

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

BEFORE TRAVEL

Do I need a visa to travel to Israel?

No. Americans, Canadians and citizens of most western countries need just a valid passport to come to Israel: no visa is required. Your passport must be valid for at least six months from the date you leave Israel. **Please take a moment to check the validity of your passport per above and order a new one if necessary.**

Is it safe to travel to Israel?

Yes. Travel in Israel is generally quite safe. We are constantly in touch with security sources throughout the trip. **We would not encourage tourists to come if we felt they would be in the slightest danger.**

How many suitcases can I take?

All airlines flying to Israel allow passengers flying in Economy class to check one suitcase under the plane and take one carry on and one personal bag on to the plane. The allowance for Business Class is generally two checked bags. Please check your flight documents to confirm prior to flying.

Do I need to receive any special vaccination before my trip to Israel?

No. Israel is an entirely western country with an advanced level of hygiene, healthcare, diagnosis and medicine that is the envy of much of the world and on a par with the best of North America and Western Europe.

Can I drink the tap water in Israel?

Absolutely. Tap water in Israel is safe and delicious. And, you will also find bottled mineral water everywhere. (It's important to make sure you drink a lot, especially if you are walking, hiking or exercising during hot weather.)



Can I combine a visit to Jordan with my visit to Israel?

Absolutely. Many visitors to Israel take a day tour to Petra in Jordan. You can fly between Tel Aviv and Amman or travel overland through a number of border crossings. (We will assist you with any questions or requests you might have.)

Can I choose not to have an Israel stamp in my passport in case I travel to some countries that don't recognize Israel?

Yes, just let the passport officer know.

TRANSPORTATION

How will we get around in Israel?

We have arranged a private luxury bus(es) for your group. The group will travel together on the same bus(es) throughout the trip.

How do I get around during my (limited) free time?

Private Taxi – a more expensive option, taxis can be flagged down or ordered by phone almost anywhere and they will take you around town or between cities.

Buses – the most popular form of transportation in Israel, you can buy tickets at any city's central bus station or from the driver at any of the bus stops. Please note that most buses don't operate in Israel on Saturdays (Shabbat). For schedules and fares of buses in Israel, please visit the [Egged website](#).

Train – the Israel Railways is an affordable, easy way to travel between major cities in Israel. Please note that the trains don't operate in Israel on Saturdays (Shabbat). For train schedules and fares, please visit the [Israel Railways website](#).

What are the distances between major cities?

Tel Aviv to Jerusalem	37 miles, 50 minutes
Tel Aviv to Tiberias/Galilee	81 miles, 100 minutes
Tel Aviv to Ramon Crater	130 miles, 150 minutes
Tel Aviv to Haifa	90 miles, 70 minutes
Jerusalem to Tiberias	109 miles, 120 minutes
Jerusalem to Masada	56 miles, 90 minutes



COMMUNICATIONS

Will I have easy internet access?

Most hotels in Israel have Wi-Fi available for hotel guests at customary prices. Many cafes and restaurants offer a complimentary Wi-Fi service. Since September 2013, both Tel Aviv and Jerusalem offer citywide free Wi-Fi network which provides 80 free Internet “hot spots” across the central parts of the cities.

Will I be able to use my cell phone in Israel?

If you have an international plan, your cell phone may work in Israel. Please check with your local provider about calling and data packages.

Can I rent a cellular phone in Israel?

Certainly. You can rent a phone when you arrive or at any time during your visit. Read about renting a cellular phone [here](#).

We have made arrangements with the 019Mobile cell phone company. Information about rates and plans can be found [here](#).

What is the country code to dial to Israel?

+ 972

WEATHER

What is the weather like in Israel?

Israel enjoys long, hot, dry summers, with variation in humidity between cities and regions.

Winter temperatures can vary widely between cities and regions. Jerusalem and the Golan/Galilee are generally colder; Tel Aviv, the desert and Eilat are milder. Winter is the rainy season all over the country. The best thing is to travel with layers and rainwear.

For more specific weather information, [click here](#).



What kind of clothing should I pack?

All of the clothing you bring should be comfortable; no need for full formal wear. You can bring business casual clothes for Shabbat and modest clothing for certain areas of Jerusalem and Safed.

Each participant should bring their own day pack to carry whatever they might want during the day – camera, journal, sweater, phone, and personal things. It is not advisable to load the bag with too many things.

- shirts/blouses
- **Winter:** 3 sweaters or sweatshirts
- jeans/pants/shorts/skirts
- undergarments and socks
- **For women:** A knee-length/long skirt and a shirt with sleeves (any sleeve length) for some of the religious sites that require them
- Sleepwear
- 1 - 2 pair of comfortable walking shoes/hikers
- 1 pair of water shoes/sandals that you can wear in the Dead Sea
- 1 - 2 bathing suits
- **Winter:** 1 raincoat
- **Summer:** 1 sweater/sweatshirt, plus 1 light windbreaker jacket
- 1 hat (*You will also receive a Makor hat in Israel*)
- Small knapsack or day pack for daily use
- Sunglasses
- Toiletries (*There will be soap and shampoo at each of the overnight accommodations*)
- Additional Items
 - Siddur, Talit and Tfilin for those who are interested
 - Kippah (yarmulke) / head covering
 - Phone and tablet chargers
 - Adapter for electrical appliances
 - Camera, film / memory card and batteries
 - Music / MP3
 - Books / reading material for the bus
 - Plastic bag for wet or dirty clothes
 - Sunscreen
 - Mini flashlight or penlight
 - Travel alarm clock



MONEY AND CURRENCY

What is the currency in Israel?

Israel's currency is the Shekel; you'll find it abbreviated as NIS (New Israeli Shekel). Exchange rates of the shekel to all foreign currencies, as well as other information, can be found [here](#).

What credit cards are accepted?

You can use your ATM card to obtain shekels at ATM's throughout Israel. You can also use American Express, MasterCard and Visa cards at most Israeli hotels, restaurants and stores. **Before the trip, remember to notify your credit card companies and bank about your upcoming trip!**

Should I purchase Shekels before the trip?

You can purchase shekels either before the trip or once you arrive in Israel.

What taxes can I expect to pay in Israel?

The VAT (Value Added Tax) in Israel is 17%. It's already included in most prices in Israel. VAT is waived for tourists at hotels, tour companies and car rental agencies. Like in Europe and elsewhere, tourists can receive a refund of the VAT they paid on purchases when departing the country through the refund program. The purchase amount in one tax invoice, including VAT, must exceed 400 NIS. For more information, [click here](#).

When do I tip and when can I bargain?

In restaurants, if the bill does not include service, a 12% tip can be added. In hotels, the bellhop and other service providers can be tipped. Taxi drivers are not usually tipped.

You can bargain in open air markets but not in stores or restaurants.

RELIGIOUS CUSTOMS

Is everything closed on Shabbat in Israel?

Shabbat (the Sabbath) is the Jewish holy day of the week observed every Saturday. Shabbat starts at sunset on Friday and ends at sundown on Saturday evening.



All public offices are closed on Shabbat, as are banks, most stores and businesses; throughout Israel there is a growing number of shops open on Shabbat. In most cities, public transportation (trains and buses) do not operate on Shabbat. Most non-kosher restaurants are open on Shabbat. Radio and TV broadcasts operate as usual.

It is recommended to check in advance if you are planning on visiting a specific location. [For more information about Shabbat, click here.](#)

Are all the restaurants in Israel kosher?

Not all of the restaurants in Israel are kosher. Places offering kosher food usually display a kashrut certificate granted to them by the local rabbinate. Most hotels serve kosher food, as well as some restaurants, but there is no binding law.

If kashrut is important to you, you must check it out at each separate place where you dine. For more information, [click here.](#)

Can I wear my regular clothes?

Absolutely. Israelis wear what people in any Western country would wear, for the most part. The key to fashion in Israel is informal and casual.

Some religious sites require long pants for men and clothing that covers the shoulders and knees for women. Please be sure you are prepared for these sites.

OTHER INFORMATION

What are the phone numbers for emergency services?

100 – Police
101 – Magen David Adom
102 – Fire Department
Tourist Police – 972-(0)3-5165382

Will I need an adapter for my electrical appliances in Israel?

The electric current in Israel is 220 volts, C, single phase, 50 Hertz – the same as in Europe. Most Israeli sockets are three-pronged but most accept European two-pronged plug, for which you need a [plug adapter](#). If your appliance does not work on 220 volts, you will need a [voltage adaptor](#) (transformer). Your hotels should have adapters and transformers available.



Most hotel bathrooms have hair-dryers as well as low-wattage, American-style sockets for electric shavers, in which you can usually charge your cell-phone or tablet.

Can you address my special dietary needs?

Of course. Please tell us what your needs are and we will make sure to take care of you on the trip.

Should I get trip insurance?

Yes. Makor urges you to purchase cancellation insurance and supplemental medical coverage (which covers preexisting conditions). While you are free to purchase insurance from any company of your choice, Makor has made arrangements with SMS-Travel Insurance Center of Omaha, Nebraska. SMS has over 25 years of experience as worldwide insurance brokers and can help you choose the policy that best meets your needs.

Contact person: Yonah Engel

E-mail: info@travelinsuranceisrael.com

USA phone: [1-888-747-3773](tel:1-888-747-3773)

Mention promo code: IGT-MAKOR

Please note: We cannot accept responsibility for any losses or expenses, which you or any member of your party may incur as a result of failure to secure adequate insurance coverage.

Is there anything else I should know about this trip?

Yes. While the itinerary is demanding, it is in many ways a menu of daily options. If you are feeling a bit tired or need a break, you can always skip an option (other than transfer days between cities).

Please tell us something about our travel company.

Makor Educational Journeys was established in September 2013 as a joint venture between **Ezra Korman** and IGT, International Group Travel, with the intention of creating and implementing in-depth and educationally-oriented travel programs to Israel and other destinations of Jewish interest around the world. The synthesis of IGT's outstanding travel and administrative infrastructure with Ezra's vast experience in developing and implementing unique and creative travel experiences to almost all points in the Jewish world, puts Makor at



the forefront of the educational travel field. As a division of IGT, Makor is fully integrated into the IGT administrative and operational structure. The IGT team covers all aspects of preparation and implementation of any type of project, large or small. For more information about Makor, visit <http://www.makorjourneys.com/about>.

