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Journey to Prague and Israel
April 18 – May 3, 2015
Led by Rabbi Marc A. Gruber

Itinerary
(As of October 5 – Subject to Change)

Saturday April 18
- 7:30 PM departure from JFK Airport on British Airways flight #176

Sunday April 19  Prague – The Golden City
- 7:30 AM - arrive London Heathrow Airport; connect to British Airways flight #862 departing 9:50 AM.
- 12:45 PM arrival in Prague
- Packed Lunch
- Walking tour of Prague including the Old Town Square and the Charles Bridge. The Charles Bridge in the heart of Prague is lined with 30 statues. Most of the statues are from 1706 – 1714. Of special interest is the crucifixion sculpture with the Hebrew inscription ...Holy, holy, holy...
- Check-in and relax at our hotel
- Dinner Cruise on the Vlatava River
Overnight: Century Old Town Hotel, Prague

Monday April 20  Prague – The World That Was
- Breakfast at the hotel
- Prague Castle Tour: The Prague Castle was most likely founded around 880 by Prince Bořivoj of the Premyslid Dynasty. According to the Guinness Book of World Records, the Prague Castle is the largest coherent castle complex in the world. A UNESCO World Heritage site, it consists of a large-scale composition of palaces and ecclesiastical buildings of various architectural styles, from Roman-style buildings from the 10th century through Gothic modifications in the 14th century.
- Visit the Lobkowicz Palace Museum for a music-filled visit presenting key events in European history, from the unique and personal perspective of the noble Bohemian Lobkowicz family.
- Lunch and shopping time on your own
- Walking tour of Josefov, the Old Jewish Quarter of Prague including Europe’s oldest synagogue - Alt Neu Shul - seat of the famed 16th century Maharal (Rabbi Judah Lowy) and his Golem. Visit the synagogues, cemetery & Judaica of the Prague Jewish Museum
- Evening and dinner on your own in Prague
Overnight: Century Old Town Hotel, Prague

Tuesday April 21  Memory
- Breakfast at the hotel
- Check-out of the hotel
- Head to Terezin, the Nazi “showcase” Ghetto to which many of the Jews of Prague were sent before being murdered at Auschwitz and elsewhere.
- Packed Lunch
- Return to Prague and visit the opulent Jerusalem Street Jubilee Synagogue built in 1906, and named in honor of the Silver Jubilee of Emperor Franz Joseph I of Austria
- Tour and taste at the historic U Fleku Brewery, founded in 1499 and considered to be one of the oldest breweries in Prague.
- Last minute shopping time on your own
• Dinner with members of the local Jewish community before heading to the airport for El Al Airlines UP flight #2524 departing at 10:15 PM.

Wednesday April 22  – Israel Memorial Day - Yom Hazikaron
• 3:05 AM arrival at Ben Gurion International Airport in Israel
• Breakfast and transition ceremony from Europe to Israel at the Holocaust Memorial in the Ben Shemen Forest amongst the memorials to the murdered Jews of Europe and the trees that represent the resurrection of the Jewish people.
• Head north to Atlit, site of the pre-state British Detention Camp for "illegal" Jewish immigrant which tells the story of the struggle of Jews fleeing Europe (Ma’apilim), trying to reach British controlled Palestine, only to be incarcerated by the British in camps similar in appearance to the Nazi camps of Europe.
• Stand in solemn memory as the sirens wail marking Memorial Day and remembering the thousands who have made the ultimate sacrifice so that Israel may be free.
• Packed Lunch
  • At Kibbutz Lohamei Hagetaot (founded in 1949 by Holocaust survivors, partisans and Ghetto fighters) we’ll explore the role that Holocaust survivors and Holocaust memory have played in shaping contemporary Jewish and Israel identity.
  • Check-in at our hotel atop Mt Carmel in Haifa
  • Dinner and community ceremony marking the transition from Yom HaZikaron to the joy of Yom Haatzmaut: Israel Independence Day. Gain a deeper understanding of how Israelis mourn and celebrate and what Israeli society has to overcome to accomplish so much

Overnight: Crowne Plaza Hotel, Haifa

Thursday April 23  Israel Independence Day – Yom Haatzmaut
• Breakfast at the hotel
• View the Bahai Gardens and shrine areas; Haifa is the world center of the Bahai faith
• Meet members of Haifa's Ahmadiyya Muslim community at the Mahmood Mosque; explore their relationship as Israeli Arabs to the State of Israel
• Lunch on your own
• Join thousands of Israeli citizens in visiting an army base and meeting IDF soldiers. See firsthand how the country honors and respects those who serve and make our freedom possible
• Head to Acco and explore the Crusader Halls built nearly 900 years ago by Christian Crusader knights.
• Explore the dramatic white cliffs and grottos at Rosh Hanikrah.
• Return to Haifa for evening and dinner on your own

Overnight: Crowne Plaza Hotel, Haifa

Friday April 24  Israel: Land of Social Complexities Then and Now
• Breakfast at the hotel
• Visit the Leo Baeck Educational Center in Haifa to learn about their efforts to bridge gaps between the various ethnic and religious group that make up the mosaic of Israeli society.
• Head south to the ancient Roman capital and port at Caesarea, examine the complex relationships between the Roman pagan world and Jews & Judaism during the Second Temple Period and beyond.
• Lunch on your own
• Continue to Tel Aviv; check-in at our hotel on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea.
• Join Kehilat Bet Daniel for Kabbalat Shabbat services
• Return to the hotel for Shabbat dinner

Overnight: Carlton Hotel, Tel Aviv
Shabbat April 25  Shabbat in Tel Aviv

- Breakfast at the hotel
- Enjoy the special atmosphere of Shabbat in Tel Aviv by exploring the city on your own or participating in Shabbat prayers at one of Tel Aviv’s many synagogues.
- Mid-morning walking tour to Rabin Square where Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated in 1995. Learn about the ideological divisions within Israeli society.
- Walk back to the hotel via the restored area of Bet Bialik which includes the original Tel Aviv City Hall. We’ll see examples of Bauhaus Architecture. Tel Aviv’s collection of Bauhaus/International style buildings is the largest in the world and has been recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site.
- Lunch on your own
- Afternoon at leisure for Shabbat rest and to enjoy the beach, pool & spa.
- Light seudah shlishit snack, Torah Study and Havdallah led by Rabbi Gruber.
- Dinner and evening on your own in Tel Aviv

Overnight: Carlton Hotel, Tel Aviv

Sunday April 26  Tel Aviv – The First Hebrew City

- Breakfast at the hotel
- Session with educator Rachel Korazim: The Tale of Two Cities exploring contrasting Zionist representations of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv in the writings of Yehuda Amichai, Naomi Shemer, Yehonatan Gefen, Nahum and Yoram Thar – Lev
- Join Guy Sharett’s Streetwise tour to learn Hebrew and Israeli culture on the streets of Tel Aviv through graffiti, street signs and bumper stickers.
- Lunch on your own
- Explore multi-ethnic Old Jaffa with its artist’s galleries and thousands of years of history – meet a local artisan for a hands-on workshop.
- Evening and dinner on your own in Tel Aviv

Overnight: Carlton Hotel, Tel Aviv

Monday April 27  Deep Roots

- Breakfast at the hotel
- Head to the fields with Project Leket, volunteering to pick fruits to be donated to local soup kitchens.
- Continue to the Weizmann Institute and learn about Israel’s leading role in science and high tech.
- Lunch on your own
- As we ascend to Jerusalem, pause at the Israeli flag bedecked remnants of the truck convoys that desperately tried to break the Arab siege of Jewish Jerusalem during Israel’s 1948 War of Independence. Remember the vital contributions of American Col. Mickey Marcus who was immortalized in “Cast a Giant Shadow”.
- Celebrate our arrival in Jerusalem at the Haas Promenade with Shehechiyanu & the magnificent views & the stories of Akedat Yitzhak and David’s establishment of the city as the capital of the People of Israel 3,000 years ago.
- Evening and dinner on your own in Jerusalem

Overnight: Leonardo Plaza Hotel, Jerusalem

Tuesday April 28  Jerusalem Through the Ages

- Breakfast at the hotel
- Step back 3,000 years to the days of King David and the days of the First Temple at the latest archeological finds at the City Of David (the original Jerusalem); walk through the (dry) water systems.
- Private prayer and contemplation time on your own at the Kotel (Western Wall)
- Walking tour to out of the way corners of the Old City including the rooftops, the recently restored Ohel Yitzhak Synagogue and the underground “Herodian Quarter”.
- Lunch and shopping time on your own in Jerusalem’s Old City
- Visit the Church of the Holy Sepulcher where we will consider the Christian connection to and presence in Jerusalem
- **Wine and cheese reception** at the Israel Museum followed by a docent tour of the renewed galleries and model of Second Temple Period Jerusalem
- Evening and dinner on your own in Jerusalem

**Overnight:** Leonardo Plaza Hotel, Jerusalem

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**Wednesday April 29  Sharing the Land?**

- **Breakfast** at the hotel
- Session with *Khaled Abu Toameh*, Arab Affairs Correspondant for the Jerusalem Post: *Can Israel and the Palestinian Authority Make Peace?*
- Visit the restored Jewish communities of *Gush Etzion* and see the multi-media presentation at the Kfar Etzion Heritage Center.
- Wine tasting and lunch at the award winning *Gush Etzion Winery*.
- Meet residents and leaders of the Palestinian village *Khribet Zakariya*.
- See first hand what a “settlement” is and meet local residents and leaders in *Efrat*
- Return to Jerusalem for dinner and evening on your own

**Overnight:** Leonardo Plaza Hotel, Jerusalem

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**Thursday April 30  The Jerusalem Mosaic**

- **Breakfast** at the hotel
- Early departure to the slopes of *Mt. Scopus* to participate in the Temple Mount archeological sifting project, helping to sift through tons of earth and artifacts from the Temple Mount.
- Continue to *Mt. of Olives* for magnificent views of the Temple Mount
- Explore the historic Jewish cemetery on the slopes of *Mt. of Olives*. Learn about the different leaders, communities and groups that are represented here and about the complicated relationship between Jews and Arabs in Jerusalem as expressed through ongoing Arab vandalism and desecration of the cemetery.
- Lunch on your own
- Visit and encounter with members of Jerusalem’s “Ultra Orthodox” community. Gain insight to the lifestyle and concerns of this fastest growing segment of the Jewish population.
- Evening and dinner on your own in Jerusalem

**Overnight:** Leonardo Plaza Hotel, Jerusalem

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**Friday May 1  Coming Home**

- **Breakfast** at the hotel
- Briefing on current diplomatic and security issues
- At the L.A. Mayer Museum for Islamic Art see the extensive exhibits of Islamic Art and the world
- Lunch and shopping time on your own
- Visit *Ethiopian Jews* in their home and hear the remarkable stories of their long trek home from Africa to Israel and how they have fared since arriving in Israel over 20 years ago.
- Return to the hotel to prepare for Shabbat
- Join *Kehilat Harel* for Kabbalat Shabbat and Community Shabbat dinner
- Walk back to the hotel

**Overnight:** Leonardo Plaza Hotel, Jerusalem
Shabbat May 2  Shabbat in Jerusalem
- Breakfast at the hotel
- Shabbat services at Kehilat Harel, followed by a Kiddush Lunch and study with Rabbis Gruber and Zavidov.
- **Walking tour** through the historic center of modern Jerusalem including the area of the Prime Minster’s and President’s Residences, the Rehavia and Talbiyah neighborhoods
- Afternoon to rest, relax and explore Jerusalem on your own
- Summary session, **dinner and Havdallah**
- Head to Ben Gurion Airport for flight to the USA

Sunday May 3  Shalom Ulehitraot!
- 12:45 AM departure on El Al flight # 001 arriving JFK Airport 5:25 AM

- Listed activities and speakers are subject to confirmation.
- All breakfasts plus underlined meals are included in the package price.
- The trip will be staffed by a Keshet Tour Educator & a local Tour Guide in Prague
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