

# Israel

## Exploring the Biblical World

Atlanta Departure and Return:  
January 2-17, 2019

### Jan 2 (Wed): Departure

Our trip begins at **Hartsfield-Jackson airport (ATL)** in Atlanta where we check in for our flight to Israel.

### Jan 3 (Thu): Arrival

After our meet up at **Ben Gurion airport (TLV)**, we drive one hour to **Jerusalem**, the most important city in the world. With any luck, we'll arrive in time to see the last rays of the sun reflecting off the walls of the Old City. Overnight: Gloria Hotel, Jerusalem.

### Jan 4 (Fri): South to the Wilderness

From Jerusalem we drive south to the **Elah Valley**, location of David's famous battle with Goliath. Next is the frontier town of **Beer Sheva**, hub of Abraham and Isaac's travels through the Promised Land. At day's end, we arrive at **Mitzpe Ramon**, the southernmost destination of our journey. Here, we can catch a glimpse of ibexes scrambling among the rocks of the Ramon Crater's 1600' cliffs. Overnight: Desert Shade, Mitzpe Ramon.



### Jan 5 (Sat): Life in the Negev

Our day begins with a sunrise overlook of the **Ramon Crater**. Next, we head north to **Wadi Ein Avdat** where an easy hike brings us to a waterfall hidden away among the canyon's walls. At the conclusion of our hike, a short ride brings us to the Nabatean palace of **Avdat** where we explore the vast ruins that bear witness to the legendary wealth and expert desert skills of the Nabatean merchants. Our day concludes with a camel ride and Bedouin feast at **Khan HaShayarot** where we spend the night in Bedouin tents. Overnight: Khan HaShayarot, Avdat.



### Jan 6 (Sun): Along the Dead Sea

As we continue our journey north, we stop first at the ancient Canaanite city of **Arad** and the Israelite fortress and temple built nearby. Next, we descend to the Dead Sea, traveling along its shores to the sheer cliffs of **Masada**, one of Israel's most important historical sites. Here, the last remnants of the Zealots held out against the



Roman legions who surrounded them. A cable car will take us to the top of the site where we have ample time for exploration and reflection. Continuing along the shores of the Dead Sea, we visit **Ein Gedi**, a desert oasis where David once hid from King Saul. The once-in-a-lifetime experience of a swim in the **Dead Sea** caps our day, before we head to our lodging for the night. Overnight: Oasis Hotel, Jericho.

### Jan 7 (Mon): Through the Jordan Valley

Our first stop is at the ruins of **Qumran**, home to the scribes who produced the famous Dead Sea Scrolls. Next, we head back to **Jericho**, the lowest (and oldest!) city on earth. After a trek north through the **Jordan Valley**, we visit the vast ruins of **Beth Shean**, known in Jesus' day as Scythopolis. More than any other location in Israel, this site gives us a feel for the "other world" of Gentile life in Galilee. Our last stop is at **Belvoir**, a stunning mountaintop fortress built by the Crusaders. With each mile we drive north, the dry hills of the Judean wilderness transition to the fertile valleys of the Galilee. Overnight: Kibbutz Ein Gev, Galilee



### Jan 8 (Tue): North to the Golan

Today, we head north to explore **Upper Galilee**. Our first stop is **Hazor**, famously conquered by Joshua during the Conquest and again by Deborah during the time of the Judges. Next, we visit the **Hula Valley Nature Preserve**, resting place for millions of migrating birds each year. After lunch, it's on to the springs of nearby **Banias**, known in Jesus' day as **Caesarea Philippi**, where Peter famously said, "You are the Christ, the son of the living God." A few miles away, we visit **Dan**, the northernmost city in ancient Israel and the place where King Jeroboam provoked the prophets' ire by installing a shrine housing a golden calf. Overnight: Kibbutz Ein Gev, Galilee.

### Jan 9 (Wed): Around the Sea of Galilee

Today, we tour key sites from Jesus' ministry. Our day begins with a boat ride across the **Sea of Galilee** itself. Next, we're off to the towering **Arbel** cliffs and their panoramic view of the Sea. A short drive takes us to the ruins of **Korazim**, a hillside village Jesus chastised for rejecting his message. At the **Mount of the Beatitudes**, we can reflect on Jesus' famous Sermon on the Mount. Continuing on toward the Sea, we travel to **Capernaum**, base of Jesus' ministry in the Galilee. Here, we can explore



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remnants of the many ancient houses at the site and walk through the town's extraordinary synagogue. We close our day at **Yardenit**, a beautiful overlook of the headwaters of the Jordan River. Overnight: Kibbutz Ein Gev, Galilee.

## Jan 10 (Thu): Lower Galilee

Today, we begin with a stop at **Kursi**, the site where Jesus cast demons into a herd of swine. Then, leaving the Sea of Galilee behind, we head southwest to **Nazareth**, boyhood home of Jesus. Next, it is on to **Megiddo**, a store city during the days of King Solomon, for a look at Canaanite temples and the town's ancient water system. From the top of Tel Megiddo, best known by its Greek name, Armageddon, we can imagine the scene envisioned by the author of Revelation. As we continue south, we visit **Muhraqa**, site of Elijah's contest with the prophets of Baal. Overnight: Seasons Hotel, Netanya.

## Jan 11 (Fri): On to Jerusalem

Along the coast of the Mediterranean, we arrive at **Caesarea Maritima**, the city built by Herod to be the center of Rome's rule over Israel. Then, we're off to the final stop of our trek through Israel, the city of **Jerusalem**. From the bustling **Jaffa Gate**, we enter the Old City and begin our journey from the most important church in the world, the **Church of the Holy Sepulchre**, to Judaism's holiest site, the **Western Wall**. Overnight: Gloria Hotel, Jerusalem.



## Jan 12 (Sat): Jerusalem

A short bus ride takes us to the world-famous **Israel Museum** where we marvel at an enormous scale **model** of Second-Temple Jerusalem. Here, we visit the **Shrine of the Book**, home to the famous Dead Sea Scrolls. After a tour of the museum itself, we travel a few short miles to the **Herodion**, Herod's magnificent palace and eventual tomb near the ancient city of **Bethlehem**. While we're in Bethlehem, we stop off for a visit at the **Church of the Nativity**, one of the most ancient churches in all of Christendom. Overnight: Gloria Hotel, Jerusalem.



## Jan 13 (Sun): Jerusalem

A walk through the alleyways of the Old City takes us to the **Jewish Quarter** where we explore the excavations of Herod the Great's

Temple Mount. Next, we visit the oldest part of the city, the **City of David** just south of the present city walls. Here, we can hike



through the ancient **Hezekiah's Tunnel**, built by the famous king to protect the city's water supply from Assyrian invaders. We conclude our day by visiting sites along the **Via Dolorosa**, the path countless pilgrims have traveled as they mark the Stations of the Cross. Overnight: Gloria Hotel, Jerusalem.

## Jan 14 (Mon): Jerusalem

We begin our day at the **Citadel**, site of Herod the Great's palace in Jerusalem and the place where Jesus was condemned by Pilate to be crucified. After a walk through the Old City, we consider the homes of wealthy Sadducees at the **Wohl Archaeological Museum** and take a behind-the-scenes look at the **walls** Herod installed to support his magnificent temple. We conclude our day with a sobering visit to Israel's own Holocaust Museum, the **Yad va-Shem**. Overnight: Gloria Hotel, Jerusalem.

## Jan 15 (Tue): Free Day

After nearly two weeks of whirlwind touring, it's time for a **free day**, and opportunities abound for exploring the city. Overnight: Gloria Hotel, Jerusalem.

## Jan 16 (Wed): Via Dolorosa

We cap our final day in the Holy Land with a tour of sites from the last hours of Jesus' life on earth. We begin at the top of the **Mount of Olives** with its beautiful overlook of the city. As we make our way down the mount, we visit the **Dominus Flevit** church, commemorating the place where Jesus wept over Jerusalem, and the **Church of All Nations**, near the site of the Garden of Gethsemane. We continue on to the **Church of St. Peter in Gallicantu**, where we consider the last hours Jesus passed in the dungeons of Caiaphas' house. From the **Citadel**, we trace Jesus' steps to the cross. We end our trip at this very spot, the location of Calvary preserved inside the walls of the **Church of the Holy Sepulchre**. Overnight: Gloria Hotel, Jerusalem.



## Jan 17 (Thu)

Depart for Ben Gurion airport (TLV).

