



**Jewish Federation of Peoria**  
**Experience Israel Tour**  
**April 30<sup>th</sup>-May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018**  
(Subject to change)

**Day 1: Monday, April 30<sup>th</sup>-Welcome to Israel!**

- **3:00pm arrival** to Israel's Ben Gurion airport. We are met and assisted by our tour educator and escorted to our awaiting coach transportation. **Welcome to Israel!**
- Transfer to **Tel Aviv** and proceed to our hotel for check-in and some much needed rest following the long flight.
- **Dinner** at a Tel Aviv restaurant
- **Overnight: Dan Panorama-Tel Aviv**

**Day 2: Tuesday, May 1<sup>st</sup>-Experience the Action in Tel Aviv**

- After breakfast, visit the **Yitzhak Rabin Center**, built in a downward spiral and presenting two parallel stories: the history of the State of Israel and the biography of Yitzhak Rabin. The museum's exhibits focus on historical turning points in the country's development, presenting the conflicts, social challenges and dilemmas the country faced at that time
- Afterwards, visit the hustle and bustle of the **Levinsky Market**. Enjoy a walking tour of the area accompanied by culinary guru **Inbal Baum**, to include **lunch**.
- Next, visit the **Diaspora Museum**, located on the campus of Tel Aviv University and which presents the fascinating story of the Jewish people from their exile from the Land following the destruction of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple until today.
- To end our day, we visit the **Nachalat Binyamin Crafts Fair & the Carmel Market**. Enjoy one of Tel Aviv's most popular outdoor areas for great sounds, smells, shopping, and of course, tastes.
- Free evening at leisure.

**Overnight: Dan Panorama- Tel Aviv**

**Day 3: Wednesday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>-Be the Change You Wish to See in the World**

- After breakfast, we head north along Israel's coastal highway to **Taibe**, a Muslim Arab city in the 'Triangle' region. Meet with the imam of a local mosque to learn about Islam and efforts of dialogue between Jews and other non-Muslims.

- Drive along the **Green Line**, the original demarcation line of 1949, which currently separates Israel from the Palestinian territories near the village of Mei Ami and view the divided Arab town of **Barta'a**; the town and its residents are split between Israel and the West Bank.
- Continue to the Arab village of **Kfar Kara**. Meet with **Amna Kanane**, founder of **Awareness 4U**. A4U is an organization of Israeli Palestinian women, working to implement full social equality and change, challenging the topics of health, employment and gender discrimination through education and empowerment, particularly among Arab women and girls. Enjoy **lunch** and hear Amna's dramatic and personal story of overcoming all odds and embracing love.
- Visit the **Wingate Institute**, Israel's Olympic sports training facility. Meet with **IDF Soldiers** and their trainers who use the award-winning facilities to practice for military sporting competitions. We will have an exclusive opportunity to join them for an unforgettable sports practice session activity (subject to availability).
- Return to Tel Aviv.
- Free evening at leisure

#### **Overnight: Dan Panorama-Tel Aviv**

#### **Day 4: Thursday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>-Ascend to Jerusalem**

- After breakfast, we check-out of our accommodations and depart Tel Aviv.
- Visit the city of **Lod** and meet some of the young adults involved in a **JAFI** funded program, social awareness program, Re:Lod, which is trying to re-vitalize the city
- Next, drive along the strategic **Burma Road**, which enabled fighters of the pre-state Hagana and Palmach militias (predecessors to the IDF) to break through the siege on Jerusalem during the War of Independence in 1948. There, we will explore the nuanced and complex issues of Israeli independence contrasted to the challenges created by its impact on the land's Arab population.
- Ascend to **Jerusalem**.
- Visit the **City of David**- Experience firsthand 5,000 years of history as we descend into the ancient foundations of King David's Jerusalem. Here, our tour will take us through the wet Siloam's Tunnel built by King Hezekiah to protect the city's water source from the invading Assyrian Army during the days of the First Temple.
- Next, feel the presence of millennia of Jewish history and yearning as we have time to reflect at the **Western Wall** at night. Afterwards, explore the famous **Western Wall Tunnels** as they stretch under the homes of the Muslim Quarter and make their way along the entire length of the Temple Mount (subject to availability).
- Hotel check-in.
- Free evening at leisure.

## Overnight: Dan Panorama-Jerusalem

### Day 5: Friday, May 4<sup>th</sup> - *From Dark to Light & Erev Shabbat*

- Visit **Yad Vashem**, considered the foremost memorial to mankind's darkest period and Israel's official memorial and historical museum to the victims of the Shoah. Explore the issues of the legacy and impact of the Nazi Holocaust on the nascent State of Israel.
- Walk through Israel's largest military cemetery, **Mount Herzl**. Here we will visit the gravesites of Israel's greatest leaders and heroes, including Theodore Herzl, Ze'ev Jabotinsky, Golda Meir, Yitzhak Rabin, and Hannah Senezh, as well as reflect on the visible testament of the personal sacrifice of thousands of Israelis towards the continued existence, security, and safety not only of Israel, but of Jews around the world.
- Have an opportunity to stroll and shop along Jerusalem's famous **Ben Yehuda Street**. Enjoy lunch on own.
- Return to hotel and have the rest of the afternoon free to relax and freshen up before Shabbat.
- This evening, we celebrate a festive **Shabbat dinner** at our hotel.

## Overnight: Dan Panorama-Jerusalem

### Day 6: Saturday, May 5<sup>th</sup> - *Shabbat in the Holy City of Jerusalem*

- Experience the special atmosphere of **Shabbat in Jerusalem** at leisure. For those interested in attending **Shabbat morning services**, a list of nearby area synagogues will be provided.
- Descend to the **Dead Sea region**, the lowest spot on land on earth. Hike up the 'Snake Path' to summit **Masada** (or ascend via cable car for those not interested in hiking). Tour the remains of King Herod's desert retreat and fortress so well preserved over thousands of years by the dry conditions of the Judean Desert. While here, learn about the history of this fascinating place, a symbol of the ancient sovereignty of the Kingdom of Israel and hear about the tale of its violent destruction and the last stand of Jewish patriots in the face of the Roman legion. Additionally, explore the motif of collective memory in the Zionist epic as we discuss the notion of Masada as an ethos to the Zionist narrative and its place in Israeli society and collective identity.
- Enjoy **swimming and 'floating' at the Dead Sea**, the lowest place on the surface of the Earth. Have **lunch** at a Dead Sea spa hotel.
- Return to Jerusalem.
- Following the conclusion of Shabbat, we will have a Havdalah service.
- Free evening at leisure.
- Optional: Experience the breathtaking digital choreography of the Night Spectacular sound & light show at the Tower of David Museum, located in the

Old City. Utilizing the dramatic backdrop of the Tower of David Citadel as a canvas, watch and hear this one of a kind high-tech performance as it brings to life the ancient city of Jerusalem in all of its historical periods and glory before your eyes.

**Overnight: Dan Panorama - Jerusalem**

**Day 7: Sunday, May 6<sup>th</sup>-Discoveries in the Negev**

- This morning, meet with **Prof. Reuven Hazan**, head of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem Department of Political Science. Professor Hazan will explain the complexities of Israeli politics and the differences and similarities with the US system of government.
- Afterwards, we check-out of our hotel accommodations and depart Jerusalem.
- Travel to the city of and visit a **Mercaz Klita** (immigrant absorption center). Learn about the process which 'olim' go through when they make Aliya to Israel. Meet with the center's director and some of the new olim from Ethiopia.
- Continue south towards **Be'er Sheva**, the largest city in the Negev desert.
- Explore **CyberSpark**, the new Israeli cyber innovation arena centered in Be'er Sheva. By creating a unique geographical cluster of leading cyber companies, multinational corporations, ground-breaking academic research, leading technology defense unites, specialized educational platforms, and the National CERT, CyberSpark offers a comprehensive ecosystem that is unprecedented in terms of innovation and prospective success (subject to availability).
- Afterwards, proceed further south to the city of **Mitzpe Ramon**. The town of Mitzpe Ramon is located prominently on the edge of one of the most fundamentally unique and visually stunning phenomena nature has to offer-the **Machtesh Ramon**-Ramon Crater.
- Check-in to our hotel accommodations.
- **Dinner** at hotel.

**Overnight: Pundak Ramon, Mitzpe Ramon**

**Day 8: Monday, May 7<sup>th</sup>-Machtesh Ramon**

- Visit the **Machtesh Ramon Visitors Center**. Named for the late Israeli astronaut Ilan Ramon, here we can discover and learn about the intense geological forces which created the crater, as well as its natural environment, unique Israeli history, and the direction of its future.
- Experience a fascinating **jeep tour** with our guide inside the **crater**. The Ramon Crater is the largest of 3 craters in the Negev. It contains geological formations unparalleled elsewhere in the world and encompasses a vast diversity of mountains and rocks of fantastic colors and forms.
- Lunch on your own in **Mitzpe Ramon**, then rest in the hotel for the afternoon.

- Afterwards, we enjoy a mouthwatering visit to **Lasha Bakery**; a local boutique bakery offering a variety of fresh breads and cakes. We will have the opportunity to participate in a **bread baking workshop**.
- Return to hotel.
- Enjoy **dinner** at **HaChavit** ('the tap' in Hebrew).

**Overnight: Pundak Ramon, Mitzpe Ramon**

**Day 9: Tuesday, May 8<sup>th</sup>-The Western Negev**

- After breakfast, we check-out of our hotel accommodations and depart, heading north towards the Western Negev region, bordering the Gaza Strip.
- Visit the area of the **Kerem Shalom border crossing**. A border crossing on the Gaza-Israel border, witness the many hundreds of container trucks crossing over the border bringing supplies and retail goods from Israel and overseas into the Gaza Strip and where there is coordination between Israel and Hamas.
- Next, learn about the somber and important story of territorial compromise for peace at the site of the **Yamit Walls & Iron Division Memorial**.
- Sample some really tasty and quite healthy (less fat and lactose) local goat cheeses at **Tzehela Goat Dairy**.
- Afterwards, visit the ancient remains of the **Maon Synagogue**; a 6<sup>th</sup> century synagogue and archaeological site located in the fields near the border with Gaza. It is noted for its magnificent mosaic floor showcasing a menorah flanked by two lions, etrogs, a shofar, a lulav and Aramaic inscriptions.
- Proceed onwards to the **Black Arrow memorial**. Named after a major Israeli paratrooper operation into Egyptian-controlled Gaza in the 1950's, the site offers a fantastic panoramic view into the Gaza Strip.
- End our touring at the **Peace Wall at Netiv Ha'Asara**. Tour the Moshav and gain insight into the conflict and how it impacts the residents of this unique and challenged area of the country. Leave a personal message of peace on the wall, facing the Gaza Strip.
- Drive to the nearby coastal port city of **Ashdod** for hotel check-in.
- This evening, we get together one final time for a **farewell dinner** at the hotel.

**Overnight: Leonardo Plaza Hotel, Ashdod**

**Day 10: Wednesday May 9<sup>th</sup>-Departure**

- After an night-time wake-up, we check-out and depart our hotel at **2:00am** and transfer to Ben Gurion airport.
- Flight check-in procedures and departure.

**L'hitraot! Farewell but not Goodbye!**