

Greater Stowe Holy Land Interfaith Journey to Israel

April 16 – 24, 2023

(With Optional Eilat - Petra Extension April 24 – 26)

Itinerary

(As of March 8, 2023 - Subject to Change)

Sunday April 16 **WELCOME TO ISRAEL**

- Afternoon/evening arrival at Ben Gurion International Airport in Israel.
- Three group transfers from the airport to the Tal Hotel in **Tel Aviv** at about **10:45 AM** after the arrival of Delta Airlines flight #242, at about **4:15 PM** after the arrival of flights scheduled to land at 2:40, 2:50 & 2:55 PM and at about **7:00 PM** after the arrival of flights scheduled to land at 5:00, 5:15, 5:20 and 5:35 PM
- Dinner on your own
- 9:30 PM – gather together in the lobby of the Tal Hotel

Overnight: Tal Hotel, Tel Aviv

Monday April 17 **OLD - NEW LAND**

- Breakfast at the hotel
- Head to the ancient Roman capital at **Caesarea** with its theater and remains of the palace of the Roman Procurators where Paul was arraigned before being sent to Rome for trial. *Explore the intimate, complex and fraught relationship between Jewish Biblical and Roman Pagan civilizations which continues to resonate until today.*
- **Tour and lunch tastings Tel Aviv's open air Carmel Market.** *Israel's diverse population hails from over 100 different countries and regions, creating a vibrant and creative culinary environment.*
- Visit **Old Jaffa**, the ancient port city mentioned in the Bible as the location from which **Jonah** attempted to flee from God's mission. Learn about **Simon the Tanner** and about **Peter's** vision to preach to Gentiles. *Examine the common roots and divergence of Judaism & Christianity*
- Learn about the history of Tel Aviv ("the first Hebrew city") and **Israel's Declaration of Independence** which took place in Tel Aviv in May 1948, fulfilling a 2,000-year-old dream of the Jewish People "to be a free nation in our land" which some see as a fulfillment of Biblical prophecy.
- **Reflection time**
- Return to Tel Aviv for dinner at the hotel



Overnight: Tal Hotel, Tel Aviv

Tuesday April 18- *Yom Hashoah - Holocaust Memorial Day* ISRAEL: LAND OF MANY CULTURES

- Breakfast at the hotel
- 8:15 AM - Pack bus and depart hotel
- From the top of Mt. Carmel, view the Haifa Bay and **Bahai Gardens**. *Haifa is the world center of the Bahai faith. Founded in 19th century Persia it is one of the world's fastest growing religious communities.*
- At 10:00 AM join the people of Israel - **as the sirens wail as the country comes to a halt**- for two minutes of solemn silence remembering the Holocaust – the mass murder of 6 million Jews by the Germans and their allies.
- Visit an **Ahmadiyyan Muslim Mosque** and meet an Imam. *Learn about the Ahmadiyyan vision of Islam that extends its hand in friendship to the world.*
- Lunch and encounter with the **Israeli Arab Druze community**
- In Iblin, meet **Melkite Greek Catholic** (former) **Archbishop Elias Chacour** and learn about his work for peaceful coexistence in Israel.
- Continue to **Nazareth** where the **Annunciation** (*the appearance of the Angel Gabriel to Mary*) is remembered in Christian tradition.
- Check-in and dinner at our Kibbutz Hotel on the shores of the **Kinneret** (*Sea of Galilee*)
- 8:00 PM - Group Session



Overnight: Nof Ginosar Hotel, Kibbutz Ginosar

Wednesday April 19 GALILEE OF FAITH

- Breakfast at the hotel
- Explore the **Ministry of Jesus** around the Sea of Galilee and learn about Jewish life during the late Second Temple period which is the backdrop and context of the Gospel accounts and the society from which modern Judaism (*Rabbinic Judaism*) emerged.
- 8:15 AM - See the 2,000-year-old **Sea of Galilee fishing boat** found by members of Kibbutz Ginosar
- At **Mt of Beatitudes**, remember Jesus's **Sermon on the Mount** and examine it in the context of Jewish teachings.
- Visit **Capernaum** the home base of Jesus' ministry including the site of the synagogue where Jesus taught and the home church at what might have been Peter's mother-in-law's house. *Consider how a Jewish village became a Christian pilgrimage site.*
- Lunch on your own
- Continue to **Tzfat**, city of the Jewish mystics. **Walking tour** through the historic medieval streets and synagogues of Tzfat. *Learn how the mystical and spiritual traditions that emerged here 500 years ago continue to impact Jewish life today. Consider the place of mysticism and spirituality in our lives.*
- Meet **Kabalistic artist** Avraham Lowenthal in his studio and learn about **Kabalah** (Jewish Mysticism) through art.
- Return to the hotel for dinner
- **Reflection time**



Overnight: Nof Ginosar Hotel, Kibbutz Ginosar

Thursday April 20 WHAT PRICE FREEDOM?

- Breakfast at the hotel
- 8:00 AM - Pack bus and depart hotel
- Head south through the Jordan River Valley. Stop at the Quasr **El Yahud Baptismal** site at the **Jordan River**, associated with the entry of Joshua & the tribes of Israel into Canaan, Elijah ascent in the fiery chariot and the baptism of Jesus by John. *Those who wish to may be baptized*

- **Reflection time**
- Cable car up to the fortress of **Masada** where the last Jewish freedom fighters faced the mighty Roman Empire 2,000 years ago. *Tour atop the mountain as we address the troubling issues presented by the Masada story.*
- Lunch and **float in the Dead Sea**, the “lowest place on earth”
- Ascend to Jerusalem, stopping on the way to meet **Ethiopian Jews** in **Maaleh Adumim** and hear the dramatic story of their trek home from Africa to Israel. *Consider how the Biblical vision of the ingathering of the exiles impacts how Israel sees its identity and mission.*
- Celebrate our arrival in Jerusalem with the magnificent views from **Mt. Scopus**
- Check-in and dinner at our hotel
- 8:30 PM - Session at the hotel with **Yochi Rappeport**, Executive Director of **Women of The Wall: The Struggle for Religious Pluralism in Israel’s Jewish Community**



Overnight: Grand Court Hotel, Jerusalem

Friday April 21 **JERUSALEM AND BETHLEHEM**

- Breakfast at the hotel
- Head to the **Mt of Olives** for **worship** and magnificent views of the Temple Mount.
- Walk down the slopes to the **Garden of Gethsemane** and the **Church of All Nations** where the prayer, betrayal and arrest of Jesus is remembered.
- Lunch on your own at the bustling **Mahaneh Yehudah Shuk** outdoor market
- Continue to **Bethlehem** and visit the **Church of the Nativity** which remembers the birth of Jesus. Learn about how the complex political situation impacts daily life in Bethlehem. *(Please note that Bethlehem is under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority and not the State of Israel).*
- Return to the Jerusalem to prepare for Shabbat. Shabbat candle lighting 6:21 PM
- **Sabbath eve services** and **Bat Mitzvah** at the **Egalitarian Azarat Yisrael Prayer Area** at the foot of the Temple Mount.
- Continue to the **Kotel** (Western Wall) to join thousands in **welcoming the Sabbath with prayer, song and dance**
- Shabbat dinner at the hotel



Overnight: Grand Court Hotel, Jerusalem

Saturday April 22 **SHABBAT SHALOM IN JERUSALEM**

- Breakfast at the hotel
- **Morning options:**
 - **OPTION I:** 8:50 AM departure by bus to Shabbat morning synagogue services at Reform affiliated **Kehilat Kol Haneshama** followed by kiddush and discussion with Rabbi Oded Mazor and community members
 - **OPTION II:** 8:50 AM – Meet in the hotel lobby and walk to the **Garden Tomb** to learn about and remember the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus in a beautiful setting which calls to mind Golgotha (*the “place of the skull”*) as described in the Gospels.

- 1:00 PM – Shabbat lunch at the hotel
- After lunch, we'll **explore the Old City on foot**, including the rooftops and the Kotel/ Temple Mount overlook.
- **Reflection time**
- Return to the hotel for dinner
- **Havdallah** (7:51 PM) marking the end of Shabbat
- Evening on your own in Jerusalem



Overnight: Grand Court Hotel, Jerusalem

Sunday April 23 **SHARING THE LAND**

- Breakfast at the hotel
- 8:15 AM - Session at the hotel with **Khaled Abu Toameh**, former Arab Affairs Correspondent for the Jerusalem Post. *Can Israel and the Palestinian Authority Make Peace?*
- Visit the **Kibbutz Kfar Etzion** Heritage Center which tells the story of the Jewish communities that were destroyed in here in 1948 and reestablished following the 1967 Six Days War.
- Packed Lunch
- Session with **Efrat Mayor Oded Ravivi** : *Are Settlements an Obstacle to Peace?*
- Meet with **Roots/Judur/Shorashim**: The Palestinian-Israeli Initiative for Understanding, Nonviolence, and Reconciliation which brings together Jews & Arabs who live the Efrat/Gush Etzion area for dialogue and interaction.
- Continue to the “Ultra-Orthodox” town **Beitar Illit**. Meet Haredi (Ultra-Orthodox) educational pioneer **Rabbi Menachem Bombach** who heads a Hassidic High School which promotes integration into Israeli society. *Learn more about the Haredi community, the fastest growing segment of the Jewish population in Israel and around the world.*
- Return to Jerusalem for dinner at the hotel

Overnight: Grand Court Hotel, Jerusalem

Monday April 24 **HOW MEMORY SHAPES THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE**

- Breakfast at the hotel
- 8:00 AM - Pack bus and depart hotel
- Stand in solemn memory at the **Yad Vashem** Holocaust Memorial Center including the Museum, Avenue of the Righteous of the Nations and the Children’s Memorial.
- Lunch on your own
- Private prayer and contemplation time at the **Kotel (Western Wall)**
- At the **Southern Temple Mount** Archeological Park, step back 2,000 years to the days of the **Second Temple** and the **Ministry of Jesus**. *Examine the centrality of the Temple experience in Jewish society and tradition.*
- Walk part of the Via Dolorosa to the **Church of the Holy Sepulcher which is the traditional site of the crucifixion, burial and resurrection of Jesus**. *Learn about the Christian connection to and presence in Jerusalem over the centuries*
- Visit **Mt Zion**, traditional site of the Tomb of King David, the Last Supper and the Pentecost Experience and **where Jewish, Christian and Muslim traditions overlap and intersect**. *Consider how parallel claims by different groups can create commonality and competition.*
- **Summary Session** and farewell dinner at the Grand Court Hotel
- 7:30 PM - Departure to Ben Gurion International Airport for flights to the USA
- **At 8:00 PM join the people of Israel - as the sirens wail and the country comes to a halt for one minute of solemn silence marking the beginning of Memorial Day, remembering those who have fallen in defense of the State of Israel.**

Optional Petra Add-On

Monday evening April 24

- Depart Jerusalem for midnight (*approximate time*) arrival at Kibbutz Ketura

Overnight: Kibbutz Ketura Guest House

Tuesday April 25 **PETRA** **(ISRAEL MEMORIAL DAY)**

- 6:30 AM - Breakfast at the hotel
- 7:00 - Head to the Arava Border Crossing from Israel to the **Kingdom of Jordan**.
- Once in Jordan, drive up to the "Desert Highway" to the "**Rose Red City**" - **Petra**.
- Enter the ancient city through the famous "Siq - a narrow natural gorge which guarded the secret entrance to Petra.
- **Tour Petra**
- Late lunch
- Return to the Arava Border and cross back to Israel , arriving back at Kibbutz Ketura at approximately 7:30 PM as Israel marks the transition from the mourning of memorial Day to the Celebration of Independence Day.
- Dinner at the Guest House



Overnight: Kibbutz Ketura Guest House

Wednesday April 26 **THE NEGEV** **ISRAEL INDEPENDENCE DAY**

- Breakfast at the hotel
- **Tour the Kibbutz** and learn about Kibbutz lifestyle, desert agriculture, conservation and environmental challenges and about the **Arava Institute for Environmental Studies** which brings together Jordanian, Palestinian, Israeli, and other students from all around the world.
- Head north to **Makhtesh Ramon** to see some of its wonders; learn how this geological marvel formed over millions of years.
- Meet Israeli **Bedouin** Arabs, have lunch and learn about their culture – and have a chance to ride a **camel!**
- Continue to Ben Gurion International Airport for check-in for flights to the USA and dinner on your own.

- Listed activities and speakers are subject to confirmation.
- Program will be staffed by a Keshet Israel Tour Educator (*except in Bethlehem and Jordan*)
- All underlined meals are included in the package price.



Keshet Educational Journeys

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