief discovery walk to whet our appetite for the days to come. Dinner on our own in Jerusalem. We return to our hotel, staying up for as long as we can to overcome our jet-lag. Layla Tov!
Overnight, Jerusalem

Friday: We begin the day by going to Bet Guvrin where we will participate in an Archeological Dig for a Day. Enter into underground caves and start the search of the past. An archeologist joins us to examine our finds and to share their importance. We move on to nearby Tel Gezer, where we will "meet" the ancient civilizations which dwelled on this hill and then "meet" our own ancestors who passed by this hill and for some reason refused to settle here. This surprising refusal to dwell here is the opening of our story of Jewish history in the land of Israel. In the afternoon, join the Israelis at the market preparing for the Sabbath. Late afternoon, travel to the Western Wall (Kotel) to join in prayer and welcome in the Sabbath. An Oneg Shabbat of singing, stories and games together as a group - with a traditional "Kiddush and HaMotzee" follows Shabbat dinner.
Overnight, Jerusalem

Shabbat: How about a lie in? Or services in a Synagogue of your choice? At 10:00 a.m. we join together and depart with our guide for a Jerusalem neighborhoods tour. Jerusalem is like a patchwork of different neighborhoods, each maintaining its own unique character. Only by walking through these neighborhoods can we begin to capture Jerusalem's character. Enjoy an afternoon rest. At 4:00 p.m. we learn about the geography of Israel in a creative map session. After Havdallah, enjoy an evening at leisure in down-town Jerusalem. Shavuah Tov!
Overnight, Jerusalem

Sunday: From our hotel, we head for the Walls of the Old City, and climb to their ramparts from where we can see the 4 quarters of the Old City within its walls - the Armenian Quarter, The Jewish Quarter, the Moslem Quarter, and the Christian Quarter. We descend this wall and proceed to the "City of David." At the new Davidson Center at the Southern Wall Excavations we will hear an interactive story of King Herod who made Jerusalem the jewel of the ancient near east. After a visit to the excavations themselves, we once again go underground to walk through the Kotel Tunnels. A moment of prayer at the Kotel and continue through the Jewish Quarter to head for the Herodian Mansion. Here in this house of the rich and the famous, we experience a bit of the culture of the time. Our bus meets us and takes us to the Israel Museum and the Holyland Model. We start with a visit to the world famous Shrine of the Book, home of the Dead Sea Scrolls and see them up close as we relive our history. After returning to our hotel, we invite all Bar/Bat Mitzvah students to join together for a meeting with Rabbi Lee Diamond, who will conduct our Bar/Bat Mitzvah services on Massada tomorrow. Enjoy your evening at leisure.
Overnight, Jerusalem

Monday: After an early breakfast we depart for the Dead Sea and Massada. We arrive at Massada, take the cable car and glide to the top of this historic mountain. As we ascend the mountain, we do so emulating the Zealots who came here 2,000 years ago. Their story is a dramatic one and teaches us a Jewish lesson for all time. Here on this mountain of dedication and commitment, we join in prayer and a Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony - as our children pledge their loyalty to the Jewish present and future as they have their Aliya to the Torah, bless it, read from it and share some personal words. Descend the mountain, and head off for a float in the Dead Sea followed by a celebratory lunch at a local hotel. - Mazal Tov and Yashar Koach (well done) to all our B'nai Mitzvah! Now we take a journey north through the Jordan Valley to the Sea of Galilee. Late dinner at our hotel in the Galilee.
Overnight, Sea of Galilee

Tuesday: Wake up on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. First today is the Roman City of Bet Shean. Continue to Bet Alfa's wonderful ancient Synagogue from the 6th century, and its amazing mosaic floor. We move on to Kfar Nachum, otherwise known as Capernaum to examine the beginnings of our daughter religion, Christianity and its ancient Jewish roots. Continue to the mystical city of Safed, which boasts a great artists' colony. Return to the Kibbutz Hotel for a rest, and maybe some beach time on the Kineret - Sea of Galilee. Tonight, a fresh fish dinner of St. Peter's fish (Amnon in Hebrew) at Kibbutz Ein Gev fish restaurant followed by a boat ride across the Kineret. Return home to our hotel.
Overnight, Sea of Galilee

(Program subject to change according to availability of sites)



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Wednesday: We pause in our developing story to visit the Golan Heights. Between Israel's establishment in 1948 and the June 1967 war, daily attacks from this mountain range embittered the lives of the Galilee residents. We then climb the Golan Heights and visit some of the pre-1967 Syrian bunkers. We will then visit the capital city of today's Jewish Golan, Katzrin. Here we will see an audio visual presentation about the Golan, and meet with residents to hear their stories and their vision of the future of this region and how its future is interconnected with Israel's. Now for some real fun for all - we join together in family units for some great rafting on the Jordan River. We then cross the Galilee to visit Akko, otherwise known as Acre. Here after a brief tour of this city, we will learn about the experiences in the Akko prison, where members of the underground Jewish armies were interred and executed during the pre-State British Mandate period. Continue on to our hotel in Haifa. This evening, visit the Druze town of Ussifiya to meet with a family for a home-made dinner and hear about the traditions of this interesting community. Overnight, Haifa

Thursday: Begin the day with a walking tour through Haifa, viewing the magnificent Bahai Gardens. Our story of Israel continues again but now in the modern day period as Israel struggles for independence. From Haifa we continue on to Atlit, where illegal immigrants arriving from Europe after WWII were interred by the British. We then proceed through the delightful town of Zichron Yaacov settled by early pioneers and overlooking the Mediterranean coast below. Visit the Museum depicting the struggles of early statehood. We continue our journey along the Coast visiting the port city of Caesarea and then on to Tel Aviv. We check in at our hotel, with time to spend on Tel Aviv beaches. Free evening in Tel Aviv. Overnight Tel Aviv

Friday: We start our day at Rabin Square, the site of the assassination of former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin where we will discuss the issues of leadership, freedom of speech and related dilemmas in a democratic society. This will be followed by a short trip to Rehovot to visit Machon Ayalon, a secret arms factory in the pre-state days hidden under a kibbutz. It is an amazing place and lots of fun for all ages. From there we continue to Jaffa to visit the quaint reconstructed artists' quarter. We will then walk through the suburb of Neve Tzedek, and along the coast, past the fruit and vegetable Carmel Market to the Friday arts and crafts fair at Nachlat Binyamin – a chance to buy a few gifts & souvenirs for home, and some delicacies for Shabbat. We join for a group Kabbalat Shabbat service and then together enjoy a Shabbat meal in our hotel. After dinner we join on the beach for a "Kumsitz-Oneg Shabbat" with song, guitars and sharing of some of joys of this trip. Layla Tov, Shabbat Shalom. Overnight Tel Aviv

Shabbat: Enjoy a late sleep and breakfast before we set out for a walking tour of the neighborhoods of Tel Aviv, the first modern Jewish city. A visit to the Tel Aviv Art Museum will allow us to gain an insight into the new Jewish culture of Israel. This is a great day to have any Israeli family members visit you or join us for our tour. The early afternoon may be used for walking along the beachfront boardwalk or simply resting. Our day will close with a lecture discussion on the options for peace in Israel and the Middle East. We close our day with Havdalah and then spend the evening on our own in Tel Aviv. Overnight Tel Aviv

Sunday: Begin the day at the Independence Hall where David Ben Gurion declared the State of Israel on May 14th 1948. In the same room, we re-enact and relive this, perhaps one of the most significant moments in our history as Jews. On this, our last day, we will then return to Jerusalem to try to sum up our Israel experience. We continue to visit Yad Vashem, Israel's official memorial to the Holocaust. While many Holocaust museums exist throughout the world, Yad Vashem is unique as it tries to deal with the question of the Holocaust and the establishment of the State and the relationship between the two. From Yad Vashem we proceed on to Mt. Herzl and Israel's national military cemetery where we learn about the price of statehood. We will pause at the graves of young men and women who paid the ultimate price for the Jewish State and the Jewish people as well as the graves of former Prime Ministers and historic figures. Finally we join together in planting trees in one of the Jewish National Funds forests. We can plant a tree with our own hands in honor or in memory of family members, friends, or in honor of our B'nai Mitzvah who have made all of this experience possible and memorable. Farewell Dinner and then transfer to the airport for departure.

And then, we part... Saying to one another... NEXT YEAR IN JERUSALEM - **Le Shana Ha Ba'ah B'Yerushalayim!**

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